

**BULGARIA AND HUNGARY IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR:
A VIEW FROM THE 21ST CENTURY**



Editor: Pál Fodor



Research Centre for the Humanities

Budapest–Sofia, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Zoltán Oszkár Szóts and Gábor Demeter

The centennial of the outbreak of the Great War has prompted the generations who were not directly affected by that cataclysm to reacquaint themselves with—and to reevaluate—the events associated with it. Over the last five years, a host of conferences and publications have dealt with the military, diplomatic, and everyday circumstances of World War I.¹ Scholars have produced numerous analyses written from novel perspectives,² and the interpretive disputes which divided the historians from the two former European power blocs have begun to fade. In an essay published in French in 2004 and in English in 2005, Jay Winter and Antoine Prost divided the researchers who have studied World War I into three generations: those who experienced the war, those of the 1950s, and those of the 1990s. In 2009, Winter then expanded this taxonomy to include a fourth generation—those of the present era.³ In the first of these eras, analyses of military and diplomatic

1 For a survey of the war-related books published in Hungary in 2014 and 2015, see Szóts “Volt egyszer egy évforduló,” 120–46.

2 See, for instance, Rumpler, *Die Habsburgermonarchie*, vol. 11/1., especially the studies by Imre Röss, Dániel Szabó, and Ágnes Pogány. See also Clark’s *The Sleepwalkers*.

3 Winter and Prost, *Penser la Grande guerre*; Winter and Prost, *The Great War in History*; Winter, *Approaching the History of the Great War*.

history predominated;⁴ a significant number of diaries and memoirs appeared as well. The genres of history and memoir were quickly muddled. The historians of this era typically applied an event-centered approach, focusing almost exclusively on the four and a half years of military confrontations, and generally examined the war from above—that is, from the perspective of military and political leaders and diplomats.

In the interwar period, the question of responsibility for the war was primarily the concern of the former Central Powers, insofar as the treaties negotiated at the Paris Peace Conference assigned all blame for the war to them. In hopes of having the terms of these agreements revised, they made a priority of denying their culpability; even so, the notion of shared responsibility for the outbreak of the war was barely discussed in France and Great Britain before 1939.⁵ Soviet historians, in accordance with Leninist theory, emphasized the responsibility of all the capitalist states. According to Lenin, both of the belligerent coalitions involved in this conflict were fighting an imperialist war (or war of conquest, or pillage, or theft) in which the goal was to divide or re-divide the world into colonies or “spheres of influence” for financial capital. Correspondingly, the parties responsible for the war were those responsible for imperialism—that is, the capitalist class which ruled the globe, including all of the belligerent countries.⁶

In Hungary, the publication of official documents, written reflections, memoirs, and other relevant materials began during the war.⁷ In accordance

4 See, for example, Pollmann, “A Nagy Háború magyarországi historiográfiája,” 93–103; Romics, “Az első világháború – 100 év távlatából,” 11–24; Farkas, “Die ungarische kriegsgeschichtliche Forschung,” 345–62; Balázs, “A ‘sakktáblától’ a lövészárkok mikrovilágáig,” 109–31; Pók, “Az első világháború értelmezésének fő tendenciái,” 22–41; Szóts, “Haupttrichtlinien in der Historiografie,” 13–33; Szóts, “Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia felbomlása,” 51–58; Szóts, *Az első generáció*.

5 For more on the causes of—and responsibility for—the war, see Szabó, *A háborús felelősség kérdése*; Bencsik, “Az első világháború okairól,” 5–23. For an account of British historiography on the subject, see Révész, “Egy ellentmondásos centenárius,” 725–36. For a survey of contemporary Western European historiography, see Kramer, “Recent Historiography,” 5–27 and 155–77.

6 Lenin, *Az imperializmus*, 437–531.

7 For more on this subject, see Szóts, “Témaválasztások,” 487–500.

with Gergely Romsics' research on memoirs, the material written between 1920 and 1945 can be categorized into several groups.⁸ One can begin by classifying them along a spectrum from the elites to the people, and thus the first group includes everything written "from above": the journals, memoirs, analyses, speeches, and commemorative orations of political, diplomatic, ecclesiastical, and military leaders. The other end of this spectrum involves anything which originated "from below": the journals and recollections of ordinary soldiers, as well as collective expressions of mourning.⁹ Another axis along which to arrange Hungarian war literature was that of political belief—that is, whether an author accepted or opposed the political arrangements of the Horthy era. In disputing the legitimacy of the Horthy regime, leftists and Octobrists¹⁰ emphasized that the old elites of the Monarchy had been responsible for the war. Their opponents, on the other hand, ascribed Hungary's collapse to the "crimes" of the Károlyi government and the Hungarian Soviet Republic, which served as the basis of their demands for a new form of government for Hungary. This binary system was later expanded to include a third narrative, that of the populist writers who did not agree with either side.¹¹ The latter did not consider the events of the fall of 1918 as the source of all evil, nor did they question the viability of the Dual Monarchy. In their opinion, the collapse—and possibly even the war—could have been avoided if Hungary's political elites had not aligned themselves with German policies. They believed that Hungary's post-1920 political system perpetuated this legacy, and that liberation from it would require Hungarians to form alliances with their neighboring peoples and to implement comprehensive reforms.

8 Romsics, *Mítosz és emlékezet*. For an application of this model, see Szőts, *Az első generáció*.

9 Before 1945, written expressions of popular remembrance were not published with any frequency, though public commemorations were arranged in many locations as a result of elites' desires to build a memorial culture based on hero worship. One consequence of such gatherings was the mushrooming growth of monuments in every community, which became a distinctively material form of the popular memory of World War I.

10 In the Hungarian context, this term refers to the political leaders of—or sympathizers with—the democratic revolution of October, 1918.

11 Romsics, *Az első világháborús magyar emlékezetkultúra*, 179–96. The Hungarian "folk movement" was a loose grouping of socially conscious novelists and sociologists advertising a "third way" between fascism and communism.

As stated by Winter and Prost, the second—that is, post-1945—generation of historians tended to analyze World War I using a social approach, dealing with “upper” and “lower” perspectives simultaneously. They were less and less likely to regard the war as a criminal act and to search for culprits. Instead, they attributed the war to the common delusions of the peoples of Europe. Marxist approaches then proliferated in the 1960s. These methodologies involved treating the Great War and the subsequent revolutions together as a single unit of analysis, and—in accordance with Lenin’s theories—describing the war as a conflict between competing social classes and as a consequence of imperialism.

In the opinion of Attila Pók, the members of this second generation produced their analyses under the influence of their experiences of the wars in Vietnam and Algeria. The popularity of the first great success among the books connected to this generation seems to have resulted from its personal elements, insofar as it was based on the battlefield experiences of ordinary soldiers.¹² This marked the beginning of a new historiographical era in which researchers focused on the social conflicts that arose during the war or as a consequence of it.¹³

The studies produced in the 1960s no longer featured heroic battles so much as pointless suffering. The novel development in the work of this generation was a shift in focus from responsibility for the war to analyses of the causes of the war, the participants’ military objectives, and the possibilities of reconciliation. Historians from a growing number of countries agreed that the belligerent parties shared responsibility for the war.

Then Fritz Fischer took the stage with his *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (translated as *Germany’s Aims in the First World War*), in which he unequivocally asserted that the Germans had been responsible for the war; this contention triggered a serious debate.¹⁴ Using primary sources, Fischer came to the conclusion that Germany’s imperial leadership precipitated the Great War in hopes of achieving world domination. Numerous historians attacked his thesis, and the debate did not blow over until 1985. Even so, the resultant dialogue did have several positive aspects: it inspired researchers to dedicate

12 Ducasse, Meyer, and Perreux, *Vie et mort des Français*.

13 See Pók, “Az első világháború értelmezésének fő tendenciái.”

14 Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht*.

more attention to World War I, spurred a critical reexamination of the roots of National Socialism, and thereby catalyzed a reevaluation of Germany's past.

As maintained by certain authors, by 1914, the social situation in the soon-to-be belligerent powers was on the verge of revolution, and thus the war can be interpreted as a sort of preemptive strike. In the 1970s, the Bielefeld school of social history focused on examinations of social movements and conflicts;¹⁵ Bielefeld historians considered domestic politics to be of paramount importance in evaluations of the war and were opposed by the more traditional political historians of their generation, who continued to argue that foreign policy was the primary factor.¹⁶

In Hungary, on the other hand, the second generation did not manifest this diversity of approaches, but was instead dominated almost exclusively by Marxist historiography. On the one hand, this involved attempts to cast every pre-1945 Hungarian historical account of World War I in a negative light; on the other hand, a dogmatic attachment to the Leninist theory of the first generation meant that for decades, research on domestic conditions in Hungary was left to that first generation of scholars, even though their work was surpassed by non-Marxist western historians after World War II.

In 1985, near the end of the state-socialist era, Márton Farkas published a German-language historiographical study¹⁷ in which he asserted that in Hungary—as in the rest of Eastern Europe—the social transformation after World War II meant that research on World War I was relegated to the background in favor of the history of the Hungarian workers' movement for some time. Even so, there were several links between the latter and World War I: the reactions of the soldiering masses to the revolutions which unfolded at the end of the war; the history of the formation of workers' movements during the war; and the role these movements played in the collapse of the Dual Monarchy and the evolution of the various nationalisms. How did soldiers become familiar with the tenets of socialism? Did Hungarian prisoners of war take part in the Russian civil war, and if so, on which side and in what circumstances? What role did returning veterans play in the radicalization

15 One of the defining works of this school is Jürgen Kocka's *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg*.

16 See, for instance, Hillgruber's *Deutschlands Rolle*.

17 Farkas, "Die ungarische kriegsgeschichtliche Forschung."

of the Austro-Hungarian army, and what relationships did they have with the antimilitarist and monarchist movements? Despite the intriguing nature of these questions, World War I remained a marginal subject;¹⁸ the most significant Western European studies could not be published in Hungarian.

For the third generation of Western scholars, who took the stage at the beginning of the 1990s, the primary task was to investigate the broadest possible range of cultural aspects of the war—mentalities, types of behavior, emotional and psychological influences, and, above all, identity and memory. Their research focused more and more on personal experiences and collective memory at every level of society. They rediscovered objectified memory in the form of monuments, photographs, and artifacts, as well as other elements of the intimate sphere. Emotions were accorded particular significance in examinations of mourning, the brutalization of society, and wartime violence. Such research presented World War I as the foundation for the unprecedented brutality of the 20th century.¹⁹

At the same time, after 1989, Hungarians began to rediscover World War I and to reincorporate it into their public discourse. Western European studies began to appear in Hungarian translation, though the first survey produced using a genuinely new approach—a monograph by Tibor Hajdu and Ferenc Pollmann—was not published until 2014.²⁰

Jay Winter first mentioned the notion of a fourth generation of Great-War scholarship in 2009. In his introduction to the 2014 three-volume *Cambridge*

18 The Hungarian studies of World War I published in the state-socialist era amounted to the following summaries: Galántai, *Magyarország az első világháborúban*; József Balázs, *Négy év vasban és vérben*; Galántai, *Az első világháború*; Farkas, "Az első világháború," 41–130; Galántai, *Hungary in the First World War*. It is worth comparing this list to the relevant work published between 1920 and 1945; even if we limit the latter catalog to summaries, it will be significantly longer. *A világháború I–X*; Vajna and Náday, *Hadtörténelem a Magyar Királyi Honvéd Ludovika Akadémia számára*; Aggházy and Stefán, *A világháború 1914–1918*; Czékus, *Az 1914–1918. évi világháború összefoglaló történelme*; Kállay, *Magyarország a világháborúban, 1914–1918*; Julier, *1914–1918: A világháború magyar szemmel*; Pilch, *A világháború története*; De Sgardelli, *A világháború kézikönyve*; Lándor, *A nagy háború írásban és képben I–VII*; *A világháború története: 1914–1917*; *A világháború története 1914–1918*.

19 See, for example, Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*; Keegan, *The Face of Battle*; Kramer, *Dynamic of Destruction*; Kramer and Horne, *German Atrocities, 1914*.

20 Hajdu and Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja*.

*History of the First World War Winter*²¹ (who spent a decade and a half editing it) wrote that this work was the product of a fourth, transnational generation of researchers, whose chief unifying characteristic was that they posed global questions and answered them by seeking global interrelationships.

This transnational outlook has become increasingly influential in Central and Eastern Europe as well, though it is far from dominant. In our view, it is not always possible to bridge existing fault lines and overcome the deeply rooted tropes and lingering triumphalist reflexes of the nationalist historiography which often typifies “In-Between” Europe. Even so, nationalist perspectives do not in themselves constitute the problem, but rather the tendency to regard such work as the only canonical history, or to base it on carefully selected sources, which is an abrogation of the historian’s basic duty to strive for objectivity.²²

At the same time, it is important to note that in many countries, research on the Great War continues to be a national project, and thus in some places the war has not been reassessed, perspectives have not been broadened, entrenched viewpoints have not been challenged, and documents continue to be published selectively. The primacy of the national approach has been reinforced by the fact that in Central and Eastern Europe, the state funding for which scholars

21 Winter, ed. *Cambridge History of the First World War*. Vol. 1–3.

22 A conspicuous example of such problems was the conference organized in Sarajevo in 2014; even as it was arranged, disagreements about the character of the conference and the scholars to be invited divided historians from the Sorbonne, the University of Sarajevo, and Bosnia’s Serbian community—nor did Western news organization evaluate the conference objectively. According to its hosts, scholarly interest ultimately overrode old reflexes and most of the concerned parties decided to participate. See: “The Great War: Regional Approaches and Global Contexts.” For an acknowledgement of the problems the organizers faced, see Pók, *Az első világháború értelmezésének fő tendenciái*. See also Szeghő, *A problémák konferenciája*, and Szóts, *Az I. világháborús konferencia Szarajevóban*.

It would seem that in comparison with the previous 90 years, the pendulum is now swinging back in the other direction: the role Serbia played in the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s has led to a fundamental reassessment of the part it played in World War I. Certain parallels between the two conflicts are evident, but it should be emphasized that from a historian’s perspective, it is at least questionable whether judgments of the recent role of a country should subject all its past actions to reevaluation, since doing so might reinforce the cynical view that history is always written by the victors.

have competed has generally exceeded the value of the international support for projects like these ones (though budget was allocated for this purpose), and thus the number of volumes produced as a result of international cooperation is relatively small,²³ and in certain cases such collaboration has not led to the creation of solid, balanced scholarship.²⁴ Some countries have been left out, while representatives of other countries have been treated as peripheral, or they themselves have been limited by their foreign language publishing opportunities of their best works. (Of course, this also raises questions about access to information: without knowing the languages spoken in Central and Eastern Europe, it would be impossible to depict and evaluate the events of World War I in their entirety—and this sort of skills or comprehensive analysis is not always in demand.)

There is precedent for international research of a bilateral character, though only in the rarest instances these have been collaborations between former winners and losers; they are more commonly partnerships between former members of the same camp. And in this regard, the present volume is no exception. Even so, our thematic focus has not been exclusively the cooperation between these former allies; on the contrary, the studies presented here are dedicated also to the tensions between the two countries (especially those related to their territorial ambitions); to the peculiarities, handling, and consequences of a phenomenon (nationalism) which appeared simultaneously in each country; to the characteristics of life on the home front, including propaganda, indoctrination, political motivation and mobilization; and to each side's thinking about the other, especially as evidenced by diplomatic leaders during their search for allies (their sentimental ties and mutual interests, Mensdorff's mission, and Bulgaria's image in the Hungarian press). Other subjects put under a magnifying glass here include Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza and the Dual Monarchy's Hungary policy, old tropes about which have been reexamined in light of newly uncovered sources; criticism of Serbian historians' attitudes toward the notion of responsibility for the war; the

23 See for example: Denda and Ortner, *The Great War in 1915*; Milkić and Rudić, *The First World War*; Rudić, Denda, and Đurić, *The Volunteers in the Great War, 1914–1918*.

24 See for example: Horel, *Les guerres balkaniques*.

population movements which were inspired by the war; civilian suffering; and the scapegoating of figures like Dragutin (Apis) Dimitrijević.

This diverse volume grew out of the presentations at the 2015 conference of the Bulgarian–Hungarian History Commission held in Sofia; a large portion of these studies represent attempts to transcend the politics of national grievance and self-victimization, and to avoid the canonization of national myths or the deflection of responsibility. At the same time, we have consistently tried to adhere to the principle that we should point out the alternatives the politicians of the period could have chosen, and how and why certain figures might bear responsibility for particular outcomes. Certain Hungarian researchers have recently published several volumes related to the Great War, including studies of social problems on the home front,²⁵ military history,²⁶ and the memoirs of certain key figures,²⁷ though no Hungarian author has produced a thorough survey in a widespread foreign language. Though their appearances in the international arena have included publications in the fundamentally important Austrian series *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848–1918*, this work is unfortunately available “only” in German. Similarly to Hungary neither the Bulgarian historians focussed on disseminating their results abroad in monographs, thus their opinion (either stuck within the frames of the traditional national narrative or fit into transnational research schemes, discussing new-wave topics) often remained isolated and even the new results reached only the domestic readers.²⁸

25 Bihari, *Lövészárkok a háborúban*; Bihari, 1914: *A nagy háború száz éve*.

26 Balla, *A világégés albuma*. The cult of military heroes, including foot soldiers, has also experienced a revival; see: Illésfalvi, Maruzsa, and Szentváry-Lukács, *Hősök naptára 1917–1918*.

27 Apponyi, *Emlékirataim*; Berzeviczy, *Búcsú a Monarchiától*.

28 See for example the works of Markov, *Balgarskoto krushenie*; Markov, *Bălgarija i Balkanski-săjuz* Markov, *Goljamata vojna i bălgarskijat ključ*; Markov, Georgi. *Goljamata vojna i bălgarskata strazha*; See recently Markov, *Goljamata vojna i bălgarskijat mech*.

For a summary see: Naxidou, “Bulgarian historiography”.

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THE CAUSES OF THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I AND THEIR REPRESENTATION IN SERBIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics

The basic thesis of this study is that the path which led to the Great War was determined not only by the Great Powers, but also by the smaller nation-states of the Balkan Peninsula.¹ These two types of responsibility cannot be categorized as equivalent, and I myself consider the relationships between the Great Powers to have been the chief determining factors. Even so, I have attempted to draw attention to the role the nation-states of the Balkan Peninsula played as catalysts in producing the imbalances between the Great Powers which led to the outbreak of the Great War.

A great majority of the theses I will explain below were originally formulated in publications and manuscripts which I wrote between 2011 and 2014 with the assistance of a Bolyai Research Grant from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.² Some of the results of my research are completely novel; other conclusions involve factors which previous researchers have either overlooked

1 The first version of this study was debated in a workshop setting (HAS RCH IH, July 9, 2015). This workshop's participants—and others who assisted me in the composition of this paper—included Barna Ábrahám, Péter Bihari, László Bíró, Gábor Demeter, Gábor Egry, Pál Fodor, Árpád Hornyák, József Juhász, György Lukács B., Emil Palotás, Ferenc Pollmann, Imre Rész, Dénes Sokcsévits, Dániel Szabó, and László Tapolcai.

2 The overarching project was entitled *Állam, nemzet és lokalitás között: Albánia története 1912–1914* [Between state, nation, and locality: Albanian history, 1912–1914]. See *Világtörténet* no. 3 (2015): 349–89.

or failed to take completely seriously. On the path which led to World War I, the problems associated with the establishment of the independent state of Albania constitute a crucial episode. My research on Albania inevitably involved the history of Serbia, and thus after a review of my arguments, I will offer some observations about contemporary Serbian historians' representations of World War I.

THE CRISIS OF COOPERATION AMONG THE GREAT POWERS

The Orthodox-Christian nation-states of the Balkans played a crucial role in precipitating World War One. They were able to do so because by 1912, the Great Powers' influence over the peninsula had begun to wane just as the Balkan nation-states were beginning to assert themselves; meanwhile, Southeastern Europe was becoming one of the most important geographical theaters in which the Great Powers attempted to advance their interests and vie for prestige. This phenomenon was the result of three fundamental factors: the balance of power in the Balkans began to deteriorate sharply around 1908; these nation-states' economic, social, and domestic-political conditions made it possible for them to mobilize modern mass armies around that time; and these smaller nation-states were able to maneuver successfully between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. Equally important was the fact that there was no other territory in the world where the Great Powers had to account for the interests of local states (a result of the deterioration of the Ottoman Empire and the particulars of the Eastern Question), or where they had been unable to resolve—or at least manage—the disputes between them. In my view, the politicians of the Great Powers were unable to keep up with the explosive economic and social changes which modernization had produced by the beginning of the 20th century, and were thus incapable of responding systematically to the novel challenges of this new era.

At the turn of the century, the majority of the rulers, leading politicians, and influential industrialists of the Great Powers had been born in the middle of the 19th century, around the time of Napoleon III's rise to power, the Crimean

war, the crushing of the European revolutions of 1848, and the birth of the German and Italian unification movements. However, finding solutions to the problems which arose at the advent of the 20th century—which some of these leaders were incapable of recognizing at all—required a completely new mindset. These issues included the general demand for democratization; the consequences of the stalled process of partitioning empires into nation-states; the demands of small (Eastern European) nations to be recognized as independent states; the appearance of nationalism in the Muslim world; international humanitarian catastrophes; and the evident unsustainability of the operating principles of the European balance of power which dated back to the late 18th century.

The leading (foreign) policy-makers of the Great Powers were not sufficiently familiar with the domestic conditions in the powers that opposed them or in those with whom they were allied. I am not suggesting they did not know each others' languages, or were unacquainted with other countries' political systems, politicians and diplomats, or decision-making mechanisms. I mean that the contacts they maintained in other countries were limited to state officials and members of the same largely aristocratic social strata as themselves. They had no real knowledge of the sentiments and situations of the poorer social classes even in their own countries.

After the Crimean War in 1856, and especially between 1880 and 1908, the so-called Concert of Europe began to fall apart, piece by piece. One reason for its disintegration was that its members were unable to formulate mutually acceptable responses to an old-new challenge, the so-called Eastern Question. Another of the causes was the creation of the new states of Germany and Italy. The disorganization of the Concert had precursors as well: new types of conflicts had arisen in the late 19th century (largely as a result of the worldwide reach of the imperialist powers' ambitions), and increasingly nationalist public sentiment was transforming the European system of international cooperation into an intensifying competition among the Great Powers.³ In this changing world, an ever-larger number of players were capable of influencing outcomes.

3 Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 172; Demeter, "Geopolitical Aspects," 195–212.

There were other signs of the impending collapse of the Concert of Europe, perhaps the most important of which was the unprecedented *peacetime* formation of two opposing military alliances involving all the Great Powers. After 1908, these powers proved to be incapable of simultaneously addressing multiple international conflicts of the sort they themselves had instigated, such as the Second Moroccan Crisis and the Turco-Italian war of 1911. The symptoms of these conflicts also exhibited themselves in the public opinion of certain Great Powers. In the years leading up to the Great War, it was not only the German public which became belligerent and accepted the possibility of war between the Great Powers, but certainly the British and the French as well—though it is important to emphasize that by cooperating in accordance with the principles of the 19th century, the Great Powers probably maintained peace for a longer period than they would have been able to had they not worked together.

The Great Powers' relationship to the Balkan Peninsula

The diplomatic memoirs and published archival sources of the British, French, and Germans display an astounding degree of ignorance of—and credulousness with regard to—the Balkans. Generally speaking, the diplomats of these three Great Powers had very limited knowledge of the region, primarily because they regarded the peninsula as insignificant all the way up to 1908.

For the Great Powers of the era, the European half of the Ottoman Empire was nothing more than “the Near East.” Their broad conception of the “East” signified the portion of the “Near East” which lay on the continent of Europe but was ruled by a medieval, Eastern (i.e. “barbarian”) Great Power, the Ottomans, where Christian and Muslim social structures coexisted and where the other Great Powers had the right to protect the (religious) liberties and human rights of the various Christian and Jewish congregations who lived in these territories. That is, the Great Powers were continually called upon to interfere in the domestic political conditions of the Ottoman Empire in order to protect its Christian population from the Ottoman authorities (“humanitarian intervention”).⁴ This region maintained its “Near Eastern” status even after the

4 Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 171–72 and 253–55.

Christian nations of the Balkans established their own autonomous or independent states. Even in this period, the departments of the British, French, and Russian foreign ministries which were responsible for the affairs of the peninsula were their "Near Eastern sections."⁵ For these reasons, the Eastern Question of the 19th century encompassed the problems of the Balkan Peninsula as well; it is also why the easternmost region of the former Ottoman Empire is known today in English as "the Middle East." After the turn of the century, the political, economic, social, and military developments in the Christian nation-states of the Near East moved them further and further away from the conditions of the (present-day) Middle East. The Great Powers, however, confronted this fact only in October of 1912, when the allies of the Balkan League inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ottoman army. And though assessments of these Christian nation-states changed as a result of this victory, the British officers who took charge of Albania's gendarmerie in the interwar period still considered that country to be Near Eastern.⁶

The creation and subsequent independence of the Christian nation-states of the Balkans was achieved with the assistance of the Great Powers—that is, the process by which each of them gained independence could always be interpreted as the result of the (humanitarian) intervention of the Great Powers.⁷ Even so, the politicians of the Great Powers in this period regarded all the states of the recently liberated Balkan peoples to be the successor states of the Ottoman Empire, regardless of the fact that *almost all* their societies were majority-Christian. This is demonstrated by the fact that the states of the peninsula each inherited a portion of the Ottoman Empire's public debt proportional to its territorial extent—that is, even after the countries in question had won their autonomy or independence, some of the terms of the "capitulation" agreements with the Ottoman Empire remained in effect. This was the case in Serbia and Romania until 1878 and in Bulgaria until 1918. The Ottomans' reformist ambitions, their management of their public debt, and the debts the Balkan nation-states inherited from the Empire were thus inextricably

5 Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, vol. 1, xxv; Temperley, and Gooch, *British Documents on the Origin of the War*, vol. 10/1.

6 Stirling, *Safety Last*, 157.

7 Rodogno, *Against Massacre*, 60.

linked to the capitulation agreements the Great Powers had signed with the Empire.

Broadly speaking, over the course of the long 19th century, the term “capitulations” was used to describe unilateral or bilateral agreements by means of which the Ottoman Empire conferred a range of extraterritorial privileges and immunities on its Levantine populace (Latin Christian subjects of the Empire with roots in medieval Italy) and on the citizens of foreign states who resided in Ottoman territory. The goal of these “acts” was to exempt the aforementioned citizens from Islamic legal proceedings, though they also made it possible for foreign states’ consuls to represent these individuals’ diplomatic and financial interests. And thus as the Ottoman Empire grew more and more feeble, these capitulations gave European powers more and more influence. Increasingly, the character of these capitulations shifted from the protection of personal rights in the direction of commercial agreements.

In the 19th century, all this became an obstacle to the modernization of the Ottoman state, insofar as these capitulations created a state within the state. Over time, external powers had begun using foreigners’ tax exemptions, liberties, and privileges so as to interfere in domestic political issues. By the late 19th century, these capitulations had lost some of their economic significance, creating space for them to be exploited for political purposes. And by the turn of the 20th century, as a result of their efforts to advance their interests within the Ottoman Empire, the various Great Powers were using the capitulations which had been granted to them as one of their tools for competing and engaging in conflicts. The Balkan states which were then in the process of becoming independent also inherited a largely economic set of capitulations.⁸

The Great Powers considered autonomy and keeping the capitulations in effect to be necessary only for a transitional period. And though no one has explored this question in depth, international debates on the subject of independent Albania in 1913–1914 suggest that Europe’s leading powers considered this transitional period to be important for two reasons. First, they wanted to confirm that the Empire’s national successor states would actually pay back the portions of the Ottomans’ public debt which they owed. And

8 Déligorges, *Die Kapitulationen der Türkei*, 1–2, 10, 26–29, and 31–37.

second, they wanted to establish the possibility of some kind of Great-Power control until the states which had broken away from “the East” had succeeded in developing stable political systems based on European models.⁹

The Balkans as “catalyst” in the confrontations of the Great Powers

The Balkan Peninsula was predestined to act as a catalyst in precipitating World War I. Why? (As early as the 1870s, as a result of the continual disputes in the Balkans, Bismarck is alleged to have said that if the Great Powers allowed themselves to be entangled in a local conflict, the great war of the future would be set off “by some damned foolish thing in the Balkans,” adding that all the peninsula’s conflicts were not worth the healthy bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier.¹⁰)

Colonial questions and the drawing of new borders would not have been enough to spark a world war. Once they were teetering on the edge of conflict, the Great Powers always proved themselves capable of demonstrating self-restraint and agreeing to compromises. They took care not to let any one of them provide a direct cause for a world war, and even tried to avoid the suspicion of responsibility, for which reason they managed to find more or less acceptable compromises in order to resolve disputes and clashes over conflicting interests up to 1914. Because of this, the situation which led to the world war could have resulted only from the kind of tensions which brought the interests of the Great Powers into direct conflict—that is, where there was no balance of power between them, and where there were powerful local political entities with which they had to align themselves, but over which they did not have complete control.

The Great Powers were fundamentally European countries, and thus only the outbreak of a conflict on the European continent could have forced them into a world war. Even so, none of the rest of the continent could provide the spark—not Scandinavia, not the Iberian Peninsula, not the Belgium–Netherlands–Luxembourg triangle, not the straits of Bosphorus and

9 Csaplár-Degovics, “Az albániai Nemzetközi Ellenőrző Bizottság 1914-es tevékenysége,” 65–72.

10 Schollgen, *Imperialismus und Gleichgewicht*, 16.

Dardanelles,¹¹ and not Poland (the division of which did not produce any friction among the partitioning powers). The one region of the continent which fulfilled all the aforementioned conditions was the Balkan Peninsula.¹²

The balance of power in the Balkans was destabilized in the period after 1908. Despite the fact that the 1908 Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia-Hercegovina ended in an utter diplomatic defeat for Russia (and Serbia) and irremediably damaged the relationship between Vienna and St. Petersburg, in itself this incident was not the fatal blow to the balance of power in the region. In contrast to the annexation of Bosnia-Hercegovina, there was the obvious expansion of Russian influence over Serbia. The balance of power on the Balkan Peninsula, which depended fundamentally on relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia, could only be disturbed if another Great Power were to try to assert itself there, but Great Britain had no such ambitions and Italy's hands were tied by the Triple Alliance on one side and the terms of the 1909 Racconigi Bargain on the other.

It is not widely known that in the period following 1908, Germany and France attempted to assert their influence as Great Powers in this region. Their assumption of an active role was a consequence of certain features of the Eastern Question and the collapse of the Concert of Europe. These attempts to increase their influence reached a climax when the Balkan Wars completely upended the peninsula's power relations. Beginning in 1912, Germany became a political and economic rival to Austria-Hungary in the Balkans.¹³ When

11 There was an international convention governing the use of the straits; despite the disadvantages it created for Russia, they indicated several times in the fall of 1912 that they did not wish to reopen the issue. Izvolski's telegram no. 3 to Sazonov (Paris, October 18/5, 1912); Sazonov's letter no. 36 to Izvolski (St. Petersburg, October 23/10, 1913), cited in Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, vol. 4/1, 4 and 36. See also letters no. 787 (November 28/15, 1912), no. 424 (December 9/November 26, 1912), no. 2845 (December 10/November 27, 1912), and no. 431 (December 10/November 27, 1912), cited in Stieve, *Iswolski*, vol. 2, 366, 380, and 382–83.

12 "They [the Great Powers] all would continue to exist, adjusting their claims against one another from time to time, and extending their influence, sometimes, into areas where, as yet, no equilibrium of forces existed. The most important such area was the Balkans." Roberts, *Europe 1880–1945*, 67.

13 Kos, *Die Adriahafen-, die Saloniki- und die Kavallafrage*; Löding, *Deutschlands und Österreich–Ungarns Balkanpolitik*.

Gottlieb von Jagow was named foreign secretary in January of 1913, Germany's Foreign Office launched an increasingly serious diplomatic offensive in an attempt to bind the nation-states of the peninsula to the Triple Alliance or at least to reinforce their existing relationships. Large government loans were sent from Berlin to Bucharest and Sofia, though no such loans were offered to Austria–Hungary. Moreover, in 1914, Krupp AG initiated talks with the Serbian government to deliver cannons and tens of thousands of modern rifles to the Serbian army, though these negotiations did not culminate in an agreement.¹⁴ From the perspective of the Ottoman Empire, Germany was an active threat to the balance of power in the Balkans; Deutsche Bank's railroad-construction project in Baghdad took on renewed momentum in 1910. Then in December of 1913, a German military mission led by Liman von Sanders arrived in the Ottoman Empire with orders to help the Ottoman army reorganize after its two losses in the Balkan Wars.

Even before the first Balkan War, large French banks, commercial firms, and great entrepreneurs were making serious investments and loan agreements with the local governments of the peninsula. Even so, it was only in October of 1912 that the foreign ministry in Paris decided to increase its direct influence in the Balkans. One notable result of this attempt to cultivate relationships was the establishment of a close partnership with Serbia in late 1913. One consequence of the Balkan Wars was that Paris reevaluated the political and economic significance of the victorious small states and began to consider them as potential military allies.

French diplomats made overtures toward each of the victors, and thoroughly assessed the investment possibilities in these countries. By mid-October of 1912, Paris was willing—within certain limits—to support its Balkan allies' foreign-policy goals. A year later, this limited foreign-policy support was modified: after the Second Balkan War and the Austro-Hungarian Empire's ultimatum to Serbia on October 18th, 1913, Paris narrowed its immediate focus to Serbia and Greece.¹⁵ (It is also worth mentioning that between 1908 and 1912, the French financed railroad construction in Russian territories

14 Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige*, 424–25.

15 Reuter, *Die Balkanpolitik des französischen Imperialismus*, 284–86, 290–98, and 318–23.

west of the Urals. These railway lines were assembled on the basis of strategic considerations, and facilitated the quick Russian mobilization in the first few weeks of the Great War.) Overall, France's policy maneuvers in Eastern Europe were every bit as offensively-minded and aggressive as the steps Germany took to develop its military capacities in the region.

For the time being, given the lack of relevant research, it is impossible to know what sort of relationship there might have been between the aforementioned steps which Germany and France took in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Even so, it seems likely that the expansion of German and French influence over the peninsula was a fundamental obstacle to Austria–Hungary and Russia's efforts to sign a separate accord in hopes of managing the situation created by the outbreak of the Balkan War in the fall of 1912.

Before 1912, the Great Powers did not allow the small Balkan states any say in international foreign policy. Their primary reason for doing so was that European peace was based on a balance of power *which by definition involved only the Great Powers*. After 1908, this balance was increasingly difficult to maintain. It was more and more difficult to coordinate the Great Powers' interests, both inside and outside their individual alliances, and furthermore, new trouble spots had developed in the world which would not have tested the carrying capacity of the Concert of Europe just a few decades before. Europe's leading powers had to dedicate more and more energy to managing their conflicting interests and smoothing over the proliferating new conflicts between them and across the globe. By the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century, the diplomatic goal of defending "international peace" *at any price* was being invoked more and more often.

The outbreak and fallout of the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars were fundamentally surprising to the Great Powers. Among their other reactions, they were forced into the realization that the states of the peninsula had become independent actors capable of shaping international foreign policy, and thus that these states' foreign policies could be as threatening to international peace as clashes between the Great Powers. To their ever-increasing dismay, the diplomats of the Great Powers discovered that the nation-states of the peninsula were prepared to do anything in the interest of achieving their national goals, and were not intimidated by the prospect that a Balkan war might provoke a global

confrontation.¹⁶ For years, the diplomatic corps of the Great Powers did nothing but manage crises related to a war they had not started—and this crisis-management turned out to be a failure.

In my opinion, with the exception of Austria–Hungary and Russia, the Great Powers failed to grasp that by 1912, the nationalisms and militarisms of the Balkan nation-states had intensified to such an irrational degree that even their own local and national governments had trouble keeping them in check, and only a limited capacity to steer them.

Despite all the Great Powers' diplomatic efforts, they were unable to stave off the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. By means of enormous exertion and concrete military threats, they managed to keep these wars localized: in response to the Balkan War, the Great Powers of Eastern Europe ordered a partial mobilization, calling up close to a million Russian, German, and Austro-Hungarian soldiers;¹⁷ during the "Scutari crisis" in the spring of 1913, the Great Powers were forced to assemble a joint fleet and send detachments to occupy the city of Scutari (now Shkodra, Albania) in May; and only when the Austro-Hungarian Empire issued its ultimatum in October of 1913 did Serbia begin withdrawing its troops from independent Albania (see below).

The London Conference of 1912–1913, the last of the Great-Power diplomatic conferences in the style of the 19th century, culminated in the final accord of the famed Concert of Europe. At the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the Great Powers had had unlimited authority to resolve questions of borders in accordance with their own interests, but by the 1878 Congress of Berlin, they had been obliged to admit the representatives of the small nations of the Balkans as well. And though the Balkan nations had no voting rights at the latter, the Great Powers nonetheless had to take at least some of their interests into account when it was time to make decisions. The Balkan Wars of 1912–

16 "If one tells them [Serbian politicians] that they will provoke an European war they shrug their shoulders & say that Austria[,] not they[,] will be responsible if there is war, that Austria is merely trying to suppress them & ... although they may suffer considerably in a war with Austria & may lose all they have gained they will 'die fighting.' This phrase has become a sort of mania with them." Pager's report to Nicholson (Belgrade, Oct. 7, 1912), cited in Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind*, 371.

17 Williamson, "Military Dimensions," 317–23.

1913 were waged not by the Great Powers, but by the small nation-states of the peninsula. The participants in the London Conference—ambassadors, not foreign ministers—had asserted the authority to resolve only certain issues at the Great Powers’ negotiating table, not on the battlefield (the Turkish Straits, the creation of an independent Albania, the Aegean Islands, etc.). That is, the Great Powers did not dare to interfere with the Balkan states’ negotiations in Bucharest, as they feared the prospect of entangling themselves in conflicts with one another.¹⁸

Nevertheless, one element of the Vienna and Berlin conferences which did not change was the necessity of avoiding a war involving the Great Powers¹⁹—which effort took place in a very tense atmosphere. Step by step, the Great Powers’ foreign ministers came to the realization that their conflicting interests limited the conference participants’ ability to take action, even within their own alliances, and thus they and their negotiating partners were left at the mercy of the Balkan nation-states’ policies and achievements on the battlefield.

One of the most important tasks facing the Great Powers at the London Conference was the establishment of the autonomous—and later independent—state of Albania (1912–1913). The Albanian state-building project played a particularly important role in the Great Powers’ relationships with one another, insofar as *the new country achieved its independence under their joint supervision*. The stakes were enormous: if they were successful in building this new state, the Great Powers would be able to assure the outside world and their own populations that their system of cooperation was still viable, and thus that international peace could still be preserved.

However, the Albanian affair demonstrated that Great-Power diplomacy was barely functioning at that point. For instance, the participants in the London Conference were incapable of making decisions about the most important issues, such as the placement of Albania’s northern and southern borders and the sort of institutional structure the new country would have. Several Great-Power committees were assembled in hopes of resolving these

18 Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, 263.

19 Nicholson’s letter no. 59 to Hardinge (London, October 29, 1913) and O’Beirne’s report no. 70 to Grey, (St. Petersburg, November 17/2, 1913), cited in *British Documents on the Origin of the War*, vol. 10/1, 50–51 and 59–60.

problems on-site, given the inability of the negotiators in London to do so. Their representatives arrived in Albania in eight different guises. The will of the Great Powers was embodied primarily by the International Control Commission.²⁰ Two international boundary commissions were formed to determine the new state's northern and southern borders.²¹ The Great Powers sent military units to Shkodra, Albania's largest city, near Montenegro, to organize its civil and military administration.²² Dutch officers were assigned the task of organizing the gendarmerie, Albania's chief law-enforcement agency.²³ The court of its new prince, Wilhelm von Wied, who was chosen by the Great Powers and arrived in the country in 1914, also became a symbol of the international presence. Furthermore, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and to a lesser extent Great Britain attempted to enhance their reputations by organizing humanitarian actions.²⁴ And finally, the Adriatic powers (Austria-Hungary and Italy) also stationed warships along Albania's coast.

In representing the Great Powers, these eight types of entities were called on to face the new challenges of the 20th century. These generally novel tests included cooperating with committee members—who represented other Great Powers—in determining on-site how the new country's borders would be drawn; providing *joint* supervision for the institutional organization of the new state; organizing law-enforcement agencies under the direction of foreign officers; drafting a constitution with joint international assistance; and handling asylum claims and state-administered humanitarian aid. And in practice, by January of 1914, the efforts to solve these problems—and thus this joint state-building project—had stalled.

The Albanian state-building venture failed for several reasons. First, the Great Powers had failed to think through the individual stages of state-building.²⁵ Their joint administrative organ, the International Control

20 Bylykbashi, "Komisioni Ndërkombëtar," 281–304; Bylykbashi, "Komisioni Ndërkombëtar," 229–55; Gurakuqi, *Shqipëria 1911–1914*, 593–621.

21 Löhr, *Die albanische Frage*, 157–72.

22 Balla, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia katonai részvétele," 435–59.

23 Goslinga, "The Dutch in Albania."

24 Csaplár-Degovics, "Humanitäre Aktionen Österreich–Ungarns," 383–91.

25 Albania itself was a new phenomenon; before 1912, it was merely a geographical concept about which the cultured Europeans of the day knew as little as about—for instance—Tibet

Commission, was inadequate to the task of state-building; as a result of the Young Turks' coup d'état in January of 1914, the Great Powers' diplomats in Albania lost faith in each other. Second, Serbia and Greece were able to refuse to implement the solutions negotiated at the acrimonious conference in London, and faced almost no consequences for doing so. To wit: these two countries' troops did not withdraw from the territory of the ostensibly independent new state. Moreover, for many months, the two countries' armies succeeded in sabotaging the work of the boundary commissions the Great Powers had sent into the field. (The work of determining its northern border was finally expedited by ordering Austro-Hungarian and Italian detachments to protect the boundary commissioners.) Furthermore, Greek military units and so-called Epirot irregulars triggered a religious civil war between the Muslim and Orthodox communities in southern Albania. And finally, Serbia and Greece actively interfered in Albania's domestic political affairs; this interference was the driving force which very nearly sparked a civil war between Albania's two largest political centers. In general, they did everything in their power to obstruct Albania's internal consolidation, and thereby succeeded in sabotaging the Great Powers' joint state-building project and their local efforts to preserve international peace.²⁶ Thus even if the Great Powers' efforts had proven successful, Belgrade and Athens' Albanian policies would have been enough *in and of themselves* to destabilize the new country in 1913–1914.

(Wendel, *Südosteuropäische Fragen*, 120). This new state was in Europe, but did not have any definite tradition of statehood like its neighboring peoples. And unlike the other independent nation-states of the Balkans, independent Albania was the first of the Ottoman Empire's successor states in which a majority of the populace was Muslim. Furthermore, before 1913, this area was among the most neglected regions of the Empire, and thus a state had to be created there practically *ex nihilo*.

26 Csaplár-Degovics, "Die Internationale Kontrollkommission Albaniens."

SPECIFIC BALKAN VARIETIES OF STATE- AND NATION-BUILDING

Up to the middle of the 19th century, the Balkan Peninsula was not part of the cultural realm which was retrospectively defined as European. Until the appearance of their Ottoman conquerors, the territories now known as Eastern Europe were fundamentally separated from one another by the denominational boundary between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Though the writings of the ancient Greeks—and later, of Byzantine philosophers and church fathers—became fundamental sources of European civilization over the course of the Middle Ages, Byzantium was separated from the world of Roman-Rite Christianity, and thus developed in isolation from it, given that contact between the two realms was limited. The empire which was governed from Constantinople regarded itself as the true heir to the legacy of Rome, and assumed its cultural superiority over the barbarians of Latin Europe; meanwhile, Catholic Europe had its own prejudices against the Orthodox world.

If the Latin and Greek worlds did come into contact, this interaction often took the form of armed confrontation. The powers of the Catholic world—including Hungary—always tried to take advantage of the weakness of the Orthodox world, either to conquer or to Catholicize it. And by the time the power of the Byzantine Empire began to dissipate, the medieval states established by Slavic Christians—which took the Empire's place in the Balkans—had long since adopted the Empire's views and adapted them to their own purposes. Byzantine Orthodoxy and the organizational principles of the Byzantine Emperor's state proved to be very powerful connective tissue linking the states of the Orthodox peoples. The emperor's formal supremacy was never debated, even when his secular authority had already been limited to the imperial capital.

The "Byzantine commonwealth" had hostile feelings toward the Catholic world as well. It had its own worldview, which developed autonomously in accordance with its own inner logic, its own traditions of state-building, its own Christian rites and attitudes, its own ecclesiastical structures, and under its own (ecumenical and universal) head of the Church. The feelings of cohesion

among the peninsula's peoples, elites, and rulers were so strong that at the time of the Ottoman conquest, even Orthodox rulers whose relationships were adversarial were more likely seek alliances and friendships with each other than with the leaders of Catholic countries. It was in this spirit that Stefan Lazarević compromised with his archenemy's son, Đurađ Branković, naming him his successor as Despot of Serbia in 1426; and for these same reasons, the Serbian despot Lazar Branković allowed his daughter Jerina to marry the son of the Albanian hero Skanderbeg.²⁷

The Orthodox Christian faith and Islam proved themselves capable of coexistence after the Ottoman conquest (whereas Islam and Catholicism did not). And in this respect, the Ottoman Empire might have been the successor to the Byzantine Empire; the structure of the Ottoman state developed and flourished on a Byzantine foundation. The ecumenical patriarchs of Constantinople did not make any serious effort to transfer their seat of administration to another Christian country, even temporarily; instead, they compromised and lived alongside their new Muslim overlords. The ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople recognized the authority of the Ottoman Empire as the successor to the Byzantine Empire, and the sultan adopted the Byzantine emperor's titles, thereby taking on his denominational duties as well. Thus virtually the entire ecclesiastical structure of Orthodoxy was subordinated to the authority of the most powerful Muslim ruler, practically without opposition, and would remain there for an unforeseeable period. In exchange, and in accordance with Islamic legal concepts, the Ottoman Empire incorporated the Orthodox population and its ecclesiastical structure into its everyday life on the basis of the *millet* system.²⁸

It follows from the foregoing line of reasoning that over the course of the Middle Ages, the Balkan peninsula was barely affected by scholasticism, the Cluniac reforms, or the Investiture Controversy, though the effort to reunite the Eastern and Western churches under Roman Catholic leadership did leave its mark. These territories did not experience humanism, the Renaissance, the

27 Schmitt, *Skanderbeg*, 32.

28 The *millet* system guaranteed Christian individuals the right to religious autonomy; this principle of autonomy was valid in the administration of justice, in financial affairs, and in virtually every aspect of ecclesiastical life. See Csörtán, "Nem-muzulmán közösségek," 23–38.

Reformation, the Counterreformation, or the Baroque era, which intellectual movements and efforts at spiritual renewal connected the rest of Europe.

And thus on the basis of the foregoing, I myself believe that the Balkan nation-states which came into being in the 19th century were the successor states not only of the Byzantine Empire, but of the Ottoman Empire as well. The peninsula's first wars of independence (the Serbs', 1804–1813/17, and the Greeks', 1821–1829/31) were actually launched as Orthodox rebellions against their Muslim oppressors. After a significant lag, the principles of the Enlightenment appeared in the Balkans—partly as a result of the influence of their compatriots who lived abroad and partly as a result of ever-intensifying interest in the rest of Europe—and were then incorporated into their national ideologies. In other words, the Enlightenment was the first Pan-European intellectual phenomenon which directly influenced the elites of the peninsula. Even so, these new ideas had to be put into practice in fundamentally different conditions: the Balkan peoples' political, economic, social, and religious lives diverged significantly from those of the rest of Europe. Typically, Enlightenment-era ideas emerged there alongside the national principle, and in such a way that the concept of the nation dominated these other ideological elements from the start; the notions of the enlightenment and of democratization were subordinated to the demand for nation-building. The activists of Balkan national movements thus adopted only those elements, principles, and doctrines—and only in the forms—which would facilitate the process of nation-building. The members of these national movements hoped that doing so would save them time: the nation had to be created immediately so as to make it possible to establish a nation-state as well. By 1912, the independent Balkan states had formally surpassed the empires of old Europe in a number of spheres: by the standards of the era, they had extended voting rights to a fairly broad swath of the populace and drafted liberal constitutions. On the whole, though, this Westernization was illusory. One of the few areas in which they genuinely approached the level of the modern states of Western Europe was the development of modern mass armies.

As early as 1876, the countries of the Balkan peninsula demonstrated an unwillingness to accommodate themselves to the conflicts which developed between the major powers; that is, in the interest of achieving their national

goals, they did not wait for the Great Powers to start a war in their region, but rather provoked an international crisis which the powers were obliged to take an active role in sorting out. During the Great Eastern Crisis of 1875–1878, Serbia and Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire (in 1876), thereby drawing Russia into the conflict. And the Balkan League went even further in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, deliberately taking advantage of the flaws in the international system. The political leaders of the Balkan alliance understood the Great Powers’ decision-making mechanisms and were thus perfectly clear about the reactions they could expect from them—and about the fact that in going to war against the Ottomans, they risked triggering a Great-Power war.²⁹

After the victories they achieved, the Balkan states were able to force the Great Powers to redraw their boundaries. And the victorious states’ portion of the responsibility for sending Europe down the path to the Great War lies in the fact that they acknowledged no limits; they were willing to pay any price to achieve maximum territorial gains. And it was not only in opposition to each other that the victors attempted to achieve their foreign-policy goals. Serbia, for instance, tried to impose its will on *all* the Great Powers in 1913, when it attempted to acquire an outlet to the Adriatic Sea (see below). For months, this conflict—or more precisely, the question of Serbia’s new western boundaries—seemed to involve the risk of triggering a war between the Great Powers. Serbian historians have rejected the notion of responsibility for these tensions, insofar as “a little Balkan country with no passage to the sea, recently liberated from the tyranny of the Ottoman Empire” could not have been responsible for a military crisis involving the Great Powers. Nevertheless, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro were all able to provoke the major powers in

29 “Serbia will some day set Europe by the ears and bring about a universal war on the Continent...[T]he Serbs may lose their heads and do something aggressive against the Dual Monarchy which will compel the latter to put the screws on Servia...[The situation] may be compared to a certain extent to the trouble we had to suffer through the hostile attitude formally assumed against us by the Transvaal Republic under the guiding hand of Germany. It will be lucky if Europe succeeds in avoiding a war as a result of the present crisis.” Cartwright’s letter to Nicholson (Vienna, January 31, 1913), cited in Otte, *The Foreign Office Mind*, 372.

similar ways—though after its defeat in the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria was forced to abandon some of its more ambitious claims.

By 1912, the Great Powers were unable to control the first Balkan War. This was partly a result of the fact—too often ignored by scholars—that in preparing for war against the Ottoman Empire, the countries of the peninsula had *militarized their governments and societies to an extreme degree* and developed enormous mass armies. At a time when the majority of the Great Powers were engaged in a vigorous military buildup, the allies of the Balkan League mobilized a combined army of 765,000 soldiers to face an Ottoman force of 320–350,000 men—and neither of these figures includes reservists.³⁰ By way of comparison, the number of soldiers in Russia's peacetime army hovered around a million; those of France and Germany around 600,000; the Austro-Hungarian army's around 440,000; Great Britain's was even smaller, and the United States' land forces consisted of 108,000 at the time of its entry into World War I.³¹ Setting up mass armies of this size demanded a staggering level of effort, and it was obvious that these armies were going to be deployed.

In connection with the existence of mass armies, militarism, and nationalism, it is important to articulate the following assertions: in 1912, while the Great Powers were still practicing the sort of cabinet politics in which public opinion had only a limited capacity to influence state policies, the situation in the Balkans was otherwise. The societies of the Christian countries of the peninsula were characterized by a wider range of democratic rights, including voting rights, than those of most of the rest of Europe. These societies were no longer willing to allow the Great Powers to treat them as if they were merely "the (Near) East." They insisted that they be able to determine their own fates—whether in domestic or foreign policy—without the interference of the Great Powers.

The Christian countries of the Balkans considered areas which were still under the control of the Ottoman Empire to be potential additions to the territory of their nation-states. From the 1870s onward, they began referring to sectarian and national concerns in asserting the right—like the major

30 Demeter, *A két Balkán-háború hadtörténete*, 21–63; Csaplár, *Az albán nemzetté válás kezdetei*, 251–56.

31 Bihari, *A Nagy Háború 100 éve*, 117.

powers—to interfere in the Ottomans' domestic affairs. The nation-states which were then in the process of liberating themselves invested great sums in supporting their own national church organizations in the territories of the Ottoman Empire, and later in the establishment of secular school systems as well. Then, when such efforts failed to produce rapid and spectacular results (insofar as they did not seem to intensify the national consciousness of the Ottomans' subjects), they dedicated increasingly significant sums to bands of armed irregulars and their battles against each other. The most serious consequence of these measures was that from the 1890s onward, the three Ottoman vilayets of the geographical region of Macedonia lived in what was effectively a state of civil war (which the Great Powers unsuccessfully attempted to bring to an end from 1903–1908).

In connection with these nation-building efforts, it is also important to mention that the majority of the subjects of the Ottoman Empire did not have a modern sense of national belonging on the eve of the Great War. They were mostly Orthodox speakers of South-Slavic dialects whose confessional identity had begun to wane by the turn of the century, and whom the small nation-states were inundating with priests, teachers, and especially armed *chetniki* in hopes of transmitting their nationalist ideologies. Politicians in Belgrade, Sofia, and Athens saw these people as potential members of the Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek nations. And few are aware that if the promotion of the idea of Bulgarian nationalism had begun a few decades earlier, some portion of the Slavs who live in present-day Kosovo would probably identify as Bulgarians.³²

The small states' nation-building aspirations can also be interpreted as colonialist ambitions. As far back as the 1880s, the Balkan states were engaged in an (irrationally) desperate competition to see which of them could expand its national territory the farthest and bring the process of nation-building to a

32 In 1899–1900, for example, the priests who taught at the Eastern Orthodox secondary school known as *Bogoslovie* in Prizren fell into a dispute over whether their clerical graduates should teach and promote Serbian or Bulgarian nationalist ideology. This conflict eventually turned violent, as the stakes were high: the victors would be able to use the church to promote their own ethnic identity, which was likely to lead to the triumph of the given nationalist ideology in the region. Several reports on this dispute are included in: ÖStA HHStA PA, XXXVIII. Konsulate, Kt. 399. Prizren (1899–1900).

successful conclusion. This struggle to recruit the subjects of the Ottoman Empire went on for decades, and in the years after the turn of the century became a regular civil war involving the Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, and Ottomans. These colonialist ambitions reached their peak during the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, when the conquering states went to war against one another and imposed military administrations on the annexed territories, the actions of which the Social Democratic politician Dimitrije Tucović, who had participated in this conflict as an officer, likened to the atrocities the colonizing Great Powers had committed in Africa and Asia.³³

If we add to the foregoing the fact that Balkan nationalist ideologies—with the exception of the Albanian—involved an implacable hatred of the Ottoman Empire and an irrepressible desire to dissociate their nation-states from the East, and that their geopolitical situation made their territory a site for competition between the Great Powers, it becomes clear that this region had become a powder-keg for the entire continent.

Serbia's ambitions and their acceptance by the Great Powers

In the following, I will attempt to specify the role Serbia played in precipitating the Great War. In my opinion, similar lessons could be derived from the cases of Romania, Greece, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire; even so, these entities are not among the subjects of my research. Given my focus on Albania, I have formulated my general conclusions about Serbia's role by examining it through the prism of the Albanian question in the period of the wars of 1912–1913.

33 "And when the rebellion broke out, the government had the representatives of its foreign ministry communicate its intention to "make an example" of the Albanians, while the bourgeois press demanded that they be annihilated without mercy, which [policy] the army implemented. Those Albanian villages which their inhabitants abandoned in time were razed to the ground; elsewhere, they became barbarian crematoria, where many hundreds of women and children met their demise among the flames. And while captured Serbian officers and soldiers were disarmed and released by the rebels, the Serbian army did not spare children, women, or the sick... It has once again been proven that the popular uprisings of the most primitive tribes are always more humane than the military forces the modern state deploys to suppress such uprisings." (Tucović's emphasis); Tucović, *Srbija i Arbanija*, 107–8.

Considering its geostrategic and geopolitical endowments, Serbia may have been the most disadvantaged of the Balkan states. Centrally located on the peninsula, it was situated between two Great Powers and surrounded by other small nation-states. When Serbia achieved independence in 1878, the Austro-Hungarian Empire occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina, the territory Serbian nationalists regarded as their most important objective. It should be noted, however, that the Dual Monarchy was thus responsible for Serbia's territorial expansion toward Niš and Pirot in 1878. From that year forward, Serbian foreign policy was increasingly path-dependent as Serbian leaders focused their attention on the competition for territory in the central Balkan region; it was then that the modern Serbian cult of Kosovo developed.³⁴

The Serbs outside Serbia lived primarily in the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary. One indisputable objective of their national policy was to expand their state's borders to match the geographical distribution of the nation, though this political project was extraordinarily difficult to implement. I consider the Serbian political elite of this period to have been reckless in designating the Austro-Hungarian Empire (after 1903) and the Ottoman Empire as enemies simultaneously. Belgrade had an adversarial relationship with both its Great-Power neighbors; after 1908, numerous Serbian politicians and military interest groups provoked the Dual Monarchy. If this small state truly wished to avoid armed conflict with a neighboring Great Power, it should have been willing to rein in these interest groups.

The Adriatic Question

By 1912, the Serbs' desire to acquire an outlet to the Adriatic Sea had become one of the most important questions of prestige for Serbian nationalists. They hoped that by acquiring a seaport, they would be able to establish a direct link to worldwide trade flows and liberate themselves from Austria-Hungary's oppressive commercial stranglehold. Practically speaking, a passage to the eastern shores of the Adriatic could not have been achieved except by crossing through Montenegro or territory inhabited by Albanians, the latter of which

34 Csaplár-Degovics, "A szerbek Koszovóban."

was under Ottoman control until 1912. And thus acquiring this outlet to the west was problematic for a number of reasons—above all the fact that by 1912, two major powers already regarded the seaside territory of Albania as their own sphere of influence.

The so-called Adriatic Question—more precisely, the dispute over claims to the Adriatic coast—was also a question of prestige for the “Adriatic powers” of the day, Austria–Hungary and Italy. Since 1897, these two allies had been bound by an agreement stipulating that they would support the creation of an independent Albanian state if the Ottoman Empire were to disintegrate. The Adriatic allies wanted to prevent any third party from taking up a position on the Albanian coast, even if it meant war: these Great Powers were unwilling to tolerate any maritime rivals in their sphere of influence.³⁵ (The other Great Powers were aware of these agreements related to Albanian territory, though they did not take an interest in their contents or concrete significance until November of 1912.³⁶) There was one important reason for concluding this agreement, which had been extended several times by 1912: the two Great Powers’ interests in Albanian territory were fundamentally at odds, and thus they signed an accord which allowed them to put limits on each other’s activities, keep an eye on one another, and if necessary, act in concert against a third party.

Austro-Hungarian and Italian interests came into conflict as a result of the following. After their defeat at the Battle of Adwa in Ethiopia in 1896, the Italians focused their imperial ambitions on the eastern Mediterranean, partly on territory inhabited by Albanians. The Italian public regarded the Adriatic as *mare nostrum* and urged their government to treat it as if it were an Italian possession. For Austria–Hungary, its claims to the eastern shore of the Adriatic and the right of free transit through the Strait of Otranto had become central pillars of their Great-Power status by the turn of the century. The use of the strait allowed Austria–Hungary to connect with international markets directly and to use its navy to project its power anywhere on the globe.

35 Csaplár-Degovics, *Az albán nemzetiség válság kezdetei*, 119–41.

36 See Sazonov’s letter no. 676 to Krupenski (October 31/18, 1912), cited in Siebert, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, 482–83. See also Poincaré, *Memoiren*, vol. 1, 469.

For various reasons, Austria–Hungary took an active role in the Albanian nation-building project in 1896. Its objective was to facilitate the creation of a new Balkan nation which would be strong enough to prevent the Italians and the neighboring nation-states from exercising an influence over the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Albanian nationalists did not see the Austro-Hungarian Empire as an economic or political threat, and thus accepted the assistance of the Ballhausplatz. Indeed, a significant portion of the Albanian Muslims along the coast were clearly satisfied with the Dual Monarchy's Bosnian policy.³⁷

Starting in 1896, as a result of the Italians' and Austro-Hungarians' conflicting interests, an economic, political, and cultural competition developed between them in the territories inhabited by the Albanians. By 1912, Italy seemed to have won the economic contest, while Austria–Hungary appeared to have triumphed in the cultural and educational sphere, having influenced the fundamentals of Albanian nationalist ideology.³⁸

By the time of the first Balkan War, the powers of the Entente did not initially challenge Serbia's right to obtain a seaport. In fact, they accepted the various arguments Belgrade had formulated in asserting this right.

Neither the diplomats of the era nor later generations of historians have thoroughly examined what sorts of difficulties—beyond the opposition of the Adriatic powers—would have accompanied the acquisition of this coveted territory. In the accounts of the publicists of the day and the historians who have explored this question, debates over the issue of a Serbian harbor are generally represented as the result of conflicting economic interests. The truth, however, is that neither Durrës nor any other Albanian port was of any particular economic significance in that era. Durrës was the largest of Albania's harbors and it had a total of 20 meters of wooden pier, the water beneath which was only 4–5 meters deep. The danger of running aground made it impossible for larger vessels to navigate the harbor; the number of wooden warehouses at the port had not increased in decades, and thus it was impossible to stockpile larger quantities of goods. Moreover, much of the coast was a malaria-ridden swamp several kilometers wide. Furthermore, Albania also

37 Csaplár-Degovics, "Österreichisch–ungarische Interessendurchsetzung," 129–82.

38 Csaplár-Degovics, "Lajos Thallóczy und die Historiographie Albaniens," 205–46.

lacked large paved land routes and railroads, and thus it would not have been possible to transport any significant quantity of goods from the sea into the interior of the peninsula.³⁹

The economic insignificance of Durrës and Albania's other ports can be demonstrated by any sort of economic indicator. For instance, in the mid-19th century, the populations and geographical features of the Romanian port towns of Brăila and Galați were similar to those of Durrës, and yet a comparison of their export data shows that the value of the grain trafficked through these two Black Sea ports around 1850 was 4 to 6 times greater than the value of *all* the goods that moved through the Adriatic port in 1912. And statistical differences of this magnitude characterized not just their export data, but also their import data, total merchandise volume, and the number and type of ships which docked at these ports.⁴⁰

The condition of Albania's land routes is demonstrated by the fact that at the time of the first Balkan War, it was quicker and easier for the Serbian forces which lay siege to Shkodra to travel from Prizren through Bitola to Thessaloniki, then to round the Peloponnesian peninsula and land on the Adriatic coast than to cross the mountains from Prizren to Shkodra, even though the two towns were separated by a distance of less than 150 kilometers as the crow flies.⁴¹

In addition to the difficulties resulting from the opposition of the Great Powers and the local geographical conditions, the Albanians themselves created problems for Belgrade as well. Albanians are not Slavs, and the areas which the Serbs considered their sphere of influence were majority-Muslim, with a Catholic minority—that is, their inhabitants did not fit into the Serbian national framework, either ethnically or religiously.

39 Csaplár-Degovics, *Az albán nemzetké válás kezdetei*, 87–91.

40 This export data comes from *Notice sur l'état agricole*, 22–23; *Albanien. Wirtschaftliche Verhältnisse* 1913, 29; and Demeter, *A Balkán és az Oszmán Birodalom*, 143–62.

41 The conditions in this mountainous terrain were such that even the government of interwar Yugoslavia did not manage to cut a rail line through it, though doing so would have created a direct link between the Montenegrin coast and central and southern Serbia; see Bíró, *A jugoszláv állam*, 178–81.

The events of 1878 were a significant turning point for the Albanians as well. From that year forward, the ambitions of their neighboring nation-states began to seem threatening, and thus the members of the Albanian national movement began to articulate a nationalist ideology which transcended sectarian divides. The most important theoretical foundations for nation-building had been laid by 1912, though the Serbian political elites of the era denied the existence of an Albanian national movement.⁴² (In the eyes of the members of the Balkan League, the Albanians did not have the right to statehood at the time of the Balkan Wars—that is, they did not tolerate the Albanians' use of their own slogan, "The Balkans for the Balkan peoples.")

Serbia's Albania policy

In my opinion, by the summer of 1914, the Serbian government was not merely an innocent victim at the mercy of the Great Powers' policies: with the decisions they had made over the preceding years, Nikola Pašić and his administration had actively paved the way for Austria–Hungary to issue its ultimatum. Serbian Albania policies alone had almost led to war with Vienna on three separate occasions in 1912–1913.

In the fall of 1912, the Serbian government did not realize that the creation of an Albanian state was not merely an Austro-Hungarian project, but a question of prestige for Italy as well. Nor did Pašić take the negotiations, decisions, and resolutions of the London Conference seriously in 1913, considering them to be reversible. On the whole, Serbia did not accept—and Serbian historians still do not acknowledge—that their opposition to Albanian statehood put them at odds with the political will of *all the major powers* in the period between November of 1912 and October of 1913. In other words, they wanted to annex a region in which all six Great Powers had prepared to establish a joint administration.

At the time of the first Balkan war, one of the Entente powers' greatest fears was that Vienna might make a mistake and entangle Austria–Hungary in a

42 Županič, *Altserbien und die albanische Frage*; Georgevitsch, *Die Albanesen und die Großmächte*; Balkanicus, *Albanski problem*.

war with Serbia, thus creating a situation in which Russia would be forced by the terms of its alliance to get involved. After several months, Austria–Hungary succeeded in reassuring the powers of the Entente that it did not intend to launch a war against Serbia, nor to exploit the troubles in the Balkans as justification for a conquest of its own. In exchange for this reassurance, the Entente accepted the demands of the Adriatic powers (and later, of the entire Triple Alliance), and in early November of 1912, consented to the founding of an Albanian state along the Adriatic coast.

This process did not go smoothly, however, insofar as Serbia made clear by early December that it did not approve of the Great Powers' efforts to decide Albania's fate. Indeed, in the final months of 1912, the Entente's primary task was keeping Serbia—by then completely intoxicated by its victories—from getting into a military conflict with the Adriatic powers, Austria–Hungary and Italy.⁴³ Russian foreign minister Sergey Sazonov's memoirs and published Russian sources suggest that Serbia's political elite and military leadership were prepared to go to war to defend the territory they planned to occupy.⁴⁴ Though the Serbians knew that Austria–Hungary would do everything in its power to keep them from occupying territory along the Adriatic, they went for broke. Between November 7 and 10, Serbia's diplomats in Berlin announced a set of plans even more audacious than their October proposals, officially declaring that Serbia had laid claim to all of Albania and the Ottoman coast of the Adriatic.⁴⁵ Accordingly, Serbian military formations were already on the march toward the Adriatic.

By November 11, 1912, all the powers of the Entente had decided to permit Serbia an (imprecisely defined) economic outlet to the sea. On November 11, Sazonov informed his envoy to Belgrade, Nicholas Hartwig, that France and Russia were in complete agreement on this issue. Indeed, the Russian foreign

43 Grey, *Twenty-five Years*, 264 and 266.

44 Hartwig's telegram no. 207 to Sazonov (Belgrade, November 9/October 27, 1912), cited in Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, vol. 4/1, 217. See also Sasonoff, *Sechs schwere Jahre*, 88–89.

45 Kinderlen-Wachter's telegram no. 178 to Pourtalés (Berlin, November 7/October 25, 1912); Grey's telegram no. 187 to Buchanan (London, November 8/October 26, 1912); and Giers' telegram no. 209 to Sazonov (Cetinje, November 9/October 27, 1912), all cited in Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, vol. 4/1, 191–92, 198, and 218.

ministry indicated that Serbia had not thought its plans through, that they would harm the interests of the Adriatic powers, and that *they were going to lose the diplomatic support of the Entente*. More concretely stated, Belgrade had to have realized that the Great Powers were establishing an Albanian state on the Adriatic coast.⁴⁶ To Sazonov's horror, however, Belgrade decided to make the acquisition of an Albanian port into a question of prestige in mid-November.⁴⁷ For this reason, the Entente powers took diplomatic action in hopes of persuading the Serbians to exercise caution and avoid the unforeseeable consequences of deploying their army to the Adriatic coast. (The Russian foreign minister's memoirs suggest that the trouble with doing so was that St. Petersburg tried simultaneously to support the Serbs in achieving their objectives while also advising Pašić's government to show restraint.)

Nevertheless, this friendly Russian warning had no effect in Belgrade. The Serbian government rejected the Russians' advice "with tempestuous impatience" and continued to follow its previous policy of going for broke. Even so, Sazonov later realized how difficult it would have been for Pašić to calm the already inflamed and intoxicated Serbian public.⁴⁸

It is important to mention that the involvement of the Serbian army ruled out the possibility of an Austro-Hungarian–Serbian rapprochement: during the Balkan Wars, Serbian soldiers had committed a series of atrocities against Albanian Catholics (murders, assassinations of Catholic priests and monks, forcible conversions, demolitions of buildings), whose faith the Austro-Hungarian Empire exercised the internationally acknowledged right to defend. It should not be forgotten that the Great Powers had been using the pretext of defending fellow Christians in order to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire since 1825—and now one of the Christian states they had defended was committing atrocities against Christians.⁴⁹

46 Sazonov's telegram no. 2526 to Hartwig (St. Petersburg, November 11/October 29, 1912), cited in Siebert, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, 579; Bertie's letter no. 213 to Grey (Paris, November 16, 1912), cited in Temperley and Gooch, *Die britischen amtlichen Dokumente*, vol. 9/1, 253. See also Sasonoff, *Sechs schwere Jahre*, 94, 96, and 99.

47 Sasonoff, *Sechs schwere Jahre*, 90.

48 Ibid., 96–98.

49 It could not have been much comfort to the persecuted Catholics of Albania that Serbian detachments, motivated by nationalist ideology, had organized manhunts for Bulgarian

Furthermore, the Serbian forces which occupied Prizren violated every relevant international agreement in their brutal dealings with the local Austro-Hungarian consulate. The situation was unprecedented: the consul in Prizren, Oskar Prochaska, who was of Czech origin, had maintained contact with the local Albanians throughout the first Balkan War (as had the British consul in Bitola). When Serbian soldiers occupied Prizren on October 30, they alleged that someone had shot at them from the roof of the consulate, and in contravention of diplomatic protocol, broke into the building—technically Austro-Hungarian territory—and conducted an inquiry at gunpoint. They beat the consul, then dragged him off, confined him for days, and tortured him with an assortment of instruments; the unfortunate diplomat was rumored to have been castrated by his tormentors. The maimed consul was released in late November; given the ghastly humiliation, the Ballhausplatz tried to cover up his case.⁵⁰

Despite the warnings of the six major powers, Prime Minister Pašić refused to relent. The Serbian government, public, and press unanimously insisted that their country refuse to abandon its demand for an outlet to the Adriatic Sea. Indeed, the Russian envoy to Belgrade, Nicholas Hartwig, reported that Serbian military leaders had declared themselves ready to go to war with Austria–Hungary.⁵¹ On November 24, 1912, one day before the Serbian occupation of the coveted port of Durrës, Pašić offered a self-assured pronouncement to the *Times* of London, specifically delineating the central-Albanian territories and coastal corridors to which Serbia had laid claim.⁵² The next day, the Serbian army took Albania's largest harbor—and *with the*

Orthodox priests and teachers in Macedonia as well; see Thomoff-Bajdaroff, *Le mouvement révolutionnaire en Macédoine*, 140–52.

50 Kann, *Die Prochaska-Affäre*.

51 "Under the influence of our warning, only Pašić still intends to seek concessions, i.e., with regard to the establishment of an autonomous Albania. Intoxication is on display [here], though not in the government, but rather in military circles, where they express a willingness to go to war with Austria." Hartwig's telegram no. 317 to Sazonov (Belgrade, November 22/9, 1912), cited in Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, vol. 4/1, 316.

52 Benckendorff's telegram no. 336 to Sazonov (London, November 25/12, 1912), cited in Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, vol. 4/1, 331.

occupation of Durrës, the situation which the Great Powers had tried to avoid for a month and a half had finally come to pass.

To keep the situation from escalating any further, the French and Russian foreign ministries announced that the establishment of the Albanian state could not be put off any longer. The Entente also finally acknowledged that Albanian statehood was a fundamental condition of peace and continued cooperation among the Great Powers.⁵³ In a speech to his parliament on December 2, German chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg reported that Germany was ready to stand by its Great-Power allies in dealing with the Albanian question. And it was only then that the Serbian prime minister finally understood that if he were to continue down his political path, his country would have to confront the armies of the Triple Alliance by itself. Pašić asked the Russians to act as mediators in finding a solution to the problem—though Russian sources indicate that he still had not abandoned his plans for the Adriatic.⁵⁴

On December 17, 1912, the major powers' ambassadors began their work at the London Conference. They decided to establish an autonomous Albania, under Ottoman sovereignty and the simultaneous protection of the Great Powers (sic!), and that Serbia would receive certain concessions including access to an Albanian port by means of a neutral rail line under European control. The Serbian army was obliged to withdraw from the Adriatic coast or face an Austro-Hungarian military attack. The negotiators also agreed not to prepare a protocol and not to make any announcement to the press.⁵⁵

The spring of 1913 proved to be as tense as the fall of 1912: Montenegro made the taking of Shkodra a question of prestige and lay siege to the city. The Serbian army also took part in this operation. Though the Great Powers decided in late March that the city would be part of Albania, the siege

53 Siebert, *Diplomatische Aktenstücke*, 599–614.

54 Hartwig's telegrams no. 318 to Sazonov (Belgrade, November 22/9, 1912) and no. 363 to Sazonov (Belgrade, November 27/14, 1912), cited in Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen*, vol. 4/1, 316 and 351–52. See also Poincaré, *Memoiren*, vol. 1, 511 and 520.

55 Mensdorff's telegram no. 4944 (London, December 17, 1912), cited in Srbik, Bittner, Pribram, Übersberger, *Österreich–Ungarns Außenpolitik (Ö-U.A.)*, vol. 1, 147–49. See also Hiller, *Die Entwicklung*, 58.

continued, and ultimately succeeded on April 24. The resistance of King Nicholas of Montenegro and the presence of allied Serbian troops precipitated another European crisis. The only way the Entente could stave off an Austro-Hungarian declaration of war was to take direct military action itself.⁵⁶

From March 22 onward, Austro-Hungarian diplomats repeatedly noted that the city's population and defenders (not to mention the besieging forces) were suffering and dying unnecessarily.⁵⁷ After Montenegro's king ignored the Great Powers' joint *démarche* on March 28,⁵⁸ Albert von Mensdorff, Austria-Hungary's ambassador to London, tried to secure authorization for his country and Italy to enforce the terms of Conference's decision—that is, to take military action against Montenegro. However, neither Berlin nor Rome supported this idea. On March 26, it had been proposed that the major powers would conduct a naval demonstration off the Montenegrin coast. Russian foreign minister Sazonov suggested that they still had not exhausted their diplomatic means of dealing with King Nicholas, but at the same time, Russian diplomats were increasingly discomfited by the Montenegrins' and Serbians' obliviousness to the six powers' joint decisions. After Paris indicated that its warships were ready to demonstrate their power on the Russians' behalf, a five-power fleet began to assemble in the Adriatic.

By mid-April, Austria-Hungary was dissatisfied with the slow pace at which the flotilla was gathering and with the ineffectiveness of the blockade of the port of Bar. Though the military threat convinced the Serbs to abandon the siege of Shkodra, King Nicholas would not give up on this violent operation. The Montenegrin ruler considered the naval demonstration to be an open violation of the Great Powers' neutrality—even though their resolution of December 17, 1912 clearly indicated that Albania was an area of common interest to the major powers.⁵⁹ The British commander of the five powers' flotilla, the maverick Admiral Cecil Burney, was so outraged by the

56 Treadway, *The Falcon and the Eagle*, 135–58; Demeter, *A két Balkán-háború hadtörténete*, 295–99.

57 Berchtold's telegram no. 6197 to Giesl (Vienna, March 18, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 1, 993.

58 Giesl's telegram no. 6345 (Cetinje, March 28, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 1.

59 Giesl, *Zwei Jahrzehnte*, 242.

Montenegrins' failure to comply with his government's demands that he threatened a coastal landing on his own initiative.

The open defiance of this small Slavic state, along with the April 23–24 agreement it signed with Essad Pasha Toptani, the commander of Shkodra, to relinquish control of the city to the Montenegrins, finally drove the Ballhausplatz to initiate unilateral military action: in early May, Austria–Hungary ordered a partial mobilization in Bosnia–Hercegovina.⁶⁰

On May 4, understanding the seriousness of the threat, the Montenegrin king notified the negotiators at the London Conference that he would abide by the Great Powers' decisions and surrender the city. Led by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Cecil Burney, a five-power naval detachment of several hundred men then occupied Shkodra on May 14. In order to manage the city and its immediate surroundings, Burney quickly assembled an Admirals' Council, which was the first international governing body to appear on the territory of independent Albania; the city would remain under the administration of this five-power military force until the fall of 1914.⁶¹ On May 26, 1913, the negotiators in London issued another resolution reconfirming the Albanian–Montenegrin and Albanian–Serbian borders.⁶²

In summation, by the spring of 1913, the Triple Alliance's military threats were no longer enough to restrain the victorious Balkan states. Serbian forces, for instance, abandoned the siege of Shkodra only when the first British warship appeared on the horizon. For the first time in modern European history, a city was placed under the joint military administration of all the Great Powers—no Russian soldiers were stationed there, though St. Petersburg did authorize French forces to represent them in Albania. This joint military mission was necessitated in the medium term because the governments of the Great Powers had no faith in the Balkan states' promises. The only sure way to keep Serbian and Montenegrin forces out of northern Albania—including

60 Berchtold's circular telegrams no. 6418 and 6790 to Mensdorff, Mérey, and Szögyény (Vienna, April 2, 13, and 27, 1913), cited Ö-U.A. vol. 2, 263–66; see also Bridge, *From Sadowa to Sarajewo*, 352.

61 Giesl's telegram no. 6873 (Cetinje, May 3, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 2, 338–39. See also Balla, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia".

62 Mensdorff's telegram no. 7171 (London, May 26, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 2, 531.

Shkodra—was to keep soldiers stationed in the city and along a perimeter ten kilometers outside it. The presence of these forces was not unwarranted, given that the two Slavic states refused to withdraw their soldiers from Albanian territory and continued to maintain troops inside the borders drawn in London, despite the fact that the Admirals' Council⁶³ and the British Foreign Office ordered them to withdraw on several occasions all the way up to September of 1913.⁶⁴

Pašić and the Serbian government never abandoned their claim to an Adriatic seaport. Though the compromises of London were the result of a last-ditch effort by the Great Powers' diplomats, Belgrade was absolutely convinced that the boundaries they had drawn could be altered.⁶⁵ And they continued to think so, even though the six major powers clearly informed the Serbian government on several occasions that the borders had been drawn, and that nothing could be done to change them.⁶⁶

The result of the Serbs' annexation of territory in the central Balkan region and their introduction of a military administration there was that the Albanians and Macedonians attacked Serbia from Albanian territory in the fall of 1913. And it was not the residents of the new state who participated in this attack, but rather volunteers from the roughly 120,000 Albanian and Macedonian refugees who had fled to Albania from the territories Serbia had annexed. The idea for this attack originated with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VRMO), which group's chief objective was the establishment

63 Barry's unnumbered report to the Department of the Navy (Shkodra, August 9, 1913; KA MKSM, carton 15/1/21-18/1 (1913), 18-1/9-10 de 1913); Barry's telegram no. 4096, to the Department of the Navy (Shkodra, August 28, 1913; KA MKSM, carton 66/1-66/9 (1913), 66-5/11-10 de 1913). See also Balla, "Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia," 450; Löhr, *Die albanische Frage*, 193–94.

64 Crackanthorpe's reports no. 6 and 7 to Grey (Belgrade, September 10/15 and September 12/15, 1913); Grey's letter to Crackanthorpe (London, September 12, 1913), cited in Temperley, Gooch, *Die britischen amtlichen Dokumente*, 5–7.

65 Storck's report no. 194 A-E to Berchtold (Belgrade, September 22, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a) and Storck's telegram no. 3852 (Belgrade, September 22, 1913; *ibid.*).

66 Stevanović's telegram no. 120 from Belgrade to the Serbian ambassador in St. Petersburg (May 3/April 20, 1913), cited in Lukač, ed., *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije*, vol. 6/2, 208.

of an autonomous Macedonia.⁶⁷ The number of Albanian, Macedonian–Bulgarian, and Bulgarian irregulars who made up this force probably peaked around September 27 and 28, at roughly 15–20,000 men.⁶⁸

Around September 20, 1913, this force successfully crossed into the western territory of what is now known as North Macedonia, then set off along the Vardar river toward Skopje. Irregular units affiliated with the right wing of the VRMO also participated in this uprising, primarily in the area around Ohrid and Struga. The Serbian government took the situation seriously and ordered a partial mobilization; a force of 50,000 Serbian soldiers eventually put an end to this assault, expelled the invaders, and began hunting them down.

The Serbian government adopted the position that the Adriatic powers had been responsible for this attack,⁶⁹ though Viennese sources do not support this contention.⁷⁰ The basis of this accusation may have been that the Serbian foreign ministry was informed in mid-September that Rome had suggested to Vienna that they each send a military unit to protect the boundary commission drawing Albania's northern border. According to British reports, the Serbian

67 Lory, "La guerre après la guerre", 85–140; Георгиев (Georgiev), "Новооткрит документ", 135–48.

68 Memoranda (unnumbered, no. 5, and no. 9) issued by the Serbian ambassador in Vienna to the Ballhausplatz (September 29, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a); Gellinek's report no. 299 to Conrad (September 27, 1913; *ibid.*); Zitkovsky's report no. 120 to Berchtold (Monastir, September 28, 1913; *ibid.*); Lejhanec's telegram no. 4914 (Valona, September 28, 1913; *ibid.*); Zitkovszky's telegram no. 2139 (Monastir, October 9, 1913; *ibid.*); the Evidenzbureau's report, no. 4300/1 (October 1, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/450/23d). These troop numbers are also cited in Kotini ed., *Qeveria e Përkohëshme e Vlorës*, 199–200.

69 The Serbian envoy's memoranda (unnumbered and nos. 1–10) to the Ballhausplatz (Vienna, September 29/16, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a); the Interior Ministry's circular to the Foreign Ministry (Belgrade, September 28/15, 1913), cited in Džambazovski, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije*, vol. 6/3, 337 and 376–78. See also Keßler, *Der Balkanbrand 1912/13*, vol. 2, 347.

70 Rudnay's letter no. 157 to Berchtold (Durazzo, May 16, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/421/6f); Berchtold's telegram no. 24 to Rudnay (Vienna, May 23, 1913; *ibid.*); anonymous report no. Zl: 816/Pr. B. H. to the joint Austro-Hungarian minister of finance (Sarajevo, May 29, 1913; *ibid.*); Spaits' letter no. No. 179. to Conrad (Vienna, May 28, 1913; KA Nachlässe, B 1450, Akt. 84/222).

government assumed that at the time of this proposal, the two Adriatic powers' officers were already in Albania advising Serbia's adversaries.⁷¹

Russian diplomats waited for days to formulate a response to the attack the Albanians had launched. St. Petersburg supported the steps Serbia took to defend itself, and considered it natural that they would temporarily occupy certain strategic centers as part of a counterattack. However, Austro-Hungarian diplomats' reports suggest that their Russian colleagues were not aware of what had actually happened along the Albanian–Serbian border in the latter half of September, nor of the general situation in the newly liberated country. Had independent Albania launched an attack? Or had the Albanians of the central Balkan region rebelled? Or was this some other sort of incident? Who was actually in power in Albania? Considering that Russian diplomats' primary source of information was Belgrade, and that the former commander of Shkodra, Essad Pasha Toptani, had successfully misinformed Belgrade about events in Albania, it is unsurprising that the Russians did not understand the situation there. And without further intelligence, they did not wish to participate in any joint action with the other Great Powers.⁷²

Austria–Hungary's ambassador to St. Petersburg finally succeeded in convincing his Russian counterpart that Albanian refugees from the central Balkans—not independent Albania—had been responsible for this attack. The Austro-Hungarian diplomat Ottokar Czernin assured Russian deputy foreign minister Anatoly Neratov that Vienna did not question Serbia's right to defend itself, but nonetheless maintained that Belgrade had provoked this attack with its political, administrative, and military decisions. Czernin argued that Albania could not be considered the aggressor because no such state had been organized by the Great Powers: as of yet, it had no borders, no ruler, and no gendarmerie. And if there was no such state, it could not have launched an

71 Crackanthorpe's report no. 8 to Grey (Belgrade, September 12/15, 1913), cited in Temperley, Gooch, *Die britischen amtlichen Dokumente*, 6–7.

72 Storck's reports no. 193 and 194 A–E to Berchtold (Belgrade, September 21 and 22, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a); Czernin's telegram no. 4256 (St. Petersburg, September 24, 1913; *ibid.*) and Czernin's report no. 35 C to Berchtold (St. Petersburg, September 27/14, 1913; *ibid.*); Tadić's report to Spalajković (St. Petersburg, September 27/14, 1913), cited in Džambazovski, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije*, vol. 6/3, 332 and 372–74.

attack. Finally, on September 29/30, Russian and Austro-Hungarian diplomats agreed on the expectation that Belgrade would respect the borders drawn in London.⁷³

Russia did not fully comply with the spirit of this agreement in the final days of September. A certain Tadić, a junior diplomat (*službenik*) from Serbia who worked at its embassy in St. Petersburg, reported that the Russian foreign ministry did not believe that there were any Austrian machinations behind the Albanian action. Neratov also informed Tadić that the Russians would continue to take a favorable view of Serbia's efforts to defend itself, but counseled prudence and circumspection in everything. In exchange, *Belgrade received assurances that Russian diplomats would pursue the issue of border modification*—that is, Russia was ready to engage in a unilateral violation of the agreement the Great Powers had taken such pains to negotiate in London. (It is important to note that the Austro-Hungarian Empire also violated an important stipulation in issuing its ultimatum a couple of weeks later, namely the compromise that the Great Powers would always work in concert, and on the basis of prior agreements, in their dealings with the Balkans—though it is true that they issued this ultimatum in an attempt to mitigate the effects of a humanitarian catastrophe or even genocide against Albanian civilians.)⁷⁴

In early October of 1913, in pursuit of attacking Albanian forces, the Serbian army again crossed the borders established in London, and within two weeks had occupied a significant portion of northern and central Albania. In order to assure themselves of a permanent military presence, they busied themselves building a system of fortresses at strategic points throughout these occupied territories; according to Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian sources, close to 25,000 civilians lost their lives in the course of this most recent

73 Czernin's telegram no. 12 (St. Petersburg, September 30, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a).

74 Neratov's telegram no. 1059 to Benckensdorff (St. Petersburg, September 27/14, 1913); Neratov's telegram no. 1067 to Izvolski (St. Petersburg, September 30/17, 1913), cited in Stieve, *Iswolski*, vol. 3, 292 and 295; Neratov's telegram no. 855 to Benckensdorff, (St. Petersburg, September 27/14, 1913), cited in Boghitschewitsch, *Die auswärtige Politik Serbiens 1903–1914*, vol. 1, 332; Tadić's report to Spalajković (St. Petersburg, September 27/14, 1913), cited in Džambazovski, *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije*, vol. 6/3, 372–74.

occupation of Albania.⁷⁵ Most of these people were slaughtered along the banks of the Black Drin so as to create a *cordon sanitaire* along the Serbian–Albanian border.⁷⁶ The overwhelming majority of the victims lived in Albania—meaning that the six Great Powers had guaranteed their personal safety.

In the first week of October of 1913, Serbian diplomats tried to keep the Great Powers from lodging a formal joint protest of their cross-border operations. Serbian envoys managed to convince these individual governments that their forces had crossed the Black Drin temporarily and only in the interest of protecting their borders. They indicated that Belgrade also hoped to put an end to this conflict as soon as possible, but that this would require establishing diplomatic relations with the internationally recognized government of Albania. As soon as a government had formed and consolidated its authority over the country's domestic affairs, Serbia would resolve its differences with it and withdraw. And this coordinated diplomatic action was successful: the Great Powers did not issue any joint *démarche* in the Serbian capital.⁷⁷ (Paris and St. Petersburg argued that they had already issued Belgrade several friendly warnings, and that these would be enough to end the war; this, however, was not the case.)⁷⁸

Even so, there was no consensus among the powers of the Entente. Though Belgrade could generally count on diplomatic support from Russia and France, neither St. Petersburg nor Paris wanted to go to war on Serbia's behalf.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Great Britain openly sided with Austria–Hungary on the issue

75 Георгиев, "Новооткрит документ," 135–48.

76 Tucović, *Srbija i Arbanija*, 103–8.

77 Storck's telegrams no. 224 and 339 (Belgrade, October 1 and 2, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a).

78 Berchtold's telegram no. 1140 to Ambrózy in Rome (Vienna, October 1, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a); Haymerle's telegram no. 136 (Sinaia, October 1, 1913; *ibid.*); see also Storck's reports no. 8617 and 8635 to Berchtold (Belgrade, September 13 and 15, 1913) and Czernin's telegram no. 8646 (St. Petersburg, September 16, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 3, 294–96, 304, and 309.

79 Ambrózy's report no. 8849 to Berchtold (Rome, October 16, 1913); Czernin's report no. 8857 to Berchtold (St. Petersburg, October 17, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 3, 452–53 and 459–60.

of the border war, insisting that the boundaries drawn at the London Conference be honored, and that they *did not wish to allow the Balkan states to ignore the Great Powers' decisions without facing consequences*. Then in mid-October, as more and more of independent Albania's territory was being occupied by Serbian troops, the British diplomat Dayrell Crackanthorpe approached an Austro-Hungarian colleague in Belgrade to inform him of his government's position, noting that in his opinion, Serbia was not going to withdraw from Albanian territory, and thus the Austro-Hungarian Empire would have to take bold action. The Ballhausplatz interpreted the British diplomat's declaration as an expression of his government's goodwill and support.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, the French government urged Belgrade not to provoke Austria-Hungary any further and to withdraw from Albanian territory. In exchange, Paris offered to extend government loans to Serbia, which the latter had been expecting for quite some time.⁸¹

The Austro-Hungarian foreign minister Leopold von Berchtold was disappointed by this failure to act in concert, and decided that if no joint diplomatic solution could be found, the Dual Monarchy would enforce the terms of the London agreement unilaterally.⁸² On October 1, the Ballhausplatz launched a diplomatic offensive against Serbia; William Storck, the secretary of the Austro-Hungarian legation in Belgrade, presented a memorandum to the Serbian foreign ministry, demanding that the South Slavic state respect the Albanian border.⁸³ On October 3, Pašić traveled to Vienna in hopes of persuading the Dual Monarchy not to take any unilateral action; the Serbian prime minister tried to minimize the Serbian military presence in Albania,

80 Czernin's telegram no. 3524 (St. Petersburg, October 17, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/451/25a); Berchtold's telegram no. 482 to the Austro-Hungarian ambassadors, (Vienna, October 17, 1913; *ibid.*); see also E. Goschen's letter no. 38 to Grey (Berlin, October 16, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1. 32–33. See also Übersberger, *Zur Vorkriegsgeschichte Serbiens*, 44.

81 Izvolski's telegram no. 1093 to Neratov (Paris, October 18/5, 1913) and letter no. 1101 to Sazonov (Paris, October 23/10, 1913), cited in Stieve, *Izwolski*, vol. 3, 313 and 318–19.

82 Storck's report no. 209 to Berchtold (Belgrade, October 5, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a).

83 ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II (October 2, 1913). See also Storck's reports no. 8796 and 8797 to Berchtold (Belgrade, October 1, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 3, 73–74 and 415–16. See also Löhr, *Die Gründung Albanien*, 133.

suggesting that they were only restoring order in the annexed territories and that they had had strategic reasons for occupying the few villages they had seized across the border. Berchtold's reply to the Serbian leader's assertions was definitive: the resolutions adopted at the London Conference were barely enough to ensure the viability of the Albanian state, and thus Austria–Hungary could not make any further concessions in Serbia's favor. The Austro-Hungarian foreign minister warned Pašić that Belgrade had confronted Vienna with the following choice: either condone the Serbs' Albanian policy or issue an ultimatum. He made clear that this issue had become a question of prestige for Vienna.⁸⁴

On October 3, the Austro-Hungarian Joint Council of Ministers assembled to debate their course of action. The final result of these deliberations was that the participants agreed to support Berchtold's ideas and prepared for the possibility of going to war with Serbia.⁸⁵

Between October 6 and 14, the Austro-Hungarian Empire continued its diplomatic offensive against Serbia. On an almost daily basis, the Austro-Hungarian diplomats in Belgrade approached Pašić or the Serbian foreign minister Miroslav Spalajković and ordered them, in a firm but "friendly" tone, to evacuate their forces from Albania. Again and again, Serbian officials replied that the military steps they had taken were temporary and necessary to maintain their security. In hopes of reassuring Vienna, Pašić continually spread false rumors and misinformation.⁸⁶

84 ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II (October 3, 1913) 78 and 80–81. See also Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 422; Hiller, *Die Entwicklung*, 76–77. ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Clemens Erb, carton 5, 34–35; KA Nachlässe, B 1450, Akt. 90, proceedings of the Joint Council of Ministers, (October 3, 1913) file no. 249. For the text of these proceedings, see also file no. 8779 of the proceedings of the Council of Ministers (October 3, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 3, 397–403.

85 Helmreich, *Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars*, 423; Hiller, *Die Entwicklung*, 77.

86 Storck's telegrams no. 1391 and 1820 (Belgrade, October 7 and 9, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a); Storck's report no. 216 A-B to Berchtold (Belgrade, October 11, 1913; *ibid.*) and Berchtold's draft telegram no. 296 to Storck (Vienna, October 7, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XIX / Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II, [October 8, 1913] 87). See also Rappaport, "Albanians Werdegang," 839.

In the meantime, however, the Dual Monarchy mobilized its consular network and sent a few intelligence officers from the General Staff to the Serbian–Albanian border. Their appearance meant that the Monarchy no longer had any doubt about Serbia's military plans, and indeed, the Serbian army again approached the Adriatic coast. Berchtold relayed this news to the Triple Alliance, and after Germany and Italy both indicated that they would support the steps the Dual Monarchy might take, Berchtold reached an agreement with the prime ministers of Austria and Hungary, Karl von Stürgkh and István Tisza, on October 13. They consented to harsher measures, authorizing the foreign minister to issue Serbia an ultimatum, if necessary, to ensure that the boundaries drawn in London were respected.⁸⁷

On October 14, Storck, the secretary of the Austro-Hungarian legation in Belgrade, confronted the Serbian foreign ministry with the reports issued by Austro-Hungarian military and consular officers, rejected the Serbs' previous arguments, and demanded that the borders established in London be honored. The Ballhausplatz subsequently informed the other Great Powers of the diplomatic steps it had taken, then announced that if the former participants in the London Conference did not act to restrain Serbia's ambitions, Vienna was ready to take unilateral military action.⁸⁸ (Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Chief of the General Staff, had called for unilateral military action as far back as the meeting of the Joint Council of Ministers on October 3rd.⁸⁹ Conrad wanted to take advantage of the opportunity the Serbians had provided him with their military intervention; he tried to persuade Berchtold and the Emperor and King Franz Joseph that they could exploit the Albanian affair to settle their differences with Serbia on the battlefield, but in the first week of

87 Berchtold's draft telegram no. 682 to Flotow (October 10, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a); Berchtold's telegram no. 1168 to Ambrózy (October 7, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/450/23b); and ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II (October 13–14, 1913) 90–92. See also Brettner-Messler, *Die Balkanpolitik Conrad von Hötzendorfs*, 110.

88 Hornbostel's telegram no. 1694 (Tirana, October 8, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/449/23a) and Czernin's report no. 37 D to Berchtold (St. Petersburg, October 11, 1913; *ibid.*); Berchtold's instructions no. 299 to Storck (October 14, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/451/25a).

89 Conrad, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, vol. 3, 443–44.

October, the emperor, the foreign minister, and the heir presumptive, Franz Ferdinand, all rejected Conrad's plan.⁹⁰)

Between October 15 and 17, in accordance with his new instructions, Storck repeatedly alerted the leaders of the Serbian foreign ministry to the steps the Ballhausplatz planned to take. He informed Pašić that the text of the ultimatum had already been prepared, and that they were willing to give the Serbs a grace period of eight days in which to withdraw their troops—that is, Vienna expected not only to halt the Serbian army's advance, but to restore the London borders as quickly as possible. The Serbian prime minister clearly failed to grasp that Austria–Hungary was prepared to see things through this time, and deflected all responsibility with his facile responses. The situation was the same on October 16, when Storck showed him a draft of the ultimatum. Pašić continued to believe that the borders could be modified and that the Entente would support him.⁹¹

Berchtold kept his allies informed of his steps as well. Austro-Hungarian sources suggest that it was only in mid-October that Rome finally understood the actual dimensions of the Serbians' military aspirations. Even so, the Italians were not willing to take the final step and asked for time so that their government could agree on a course of action. In contrast, the German government made a quick decision. Even though Austria–Hungary had not requested it, Kaiser Wilhelm II personally declared that Germany was ready to go to war over the issue—that is, despite the fact that the Triple Alliance had not negotiated any formal agreement to act in concert, Vienna could count on Germany's support.⁹²

On the evening of October 16, 1913, Berchtold approached the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, Franz Joseph, and asked him to support the delivery of the planned ultimatum. After the ruler agreed in principle to do so,

90 Brettner-Messler, *Die Balkanpolitik Conrad von Hötzendorfs*, 107–10.

91 Berchtold's telegrams (unnumbered and no. 8835) to Storck (October 17, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/451/25a); Storck's report to Berchtold (Belgrade, October 15, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 3, 442–43. See also Rappaport, "Albaniens Werdegang," 840; Löhr, *Die albanische Frage*, 133 and 136.

92 Zimmermann's briefing no. 14161 for Wedel (Berlin, October 16, 1913), cited in *Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, vol. 36, 386–87; E. Goschen's letter no. 38 to Grey (Berlin, October 16, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1, 32–33.

a small conference was assembled at 10 o'clock that night to finalize the text. The next day, on October 17, Austro-Hungarian ambassadors relayed the contents of the document to the foreign ministers of the Great Powers. In the accompanying memorandum, the Ballhausplatz insisted that the Dual Monarchy had not interfered in the Balkan Wars, had renounced all territorial ambitions, had cooperated with other governments in restoring peace and order, and had acted in opposition to its own interests in allowing Albania's borders to be drawn in the way they were. In contrast, Serbia had ignored the Great Powers' resolutions at the London Conference and had stationed its armies on Albanian territory for months. In fact, wherever their interests were at stake, Serbian government had overruled the decisions on which the Great Powers had compromised. The Albanian attack had been precipitated by Serbia's provocative behavior and the conduct of the Serbian army; the Serbians' goal had been to create a rationale for occupying Albania. And given that Belgrade had ignored all of the Dual Monarchy's friendly warnings and challenged the Great Powers' decisions, Austria–Hungary had no choice but to enforce the terms of the London agreement unilaterally; Serbia would have eight days to evacuate its troops.⁹³

After Serbia again failed to react positively to Vienna's warning (the Ballhausplatz had issued three such admonitions just in the course of October), Storck delivered the ultimatum to the Serbian government at noon on October 18.⁹⁴ The actions taken by the Austro-Hungarian Empire—and the resolve it demonstrated—triggered apprehension among the Great Powers. Though *no one questioned* Austria–Hungary's right to take action (insofar as they had invoked the resolutions which the Great Powers had jointly negotiated in London), they expressed concerns about *the form* it would take. Germany was the only power which openly and unconditionally backed the Ballhausplatz's

93 ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II (October 16/17, 1913) 96–97.

94 Daily report *pro domo* no. 4940 (Vienna, October 18, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/451/25a) and Berchtold's draft telegram no. 1221 to Ambrózy (Vienna, October 18, 1913; *ibid.*). ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II (October 18, 1913) 98–99; KA Nachlässe, B 1450, Akt. 90, the foreign ministry's briefing for Conrad (Vienna, October 18, 1913; 592/K.d.M) and Gellinek's report to Conrad (Belgrade, October 18, 1913), no. 324. See also Rappaport, "Albaniens Werdegang," 840; Hiller, *Die Entwicklung*, 77.

ultimatum and was ready to accept the consequences arising from their alliance.⁹⁵

Among the Entente powers, Russia notified Austria–Hungary’s ambassador to St. Petersburg that they were going to accept Serbia’s response to the October 18 ultimatum. Neratov also informed the Austro-Hungarian and German ambassadors to St. Petersburg that it was important to Russia that the London borders be respected, but that Serbian forces would need time to evacuate. Russian diplomats demonstrated a willingness to formalize the borders and accelerate the establishment of the Albanian state.⁹⁶

Paris did not consider the form of the ultimatum to be the most promising solution and expressed its disapproval accordingly. France’s leading diplomat changed his attitude when the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Paris approached him on October 19 and showed him copies of Austro-Hungarian consular reports describing the circumstances of the Albanian attack. French President Raymond Poincaré then promised to adjure Belgrade to demonstrate some “moderation.”

The British Foreign Office understood and accepted the *goals* of the ultimatum, but did not agree with its *form*. For almost two weeks, and through several channels, foreign secretary Edward Grey indicated that Great Britain would support joint action by the Great Powers, given that in his opinion, any independent measures Austria–Hungary might take would in a certain sense constitute a confrontation with the other Great Powers and have a deleterious effect on their collective authority.⁹⁷

95 Hugh O’Beirne’s letter no. 78 to Grey (St. Petersburg, November 11/17, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1, 66; Bogičević’s report no. 367 to Pašić (Berlin, October 22/9, 1913), cited in Boghitschewitsch, *Die auswärtige Politik Serbiens*, vol. 1, 385–86.

96 Czernin’s reports no. 8866 and 8867 to Berchtold (St. Petersburg, October 18, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 3, 464–66; Lucius’ report no. 14177 to Jagow (St. Petersburg, October 19, 1913), cited in *Die große Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, 1922: 399; Neratov’s telegram no. 1095 to Benckensdorff, (St. Petersburg, October 18/5, 1913), cited in Stieve, *Iswolski*, vol. 3, 313–15.

97 Daily report no. 8884 (Vienna, October 20, 1913), cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 3, 478; Grey’s letter no. 43 to E. Goschen (London, October 18, 1913) and Grey’s letter no. 48 to Groschen (London, October 20, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1, 36–37, 41.

The Ballhausplatz conveyed a response to their colleagues in London through the British ambassador to Vienna and the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to London. Berchtold indicated that given the state of affairs on the Albanian–Serbian border and the fact that the Albanians were subject to the greater share of violence, there was no way to avoid further loss of life (the Serbians’ second occupation of Albania also resulted in tens of thousands of civilian casualties)—and no time to waste. According to Vienna, they had exhausted their diplomatic means of dealing with Belgrade.⁹⁸ It is worth noting that British protests ceased after Sazonov resumed discussions with the British ambassador to St. Petersburg, Hugh O’Beirne. The Russian foreign minister suggested that the Entente powers considered the issue of the Serbian–Albanian war to have been settled, at least partly because—and this contradicted their previous statements about their ally—*Russian minister of foreign affairs considered Serbia to be largely responsible for the outbreak of this armed conflict.*⁹⁹

The British envoy to Belgrade approached Pašić on October 19 and informed him that though the powers of the Entente did not agree with the form of the ultimatum, they were not willing to extend military assistance to Serbia. It thus became clear that Serbia could not expect Russia or France

98 Daily reports *pro domo* no. 4985 (October 20, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/451/25a); unnumbered (October 20, 1913; *ibid.*); no. 8321 (October 22, 1913; *ibid.*); ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II (October 19, 1913) 101–2; the foreign ministry’s briefings for Conrad, no. 236 (Vienna, October 20, 1913; KA Nachlässe, Akt. 90) and no. 238 (October 21, 1913; *ibid.*). See also Grey’s letter no. 51 to Cartwright (London, October 22, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1, 44–45. See also Hiller, *Die Entwicklung*, 78; Löhr, *Die Gründung Albaniens*, 139 and 141.

99 “Mr. Sazonow said to me in the strictest confidence on the 26th instant that Servia had been more to blame than was generally supposed in the events which had led up to the recent ultimatum from Austria... Mr. Spalajkovitch had held the most imprudent language with regard to the possibility of Servia’s coming to an understanding with Essad Pasha and combining with him to crush the Albanian Government provisionally established at Vallona. The question of Servian access to the Adriatic would thus, Mr. Spalajkovitch had said, be satisfactorily settled. He had spoken in this strain to the Russian Chargé d’Affaires at Belgrade and Mr. Neratow had thereupon sent him a severe admonition, pointing out that imprudent language of the kind would render it impossible for Russia to give Servia any support. Mr. Sazonow did not know whether Mr. Spalajkovitch’s remarks had come to the ears of the Austro-Hungarian Government, but he thought that they might have done so at least in part.” Hugh O’Beirne’s report no. 56 to Grey (St. Petersburg, November 3/October 28, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1, 49.

to lodge a serious protest against Austria–Hungary’s ultimatum, and the Serbian government decided that same day to withdraw. According to British diplomatic reports, Serbian military leaders did not seem to share their government’s willingness to reach an agreement.¹⁰⁰

As Serbian forces were being evacuated, the organization of the Albanian state could begin, though it was precisely at this juncture that the Great Powers’ efforts to cooperate collapsed. On the one hand, the Entente powers did not put enough emphasis on the organization of the state, as their chief objective was challenging the Adriatic powers’ Albanian policy.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, the Adriatic powers pursued policies in increasing isolation in Albania. Once the Great Powers’ confidence in each other finally disappeared, the relationship between Austria–Hungary and Italy soured (partly as a result of their divergent Albanian policies and partly as a result of other issues).¹⁰²

These events created a new situation not only for Serbia, but for all the Balkan nation-states. The roles that the various Balkan countries had played in the course of 1912 and 1913 were now completely irrelevant, as the international system of the 19th century had become utterly dysfunctional. The states of the peninsula recognized the flaws in the system and their new room to maneuver, and exploited the opportunities it created for them. And thus the military alliance which joined the countries of the peninsula finally outgrew the system of alliances which bound the Great Powers.

100 Storck’s report no. 224 A-B to Berchtold (Belgrade, October 20, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/451/25a). For more on the Serbian government’s response, see Storck’s telegram no. 3899 (Belgrade, October 20, 1913; ÖStA HHStA PA XII/451/25a); ÖStA HHStA PA XIX/Nachlass Berchtold, carton 4, vol. 4/II (October 20, 1913) 101–3; the foreign ministry’s briefing for Conrad, no. 238 (Vienna, October 21, 1913; KA Nachlässe, B 1450, Akt. 90). See also Crackanthorpe’s reports no. 44 and 45 to Grey (Belgrade, October 18 and 19, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1, 37–38 and 39.

101 O’Beirne’s report no. 74 to Grey (St. Petersburg, November 5, 1913) and Bertie’s private report no. 79 to Grey, (Paris, November 11, 1913), cited in BD, vol. 10/1, 62 and 66–67.

102 Grey’s letter no. 261 to Bertie (London, November 8, 1913); Lamb’s report no. 296 to Grey (Vlora, November 5, 1913); Grey’s telegram no. 320 to Russell (London, November 17, 1913); Russell’s telegram no. 326 to Grey (Vienna, November 18, 1913); Dering’s telegram no. 331 to Grey (Rome, November 18, 1913); Bertie’s telegram no. 333 to Grey (Paris, November 19, 1913); Lamb’s report no. 378 to Grey (Vlora, November 22, 1913); all cited in Duka, *Dokumente britanike për Shqipërinë dhe shqiptarët*, vol. 1, 318, 353, 376, 383, 386, 388, and 429–30.

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand took place in the immediate aftermath of these events. And even if we accept the contention of most Serbian historians, that Serbian sources do not confirm their government's involvement in this plot, it is important to note that in the summer of 1914, there was not a single European country in which the government, the political elite, the press, or the public doubted that Belgrade was behind the assassination.

SERBIAN HISTORIANS' RECEPTION OF THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I

The constraints of space make it impossible to put all the relevant Serbian publications under a microscope, for which reason the criticism below is focused on the texts which I consider to be most characteristic, and which I have evaluated on the basis of a study by Mile Bjelajac (Bjelajac 2014). I have tried to take into account all the aspects of the writings which characterized the Serbian historiography on this subject in the period in question.¹⁰³

One common element of these texts is that they explain the outbreak of the Great War by concentrating on the events of the summer of 1914; they present no precursors. It is as if an inexorable and mercilessly rational chain of events had suddenly been initiated *ex nihilo* and would inevitably lead to one of humanity's most monstrous conflicts. Another element common to these accounts is the vague sketch of the preceding events, which is presented as the history of the conflicts between Austria–Hungary and Serbia, and in which Austria–Hungary is the aggressor and Serbia is the vulnerable little neighbor. In evaluating the nervy relationship between Vienna and Belgrade, Serbian scholars tend to emphasize the ideas of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff (though it would also be interesting to evaluate the Serbian General Staff's views on Austria–Hungary). Another topos here is the idea of a militaristic Germany lingering in the background, waiting for the perfect moment to

103 Bataković, "Storm over Serbia"; Bjelajac, *1914–2014: zašto revizija?*; Mitrović "Les intérêts français en Serbie;" Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan*; Popović, *Evropski rat 1914*; Radojević, Dimić, *Srbija u velikom ratu*; Rastović, *Englezi i Balkan 1837–1914*; Živojinović, *Kralj Petar Karađorđević*.

annihilate Serbia (and France). In general, Serbian historians have made highly selective use of the published sources of the Entente and tend to treat the contemporaneous documents of the Triple Alliance as clear proof of anti-Serbianism in Vienna and Berlin. Significantly, Serbian historiography rarely conveys its authors' opinions about the precise role Serbia might have played in precipitating the Great War. Among the publications cited here, only one—the volume by Radojević and Dimić—dedicates a separate chapter to a discussion of the path which led up to the war (“The Causes of the War and the Serbian Kingdom”).¹⁰⁴

In discussing the causes of the war, the scholars under analysis here tend to avoid basic research in favor of certain hypotheses which they treat as axiomatic truths. They generally ignore the increasing clout of French foreign policy in Eastern Europe; they seem to be unaware of the problems Albania created for Great-Power relations; their causal models do not incorporate the evolution of Serbian domestic policy between 1912 and 1914, even though this subject is a key question in discussions of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand; and they make no reference to the international crises provoked by Serbia's foreign policy and military actions. On the other hand, they treat as axioms the notions that Germany and Austria–Hungary were good allies to one another, that their relationship was untroubled, and that one of their common objectives was the destruction of the Serbian state. Another of their axioms is that the Dual Monarchy pursued a coherent and unified foreign policy in its dealings with Serbia. The fact that Vienna's foreign policy was the result of compromises involving at least five separate centers of power (Emperor Franz Joseph, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the joint ministries, the governments and prime ministers of the two sub-empires, and the joint general staff) is treated very superficially here, and thus Serbian readers are left unacquainted with the seriously conflicting interests which sometimes separated these centers of power. These summaries also avoid Serbia's domestic political divisions—the suspension of the work of the *Skupština* in 1914, the conflict between the government and the opposition, the government's relationship with the military and the Black Hand, and the tensions within the army itself—even when

104 Radojević–Dimić, *Srbija u velikom ratu*, 40–73.

otherwise well researched topics are under discussion. It is also problematic that their generally one-sided accounts of the Albanian question (1913) are presented exclusively in relation to the history of the conflicts between Austria–Hungary and Serbia.¹⁰⁵ And as a result of these shortcomings, contemporary Serbian historians generally avoid attempts to answer the following two questions: First, given that the international crises of 1912–1913 were much more serious incidents than the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, why did they not trigger a world war? And second, by what process did members of the Austro-Hungarian pro-war party—which had been *in the minority for decades*—come to predominate? That is, what were the factors which ultimately convinced Vienna that war was the only remaining solution?

I would formulate my general criticisms of the authors under discussion here as follows. On the one hand, in their work related to the background of the Great War, they generally justify their lines of reasoning by referring to published or unpublished Serbian archival sources—of which there are very few, even in Belgrade. On the other hand, all the former Great Powers have published primary-source collections related to World War I, not to mention sources in the Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Albanian languages, which should not be ignored either.

Serbian historians could also be reproached for their failure to engage in source criticism of the Serbian documentation of the period in question and their complete lack of (self-)reflexivity in dealing with their national historiography. It is problematic that researchers simply avoid questions which cast their national history in a negative light—for instance, more and more sources indicate that Serbia's political and military elites both had plans to go to war against Austria–Hungary, though they did not consider the summer of 1914 to be an opportune time to do so.¹⁰⁶ Serbian scholars could also be called

105 Hrabak, *Arbanaški upadi*; Ćorović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*; Perović, *Prvi balkanski rat 1912–1913*; Đurišić, *Prvi balkanski rat 1912–1913*; Ratković, *Prvi balkanski rat 1912–1913*; Stojančević, *Srbija i Albanci u XIX i početkom XX veka*; Bataković, “Serbian Government and Esad-Pasha;” Bataković, *Nova istorija srpskog naroda*; Radojević, Dimić, *Srbija u velikom ratu*; Milićević, *Rat za more*.

106 Pašić's message cited in Krizman, “Skica za biografiju Svetozara Pribičevića,” 282. Citations from—and allusions to—Krizman's work appear in Sokcsevits, *Horvátország története*, 435–36.

to account for not analyzing Serbian-language archival sources which are awkward for their national salvation history, at least partly because such materials are simply not published in primary-source collections.¹⁰⁷ In discussions of foreign sources, they tend to mention materials from the Triple Alliance only when they serve as proof of anti-Serbianism, and ignore materials from the Entente whenever their contents are awkward for—or critical of—the Serbian state; the latter is particularly conspicuous in the case of published Russian sources.¹⁰⁸

The situation is the same with international analytic literature. Studies favorable to Serbia's national historiographic project (such as Fritz Fischer's, Günther Kronenbitter's, or John Leslie's work¹⁰⁹) have been incorporated into the Serbian canon, but those with a critical tone are treated as "biased" or "anti-Serbian."¹¹⁰ At the same time, it is worth noting that no international historian has questioned the legitimacy of Serbia's state- and nation-building projects or doubted its reasons for feeling threatened.

These nationalist narratives have narrow horizons, few lines of inquiry, and are fundamentally reflections of a Serbia-versus-the-world mentality. They do not differentiate between Great-Power politics, the relationships between Great Powers and small states, and the small states' interactions with one another. If the Serbian politicians of the era had a say in the development of a particular Great-Power policy, that was only natural; if they were unable to contribute, then their nation-state is portrayed as a victim.

These scholars generally have no interest in conducting in-depth analyses of the history of Austria–Hungary, and tend to focus only on a single aspect

107 The editing of the 1912–1914 volumes of the primary-source collection *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije* (*Documents Related to the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia*) was entrusted to Vaso Čubrilović, a Serbian nationalist and a participant in the plot to assassinate Franz Ferdinand.

108 For example, in his *Storm over Serbia*, Dušan Bataković used the most important of the Russian source collections (Hoetzsch), but in his treatment of the Albanian question, did not mention any Russian foreign-policy reports which were critical of Serbia; Bataković, "Storm over Serbia," 307–56.

109 Kronenbitter, "Nur los lassen," 159–87; Leslie, "Österreich–Ungarn vor dem Kriegeausbruch," 661–83.

110 Sundhausen, "Serbische Historiographie."

thereof—that is, what the Dual Monarchy did to inhibit the political, economic, and military development of the Principality, and later Kingdom, of Serbia.¹¹¹ Even so, this approach is as senseless as conceiving of the Serbia of the era as the sum of its efforts to destabilize ethnic relations in both Austria–Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. In-depth, independent research into the political, economic, and social history of Austria–Hungary and the Serbians is warranted, particularly in present-day Serbia. (Before 1990, there were notable Serbian scholars researching the history of Austria–Hungary, though they tended to focus on isolated questions.¹¹²)

It is possible to accept the contentions that the Serbian government did not want to go to war in the summer of 1914, and that this can be proven on the basis of the sources in Belgrade, which do not mention the planning of the assassination in Sarajevo. Even so, this assertion does not absolve Serbia of all responsibility for the war, nor does it explain the foreign-policy steps Serbia took before 1914. And at the centennial of the Great War, there is yet another phenomenon which casts contemporary Serbian historiography in a poor light: every time an international historian proffers an observation or thesis which explicitly or implicitly criticizes the Serbian state of 1914, or its political or military elite, representatives of the Serbian nationalist narrative perceive it as anti-Serbian attack, and respond as if they were obliged to coordinate a centrally organized defense of their country.¹¹³ Within the discipline of history, this phenomenon manifests itself primarily in the form of “conference wars”: in some cases, a conference is politicized to the point that Serbian historians protest by refusing to take part (as happened in Sarajevo in 2014)¹¹⁴; in others, Serbian historians appear, but present more nationalist propaganda than historical studies. (In Serbian society, certain

111 Hornyák, “Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia,” 116–17.

112 Čorović, *Istorija Jugoslavije*; Đorđević, *Carinski rat Austro–Ugarske*; see also several publications by Andrej Mitrović.

113 A study of this subject was first published in Hungarian in 2015.

114 *The Great War: Regional Approaches and Global Contexts*. International Conference on the Occasion of the First Centennial of the Beginning of World War One. Sarajevo, June 19–21, 2014. http://konferencija2014.com.ba/o_konferenciji/osnovne-informacije/.

recently founded institutions also symbolize the necessity—and a possible new means—of self-defense.¹¹⁵)

According to Holm Sundhausen, Serbian historians' tendency to regard their nation as a victim was reinforced in the 1980s (though the roots of this self-perception date back to 1389).¹¹⁶ That is, this tendency intensified when Yugoslavia was on the verge of collapse and the Serbian nation was faced with the prospect of being divided among the republic's successor states. Since then, Serbian historiography has been divided into prewar, wartime, and postwar phases, each of which politicians have been able to instrumentalize. During those years, national historiography had enormous power to create social values. For historians attached to the nationalist narrative, this old-new approach involved returning to the Balkan Wars and reevaluating Serbian history in accordance with the notion that it had taken a wrong turn. With the collapse of Yugoslavia, Marxist terminology was translated into a nationalist vocabulary, and thus the content of historical messages changed as well. Essentially, the Serbian nation had made a great (blood) sacrifice over the course of the 20th century, and nevertheless lost the peace. With Slobodan Milošević's rise to power, the nationalist narrative was militarized and a competitive form of "nationalist one-upmanship" took over public discourse as well. During the Yugoslav wars, historians (on all sides) participated in attempts to legitimize territorial claims and fought their own battles when historical attitudes toward the past came into conflict. The discipline of history ossified

115 The *Andrićev Institut* (or Andrić Institute, www.andricevinstitut.org), associated with the renowned film director Nemanja (Emir) Kusturica, serves such purposes, as did the recently shuttered Reiss Institute (<http://www.reissinstitute.org/en/about-2>), the aims of which were formulated as follows: "The Reiss Institute for Serbian Studies was established in December 2013, with the principal mission of challenging the fictions, fabrications and fantasies that have caused so much suffering and violence in the Balkans over the course the 20th century... Honoring the memory and legacy of Dr. Reiss, we will endeavor to deconstruct the lies and promote the accurate history of Serbia and Yugoslavia, in order to contribute to the liberation and better understanding of the Serbian people. We will seek out the truth, wherever it is buried, and bring it to the light of day, so it may set us free." (<http://www.heroesofserbia.com/2014/08/great-serbs-r-archibald-reiss-by.html>).

116 Sundhausen, "Serbische Historiographie," 411.

into the science of legitimation and a new form of historical remembrance began to develop and predominate.¹¹⁷

On the whole, however, this movement did not succeed in coopting the entirety of Serbian historiography. Since the 1980s, there has been a school of thought which continues to espouse Titoist attitudes toward Yugoslavia; this period has also witnessed the emergence of a well-trained group of younger historians who have oriented themselves to international trends and incorporated new sets of questions into their research. In the period after the wars of the 1990s, however, they have been limited largely to investigations of questions which are of less significance to national narratives, such as urban history.

Since Sundhausen published the aforementioned work almost twenty years ago, the situation has developed as follows. The excessively nationalist school of Serbian historiography has not succeeded in completely monopolizing Serbian national history. One reason for this is the ever-increasing number of talented young scholars who have entered the field and dared to think critically about the subjects of their investigations. Zoran Janjetović is one such example, and the formation of a joint Serbian–Hungarian academic commission to uncover the atrocities of the period from 1941 to 1945 is also reason for hope.

The potential danger arises from an increasingly close relationship between nationalist historiography and the state: awkward subjects become taboo, pushed into the background or forgotten, never to be investigated. And this process further reinforces the social legitimacy of rewriting or reencoding the past. Just in the last few years, two such events have been cause for concern: the Serbian government has rehabilitated the World War II *chetnik* leader Draža Mihailović¹¹⁸ and announced plans to erect a statue to Franz Ferdinand's assassin Gavrilo Princip (though it is not the statue, but the ideology around it, which is dangerous).¹¹⁹ Moreover, there is no opposition movement of historians working against such phenomena.

And at this point is worth pointing out that for years now, the Hungarian state has also been creating institutional opportunities for rewriting the past.

117 Ibid., 416–17.

118 <http://www.tanjug.rs/full-view.aspx?izb=178828>. Accessed on June 24, 2015.

119 <http://www.tanjug.rs/full-view.aspx?izb=183542> and <http://www.tanjug.rs/full-view.aspx?izb=183978>. Accessed on June 24, 2015.

Hungary has also made a government policy of the old-new propagation of the idea of national victimhood—in its attitudes toward Hungary's (post-)World War history, for instance. For the time being at least, Hungarian politicians, along with pro-government journalists, intellectuals, and propagandists, are also making continual efforts to instrumentalize the discipline of history.

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ISTVÁN TISZA'S POLICY TOWARDS THE GERMAN ALLIANCE AND AGAINST GERMAN INFLUENCE IN THE YEARS OF THE GREAT WAR

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In the half-century of dualism, the foreign affairs of Austria–Hungary were always clearly directed from Vienna. The influence of the Kingdom of Hungary on common foreign policy, constituting the larger, yet in both an economic and a political sense essentially weaker part of the monarchy, was not usually decisive. One exception was the period in the years of Hungarian prime minister István Tisza 1913–1917.

THE LEGACY OF THE FOREIGN POLICY OF GYULA ANDRÁSSY

In the 1870s, the years of Gyula Andrássy, who advanced from prime minister of Hungary to the position of the imperial minister of foreign affairs (1871–1879), the shaping of the foreign policy of the monarchy was, for a short period of time, influenced by Hungarian interests. In his eyes, the Habsburg Empire constituted a means of defence against the western expansion of Russia. He endeavoured to make Austria–Hungary a part of a system of alliances able to shield itself and Europe from Russian expansionism, the fatal consequences of which Andrássy's generation had personally experienced when two revolutions were crushed by the Russians in Poland and in Hungary.

This Hungarian nation-state nationalism implemented by Andrassy in foreign relations conceived of the Balkan nations as allies, too. His aim was to see that Romanians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, and Bosnians should view the monarchy as the protector of their national interests. At any rate, what with the occupation and the active military as well as diplomatic presence it necessitated, Vienna and Budapest were no longer the passive remote observers but rather the active shapers of relations between the Balkan nations.¹

This doctrine, which also vindicated Hungarian points of view, as became evident at the 1878 Berlin Congress, had three emphatic elements. One was the severing of ties with and turning against Russia. Against the threat of Russian expansion in the Balkans as well as along the eastern borders of the monarchy in Galicia, he forged a double alliance founded on Germany. Furthermore, in the Balkan hinterland of the monarchy and especially of Hungary, he conceived of the nations trying to build nation-states of their own, as allies, and tried to turn them against Russia, in an effort to replace the traditional policy of spheres of interest by the elaboration of an Austro-German–Hungarian zone of influence.

For the most part, there was a common understanding on these questions among the Hungarian political élites of the period of the dual monarchy up to 1918. The Hungarian government, which was in favour of the Compromise with Austria, and that had found its place in a peculiar liberal-nationalistic central area of power and would only be weakened between the years 1903 and 1910, saw the guarantee of the imperial and nation-state positions of polyglot Hungary in the maintenance of dualism and the German alliance. This threefold legacy of Gyula Andrassy provided the key basic principle of Hungarian foreign policy thinking from the Berlin Congress and the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina until its annexation in 1908.

The double alliance and then the similarly solid German–Austrian–Hungarian alliance within the framework of the Central powers (the Triple Alliance) was a secure basis for political and military planning in the years preceding the First World War. This was the view of Count István Tisza, too,

1 Diószegi, "Andrassy;" Palotás, *Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia balkáni politikája*; Demeter, "Count Andrassy."

who was the strongest politician in early 20th-century Hungary and who was twice appointed by King Francis Joseph to the office of the prime minister, in 1903 and 1913.²

FROM THE ANNEXATION TO SARAJEVO

Following the annexation of Bosnia in 1908, and especially during the Balkan Wars, the unsolved problems of the nationalities of the monarchy, mainly inside Hungary, gained international significance with increasing frequency. The Czechoslovak and South Slav movements for unity within the framework of the Neo-Slavonic movement were questioning the boundaries of the solutions within the monarchy just as much as the great Romanian and Yugoslav concepts supported by the kingdoms of Romania and Serbia. This was true despite the fact that the Neo-Slavonic movement, and, most of all, its congress in Sofia in 1910, was a disappointment to those of Russophile tendencies, who hoped for the victory of more conservative trends, and would have seen the best guarantee for the Slavonic national movements of the monarchy and on the Balkan peninsula in the strengthening of Russian orientation and of ties to Russia.³

From the very beginning, it was Berlin for whom Romania, which had joined the Triple Alliance, was more important. The strong assimilatory efforts of Hungarian policy from 1896 onwards gave rise to more and more severe conflicts between nationalities, directing the critical gaze of international opinion to the Romanian, Croatian, Slovak, Serb, and even the Ruthenian and Danube Swabian questions. In the first half of the 1910s the circumspect and resolute statesman István Tisza had to experience the negative impact of the

2 On Tisza's war years in office and his decisions, see Vermes, *István Tisza*, 345–418; Diószegi, "Tisza István és a világháború;" Bihari, 1914: *A Nagy Háború*, 129–32; Bertényi, "A gyűlölt Tisza István;" Bertényi, "Az első világháború okai," 16–17; Maruzsa, "Tisza István és a háborús felelősség kérdése;" Jeszenszky, "Istvan Tisza: Villain or Tragic Hero;" Wolff, *Der Krieg des Pontius Pilatus*.

3 Diószegi, "Tisza István és a világháború."

diminished prestige of liberal Hungary that had weakened prior to the First World War and was completely lost during it.

He tried to prepare Hungary for the war in terms of both domestic and foreign affairs. His achievements on the Croatian question, as well as his steps to stabilize the Romanian question in Transylvania and eastern Hungary, could provide some hope that in the event of military conflict Hungary would not be the weakest link within the alliance of the Central powers. As regards the foreign affairs of the monarchy, Hungary and the Hungarian political élite managed to achieve a position in which their interests could be asserted stronger than ever before.⁴

The basis of the existence of the multi-ethnic yet unanimously Hungarian-dominated Hungary before 1918, when she was three times bigger than she is today, was furnished by the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and, within it, the sovereignty safeguarded, with the exception of foreign and military affairs, for the Hungarian political élite. The international basis of the Hungarian imperial idea, however, was provided by the support from Germany within the alliance of the Central powers. Tisza himself was clear about the value of this German alliance in a study written in 1912: "It is the Hungarian nation which supports the international alliance with the German Empire perhaps even more unambiguously than the Germans living in Austria do. This is the cornerstone of our entire policy because [...] the Hungarian nation must fulfil its world-historic calling in political solidarity with the great German nation."⁵

This dogmatic statement was applied in practice by Tisza as a doctrine on a number of occasions before and during the war. He managed to gain the understanding and support of Berlin. Prior to July 1914, he succeeded in calling the attention of Emperor William II to Hungarian particular interests and the risks hidden in the neighbourhood of the monarchy in the Balkans. In light of his relations with him, the emperor was impressed by Tisza's professionalism and his prudent analyses. During his visit to Vienna in autumn 1913, the German sovereign realized that in many respects the dangers

4 Demeter, "Külpolitikai alternatívák."

5 *Magyar Figyelő*, 1912. Quoted by Bihari, 1914: *A Nagy Háború*, 131.

threatening the interests of the Central powers in the Balkans and the conceivable remedies for them were better understood in Budapest than in the imperial city. Against the more and more hesitant Romania, Tisza judged the winning of Turkey and Bulgaria to be the primary pre-condition in foreign affairs in the event of a military intervention in the Balkans.

TISZA'S SCOPE FOR ACTION IN THE WEEKS OF THE JULY 1914 CRISIS

Notwithstanding these, Tisza's attitude in the course of the July Crisis of 1914 was a surprise for Berlin. The prime minister of Hungary was expecting nothing less than a guarantee from the German Emperor, the German government and the German army, one that could bring effective assistance for the monarchy, and, within it, for Hungary, against Serbia and an attack from Romania in particular. When the Hoyos Mission and the endless diplomatic attempts at persuasion led to a situation in which not even the Hungarian prime minister could overplay things, Vienna and Berlin seemingly had similar intentions. As usual, Emperor William II put a remark in the margin of the Tschirschky Report sent to Berlin, noting Tisza's consent to the ultimatum, and wrote: "Na, doch mal ein Mann!"⁶

In the month following the Sarajevo assassination, i.e. the days of the July crisis, Tisza came to prominence among the leading politicians of the monarchy, including the Austro-Hungarian common council of ministers. The Joint Minister of Foreign Affairs, Leopold Berchtold, the Joint Minister of War, Alexander von Krobatin, the Joint Minister of Finance, Leon Bilinski, the chief of the general staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, as well as the Austrian Prime Minister, Karl von Stürgkh, all urged a unilateral and prompt military solution. Although they were aware of the dangers of the latest foreign and military situation and the risk of war with Serbia and Russia on two fronts, they maintained that it could be managed. Tisza, however, had from the outset considered a war on three fronts to be plausible, as it would indeed later turn

6 Gülstorff, "Da kann nur Tisza helfen!" 412; Diószegi, "Tisza István és a világháború."

out to be. The members of the session of the common council of ministers were confronted with his opinion on July 7.⁷ In July 1914 he warned the ruler of the dangers of risking a world-wide war that could follow a declaration of war on Serbia in three memoranda.

Undoubtedly, Tisza rose above the futile public law debates in parliament through his response to the challenges and hard tests of the First World War. Between 1914 and 1918 he became a symbol of historic decisions and alternatives. For millions, he was the symbol of endurance to the bitter end, of the country's final heroic achievement, or, quite on the contrary, of defeat, horrible casualties and senseless war.⁸

In order to draw the fullest possible picture, one has also to examine the other elements of István Tisza's work as prime minister – one has to have a look at the logistical and economic measures that affected the monarchy's hinterland, if also, clearly, at the matter of war casualties, losses and defeat. One key aspect is that all his acts and decisions served the preservation of the unity of the historic country, and thus his responsibility for the military defeat was only rarely linked to the issue of the multi-ethnic Hungarian state breaking up.⁹ One cannot neglect a survey of the role he played in this highly complex process, one that ended in the military defeat leading to the break-up of the dualistic structure of the monarchy and of historic Hungary that he had always deemed indivisible. Why did he not start weighing up the alternatives to a military solution as soon as he became the very Hungarian politician who undoubtedly had the most exact sources of information at his disposal? Following the peace initiatives in late 1914 and early 1915, ones he himself considered important, why did he cease urging negotiations that might lead to the earliest possible peace agreement? Did he really see victorious struggle as the only solution? Was he unaware of or did he try to neglect the change in general sentiment which had come about rather soon?

Just a few months after the initial voices of welcome and homage, the shock caused by the casualties amounting to hundred thousands on the Serbian and

7 Joint Council of Ministers, July 7, 1914. Rauschensteiner, *The First World War*, 119–25. Szabó, *Az első világháború*, 47–49.

8 Szász, “Tisza István, a háború jelképe,” 3–8.

9 Romsics, “Trianon okai,” 663–91.

Russian fronts, the widowed families, the disillusionment of soldiers who had not been prepared for the horrors of the trenches, (de)privation and living in permanent proximity to death, the increase in the number of injured, handicapped and prisoners of war, their misery, as well as growing social and ethnic tensions all meant that he was blamed and condemned and seen as the number one person responsible for the war. At the end of the war he himself had to face the fact that his in many respects heroic overreach of forces had become the symbol of the war, the risks of which he had been perhaps the only one capable of fully assessing back in July 1914.

Nevertheless, it would surely be a misinterpretation to analyze the life of the greatest Hungarian politician of the First World War in terms of simplistic and even false dichotomies. One needs rationally to evaluate the interactions and fields of force of complex historic procedures determined by the dominance of a series of events of multiple dimensions, as well as external and domestic factors, in order to clarify the background and consequences of Tisza's decisions. As the most influential Hungarian politician of his time, he represented one of the most decisive factors in the monarchy. After the forced abdication of Count Berchtold, minister of foreign affairs, the sovereign offered Tisza this position, one that would eventually be filled by his personal friend and partisan, Baron István Burián. His power and role continued to decline after the Romanian invasion of Transylvania in August 1916 and the death of Francis Joseph I in November of the same year. However, his impact and influence, as well as his moral authority, remained until his death, which, as it happens, could easily have come in late 1916. Friedrich Adler, the son of a key politician of the Austrian Social Democrats, Viktor Adler, considered assassinating Tisza, who was seen as the strongest man of the monarchy. Finally, on October 21, 1916 he killed not the Hungarian, but rather the Austrian prime minister, Karl von Stürgkh, in a restaurant in Vienna.

THE HUNGARIAN ASPECTS OF THE WAR AGAINST SERBIA AND ROMANIA

The question naturally arises of whether the Hungarian prime minister really had a good grasp of the steps Germany took to prepare for the war. His intensive diplomatic correspondence with foreign minister Berchtold, as well as the Austro-Hungarian ambassadors to Bucharest, Sofia, Istanbul and Belgrade, could only have convinced him that the monarchy would be unable to compensate for neutral Romania and Italy by means of co-operation with new allies. He tried to judge the measure of the concerted danger of the declaration of war on Serbia and the Russian mobilization that he took for granted, and the possible scale of German assistance, by analyzing the attitude and policy of Germany in the Balkans, as well as direct information received from Tschirschky, the German ambassador to Vienna. In fact, albeit Berlin hoped for loyalty from Bucharest, it began negotiations with the Turkish government, on its joining the Central powers, much earlier. From the outset, Tisza deemed it more significant to win the support of Bulgaria than German chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg did.

In the days of the crisis in July 1914, not even in Vienna did anyone believe in a bilateral, preventive and penalizing war that would remain local. This is why Tisza's apprehension was taken seriously. He had first-hand information that there was no well-considered strategy in the monarchy's military plans for the eventuality of a war against Serbia and Russia on two fronts. He could also clearly see that Romania would not enter the war on the side of the Central powers, which would aggravate the position of Austria-Hungary in Serbia.¹⁰

Furthermore, it needs to be emphasized that Tisza conceived of the military solution to the southern Slavonic question as fundamentally wrong, and therefore he opposed and rejected the logic of the ultimatum in July 1914. In his view, even a limited war in Serbia would bring more risks than advantages for Hungary. The international extension of the conflict was from the outset contrary to the interests of the monarchy and especially those of Hungary.

10 Galántai, "Tisza és a világháború," 693–98.

The history of the Austro-Hungarian, German and Bulgarian occupation of the Kingdom of Serbia and of Montenegro between 1915 and 1918 has been elaborated in a number of publications in recent years.¹¹ The Hungarian standpoint regarding the future of Serbia did not fundamentally change even after 1915, when, with the affiliation of Bulgaria, the Central powers managed to defeat and conquer it militarily.

After the forced resignation of Berchtold, minister of foreign affairs, in January 1915, István Burián took over the direction of the common Austro-Hungarian ministry of foreign affairs. He had a reputation for being a confidant of István Tisza. From the early stages onwards, the Hungarian prime minister vehemently opposed the proposals made by Austrian military circles, which considered the annexation of the Serbian state to be the best solution. One point of agreement with them was that efforts to achieve southern Slavonic unity, which constituted a threat to the monarchy, needed to be weakened.¹²

Tisza's position on the future of Serbia did not fundamentally change even after the Central powers, as joined by Bulgaria, managed to defeat and conquer the country militarily in 1915. Concerning the fate of Serbia, he faced two options pondered by Germany. According to Berlin, the monarchy could either incorporate the territory of Serbia or meet its claims. However, Tisza's standpoint was this: "Serbia must not be incorporated and cannot be satisfied. Indeed, the reason for this is that Serbia cannot be satisfied with anything else but the realization of the great Serb state." Tisza's conclusion was: "What can safeguard tranquillity along our southern borders is not a satisfied but rather a resigned Serbia which reconciles itself with its fate."¹³

Even in winning Bulgaria over to the alliance, Tisza attributed great importance to the role of Berlin. He maintained that, although Bulgaria would sooner or later accept the idea of joining the Central powers, as Turkey had done, it was Berlin which ought to create a situation either on the Saloniki question or in shaping Turkish-Bulgarian relations which would

11 Szabó, *Magyar álláspontok helye*; Gumz, *The Resurrection and Collapse*; Scheer, *Zwischen Front und Heimat*; Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*.

12 Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*, 301–4.

13 Ibid.

urge Sofia to act swiftly.¹⁴ From a Hungarian point of view the Bulgarian decision was of huge importance in preparing for the growing threat of a Romanian attack.

On the Romanian question, Tisza faced harsh voices of criticism from the Germans, too. A number of times he was asked to explain in Berlin why he was not willing to make concessions to the Romanians in Hungary. According to one of the oft-repeated proposals, Romanian autonomy of Transylvania should have been granted in order to keep Romania out of the war and prevent it attacking its allies.

King Charles of Romania, who would have liked to keep his country in the camp of the Central powers or at least in neutrality, asked Berlin to intensify the pressure on Tisza. Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg himself had personal negotiations with Tisza on the question of concessions to Romanians. Nevertheless, Tisza succeeded in persuading the Germans that constitutional changes on a larger scale should only be experimented with after victory in the war. This was one of the reasons he opposed Naumann's *Mitteleuropa* propositions.

It is essential to remark that, in his disputes with Berlin, Tisza could most efficiently base his argument on the diplomatic and military unpreparedness of the Central powers on the Balkan Peninsula, while he postulated the hostile behaviour of Romania from the very beginning, as well as the urgency of elaborating the alliance with Bulgaria and Turkey, i.e. the importance of the Balkans. He could see the significance of the region from the outset, and was surely not taken by surprise when the military defeat of the Habsburg Monarchy—and, therefore, of Hungary—began with the Entente's breakthrough in the Balkans and the capitulation of Bulgaria and Turkey.

From the very beginning, next to the events taking place on the eastern as well as western fronts and before the eyes of the European public in an obvious, if not predictable way, the series of events in the Balkans entailed the possibility of the most unanticipated twists and turns. Through his intensive connections with the Hungarian and Romanian political élite in Transylvania, and with Count Ottokar Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian

14 Tisza's letter to Berchtold, minister of foreign affairs, on November 26, 1914. TIÖM, vol. 2, 323–27.

envoy to Bucharest, István Tisza always counted as an expert on Romania. Just like the Hungarian poet Endre Ady, he saw and sensed the gravity and possible tragic outcome for Hungary of the Transylvanian question. Paradoxically enough, even on the Transylvanian issue, albeit with heavy debates and tensions, it was in Berlin where he won the essential guarantees for the elimination of the Romanian invasion in the form of a promise rather than any effective help in autumn 1916.¹⁵

Analyzing the reasons for the change in Tisza's standpoint, the Hungarian historiography has repeatedly proposed the possibility that the final consequence of his rejection could have been embodied in his resignation. The formula of resignation in his memorandum, both as written to the sovereign on July 1, and in the record of the common council of ministers in July, shows that Tisza tried to use the possibility of his departure as an argument and a form of political blackmail that in the given context was probably correctly understood by all. Between 1914 and 1916 (as has been convincingly proved by Iván Bertényi Jr., who, in search of explanations, has studied the problem thoroughly), from the point of view of the effective realization of Hungarian interests, and with the exception of Gyula Andrássy Jr., there was no politically appropriate alternative to Tisza who could have been acceptable to Vienna and Berlin and who could have had a voice of consequence in representing Hungarian interests. Due to differences of political opinion and in possession of the secure hinterland provided by the parliamentary majority of this party, the *Munkapárt*, as well as concepts linking the future of the country to the development of the Hungarian nation-state and gradual compromise with the different national groups, Tisza could not step back without having to contradict himself.¹⁶

In summary, we need to emphasize three elements of the policy of the Hungarian prime minister between 1914 and 1917 that concerned Germany. Despite there being from the outset a number of disagreements and a range of differing political opinions on matters in Eastern-, East-Central- and South-Eastern Europe that disturbed co-operation between the two leading countries of the Central powers, István Tisza adhered to the maintenance of the alliance

15 Szász, "Az első világháborúban," 1690–1700. Gülstorff, "Da kann nur Tisza helfen!" 411–14.

16 Bertényi, jr., *Tisza István*, 71–79; Szalai, *Ifjabb Andrássy Gyula élete és pályája*, 114–32.

with the Germans right up to the defeat in 1918. It is characteristic of him that even as late as the weeks of the collapse he warned his friend István Burián, common minister of foreign affairs, not to try alternatives, federal plans or experiments with a separate peace that would disregard Berlin. "We must not run after chimeras [...] we must safeguard confidential, permanent contacts with the Germans and do everything we can so that at the peace negotiations and the discussions preceding these the vital interests of the Hungarian nation find full understanding and support from the parts of Germany."¹⁷

As was shown by the brief delineation of the July 1914 crisis, Tisza's outstanding role in Hungarian political life, and, for a short period of time, his key role in Austro-Hungarian decision-making, came to the fore in particular because of the settling of the conditions of allied war co-operation with Germany. Finally, it must be underlined, too, that of the Balkan initiatives of the Hungarian prime minister the Germans agreed with him from the outset on the question of forging an alliance with Turkey and Bulgaria. In matters of the war and occupation in Serbia his standpoint was close to German claims. On the question of the war with Romania he differed sharply from the views of the German government, but the successful war with Romania provisionally proved him right. Whereas the Hungarian–German alliance he deemed to be destined and special would provide significant assistance in seeing that no foreign troops be stationed permanently in Hungary until armistice day, in concluding the peace it was exactly these close German–Hungarian relations which became one of the country's chief liabilities.

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17 István Tisza's letter to the minister of foreign affairs, István Burián. TIÖM, vol. 6. 10 October 1918. Gülstorff, "Da kann nur Tisza helfen!" 416.

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EXPANSIONISM OR SELF-DEFENCE? THE PLANS OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES AGAINST SERBIA (1913–1915)

Gábor Demeter

The present study investigates the changes in Austro-Hungarian concepts relating to Serbia after the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913.¹ The two extremist concepts mentioned in the title clearly mark the range of diverse opinions in Austria–Hungary regarding the Serbian problem. After 1903 Serbia was considered not only as a barrier to Austro-Hungarian economic penetration into the peninsula, but as a growing threat to the existence of Hungarian statehood—at least according to Hungarian politicians. Plans for Serbia varied from conquering the state to temporary occupation, mutilation or total division of the country between her neighbours (with or without the participation of Austria–Hungary), with economic subjection as the least aggressive plan. The relevance of these plans depended on the relative strength of the numerous competing pressure groups, and was also influenced by the situation on the battlefields between 1912 and 1915.

This study focuses only on the activity of the “Magyars,” including the imperialistic tendencies of the press, and the attitude of a certain (“conservative”)²

1 The Hungarian version of this article was published in *Világtörténet* 37, no. 3 (2015): 391–408. Dániel Szabó's book of similar title deals with the ideas of the period 1915–18. Szabó, *A magyar álláspontok helye*. See also: Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*.

2 In fact, they were liberal-nationalists, like the party of Brătianu in Romania. But we use the term “conservative,” as they wanted to conserve the given political situation in Austria–Hungary, being strong supporters of dualism and opponents of trialism and of universal suffrage.

group of decision-makers including Baron István Burián and Count István Tisza. The numerous pressure groups had different concepts regarding foreign policy, and their rivalry did not increase the efficiency of executive power. The group mentioned deserves our interest because, having been rather uninformed in 1913, and without consolidated, influential positions, by 1915 it had managed to take control of almost all the key positions of decision-making. In 1912 Burián—who had considerable experience in Balkan affairs after his missions to Sofia and Athens³—lost his position as joint minister of finance. This meant the weakening of Hungarian influence on foreign policy and in Bosnia too. His colleague, Lajos Thallóczy, as a civilian official, was forced to balance between Biliński, the new joint minister of finance, and the Hungarian pressure group. Although István Tisza envisioned a concept for foreign policy serving Hungarian interests, until mid-1913 he lacked proper information and power. After having been appointed to the position of Hungarian prime minister again, Tisza immediately employed Burián as minister for mediation between the emperor and the Hungarian government, thus restoring the formal positions of the pressure group and the accessibility to confidential information. Burián finally became minister of foreign affairs in 1915 after the fall of Berchtold—whose policy was continuously being criticized by Burián (partly because of his dismissal from Bosnia, and partly because their foreign policy intentions were in opposition). Finally, Thallóczy became civil governor of occupied Serbia in 1915.

It was the death of Francis Ferdinand and the failure of Berchtold in the two Balkan Wars that strongly contributed to the emergence of this pressure group. Nonetheless, their opinion did not coincide in all cases. Burián was a supporter of appeasement with Russia,⁴ while Tisza neglected this question and focused on the Balkans. He wanted to use Bulgaria to counterbalance Romanian aspirations for Transylvania. This meant that his ideas were in

3 Consul in Sofia, later ambassador to Athens in 1897–1903. See also Okey, “A Trio of Hungarian Balkanists” which discusses the question of the Hungarian pressure group in a similar manner.

4 From 1849 onwards, the Hungarians’ and Andrassy’s greatest fear was a Russian takeover in the peninsula, promoting the self-consciousness of Slavs in the Dual State and checkmating Austria–Hungary. His successor inherited this fear of pan-Slavism.

contradiction with the plans of an allied Germany: the latter wanted to establish Greek–Romanian cooperation on the peninsula.

The ideas of other groups, including the political circles of Franz Ferdinand, or the army (Beck, Conrad, Krobatin, Hoyos, Sarkotić), or those who supported German policy (partially Berchtold) are not discussed here (for their plans, see *Figure 1*); the focus is on the activity of the aforementioned *triumvirate*. But it is worth mentioning that the constant rivalry between these groups decreased the efficiency of foreign policy—both the joint minister of finance, like Kállay and Burián, and the minister of foreign affairs tended to pursue their own foreign policy in the Balkans instead of reinforcing it.

Extremist expansionism was not a typical feature of this group. They might have believed in Hungarian political and cultural superiority over the Balkans, but their imperialistic tendencies were “only” of economic character. The Eastern Academy of Trade and Commerce (Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia) provided the institutional background for these economic ideas. The politicians’ activity was driven by certain fears more than by territorial expansion. The political élite considered Serbia a constant threat to the integrity of the Hungarian statehood due to Serbian propaganda. Thus they agreed on the necessity of a possible preventive war—in this respect they took a similar stand to Conrad—but the conquest and annexation propagated by the latter (*Figure 1*) was against their interests.

The propagation of expansionism came from the “Magyar” middle class, not from the political élite, and was expressed in popular articles in the press. Famous entrepreneur Rezső Havass was one of the founders of Hungarian political geography and geopolitics. He wrote the following: “we have not any colonies as yet, and we have not enough power to compete with other nations in distant continents to gain economic supremacy over our rivals, but the neighbouring Balkan peninsula can offer us hegemony in this economic space ranging from the Black Sea to the Aegean.”⁵ In general, he was thinking of economic penetration and gaining cultural supremacy in this region: “Budapest should be the Paris of the Balkans; let us spread Hungarian economic and

5 Quoted by Ábrahám, “A Balkán képe.” *Regio* 18, no. 2 (2007): 47–78.

mental forces over the peninsula.”⁶ The arguments of the editor of *Vasárnapi Ujság* (Sunday News), Pál Hoitsy, were of academic character, but aggressive. In his rhetoric, popular scholarship was used to support political ideas. He argued that the Carpathian Basin⁷ is opened towards the south hydrogeographically, so whoever established a state here would be forced into expansionism forever.⁸ “Nature itself delimited the necessary boundaries of the Hungarian states, towards the watershed of the Alps, including the territory of Dalmatia, Bosnia and Serbia, and towards the Balkan mountains, including Bulgaria and the lower basin of the Danube, towards the Danube Delta. The country will not expand beyond this line.”

A teacher at the Academy of Eastern Commerce and Trade⁹ (which could be considered as the institutional embodiment of Hungarian imperialistic tendencies), Dezső Szegh pointed out in his work that

“the Berlin Congress did prevent some international calamities, but could not settle the Eastern Question, and, with its hidden thoughts, and open doors, created the acute Balkan Question... The economic positions of the Dual Monarchy had been deteriorating since the Berlin Congress, with no advances gained, but with positions abandoned. Therefore, it is not surprising that in its political actions this state functioned only as stuffing. In order to realize Hungarian claims, we also have to fight with Austria. If the Ballhausplatz finally recognises that Austria–Hungary should turn into a Great Power while looking to the East, then the realization of this idea could be carried out together with protecting Hungarian interests, which is also in the interest of the Dual State.”¹⁰

6 Ibid.

7 This term was quite unknown in European geography (the term ‘Pannonian Basin’ was more common) and was applied mainly in geology (although the theory of the Tisia block—which this term relied on—later proved to be false). Nowadays this term is not used by neighbouring countries (successor states) due to its implicit political meaning.

8 See: Hoitsy, *Nagymagyarország*, 26.

9 Among its teachers we may mention Ignác Kúnos or Adolf Strausz, the Hungarian propagator of the Mitteleuropa Plan, and among the students there was Mátyás Rákosi, the later communist leader.

10 Szegh, *Magyarország a Balkánon*, 5–6.

Similar thoughts were expressed by Lajos Lóczy, the leading Hungarian physical geographer. "Lóczy now expressed his pleasure that the Balkan Wars put an end to this pending Turkish question. A great area has been liberated for the purposes of economy and science. We have only had iron ore for 80 years. We still have coal, but we need the coalfields in Bosnia for Hungarian industry. Salt and petroleum can also be found in Bosnia," Thallóczy wrote in his diary. Capital for this exploitation could have been supplied by Leo Lánczy (a banker with relations to the Rimamurány Iron Co.). The debate over the exploitation of the iron ore in Prijedor and the direction of Bosnian railway lines is further testimony to this internal rivalry between the different parts of the Habsburg Monarchy (*Figure 2*).¹¹ The Hungarian lobby¹² could count on more and more officials with pro-Hungarian sentiments in Bosnia due to the activity of the joint ministers of finance of Hungarian origin.

The country was mesmerized by its imaginary superiority. But from the political left a different tone arose. László Rubin, associate of the left-leaning scholar Ervin Szabó, interpreted this "scientifically confirmed superiority and 'chosenness' that gave an authorization to intervene into Balkan affairs" as a false indoctrination, refuting these ideas emerging from the rank of political doctrines (re)presented by Havass, Hoitsy or Lóczy. As a witness of the attempt of the Dual Monarchy to create the Albanian state, he wrote the following:

We wanted to establish a colony. Our megalomaniac dreams have almost been fulfilled. This masterpiece of the art of violence, haste, clumsiness and lack of principles was observed by the author of these lines from the first row, because he was appointed as civil governor of the area in the name of General Können-Horák, who rather acted like a 'Tischlermeister' twit. The main goal was the establishment of bureaucratization. The new statehood was indeed manifested

11 *Országos Széchényi Könyvtár. Néhai Dr. Thallóczy Lajos osztályfőnök hátrahagyott iratai sztenographált részének átírása*. Fol. Hung. 1677. Bosniaca VIII/7. (hereafter Thallóczy's journals), 303, 320–29, 254, 330–31. November 21, 1912. For the debate over the Prijedor iron mines, see also Burián's diary (Horváth and Tenke, *Báró Burián István naplói*, 82). For the debate on the railways see: Sándorffy, "Bosznia-Hercegovina vasúthálózata", 152–56.

12 This included officials and propagandists, as well as economic theoreticians, Dezső Szegh, orientalist-adventurer Adolf Strausz from the Academy for Eastern Trade, Ödön (von) Horváth or the journalist Géza Lengyel. The link between them was Thallóczy or the Academy.

in bureaucratization. Albania soon became flooded by so many military officials that the proportion of officers reached one for each hundred sheep. The highest levels of administration were immediately established. In Scutari, hundreds of k.u.k. officers were stationed and garrisoned and who grew ideas and produced documents. You could see them hurrying in the streets, holding plans under their arms; each was an 'Albanienkenner' who had arrived from the West yesterday to solve the Eastern Question by tomorrow. For these plenty of officers, new palace-like barracks were erected to store these documents. The age of documents has arrived in a country where nobody could write and read. Hundreds of orders were issued, which were not executed, because nobody could read them, and no one dared enter the central parts of the country called the 'Sauland'. The structure of administration was similar to an upside-down pyramid. ... In Scutari, each case, like collecting turtles, forestry or mining, had a special reference person, but nobody collected frogs and turtles, nobody dared go to the woods, and the mines did not exist at all.¹³

This "testimony" was one of the rare overt expressions of the colonial plans of the Dual Monarchy (often refuted by historians). Although the word *colonization* had already been put down in writing by civic officials a decade before,¹⁴ the picture drawn by the Austro-Hungarian method of state-building, which was "bureaucratization at first, second and last," was a rather sad, but also funny one.

The good people looked upon us as the bearers/manifestations of impartial justice and rigour. And we flooded the land with the Hungarian gendarmerie, who were sniffing out spies everywhere and seeing political opponents in everyone. While the robbers and burglars were running away, Hungarian policemen were, together with the Czech auditors, creating political show trials, and the most occupied person happened to be the ketch.¹⁵

13 See: Rubin, "Albánia állammá alakulása," 135–41.

14 The term "colonization" also appeared after the death of Kállay, but prior to the annexation of Bosnia (in connection with Kállay's failure to create the "Bosnian" nation in order to decrease Serbian influence). Gratz, "Bosznia Kállay halála korában," 376.

15 Rubin, "Albánia állammá alakulása," 135–41.

These considerations did not mean the necessity of a conquest of Serbia, but definitely implied its economic subjection, forcing the country to return to its former policy (from prior to 1903).

Baron István Burián, then minister appointed to the king, summarized the political situation after the Bucharest Peace Treaty (August 10, 1913) in the following words:¹⁶

Berchtold is tainted by the thought of exploiting the situation—in which Bulgaria is so desperate and Serbia is so exhausted—to enter into a showdown with the latter [whatever this might mean], saying that “within few years people will blame me, that I failed to exploit this possibility.” Taking into consideration the problems of our domestic affairs I would not consider this to be a good political idea, even if Bulgaria would be in a different situation, as we had originally calculated. We cannot attack and dismember Serbia, because we cannot take our part of the deal anywhere, while the justness of Bulgarian aspirations would not be acknowledged by anyone in Europe.

This short note on the events tells us that (1) the Hungarian and Austrian plans did not coincide; (2) the two Balkan Wars did not ameliorate the positions of Austria–Hungary; (3) a showdown with Serbia gave plenty of scope for different combinations. This included (a) a war without annexation to smash the military potential of the country, (b) the annexation of Serbia, (c) the mutilation or total dismemberment of Serbia without the participation of Austria–Hungary, (d) the mutilation or total dismemberment of Serbia with the participation of Austria–Hungary, (e) the economic subjection of Serbia. Between 1913 and 1915 each of these was a viable alternative, and their realization depended on the foreign political situation and the relative power of different pressure groups.

Burián's opinion was that although the declaration of independence of Albania and Serbia's retreat from the Adriatic Sea was a success, the Second Balkan War had resulted in a huge loss of prestige for Austria–Hungary.¹⁷

16 See: *Bárá Burián István naplói*, 69. July 28, 1913.

17 *Bárá Burián István naplói*, 71. August 16, 1913.

The only possible solution to events would be now [after the Bucharest Peace Treaty], when the Powers are against any revision, to undertake an attack on Serbia (following the Romanian example on Bulgaria), forcing it to withdraw from Bulgarian inhabited territories. Probably this would not mean a war. But such an act would require the ability to react: good diplomatic leadership, the subjection of military aspects [the annihilation of Serbia] to political decision-making... and financial readiness.¹⁸

Each of these circumstances were missing and this was well known by Burián. His assumption—that an attack on Serbia could not initiate a world war—might have been dubious, but it was evident that he did not feel the time to be opportune for the destruction of Serbia.

If anyone wanted to destroy Serbia, a good pretext had to be found, some provocation that would give at least ostensible justification for the Austrian step to be taken.¹⁹

The dismemberment of Serbia was not a new concept (see *Figure 1*). We also know Bulgarian maps from 1913 that completely dismembered Serbia, splitting it between Romania, Bulgaria and Austria–Hungary (*Figure 3*). The diary of Lajos Thallóczy also gives an account of the promises of Austria–Hungary to Bulgaria in the case of a Bulgarian–Serbian clash. Tsar Ferdinand was promised military aid even in the case of defeat at the hands of Serbia. But—unlike Tsar Ferdinand’s offer—even this straightforward diary does not contain any ideas on the mutilation or dismemberment of Serbia after the Balkan Wars.²⁰

However, military aid contradicted the interests of Austria–Hungary. “We cannot bind our forces and alliance to Bulgaria. They will fulfil their function as the enemy of Serbia—which is important for us—even without support, because it is their destiny. But working together with Bulgaria—which ruined everything—is impossible.”²¹ This concept of Burián was soon overshadowed

18 Ibid., August 14, 1913.

19 For a thorough analysis of the Hungarian stance during the First World War, see Imre Röss on the later periods. Röss, “Das Königreich Ungarn in ersten Weltkrieg,” 1095–1163.

20 See: Thallóczy’s journals, IX/1, 500, April 19, 1913 and XI/2, 581, July 4, 1913. Here the reoccupation of the sanjak of Novi Pazar and a joint border with Albania was also mentioned.

21 *Báró Burián István naplói*, 71. August 24, 1913.

by Romania's reluctant behaviour towards the Dual Monarchy, and Tisza became the propagator of cooperation with Bulgaria.

Serbia was able to play a key role in the foreign policy of Austria–Hungary not only because of its propaganda in Bosnia or in Vojvodina, which enhanced the centrifugal tendencies in this multi-ethnic empire, and not only because of the economic interests of the Dual Monarchy—several plans existed to isolate or bypass Serbia economically. It was the changing geopolitical situation and increasing Russian penetration that overvalued Serbia and Bulgaria. Prior to 1903 Romania and Serbia were lining up along the southern frontiers as buffer states of Austria–Hungary. By 1913 these had become hostile towards Austria–Hungary, which had to create a new buffer zone (*Figure 4*). This gave an opportunity for Bulgaria to appear on the political map again: the Hungarian pressure group—having no trust in the future behaviour of Romania²²—became the propagator of an autonomous or independent Albania and of closer cooperation with Bulgaria. “Berchtold remains silent about the weakening of our positions, supposing that there was no change in the relative strength of Austria–Hungary on the one side and Romania and Serbia on the other,”²³ summarized Burián.

This also means that the plans of the pressure group in question were in contradiction to the official policy of the Triplice.

This involuntary path in foreign policy coincided with the economic needs of the Dual State: the isolation of Serbia was important not only for military reasons, or to weaken the enemy economically; the Dual Monarchy proposed its new railway lines towards the Aegean Sea along the Albanian coast in order to bypass Serbia and the Otranto Straits in order to reach the Via Egnatia through Valona and Monastir. This concept—including the will to control the river Danube down to the Danube Delta and together with a proposal aiming to connect the Danube with Saloniki through the construction of a channel between the Morava and Vardar rivers—was summarized by theoretician Adolf Strausz (teacher at the Eastern Academy of Commerce) in 1917.²⁴

22 “*Rumänien ist durchgegangen*,” admitted Burián in his diary in 1913.

23 Bárió Burián István *napló*i, 79. November 18, 1913.

24 Strausz, *Grossbulgarien*, 180–90.

This was the fourth plan that Austria–Hungary tried to realize. The first—the economic outlet through the Belgrade–Saloniki railway line—failed in 1903 after the Serbian political turn. The second was the Sanjak railway project, abandoned in 1908 and hindered again in 1913 by the allied Germans after Austria–Hungary refused to accept German conditions for the necessary loans. The third failure was the Romanian attack on Bulgaria, which dashed plans to reach the port of Kavala through Romania and Bulgaria.

In order to realize the fourth plan, that of reaching the Via Egnatia, a friendly Albania and a landlocked Serbia left without any maritime outlet was required. It is not surprising that in October 1913 the Dual Monarchy did not hesitate to stop the Serbian advance in Albania. “What would we do if Serbia was—even temporarily—to occupy Albanian territories? We would occupy part of Serbia as a counterstep. I heard many opposition arguments, especially that the soldiers would only march if the annihilation of Serbia was at stake. I guess this is not necessary, but it would be a political mistake indeed,” wrote Burián.²⁵ Before analyzing the Hungarian fears behind this “relatively peaceful” attitude (especially compared to the behaviour of the “war eagles”), it is worth mentioning that the k.u.k. army was mobilized four times during the two Balkan Wars, meaning 1 billion francs in additional expenditure, almost 16% of the total budget!²⁶ The Habsburg Monarchy was poor in capital, and was only able to cover these expenses with credit. But domestic banks were no longer keen to finance an army that had not even shot a gun. (The Balkan Wars cost twice as much for the Bulgarians, even though they only fought for eight months.) Foreign (German) financial support would have serious political and economic consequences, reducing Austria–Hungary’s ability to manoeuvre. Behind the militant attitude of the army, this economic aspect has also to be taken into consideration. Attacking Serbia without making any territorial gains was simply not profitable; at least some economic consequences had to be achieved.

The concept of the economic subjection of Serbia was not a new one: prior to the “pig war” of 1906, Serbia was bound economically to Austria–Hungary. A desire for the reinstalment of strict control over Serbia emerged again in

25 *Báró Burián István naplói*, 73, October 7, 1913.

26 *Thallóczy's journals*, XI/1, 486.

1913 as compensation for Serbian territorial expansion. If we analyze these demands (official renouncement from Bosnia; the disbandment of the Narodna Odbrana; territorial compensation for Austria–Hungary in the sanjak of Novipazar around Plevlje and Prijepolje as the hinterland of the sanjak railway project; the acquisition of the Montenegrin Lovćen mountain to secure the planned railway lines and the harbours towards Albania; the creation the Užice–Vardište railway line to connect Bosnia with Serbia, with a junction towards River Morava; free trade till 1917, then a customs union; the creation of the Sarajevo–Mitrovica–Saloniki line, under the auspices of Austrian entrepreneurs, within six years), we may come to the conclusion that many of these were economic in character, and their realization would have been tantamount to the complete economic subjection of Serbia.²⁷ If we compare these demands to the ultimatum of 1914, from an economic aspect hardly any differences can be seen.

Burián thought that Austro-Hungarian neutrality should have been sold at a high price in 1912–1913, and then all these demands could have been realized.²⁸ Berchtold had the right aims (Albania), but his instruments and measures were not adequate for this purpose.²⁹ Although he was sure that an Austro-Hungarian intervention would not result in the escalation of warfare, this assumption remained untested. In 1913 all six Great Powers wanted peace. It was the contradiction of interests that emerged during the peaceful settling of the questions debated that would indeed prove that the concert of Powers no longer

27 Thallóczy's journals, XI/1. 398–400. January 9, 1913.

28 Burián was forgetting about the contradictions and asymmetric interdependence in the alliance politics of Austria–Hungary: the German support was not unconditional. To realize the sanjak railway and other plans, Austria–Hungary needed credit, owing to the lack of domestic finance. In 1912–1913 Germany offered a loan and diplomatic support on the proviso that German materials be used during the construction work. But Austro-Hungarian circles protested against this—the Salgótarján–Rimamurány Iron Works and the banker Leó Lánczy claimed that the construction should be based on domestic raw materials and had to rely on domestic firms (as they were also able to carry out such a project). Politicians were angered when Germany wanted to enforce similar financial conditions on the Dual State as they did on small states in the Balkans. Finally, the Germans withdrew their proposal for a loan, and the Dual State, in the absence of diplomatic and financial support, had to withdraw from the railway plan.

29 *Bárá Burián István naplói*, 79. November 24, 1913.

functioned. In 1914, in a similar situation, neither of the Powers considered non-intervention to be a solution to the stalemate any longer.

But the main problem lay not in unsatisfied economic demands. Public opinion saw Serbia as a constant threat to the integrity of the Dual Monarchy. In Bosnia and Croatia the opinion quickly spread that the next king would be named Petar:³⁰ a conflict with Serbia seemed to be more and more realistic day by day, and even within political circles it was supposed to be a struggle for the survival of Austria–Hungary. The attack on Serbia in 1914 was therefore labelled as self-defence, even if it was indeed a preventive attack. “The showdown will begin the minute we are prepared to it. It will be a struggle for survival, both for the Dual Monarchy and for Hungary as well,”³¹ wrote Burián.

So, most of the diplomats saw a war with Serbia as unavoidable, although the date, pretext, goals and consequences of this remained unclear. What then was the original reason for Tisza to oppose the idea of war, and what made him change his mind? In his letter to Francis Joseph dated July 1, he warned that he would consider war a fatal mistake and did not want to share the responsibility for it. “Up to now we have no evidence to consider the Serbian state responsible [for the murder of the heir presumptive] [...] we would initiate a war under the worst circumstances. [...] I think this is very unfortunate timing, as we have been unable to substitute for the loss of Romania, and the only state we could count on, Bulgaria, is exhausted.”³²

The Hungarian pressure group (Tisza, Burián, Thallóczy) considered Bulgaria much too important as a counterweight to Romanian aspirations for Transylvania than to sacrifice it as a consequence of settling the Serbian question, while Berchtold did not refrain from such an act. “I warned Berchtold,” Burián wrote, “to refrain from the idea of giving a free hand to Romania against Bulgaria, if—in turn—Romania gives us a free hand against Serbia.”³³

30 Ibid., 100. May 22, 1914. The Hungarian side severely criticized official foreign policy and Berchtold personally. Burián had a crucial role in this, as he felt insulted after his removal from the position of joint minister of finance. He thought that Franz Ferdinand was behind Berchtold (this was only partly true), and therefore Burián attacked both of them.

31 *Báró Burián István naplói*, 106. July 1, 1914.

32 *Tisza István írásai és beszédei 1888–1918*, (hereafter TIÖM). Vol. 5, no. 433.

33 Burián’s letter to Tisza, June 16, 1914. MREZsLt, 44 a fond, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 47, item no. 66–67.

Diószegi wrote that Tisza had been afraid of upsetting the balance between the two constituents of the Dual State.³⁴ Both a victorious war and a failure could have disturbed the equilibrium, and this could have threatened the position of the Hungarians and the system of dualism itself. Tisza did not consider the murder of the heir apparent serious enough to establish a *casus belli* until the complicity of the Serbian state was proved. Vermes went further, claiming that Tisza thought an anti-Serbian coalition could still be realized, and that this would ameliorate the positions of Austria–Hungary without resorting to warfare.³⁵

We cannot fully agree with this opinion, since the Germans only tolerated an alliance with Bulgaria in order to make Tisza change his mind regarding the question of war. In case of a peaceful outcome of events, Germany would never have supported such a pro-Bulgarian idea from Hungarian groups.³⁶ Conrad von Hötzendorf wrote that Tisza's hesitation was caused by the fear of a Russian attack, and that Germany would not come to the support of the Monarchy if this happened.³⁷ Berchtold thought that Tisza feared a Romanian attack on Transylvania in the event of war.³⁸ In order to ease Tisza's anxiety, therefore, Berchtold convinced Francis Joseph—who was also willing to enter into a fight—to write a letter to Kaiser Wilhelm on July 5, containing the principles of Austria–Hungary's Balkan policy.

The letter had two aims: to win Germany for an alliance with Bulgaria, and to make it clear whether or not Austria–Hungary could count on Germany in a war against Serbia. Tisza was noticed by Berchtold on July 6 about the position of Germany in these questions. "We can count on the wholehearted

34 Tisza was against of annexation of Serbia because—as he admitted in his retrospective speech at the Parliament on October 22, 1918, "it would have meant weakening and complications for the Dual Monarchy instead of strengthening it." Diószegi, *A Ballhausplatzi palota*.

35 Vermes, *Tisza István*, 246. See also: Bertényi, *Tisza István*.

36 The Greeks would have never accepted such a coalition of the Triplice in which Bulgaria was included, and Greece was important for Germany. There was another confrontation between German policy and Tisza's initiatives: in order to win Romania Germany would have sacrificed even Transylvania (not only Bukovina!) to his cause against the *Entente*, while Tisza wanted to keep the province, that is why he was searching for a counterweight against Romania.

37 Conrad, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, vol. 4, 34.

38 TIÖM, vol. 5, no. 433.

support of Germany against Serbia. Russia is unprepared. We should not let this favourable opportunity go unexploited." In his diary, Thallóczy added: the Kaiser wrote that Austria–Hungary should not fear Romanian attack, but at the same time warned that this was possibly the last chance for this, because after the death of ageing King Carol no one would be able to deter Romania from intervention without offering territorial compensations³⁹ (which meant Transylvania, as the offer of Bukovina proved inadequate).

Despite these assurances, prior to the joint *Ministerrat* on July 7, Tisza still maintained that "everything has to be done to avoid the violation of the sovereignty of Serbia, which could lead to a war. If you want the latter, the emperor has to find a new prime minister to do it."⁴⁰ During the council of ministers he also refrained from an immediate attack prior to any diplomatic intervention, as recommended by Berchtold and Krobatin and also supported by Biliński. Having German support behind him, Berchtold remained surprisingly stable and steady, unlike his hesitant behaviour during the Balkan Wars. He had nothing to lose: he knew that another failure against Serbia would be his last—the Hungarian lobby would enforce his dismissal. Contrary to Berchtold, Tisza was thinking of diplomatic steps first: "we have to express our demands against Serbia, but an ultimatum is only necessary if these are refused. These demands have to be tough, but not humiliating or unacceptable. If Serbia accepts them, then we will enjoy a diplomatic success and our prestige in the Balkans will be restored." Tisza probably had in mind the economic demands outlined above. If Serbian promises did not meet the demands, Tisza was willing to support the military solution, but only on one condition: the attack could not have the aim of annihilating Serbia; only its mutilation could be acceptable.⁴¹ The members of the council opposing Tisza claimed that "a mere diplomatic success, even if it resulted in the humiliation of Serbia, would be useless [would only serve to increase revanchism], and therefore it would be wise to come up with demands that could not be fulfilled, thus paving the way for military intervention."⁴²

39 Hauptmann and Prasch, *Tagebücher*, 36. July 7, 1914.

40 TIÖM, vol. 5, no. 433.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

The Austrians—criticizing the alliance policy of Hungarian conservatives—were of the opinion that the “simple” humiliation of Serbia would not change anything: neither its relationship towards Austria–Hungary, nor the relationship of other Balkan states towards the Dual State and Serbia. Bulgaria would still have unfulfilled aspirations regarding Macedonia, and Austria–Hungary could lose control over Bulgaria, as it had done a year before,⁴³ while military expenditure would be too high without bringing any results. So, the Dual Monarchy could (again) gain nothing, and therefore Hungarian Balkan policy was considered flawed.

Burián positioned himself in-between Tisza and the others—his opinion was that the annihilation of Serbia was unnecessary, but that the policy of Austria–Hungary should be based on securing the way towards Albania, and thus the points laid down early in 1913 could be renewed, together with the claims on the sanjak of Novipazar. But Berchtold thought this would only further anger Serbia, which could still count on Russia, even if the country was ravaged.⁴⁴ Therefore the only solution was annihilation. This could be carried out by the annexation of Serbia, which would immediately trigger Hungarian opposition, or by its dismemberment and dividing it among its neighbours, which was not refused by Hungarians.

However, the editor of the text of the ultimatum, Alexander Musulin, pointed out that the concept of moderate demands had won. So—with the exception of some pessimists—everybody at the Ballhausplatz thought that Serbia would be willing to accept these.⁴⁵ Thallóczy gave a detailed account of the behaviour of the “war eagles,” who feared the fulfilment of the demands. Burián himself admitted that even if Serbia was willing to accept the ultimatum, the Dual Monarchy would have no coercive measure to control its execution

43 “Tisza sees this diplomatic success as an instrument for the strengthening of our position in the Balkans, while, even regarding the diplomatic successes of 1909 and 1912, I am of the opinion that these were futile in the long run, and contributed to the deterioration of our relations with Serbia, and therefore I am very sceptical about the results of another pure diplomatic success ... and Stürgkh agrees with me.” *Österreich–Ungarns Aussenpolitik* (hereafter Ö-U.A.), vol. 8, no. 10459. Berchtold to Mérey.

44 Hauptmann and Prasch, *Tagebücher*, 36. July 7, 1914.

45 TIÖM, vol. 5, no. 434.

—with the exception of the army, but this would also mean war.⁴⁶ When Sándor Popovics mentioned that the budget deficit would be 400 million francs even without any military intervention,⁴⁷ constituting 6% of total expenditure, and the costs of the mobilization of an army corps for three months would mean an extra expenditure of 1,100 million francs, reaching 16% of the budget, it became clear that the events of the previous year could be repeated. Mobilization without war was a waste of time and money. If Serbia refused the ultimatum (and without preliminary mobilization it would surely do so), the only coercive measure could be an attack or a mobilization. Therefore—for military-financial purposes—everyone was sticking to the one-step procedure (an ultimatum as beginning and end), with the exception of Tisza, who wanted a two-step method. As mediator, Burián had an idea as to how to solve the financial problems. If the Serbs accepted the ultimatum only after the mobilization, they had to pay the costs. If they refused to do so—the costs amounted to as much as the six-year budget for Serbia–Austria–Hungary would occupy territories neighbouring Albania and the Lovćen mountain⁴⁸ until Serbia repaid the costs. This could satisfy those wanting territorial expansion, while at the same time promoting the realization of the Hungarian political-economic concept as well.

“Tisza pointed out that he would give his consent to the one-step method [the ultimatum] on one condition: if—before the ultimatum was delivered—the council of ministers were to declare that Austria–Hungary does not intend to gain Serbian territories with the exception of minor modifications to borders,” wrote Berchtold to Francis Joseph. The report of German ambassador Tschirschky reveals Berchtold’s insincere behaviour on this question: “if the Serbs accepted our demands, this would result a very inconvenient situation for him [Berchtold], and therefore he was constantly thinking of new demands, unacceptable for Serbia.”⁴⁹

46 Hauptmann and Prasch, *Tagebücher*, 59. July 20, 1914.

47 Ibid., 23.

48 Without a declaration of war, this seemed impossible, as this was Montenegrin territory!

49 It is evident from Thallóczy’s diary that many of the diplomats were against Serbian acceptance of the ultimatum. Hauptmann and Prasch, *Tagebücher*, 49. July 20, 1914.

Tisza's stance went through major modifications between July 3 (when he only wanted the humiliation of Serbia) and July 14 (when he accepted that Serbia should be mutilated), although he still did not agree with the annexation of Serbia. We have already enumerated his arguments for refusing to countenance a war; we now enumerate the arguments that forced him to accept it.

In Galántai's opinion, it was German approval of the Bulgarian alliance and Berlin's promises to hinder Romanian entry into war that made Tisza accept the violent solution.⁵⁰ Vermes claims that Tisza feared the loss of Germany's friendship.⁵¹ This could have meant that the Dual Monarchy and Hungary would have become politically and militarily defenceless (for this reason Tisza himself also supported the renewal of the Triple Alliance in 1913). Berchtold manipulated Tisza⁵² when he interpreted the German point of view as being that Austria–Hungary's hesitant behaviour would influence the future alliance policy of Germany.⁵³

Diószegi pointed out that the Hungarian prime minister (or a Hungarian foreign minister) only had room for manoeuvre in this dualistic system if he could rely either on the court or on the parliament. But both the former and Hungarian public opinion took the side of the war party during the crisis of July 1914. Everybody was convinced that, if the Hungarian premier resigned, his successor would immediately support the ultimatum (and the war).⁵⁴ We may add another argument: the position of Austria–Hungary among the southern Slavs of the empire was weakening. The patriotism of the Croats became reduced to their anti-Serbism (owing to their rivalry over contested territories). The Hungarian government did not want further to weaken its diminishing prestige with a tolerant attitude towards the Serbs. The Bosnians also attacked the Balkan policy of Austria–Hungary during the internal

50 Galántai, *Magyarország az első világháborúban*, 93. and Vermes, *Tisza István*, 249–50.

51 When the Germans withdrew their idea of handing Transylvania over to Romania in order to win its political benevolence, Tisza implicitly accepted the possibility of war. (Tisza propagated the Bulgarian alliance for the Germans, claiming that Bulgaria could also counter-balance the loss of Romania.)

52 Fay, *Der Ursprung des Weltkriegs*, vol. 2, 170.

53 Vermes, *Tisza István*, 248. According to Diószegi, the fear of losing the German alliance was the main cause of Tisza's *volte-face*. (See: Diószegi, "Tisza István és a világháború.")

54 Diószegi, "Tisza István és a világháború," 283–87.

debates of 1912, claiming that, while autonomy had been promised to the Albanians, and the principle of nationality—"the Balkans for the Balkan peoples"⁵⁵—was generally accepted by Tisza, the southern Slavs within Austria–Hungary had not received anything similar.

As a result of the next council of ministers on July 14, the text of the ultimatum changed. "Berchtold accepted it, but Stürgkh, Forgách and me felt it too soft," wrote Burián. The final text was accepted on July 19. As Tisza wrote to the historian Henrik Marczali on January 25, 1918, he accepted the idea of an ultimatum, but he was the one who tried to moderate its text.⁵⁶

Berchtold finally decided—as the Hungarians played with the Russian card—"to warn the Powers immediately, in the event of the outbreak of war, that Austria–Hungary did not fight for territorial expansion, and did not plan to incorporate the Serbian Kingdom. But this did not exclude border corrections based on strategic considerations, or the concession of Serbian territories to other states, and the temporary occupation of Serbian areas."⁵⁷ But Berchtold was incorrect when he forwarded the ultimatum. He delivered an arbitrary interpretation of the text to St. Petersburg, adding: "as long as the war between Serbia and Austria–Hungary remains localized, the Dual Monarchy does not anticipate territorial conquest." With this step, Berchtold simply wanted to secure Russian neutrality, but this meant an additional condition, one that was refused by the Russians. Furthermore, by "border corrections" he meant something different from the Hungarians. Thallóczy's diary mentions that on July 19, 1914 Berchtold and Biliński recommended the acquisition of Belgrade (!) and Šabac as border corrections (which was also at odds with plans to regain the sanjak of Novipazar), and did not forget to compensate Romania and Bulgaria with Serbian territories.⁵⁸

55 See his speech in *Budapesti Hírlap*, June 20, 1913. Nonetheless, this principle was expressed only to avoid the intervention of powers (especially of Russia) in Balkan affairs. Tisza himself (as a conservative liberal applying the French constitutional model, he thought that equal individual rights were enough to secure the free development of nationalities) was against the self-government (and positive discrimination) of nationalities within Hungary.

56 TIÖM, vol. 5, no. 434.

57 Ibid., no. 436.

58 Ö-U.A. vol. 8, no. 10389.

Those supporting the idea of energetic steps to be taken argued that “Serbia could not pursue a fair policy toward us, because she was convinced that she could do anything because Russia would defend her. This belief or legend has to be tested, because we cannot live any longer in these circumstances. [...] a new era will begin, as it was at Valmy.”⁵⁹ This means they were aware of the possible consequences, including that of Russian intervention. “Hoyos, who was sent by the Emperor’s letter to Germany, “caught fire” and annexed Serbia. Tisza poured cold water on them (at the joint council of ministers) and led them back to the realities. The King agrees with your idea of avoiding the annexation of any Serbian territories.”⁶⁰ This statement was necessary not only to decrease the likelihood of Russian intervention, but also to moderate Italian demands for compensation.⁶¹

So the politicians of Austria–Hungary primarily wanted to break out from the diplomatic stalemate by means of an attack on Serbia; secondly, they wanted to punish the unruly state for the murder (this was the ideological basis for intervention). Territorial advantages were not among the major goals—this was confirmed by the fact that the various positions regarding territorial claims were not consistent.

The group of Hungarians analyzed did not expect the annexation of Serbia at all. There is no sign of this in the diaries of Burián or Thallóczy prior to 1914: whenever they mentioned plans for the partition of Serbia, they immediately added that this was not their idea, or that it should be executed by other small Balkan states. At the outbreak of the war their ideas were quite moderate compared to the others. This changed radically only after 1916. It is true that the annexation of Mačva and Negotin appeared in Burián’s diary early in November 1914, but this was a small, although geostrategically significant, area.⁶² This territory was needed to secure the connection between Hungary and Bulgaria (plans were even elaborated for a railway connection to Turkey), while at the same time separating the inimical Romania and Serbia. The region was rich in natural resources (ores), which were needed by the army and industrial network

59 *Báró Burián István naplói*, 108. July 22, 1914.

60 *Ibid.*, 106–7, July 7 and 12, 1914.

61 *Ibid.*, 109. July 27, 1914.

62 *Ibid.*, 128–29. November 3, 1914. See the chapter written by Imre Ress.

of the Rimamurány–Salgótarján Iron Company; furthermore, it facilitated control of traffic on the river Danube towards Turkey. The annexation of Serbia to Hungary remained an unwelcome outcome, as it would have strengthened the Slavic element in the country and weakened “Magyar” supremacy. The incorporation of Serbia into the Austrian part of the monarchy was also an undesirable outcome, because it could have led to the federalization of Austria, and later to that of Hungary, or would have promoted the way to *trialism*, which was opposed by this pressure group. It could also have resulted in a change to the settled equilibrium between the constituents of the Dual Monarchy that was the basis of the legitimization of the Tisza party against the radical 48-ers. Such a change might have removed the Tisza party from political power.⁶³

But a war without any result was against the interests of soldiers and the banks. So this Hungarian group had to articulate a coherent and executable Balkan policy that was contrary to some of the conventional trends and that would make it possible to ameliorate the country’s worsening geopolitical situation (creating a new buffer zone along the southern borders to counterbalance the loss of Serbia and Romania), and that could be viable and profitable at least economically (as annexation was rejected by this group).

This lobby did not oppose the idea of territorial expansion, but wanted it to be not at Serbia’s cost. This was the core idea of the Albanian–Bulgarian buffer zone concept. In his memorandum (March 15, 1914), Tisza explained that the only viable way to ameliorate Austria’s position was the incorporation of Bulgaria into the Triple Alliance and the creation of a new Balkan League led by Bulgaria.⁶⁴ The realization of this plan could have prevented a war against Serbia. But this

63 The Hungarians were sticking to the agreement made in 1867 because any changes like the aforementioned trialism could create a multiplayer bargaining position in which any two parties could cooperate against the third (which, given the feelings of Franz Ferdinand, would be Hungary). In order to avoid isolation, Hungary would continuously have to give rights to the Slavs in Hungary. Tisza wanted to avoid such outcomes. He even refused the immediate broadening of suffrage and wanted to implement it only after the proportion of ethnic Hungarians grew to over 66% (in 1910, without Croatia, it was 50%). He thought twenty to thirty more years enough to achieve this, thinking that such an ethnic pattern would stabilize the country’s position (as well as his party’s power).

64 Ö-U.A. vol. 7, no. 9482.

plan was supported neither by Germany, nor by Hoyos, Conrad or Berchtold, at least not in peaceful circumstances, until the death of the heir apparent.

Therefore, this Hungarian group propagated the dismemberment of Serbia between her neighbours instead of its annexation. Burián wrote to Tisza on July 27, 1914: "The Romanian king is frightened and hesitating [as to whether to support Austria–Hungary or not, thus losing the opportunity either to acquire Transylvania or the Negotin district]. He is hungry for the Negotin district, but the Bucharest Peace Treaty forbade changes. For the future we may promise only that we will consider the balance of power between the Balkan states. So—in case we have the opportunity—not only Bulgaria can get a piece of Serbia, but so can Romania, Greece and Albania too."⁶⁵

Paradoxically, the notion of the mutilation of Serbia arose in 1914 because of the ally of Italy. The Italians wanted compensation even for a temporary occupation of Serbia, and even if there were no territorial concessions to Austria. The compensation for Italy would have been the Albanian Valona, which would have enabled Rome to close the Otranto Strait. "I guess we may give Valona to Italy, if Serbia loses Macedonia,"⁶⁶ its Albanian territories, Šabac, or the north-eastern parts of the country—those inhabited by Romanians. In this case Macedonia could be given to Bulgaria, southern Albania to Greece, and we could create a viable Albania around Skutari with Antivari acquired from Montenegro and including the sanjak of Novibazar. An independent Albania with common borders with Austria–Hungary would—together with the sharpening of the Greek–Italian rivalry—be adequate compensation for the rise in Italian power after its acquisition of Valona," wrote Tisza and Burián.⁶⁷ However, Thallóczy claimed Valona to be the key to a viable Albania and also a key position against Austria–Hungary, and thus—in his opinion—the loss of the Otranto Strait could not be compensated for by the acquisition of the sanjak of Novipazar.

65 Burián to Tisza, July 27, 1914. MREZsLt, 44 b fond Tisza–Balogh documents, batch no. 10a/9. no. 145–47.

66 In this case the Austrian railway project could have been realized through the sanjak and the new Bulgarian territories.

67 Tisza to Burián, July 28, 1914. MREZsLt, 44 b fond, Tisza–Balogh documents, batch no. 10a/9. no. 145–57.

In this latter approach the mutilation of Serbia was no longer merely an element of the compensation of the small states: it became an integral part of Austria–Hungary’s Adriatic policy to promote her interests against Italian penetration. The desire to create a Greater Albania clearly marks this change—the *Balkan states would receive compensation in return for the creation of the new state, or to counterbalance the Italian “Vordrang;” the punishment or mutilation of Serbia would be only a secondary consequence and no longer the main aim.*

This meant that the Italian problem—which made a temporary occupation of Serbia futile and unreasonable because of the territorial concessions that would have to be made to Italy—also influenced Austria–Hungary’s behaviour, which then shifted with greater probability towards a war with territorial consequences. The regaining of the sanjak had, due to its geostrategic significance, been a permanent question ever since 1908 (it was demanded as compensation or punishment in 1913 during the Interallied War, and during the Serbian advance in Albania in October 1913): it could detach the two Serbian states from each other while securing the economic outlet to Albania and the Macedonian railways.

July 20, 1914 brought new plans: the unification of Montenegro and Serbia, enthroning the Njeguš-dynasty after the dismissal of the Karadjordjević.⁶⁸ After the occupation of Serbia the question became more problematic. Conrad urged the annexation of Serbia at any cost; he was not bothered by the consequences it might have for the structure of the empire. General Sarkotić also shared his opinion, but Khuen-Héderváry (ban of Croatia) and Tisza rejected the idea. Burián, recently appointed as joint minister of foreign affairs, was stuck in-between the two groups. He wanted an independent but weak and mutilated Serbia and the acquisition of the sanjak of Novibazar to have a common border with Albania. He argued that Serbia and Montenegro should be separated.

In contrast, Count Gyula Andrásy (representing the Hungarian political opposition) came up with the idea of creating a Switzerland in the Balkans, which would be comprised of Serbia, Montenegro and Albania—presumably under Austrian influence (similar to the plans of Calice and Beck in the 1890s).

68 Hubka military attaché. *Báró Burián István naplói*, 151.

But Burián thought it would be impossible to establish long-lasting Austro-Hungarian influence in such a state conglomerate weakened by internal tensions.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the hunger of the Bulgarians also began to grow: they wanted to delimit the spheres of influence between Grocka and Smederevo after the Serbian defeat of 1915. Burián replied that given the economic significance of the region it would be better to realize the common Hungarian–Bulgarian border through Hungarian territorial gains (instead of Bulgarian ones). Since Bulgaria also demanded the Niš–Priština–Prizren line, which endangered the Austro-Hungarian outlet to Albania through the sanjak of Novibazar, Kosovo again became an “apple of discord,” this time between Austria–Hungary and Bulgaria.

We have heard the opinion of some politicians, but how did Hungarian public opinion relate to the Serbs? Paradoxically, it was the Serbs, accused of endangering the integrity of Hungary, who removed a person who also meant a constant threat to the concept of the Hungarian state: Franz Ferdinand. The Hungarian élite gained a success in the short term, while in the long run it lost everything by initiating “a war without territorial consequences.”

Owing to this paradox, the indoctrination of the war for the public opinion at first glance seem quite problematic. Ordinary people did not know too much about the aspirations and plans of the heir apparent, however, and therefore all of this frustration was vented on Serbia. We are going to show how this worked —through a small provincial paper called “Eger”:⁷⁰

The mood was enthusiastic, but not free of contradictory acts. The press exaggerated the moral superiority of Austria–Hungary (this superiority was constantly expressed earlier as well, sometimes in a peaceful “paternalistic” way, but was hardly ever put into the field of “morality”), emphasizing Vienna’s “tolerance,” as Austria–Hungary did not attack Serbia immediately, but rather provided the opportunity to investigate and settle the question by diplomatic means. (It is definitely not tolerance, as everybody who is accused of something is entitled to have an independent investigation and jurisdiction before being found guilty.) Enrolled soldiers sang the famous “Kossuth

69 Ibid., 167. January 7 and 16, 1916.

70 Excerpts from the weekly paper *Eger*, July–August, 1914.

Song,” which was not only anachronistic, but had nothing to do with the Serbs. Another song, “Beware doggish Serbia, You won’t get Bosnia,” was also popular, revealing that ordinary people might have been thinking that what was at stake was only Bosnia and not the existence of Greater Hungary or the maintenance of the structure of the dualistic state and its vertical (classes) and horizontal (nationalities) social system (which was well known in political circles). The leader of Heves County, Viktor Majzik, spoke about a war of self-defence, and antagonistically called it a “war for rest, war for peace.” The *si vis pacem, para bellum* mood was abundant everywhere. Majzik claimed that the Serbs “attacked our land,” which was not true—the attack was targeted at the dynasty. Lajos Szmrecsányi, the archbishop of Eger, called the hated Franz Ferdinand a martyr, and drew parallels between recent Serbian behaviour and 1848. From a historical perspective, this was not the best comparison, as in 1848 the Serbs pretty much defended the dynasty’s interest. Hysteria spread (and was spread by agents) everywhere: ‘Serbian spies’ were arrested, and mistreated. In Eger even an old lady was beaten up for being unable to speak Hungarian: later it transpired that she was a new French teacher who had just arrived from Debrecen.

Of course, these words were needed to enhance the morale and motivation of the troops—politicians were sure that soldiers did not want to die for the Balkan interests of Austria–Hungary (and for the interests of the Hungarian political élite). Without the murder of the heir apparent it would have been difficult to expect an enthusiastic mood. Early on October 18, 1913, during the Balkan Wars, when the first ultimatum was delivered to Belgrade due to the Serbian advance into Albania,⁷¹ Burián expressed his feelings that “the war would not be popular in Austria–Hungary unless we targeted the achievement of greater aims” (like territorial expansion or the annihilation of Serbia). Thallóczy’s diary also reveals the apathy, fears and impotence in political and civil circles during the two Balkan Wars (see next chapter).⁷² But the murder of the *Thronfolger* made it possible for the Hungarian élite to come up with the idea of the “war without territorial consequences”—without this it would have

71 The ultimatum was successful in 1913, and this is probably why politicians wanted to come up with this again in 1914, in the hope that it would be accepted.

72 Thallóczy’s journals, October 18, 1913.

been difficult to explain the need to wage war and die for “nothing.” This “nothing”—the maintenance of the power of the political élite and the structure of the state—was not too attractive for the masses, while the *Schlagwort* of “territorial integrity” could still mobilize thousands—if not everyone.

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FIGURES



FIGURE 1.
DIFFERENT AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN PLANS FOR THE DISMEMBERMENT OF THE BALKAN PENINSULA
[a] THE PLAN OF CALICE FROM 1896

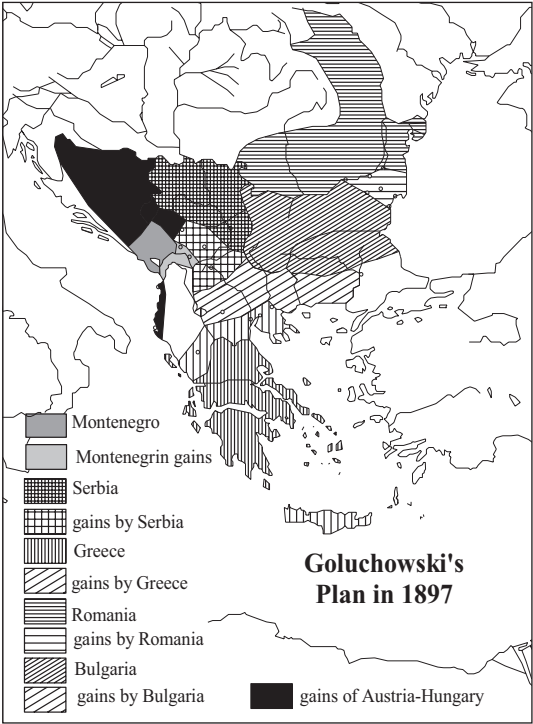


FIGURE I. [b]

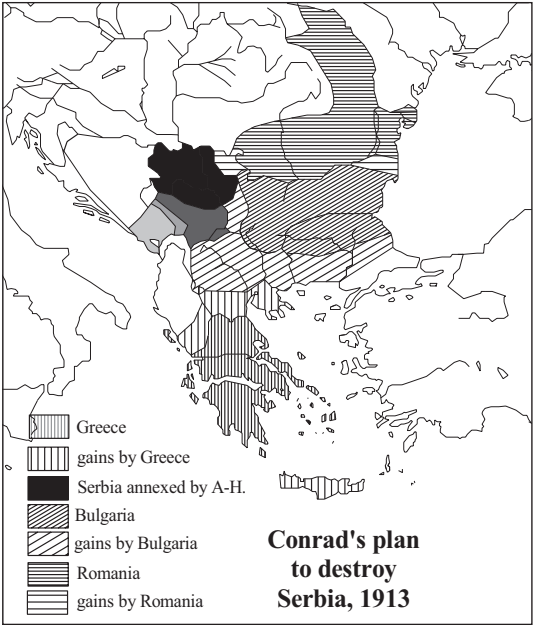


FIGURE I. [c]

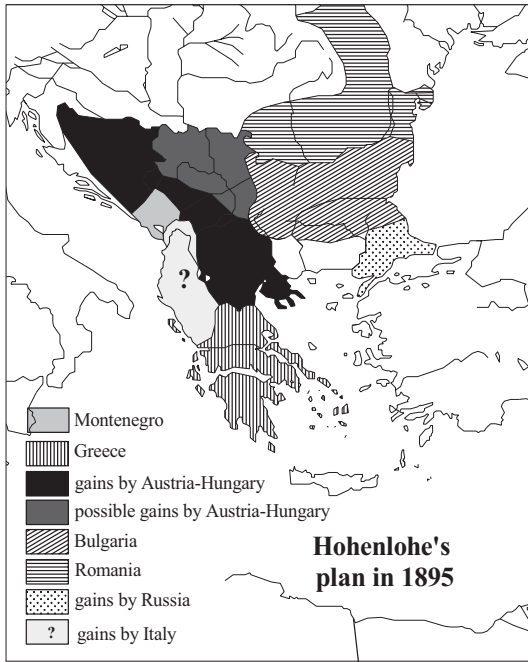


FIGURE 1. [d]



FIGURE 1. [e]

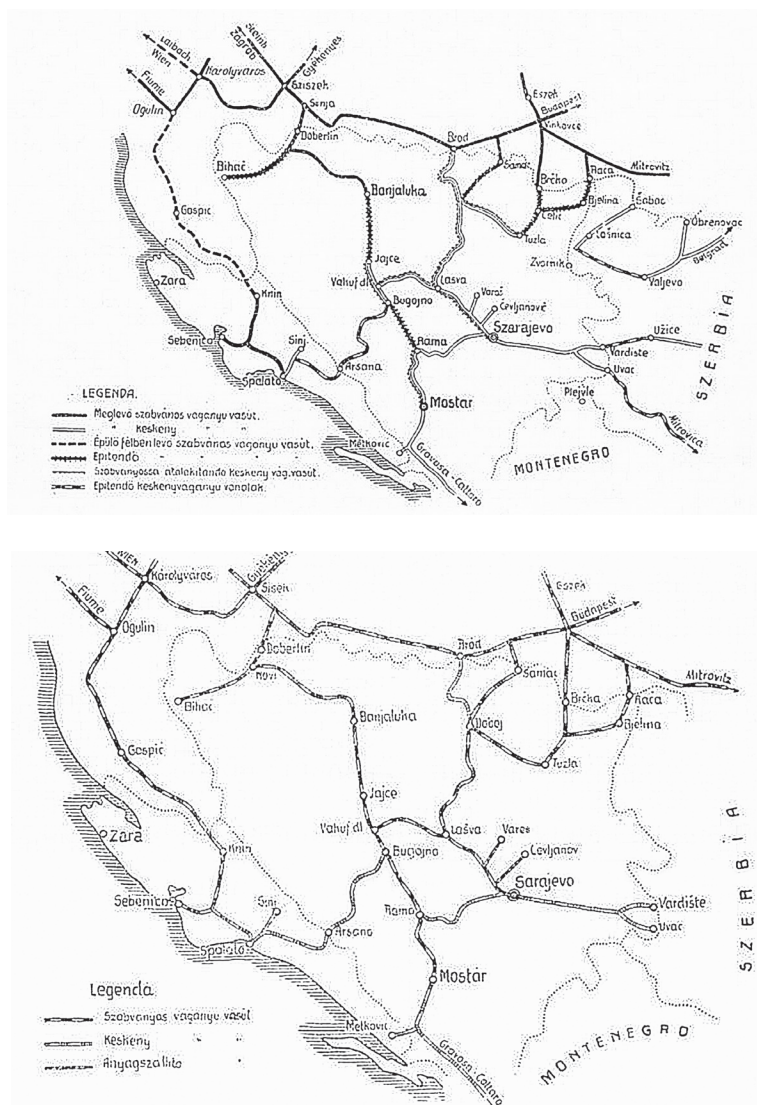


FIGURE 2.
AUSTRIAN–HUNGARIAN RIVALRY IN BOSNIA AS REFLECTED IN RAILWAY PROPOSALS
SOURCE: SÁNDORFFY, “BOSZNIA-HERCEGOVINA VASÚTHÁLÓZATA”

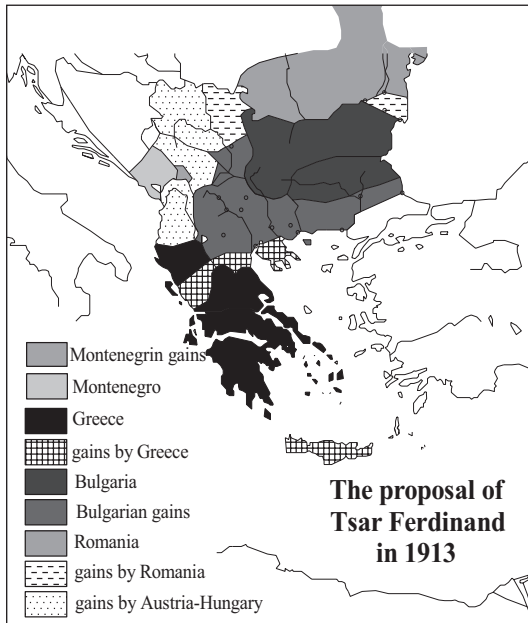


FIGURE 3.
THE PROPOSAL OF TSAR FERDINAND
TO DISMEMBER SERBIA

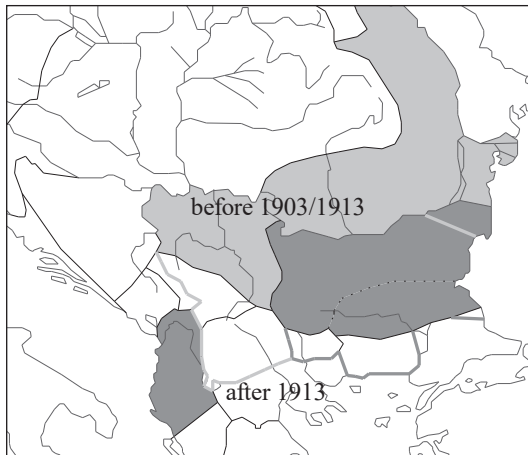


FIGURE 4.
THE WORSENING OF THE
GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION
FOR AUSTRIA-HUNGARY TILL 1913:
THE FRIENDLY BUFFER ZONE
LOCATED ALONG ITS BORDER
DRIFTED SOUTHWARDS
NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES BECAME
HOSTILE AND WERE UNDER RUSSIAN
INFLUENCE

ISTVÁN TISZA AND AUSTRIA–HUNGARY’S BALKAN POLICY, 1913–1914

Imre Ress

THE ATTEMPT TO REVITALIZE THE ALLIANCE WITH GERMANY ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT WAR

In the Dualist era, an overwhelming majority of Hungary’s political and intellectual elites linked the preservation and security of the multi-ethnic Hungarian nation-state to Austria–Hungary’s status as a Great Power and to the alliance Gyula Andrásy the Elder had established with Germany. A second constant element of Hungary’s liberal-nationalist foreign-policy doctrine was its role as a roadblock preventing tsarist Russia’s expansion into Southeastern Europe, the cornerstone of which strategy was the use of Austro-Hungarian influence to promote the political independence and economic development of the Balkan nation-states and to facilitate efforts to address their civilizational backwardness. Hungarian politicians generally rejected any territorial expansion of the Dual Monarchy into the Balkans, though Hungarian stances on this issue were not always consistent.

When the Independence Party, after a long period in the opposition, came to power as a part of a coalition government, it backed the Habsburg bureaucracy’s plan to annex the temporarily occupied territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as did a significant portion of the political leadership of the pro-compromise [National Labor] party. The annexation of this region, which was claimed by right of the Hungarian crown, was justified by citing defensive concerns, primarily the desire to limit the spread of increasingly intense South-

Slavic irredentism and to prevent the establishment of a greater South-Slavic state led by Serbia; this sort of territorial expansion—accompanied by reference to the historical rights—was also an expression Hungarian imperialism, which also aimed to increase the Hungarian influence within the Dual Monarchy.¹

This approach lost a significant portion of its value as a result of the outcome of the Balkan Wars, insofar as the elimination of the Ottoman Empire as a military and diplomatic power in Southeastern Europe offered Serbia and Romania a broad range of developmental alternatives, including the unifications of their entire ethnic populations into consolidated nation-states, Great-Power support for which aspirations was provided by Russia and France. The Hungarians strongly disapproved of the Treaty of Bucharest, which reorganized the territory and state structures of the Balkan peninsula, because it left Bulgaria—the one Balkan state with which the Dual Monarchy's interests did not come into conflict, and which it thus considered a potential ally—territorially truncated, politically isolated, and militarily helpless. At the same time, this agreement bound Romania (an ally of the Triple Alliance), Serbia, and Greece (both parts of the Entente's sphere of interest) into a community of interest and intensified the latter two states' opposition to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which supported the establishment of an independent Albania. This newly emergent grouping of Balkan states, especially the rapprochement of Serbia and Romania, obviously tended to impinge on the Dual Monarchy's position of authority, and this international transformation directly affected Hungary and its ethnic minorities. Hungarian politicians were shocked when they realized that Germany, in accepting the Treaty of Bucharest and expressing sympathy for Romanian and Greek aspirations, was effectively participating in a transformation of the conditions in the Balkans which would be disadvantageous to Austria-Hungary.²

Under the influence of the Balkan Wars, the Hungarian Prime Minister who came to power in the summer of 1913, Count István Tisza, completely reimagined the role his office would play in Austria-Hungary's joint foreign

1 Diószegi, *Das politische und wirtschaftliche Interesse Ungarns*, 386–96.

2 *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik* (Ö-U.A.), vol. 7, no. 8343. *Denkschrift des ungarischen Ministerpräsidenten*, August 11, 1913, 112–14; Boeckh, *Von den Balkankriegen*, 275–96; Diószegi, "Burian Tagebuchstelle," 188. August 9, 1913.

policy, intending to make continual use of his direct personal influence to advance Hungarian interests in determining the Dual Monarchy’s strategic objectives, primarily in the field of Balkan diplomacy. His government revitalized the so-called “Ministry Beside the King” (the royal equivalent of the Foreign Ministry) by giving it special authorization to engage in systematic foreign-policy activities in Vienna. The post of Minister Beside the King, which had gone unfilled for several years, was assigned to the then-sidelined István Burián, the former Joint Finance Minister and an expert on South Slavic issues who had already served in an official capacity as a diplomat, and would now operate as a personal advisor to the King and as Hungary’s “unofficial ambassador to Vienna,” he thus ensured regular—sometimes daily—exchanges of information between the Ballhausplatz in Vienna and the Sándor Palace in Budapest.³ The elderly Emperor Franz Joseph I, who enjoyed the supreme right to determine the Dual Monarchy’s foreign policy, explicitly supported the idea, that is to put Burián into a prominent position in the Hungarian government, insofar he was an *aulic* politician who had laid the groundwork for Franz Joseph’s annexation of Bosnia, and enjoyed complete confidence of the Emperor.⁴ In advancing Hungary’s foreign-policy interests, Burián was assisted—informally—by his old friend and versatile colleague Lajos Thallóczy, a division chief at the Joint Ministry of Finance, a knowledgeable scholar of the legal relationship between Austria and Hungary and of South-Slavic and Albanian history, and an instructor at the consular academy, who was thus trusted by numerous influential representatives of the foreign ministry, including Burián himself.⁵ The temperament and personal characteristics of the Joint Foreign Minister, Count Leopold Berchtold, favored an institutional

3 Diószegi, “Burian Tagebuchstelle,” 167–68; Pölöskei, *István Tisza*, 86–94; Vermes, *Tisza István*, 221–28; Thallóczy’s journals, entry dated June 13, 1913. Thallóczy’s journals, Fol. Hung. 1677/2.

4 Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 434–35; *Báró Burián István naplói*, 59–60. June 11, 1913. When members of the Hungarian government were swearing their oaths at Schönbrunn Palace, Franz Joseph offered Burián the following encouragement: “I am profoundly grateful that you find yourself ready for this undertaking. [I wish you] the best in this sphere of activity. [Be of] assistance to Tisza and the foreign [ministry]. You have my complete confidence.”

5 Somogyi, “Die staatsrechtlichen Ansichten,” 119–27; Csaplár-Degovics, “Ludwig von Thallóczy,” 142–63.

buildup of Hungarian influence over the Dual Monarchy's foreign policy. The indecisive Moravian aristocrat felt that the post of foreign minister was beyond his capabilities and thus waited for the advice—and hoped for the support—of these two Hungarian politicians.⁶ And he was not disappointed. When the Austrian and Hungarian delegations met at a session in November of 1913, to the consternation of influential representatives of the governing party like Károly Khuen-Héderváry and experienced diplomats like Miklós Szécsen (the Dual Monarchy's ambassador to Paris), Tisza made an overt display of his support for the much-maligned Berchtold; the Hungarian delegation declared its complete confidence in his person, and thus in the policies he had pursued during the Balkan Wars.⁷ In the foreign minister's eyes, Tisza was an embodiment of indisputable political authority, a statesman of extraordinary importance, "the Hungarian Bismarck" who used an iron fist in brushing aside the opposition's attempts at parliamentary obstruction.⁸ For this reason, Berchtold had no reason to object to Tisza's regular, personal attempts—sometimes with Burián's mediation—to supervise the foreign ministry's activities and to involve himself directly in the preparations to make everyday foreign-policy decisions.

The foreign-policy strategy which took shape as a result of the active cooperation of these two Hungarian politicians involved intensifying efforts to address the consequences of the Balkan Wars and to restore Austria-Hungary's authority and influence as a Great Power, as well as its readiness to take action; they took an ambitious dynamic approach to diplomacy in their attempts to reorganize the interstate connections in Southeastern Europe. Initially, the Hungarian prime minister's chief objective in advancing the Empire's defensive interests was the isolation of Serbia, which was to be accomplished by detaching it from Romania and strengthening the latter's relationship with the Triple Alliance, and by rebuilding Bulgaria so as to provide an effective regional

6 Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 455–72.

7 Thallóczy's journals, 20 and 22. Entry dated November 4, 1913. Szécsen evaluated the relationship between Tisza and Berchtold as follows: "He was somewhat displeased that Tisza supports Berchtold so much because it's flattering to [the former] that he gets to make foreign policy and Berchtold lets him."

8 Typescript of Berchtold's memoirs. March 4, 1914. ÖStA HHStA SB. Nachlass Berchtold.

counterbalance.⁹ In the course of handling the Serbian–Albanian conflict in the fall of 1913, Tisza and Burián cooperated in asserting the regulatory role Austria–Hungary had assumed in the Balkans; the Dual Monarchy’s resultant combination of military pressure and diplomatic activity succeeded in forcing the Serbians to withdraw a significant proportion of their occupying troops from the territory of Albania, which the Austro-Hungarians considered to be part of their sphere of influence.¹⁰ This action involved ignoring the prerogatives of the Concert of Europe, though the Great Powers were willing to tolerate it because putting an end to the Serbian–Albanian conflict unquestionably helped restore peace to the region and contributed to the stability of the Albanian borders which the Great Powers had established by consensus.¹¹ Hungary’s foreign-policy approach to Serbia was based primarily on defensive and regulatory actions which did not call into question the Serbian kingdom’s right to exist, given that a war against it and an annexation of its territory would have completely isolated the Dual Monarchy from the other European powers and likely sparked a domestic political crisis. As Tisza put it at a session of the Joint Council of Ministers in October of 1913, “Serbia is an unpleasant neighbor which we have to tolerate for now; we need not devour it immediately.”¹² Even though Serbia disregarded the principle of ethnic self-determination and the borders drawn in accordance with the consensus of the Great Powers, the two-step diplomatic plan which Tisza had recommended and approved—an urgent warning followed by an ultimatum with a deadline—was designed primarily to give Serbia the option to withdraw.¹³ Budapest advised Berchtold that if the warning failed to convince the Serbians to withdraw from Albania, they should be forced to reimburse Austria–Hungary for the costs of the mobilization which would accompany the ultimatum; moreover, they would have “to pay for peace with significant economic concessions.”¹⁴ Tisza’s two-step diplomatic

9 Ö-U.A. vol. 7, no. 8474. *Denkschrift des ungarischen Ministerpräsidenten*, August 25, 1913, 198–201.

10 Galántai, *Die Österreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie*, 165–83.

11 Hildebrand, *Das vergangene Reich*, 291.

12 Schmied-Kowarzik, *Die Protokolle 1908–1914*, 604–9.

13 Tisza to Berchtold, Vienna, October 13, 1913. ÖStA HHSStA SB. Nachlass Berchtold 15-1-98.

14 Tisza to Burián, Budapest, October 20, 1913. MREZsLt, file no. 45, István Burián’s writings, batch no. 30.

initiative ultimately proved completely successful; by the time of the deadline established in the ultimatum, Serbian forces had withdrawn from Albania without any further threatening military maneuvers. And although the Hungarian prime minister considered the Kingdom of Serbia to be a potential leader of an anti-Austro-Hungarian coalition, and his long-term plans included forcing Serbia to cede the Macedonian territory it had acquired to Bulgaria in order to convince the latter to form an alliance with the Dual Monarchy, after the conclusion of the Serbian–Albanian crisis, Tisza nevertheless prioritized the normalization of political and economic relations with Serbia and the prevention of further conflict. He was even prepared to countenance the unification of Serbia and Montenegro, as long as the resultant entity did not have an outlet to the Adriatic Sea.¹⁵ The Hungarians’ relatively tolerant attitude toward Serbia was also influenced by domestic political considerations. Tisza did not regard the waning loyalty of the Serbians who lived in the Dual Monarchy to be anywhere near as dire a problem as did the soldiers who were blinded by the irrational *Serbenwut* (“hatred of Serbs”). By that time, the Hungarian government’s policies had already ousted the Serbian national parties from parliament and successfully integrated a significant proportion of the Serbian economic and intellectual elites into the Hungarian “political nation.” For instance, there were seven ethnic Serbs who served in parliament as members of the National Labor Party which came to power in 1910. Tisza relied on a Serbian–Croatian coalition in putting an end to the state of emergency in Croatia, which had lasted for several years, and in forming a government predicated on the principle of Austro-Hungarian dualism. Hungarian leaders traditionally counted on the Serbians to act as a natural obstacle to aspirations for a Catholic Greater Croatia, which concept enjoyed support among members of the heir presumptive Franz Ferdinand’s inner circle.¹⁶

Diplomats at the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin were circumspect in expressing support for Austria–Hungary’s *démarche* in Belgrade, though Kaiser Wilhelm II issued a grandiloquent statement praising the sometimes overly prudent leaders of the Dual Monarchy for their extraordinarily forceful effort to

15 Vermes, *Tisza István*, 237.

16 Gross, “Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand,” 286–94; Pölöskei, *István Tisza*, 101–5; Bertényi Jr. “Politikai nemzet,” 350–52.

advance their interests on their own.¹⁷ At the time of his visit to Vienna, the *Kaiser* set off some genuine verbal fireworks, saying he was ready to “draw [his] sword” to help Austria–Hungary achieve its goals in the Balkans—and in the case of Serbian defiance, to unleash military force: “if His Highness Franz Joseph demands something, the Serbian government must submit, and if it does not, Belgrade will be fired upon and occupied until they comply with His Highness’ will.”¹⁸ In the *Kaiser*’s presence, the Dual Monarchy’s ambassador to Berlin, László Szógyény-Marich, continually stressed the role that the Hungarian government’s foreign-policy influence had played in changing Vienna’s approach, and Wilhelm II unequivocally expressed his unconditional sympathy for István Tisza, even though he and the Hungarian prime minister had never personally met.¹⁹ This acknowledgement from Berlin was a source of satisfaction and relief to Tisza,²⁰ though he was already aware of the actual political value of the impulsive German ruler’s extemporaneous declarations. Tisza was ruthlessly honest in pointing out the contradiction between the *Kaiser*’s theatrical oaths of allegiance to his Austro-Hungarian allies, “his passionate toasts and solemn promises [to use] his sword,” and the fact that his otherwise valuable and honorable gestures did nothing to make up for the lack of diplomatic coordination between the two allies, given that the Germans paid barely any attention to Austria–Hungary’s political exigencies in the Balkans. They intensified their economic influence in the region to the detriment of the Dual Monarchy; not only did their efforts regularly come into conflict with Austro-Hungarian ambitions in Romania, but in Serbia as well.²¹ As a result of the so-called Pig War, the Austro-Hungarian–Serbian trade war of the preceding decade, Germany had significantly improved its access to markets along the Sava River, and despite the various political crises, the volume of trade between the Germans and the Serbs was exhibiting remarkable

17 Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige*, 424.

18 Ö-U.A. vol. 7, no. 8934. 513. Berchtold’s daily report of October 28, 1913, describing a discussion with *Kaiser* Wilhelm II which took place on October 26, 1913.

19 Burián to Tisza, Vienna, October 28, 1913. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 47.

20 Tisza to Burián, Budapest, Oct. 29, 1913. MREZsLt file no. 45, István Burián’s writings, batch no. 30.

21 Ö-U.A. vol. 7, no. 8474. *Denkschrift des ungarischen Ministerpräsidenten*, 198–201.

year-over-year growth. After the Balkan Wars, with the active support of German diplomats and offers of German-financed loans, representatives of Germany's largest arms manufacturers, including Krupp AG and DWM (German Weapons and Munitions Works), regularly visited Belgrade to negotiate deliveries of artillery pieces, grenades, and ammunition that improved the battlefield capabilities of the Serbian army.²² At the same time, in the spring of 1914, in accordance with the strategic military plans of the Dual Alliance (Germany and Austria–Hungary) to cover the costs of building railways in Bosnia, the Dresdner Bank planned to issue a loan to the Dual Monarchy under the humiliating “Balkan-State” conditions dictated by the Prussian finance minister Reinhold von Sydow, including the stipulation that German manufacturers produce all the industrial materials necessary for the project, such as the railroad tracks. The Germans’ behavior which impinged on Austria–Hungary’s Great-Power prestige and its status as an equal ally was more than surprising; it produced genuinely Dualist, anti-German solidarity between Cisleithanian and Hungarian politicians, who had previously quarreled about the railway’s route and about the iron ore production in Bosnia, which situation Burián described for Tisza as follows: “...one could hardly find a responsible actor in the Monarchy who would accept the occurrence of [even] the first attempt to conclude with a Great Power an agreement of the sort invented by France, which it successfully implements overseas and in the Balkan states.”²³

The Hungarian prime minister did not react to the news of the Germans’ humiliating offer in the spring of 1914, thus tacitly acknowledging that his more powerful ally was no longer going to limit the use of its financial superiority to creating economic advantages in its interactions with small neighboring states; it was going to assert its dominance even in its dealings with the Dual Monarchy. As recently as the fall of 1913, the German practice of selective lending had still evoked heated protests, when—according to the Austro-Hungarians’ judgment—Berlin rewarded Romania for its allegiance by offering it preferential terms for a loan, while dismissing Hungary’s loan

22 Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige*, 425–26.

23 Burián to Tisza, Vienna, April 4, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 23.

requests with “cruel indifference,” even though the latter’s pro-German policies excluded it from English and French financial markets.²⁴ The Germans justified their behavior by suggesting that their capital markets were overburdened, which might technically have been the case, given that Austria and Hungary each obtained loans of half a billion francs in February of 1914, while the idea of using a German loan to stabilize the Dual Monarchy’s favorite potential ally, Bulgaria, was left off the agenda.²⁵ Tisza’s experience of the Germans’ economic and financial dominance reinforced his conviction that he would need to coordinate his Balkan policy with Germany’s. In addition, German diplomats intervened in an attempt to convince him to extend collective rights to the Romanians who lived in Hungary, hoping that Hungarian concessions might thereby strengthen Romania’s political ties to the Triple Alliance. Even so, despite the Germans’ admonition to the Hungarian government, the prime minister and the leaders of the Romanians in Hungary could not reach a satisfactory agreement based on the principle of dualism.

Two mutually reinforcing phenomena contributed to the failure of the Hungarians and Romanians to reach a compromise: the preservation of the adversarial relationship between Transylvanian Romanians and the Hungarian government, which was in the interest of leaders in Bucharest, who jealously guarded their government’s room to maneuver; and the intention of the Austro-Hungarian heir presumptive, Franz Ferdinand, to exploit the permanent dissatisfaction of Hungary’s ethnic minorities in an effort to dismantle the dualist system.²⁶

Franz Ferdinand’s political aspirations motivated Tisza to strengthen Hungary’s relationship with the Germans in an indirect and delicate manner, by building up further institutional links. When Tisza came to power, the Austro-Hungarian ruler occasionally proved useful in acting as a shield, defending the Hungarian prime minister’s domestic- and foreign-policy activities from Franz Ferdinand’s predictable opposition and neutralizing the latter’s intrigues, though there was no guarantee that these efforts would

24 Tisza to Berchtold, Budapest, November 22, 1913. ÖStA HHStA SB. Nachlass Berchtold 15-1-100.

25 Demeter, *Kisállami törekvések*, 403–4.

26 Szász, “Politikai élet,” 1685–87. See also Pölöskei, *István Tisza*, 99–101.

continue to mean anything once the heir presumptive took the throne.²⁷ The Budapest government assigned Burián his particular role as Minister Beside the King not only so he could provide information on Austrian foreign policy, but also in hopes that his official role would allow him to maintain constant contact with Franz Ferdinand's advisors at the Belvedere Palace. The heir presumptive, who already knew Burián and had gladly welcomed him earlier as a joint minister, now refused to receive him in his new role as a member of the Hungarian government. Franz Ferdinand conspicuously ignored Burián at social gatherings, refusing to communicate with him and using this conversational boycott as a way of demonstrating his lack of confidence in the Hungarian political system.²⁸ Franz Ferdinand's antipathy was aimed primarily at Tisza, a consistent adherent of Dualism whom imperial reformists considered one of the greatest obstacles to their plans, though the heir presumptive was also irritated by the growing number of Hungarians who were assuming leading roles at the joint foreign ministry in the spirit of the notion of royal and imperial parity.²⁹ In an effort to counterbalance the "Hungarian clique" at the Ballhausplatz, Franz Ferdinand used his personal influence with the foreign minister to assign his own confidants to sensitive and important posts in various foreign-service delegations. One consequence was that the Czech aristocrat Count Ottokar Czernin, who openly expressed his approval of imperial reformists' plans to dismantle the dualist system, was named Minister to Bucharest in the fall of 1913; his appointment provoked a storm of protest in Hungary, as even the former prime minister Károly Khuen-Héderváry—well known for his aulic sentiments—understood it to be a slap in the face aimed at the Hungarian government.³⁰ In responding to the Hungarian opposition's protests against this appointment, Tisza explicitly defended Franz Ferdinand's debatable personal decision, and while Czernin appreciated his loyalty, Tisza's conciliatory intervention did not succeed in

27 Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 434–35.

28 Thallóczy's journals, entry dated October 24, 1913; *Báró Burián István naplói*, 37, December 29, 1910; *ibid.*, 38, January 26, 1911; *ibid.*, 89, February 24, 1914.

29 Kann, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand*, 121–22; Somogyi, "Im Dienst der Monarchie," 596–626.

30 Kann, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand*, 61–68, 231–32; Thallóczy's journals, entry dated November 22, 1913.

earning him a personal audience with the heir presumptive.³¹ By that time, Franz Ferdinand had been engaged in a lengthy struggle to eliminate Andrassy’s legacy of policies which stipulated the appointment of dualist foreign-policy personnel, and to get rid of the unquestionable but unwritten post-1871 legal practice of always assigning the role of ambassador to Berlin to an ethnic Hungarian, given that his Hungarianness was the chief guarantee that the cooperative alliance between the two Great Powers would operate in accordance with the system of dualism, as it was not burdened by the fraternal strife and mistrust between the Austrians and the Germans, nor by the Slavs’ lack of confidence in the Germans.³² By 1913, the intellectually deteriorating, partly deaf, telephone-averse László Szögyény-Marich was in his twenty-first year of service as Ambassador to Berlin, but Franz Joseph kept him on for another year so as to keep his heir presumptive from assigning another candidate to the position. Tisza accepted the designation of a compromise candidate, Prince Gottfried Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst—the son-in-law of Archduke Friedrich (a member of the Magyaróvár branch of the House of Habsburg)—as ambassador to Berlin; given Franz Ferdinand’s inevitable objection, Tisza did not see the point of transferring Ambassador Kajetán Mérey from Rome to Berlin, which idea had been embraced by the Hungarians at the Ballhausplatz who wanted to maintain control of the position.³³ The loss of this diplomatic bridgehead in Berlin, which symbolized the dualist system, convinced Tisza that he would have to make a direct, personal effort to apprise the German Kaiser of the significance of Hungary’s foreign-policy priorities, the unchanging importance of the Hungarian nation-state in its function (derived from Bismarck’s conception) as a roadblock preventing the Slavicization of the loosely bound region of Cisleithania, and its role in obstructing the Dual Monarchy’s undesirable foreign-policy initiatives, which activities he hoped would earn effective external support for the maintenance of dualist system, which would be threatened once the new emperor took the throne.³⁴

31 Höbelt, “Warum gibt es,” 422.

32 Kann, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand*, 231; Somogyi, “Professionalisierung,” 121–23.

33 Thallóczy’s journals, entry dated October 24, 1913.

34 Vermes, *Tisza István*, 237.

A rarely noted motivation for Tisza's policy of unconditionally prioritizing the alliance with Germany stems from Hungary's domestic ethnic conditions and a particular set of views about the significance of its German population. In Tisza's view, Hungary's two million Germans were its only minority population which identified completely with the dualist system and the conception of the Hungarian state, and given their levels of integration, the Germans were a stable constituent element every bit as committed to the Hungarian political nation as ethnic Hungarians themselves. According to his calculations, the country's Hungarian and German inhabitants made up more than two-thirds of the country's total population and at least five-sixths of its intellectuals, and thus the Germans were among the most important factors offsetting Slavic and Romanian ethnic separatism.³⁵ Having been advised by the nationalist writer Ferenc Herczeg and having taken into consideration the concerns of the Dual Monarchy as a whole, Tisza regarded the previous government's policy of linguistic homogenization to have been mistaken; his objective was no longer the linguistic assimilation of the Germans, but rather to help them learn Hungarian and to implement a state policy of making use of professionals' knowledge of the German language.³⁶ On the basis of practical experience, he wholeheartedly agreed that an understanding of the German language was an indispensable means of communication, a tool for achieving Hungary's dualist and state-nationalist strategic objectives, and an instrument for increasing Hungary's influence over the Dual Monarchy's decision-making.

Hungarians were to achieve a leading role within the dualist state by increasing (in accordance with the dualist quota) the proportion of Hungarian personnel in positions of authority in the joint administration of the Monarchy, and a significant number of these skilled representatives were members of Hungary's German minority who were loyal to the Hungarian state. Maintaining the Germans' national loyalty—which helped guarantee Hungary's stability—was always one of Tisza's fundamental concerns, and it was for this reason that he forced two Transylvanian Saxon representatives out of the governing party in the spring of 1914 after they had agreed to establish

35 *Denkschrift zur rumänischen Frage*, September 26, 1914. TIÖM, vol. 2, 159–61.

36 MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 25; Herczeg, *Délvidéki németek*.

an ethnic political organization of Germans in Southern Hungary with the support of the Pan-German League. Although the ethno-political activities of social organizations from Germany were intensifying, they were still of limited significance because the German Empire, in accordance with Bismarck’s tradition, prioritized the strategic considerations of its alliance with Austria–Hungary and invariably avoided attempts to organize Hungary’s Germans into political associations.³⁷ For Tisza, Berlin’s self-restraint was evidence of the importance of this alliance to his ethnic-minority policy, though in the eyes of German diplomats, pre-war Hungary was no longer the stable success-story of the previous quarter century, but rather a country which would face serious crises and shocks as a result of its ethnic composition.³⁸ By the spring of 1914, Hungary’s inability to assimilate its ethnic minorities—that is, the practical failure of its homogenization policy—and reports in which Germany’s ambassador to Vienna and its consul-general in Budapest documented deepening ethnic divisions led German foreign-policy decision-makers to consider the possibility that Austria–Hungary might disintegrate and force them to reorient their system of alliances.³⁹

However, the Hungarian prime minister did not look for alternatives to the alliance with Germany, the diplomatic institutionalization of which was—in his opinion—an unequivocal imperative given developments in the Balkans and the newly emerging system of relationships linking the Great Powers. He attributed great significance to the change which took place in February of 1914, when the diplomatic procedures and bilateral communication the Concert of Europe used in dealing with Balkan affairs were replaced by ad hoc deliberations and the consolidation of the Triple Entente, which was accompanied by another significant military buildup in Russia. Under the combined influence of domestic political concerns and international conditions, the German Kaiser launched a set of coordinated German–Austrian–Hungarian diplomatic initiatives in the Balkans, which cooperative efforts were timed to coincide with his visit to Vienna and with which strategy

37 Schödl, *Land an der Donau*, 417–28, 431.

38 Gülstorff, “Ein geschätzter Bündnispartner,” 404.

39 Sutter, “Die innere Lage Ungarns,” 188–224; Mommsen, *Der autoritäre Nationalstaat*, 230.

Berchtold fundamentally agreed.⁴⁰ Tisza had imagined that the two allies had mutual respect for each other's territorial interests (which he envisioned as almost formally defined spheres of interest); thus the Dual Monarchy would support Germany's ambitions in Turkey, while the Germans would provide financial support and diplomatic assistance in advancing Austria-Hungary's interests in the states in its immediate geographical vicinity.⁴¹ A lack of capital and access to financial markets strictly limited the Dual Monarchy's opportunities to act on its own initiative in the Balkans. For instance, despite the maximal exertions of the Austro-Hungarian banking consortium which was formed at the behest of its foreign-policy leadership, it was unable to offer Bulgaria—which it considered a potential strategic ally—more than a paltry sum of short-term bridge loans, which managed only to postpone the impending threat of Bulgarian insolvency for a few months.⁴² Factors like these convinced the Hungarian prime minister to pursue plans to advance the Empire's defensive interests by reinforcing the alliance with Germany and by implementing a coordinated Balkan policy which would resolve practical problems arising from conflicting interests. Moreover, in the spring of 1914, he was haunted by the ghost of a Pan-Balkan alliance, an aggressive partnership of Balkan states organized around Serbia, with Russian patronage and French financial support, which he hoped could be prevented by joint German and Austro-Hungarian action. In his opinion, this sort of Balkan coalition would shift the continental balance of power in the Entente's favor, and to such a degree that it would jeopardize the Dual Monarchy's territorial structure and thus have a serious effect on Germany's security. Despite his emphasis on the fact that both Central powers faced the threat of encirclement, the Hungarian prime minister was motivated primarily by defensive concerns and the long-term possibility of maintaining peace by using concerted political and economic diplomacy to reorganize the interstate relationships of the Balkan peninsula. One cornerstone of this strategic approach was the formation of an alliance

40 Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige*, 436–39; Tisza to Burián, Budapest, March 15, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 20, item no. 69.

41 Ö-U.A. vol 7, no. 8474. 198–200. *Denkschrift des ungarischen Ministerpräsidenten*, August 25, 1913.

42 Friedrich, *Bulgarien*, 22–24.

with—and the financial consolidation and fortification of—Bulgaria, the primary objectives of which plan were isolating Serbia and convincing Romania to join the Triple Alliance. If the Germans were to prove ambivalent toward this Bulgarophile policy, Tisza planned to form alliances with Greece and Romania by making judicious use of Kaiser Wilhelm II’s obsession with the non-Slavic states of the Balkan peninsula which were ruled by members of German dynasties. In this spirit, he designated the gradual detachment of Romania and Greece from Serbia as one of the alternative solutions to be pursued by means of coordinated joint diplomatic activity. In the course of his first meeting with the German Kaiser, Tisza made a positive impression as an energetic, self-confident individual and independent foreign-policy strategist, though neither the Kaiser nor Germany’s foreign-policy leaders accepted Tisza’s political goal for the alliance, namely a coordinated diplomatic approach to the Balkans.⁴³

The Hungarian prime minister and his confidant in Vienna were not in complete agreement about Austria–Hungary’s room to maneuver in the foreign-policy arena, nor about its possibilities for taking action, and their divergent views came into conflict during the German Kaiser’s visit to Vienna in March of 1914. Burián considered Tisza’s planned Balkan diplomatic offensive to be insufficient, and given his doubts about—and his desire to avoid exclusive dependence on—the Germans’ support, he advocated the simultaneous opening of parallel talks with Russia in hopes of clarifying their positions and easing tensions. He envisioned this consultation as a confidence-building exercise based on earlier examples of cooperation between Russian and Austro-Hungarian conservatives, which would to maintain the territorial status quo and focus on debates surrounding two key problems. First, as an expression of Austro-Hungarian goodwill, he recommended that the Dual Monarchy agree to discuss the prospect of opening the straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to Russian traffic. And second, he anticipated that an atmosphere of confidential negotiations would create opportunities for discussing the mutual renunciation of support for the national movements in

43 Ö-U.A. vol 7, no. 9482. *Denkschrift des ungarischen Ministerpräsidenten*, March 15, 1914, 974–79. See also Vermes, *Tisza István*, 231–37.

Galicia and the Balkans which threatened the two neighboring multi-ethnic empires. His assessment of the situation was based on first-hand experience and diplomatic intelligence suggesting that Russia's power elites were concerned by the tsarist empire's vulnerability to ethnic upheaval; they were especially disturbed by the intensification of Polish separatism and Ukrainian aspirations to ethno-cultural independence, which they linked to Austria-Hungary's policies in Galicia. The Russians were particularly hostile to the Galician Compromise of January of 1914, which they asserted was a form of support for the national movements which threatened the Russian Empire, because the introduction of the principle of personal autonomy expanded the Poles' and Ukrainians' opportunities to establish and operate cultural and administrative forms of self-government.⁴⁴ Burián rather optimistically concluded that the Austrophobia on display among Russia's power elites would provide Austro-Hungarian diplomats with a favorable opportunity to offer the Russians reassurances regarding the Polish and Ruthenian questions and thus to address, at least in some measure, this lack of trust. He hoped that in the spirit of reciprocity, the Russians might then substantially reduce their support for the Balkan states and thus curb the Serbian and Romanian irredentism which targeted the Dual Monarchy.⁴⁵

Given the Russians' enormous military buildup, their grim saber-rattling, and their trial mobilizations in the spring of 1914, Tisza was considerably more skeptical of the prospect of negotiating a conciliatory agreement with the Russians. His absolute priority for Balkan policy was the coordination of German and Austro-Hungarian diplomatic activity; secret talks with St. Petersburg seemed useful to him only for tactical reasons, such as probing the Russians' political intentions.⁴⁶ In formulating a stance on the Ukrainian-

44 Mitter, "Galizien-Krisenherd," 222-31; Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige*, 432-33.

45 Burián to Tisza, March 13, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44.b, Tisza-Balogh documents, batch no. 10/a, no. 9; Burián to Tisza, March 18, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 19, item no. 100.

46 Kronenbitter, "Krieg im Frieden," 449-51. See also Tisza to Burián, Budapest, March 15, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's batch no. 20, item no. 69: "I read your last letter with great interest and have given much thought to the Russian conversation as well. It is possible that I have been mistaken in my judgment of this matter, though I confess that I cannot attribute decisive importance to them. Do not misunderstand: I would not oppose this [initiative]

Ruthenian national question, however, he took into account the Russians’ sensitivities on this issue so as to avoid exacerbating the tensions—and in hopes of restoring tranquil neighborly relations—between the two Great Powers. Austria’s Prime Minister, Count Karl Stürgkh, and its Foreign Ministry embraced an initiative to support the Ukrainian–Ruthenian ethno-cultural awakening in hopes of offsetting the Orthodox church’s proselytizing propaganda and the spread of political Russophilia in Galicia and Hungary, and thus to use unified Ukrainian nationalism as a bulwark against Russia, though Tisza found this plan utterly unconvincing.⁴⁷ Hungarian leaders’ dismissive attitude toward the Ukrainian question gave Burián an opportunity to put the idea of a “great dialogue” with Russia on the agenda in Vienna.⁴⁸ However, without the overt support of the Hungarian prime minister, the political clout of the Minister Beside the King was insufficient to convince foreign-policy decision-makers at the Ballhausplatz—who had their doubts about Russia—to discuss a consultation regarding the question of the nationalities of Galicia or create a foundation for a rapprochement in the two powers’ bilateral relationship.

The adversarial passivity of Austria–Hungary’s Russia policy did not change when the ambitious Hungarian Count Frigyes Szapáry took over as the Dual Monarchy’s ambassador to St. Petersburg in February of 1914. Several times over the course of his career at the foreign ministry, Szapáry—a former student of Thallóczy’s and an influential chief of staff for Foreign Minister Berchtold (and his predecessor Lexa von Aehrenthal)—had been confronted by Berlin’s ambivalent support for Austria–Hungary and its efforts to compete economically

under any circumstances... It is my belief that [the Russians] are preparing for war, but they do not want to start a war until they have aligned an overwhelming proportion of the Balkan [states] against us. They are working and will work toward this end, no matter what we say to them (this is the aim of their current saber-rattling as well), and there can be no remedy to this but a farsighted, determined, calmly consistent Balkan policy. This is not something we can do [ourselves], only in agreement with Germany. For this reason, our very first, most important, and most urgent task is to clarify things with Germany.”

47 MREZsLt, file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 21, item no. 96–97. Correspondence between Stürgkh and Tisza, June 10 and 15, 1914.

48 *Báró Burián István naplói*, 104–5. June 20 and 23, 1914; MREZsLt file no. 44.b, Tisza–Balogh documents, batch no. 2, no. 70–71. Burián to Tisza, Vienna, June 22, 1914.

with the Dual Monarchy in the Balkans.⁴⁹ As ambassador to St. Petersburg, he tried to establish the conditions for a rapprochement with Russia by advancing the proposition that the tsarist empire's social, ethnic, and domestic economic problems—and its issues in the realm of power politics—would encourage “the leaders of the Russian state [to seek] political détente” and “aspire to a better relationship with Austria–Hungary.” As Aehrenthal's protégé, Szapáry envisioned a cooperative, conservative Russia, imagining that at least a temporary reconciliation was still possible and necessary given that both parties had been affected by—and would need to work in concert to address—the consequences of the Great Powers' exclusion from the Balkan peninsula, their loss of authority resulting from the Treaty of Bucharest, and the prevailing democratic tendencies of the increasingly nationalist Balkan states, which jeopardized the foundational principles of these dynastic empires.⁵⁰ Szapáry and Burián were in complete agreement that the Straits Question and the Ukrainian–Polish problem should be the central subjects of any talks designed to facilitate a rapprochement. Their negative assessment of pro-Austrian Ukrainian nationalism was completely consistent with the Hungarian prime minister's anti-annexationist views and his pro-Russian notion that support for Ukrainianism was a merely a provocative means of putting pressure on Russia, “...given that we do not wish to—and could never—make our way to Kiev.”⁵¹

Open expressions of Russian–Romanian rapprochement reached a spectacular peak in June of 1914, when the Russian tsar visited Constanța and his foreign minister accompanied the Romanian prime minister on a journey through Transylvania, which the Romanians considered “the promised land”;⁵² this seems to be certain evidence that the inner circles of decision-makers at the Ballhausplatz did not take seriously, or possibly even discuss, the policy of détente with the Russians which the Hungarian government approved and the Dual Monarchy's ambassador to St. Petersburg officially pursued. The

49 Bittner, “Graf Friedrich Szapáry,” 958–62; Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige*, 429–34.

50 Ö-U.A. vol 7, no. 8474. 755–62. *Denkschrift des Botschafters in St. Petersburg Grafen Friedrich Szapáry über die österreichisch-ungarisch-russischen Beziehungen*, Vienna, January 20, 1914.

51 Ö-U.A. vol 7, no. 9417. 913–16. Szapáry's private letter to Berchtold, St. Petersburg, February 10/23, 1914.

52 Boeckh, *Von den Balkankriegen*, 278–81.

indifference of the Dual Monarchy’s foreign-policy leadership is demonstrated by the fact that when Szapáry took his post on the banks of the Neva, he did not receive any kind of written instructions; his memoranda indicate that he himself determined his political agenda and strategic objectives. However, he was hampered in achieving his goals by his wife’s illness, which forced him to spend more time at home in Lower Austria than in St. Petersburg. It is clear that the Straits Question—a legacy of Aehrenthal’s foreign policy, which Szapáry wanted to use as a means of starting a dialogue with Russia’s power elites—was now too important to allow Austria–Hungary to launch an independent initiative of its own. Since December of 1913, when the Germans sent a mission headed by general Otto Liman von Sanders to take military control of the Bosphorus, Austro-Hungarian diplomats, who had continually pleaded with their partners in the Dual Alliance to implement a coordinated policy in the Balkans, were simply incapable of cutting a separate deal with the Russians on the issue of the Turkish Straits.⁵³ Ultimately, after an extended period of indecision at the Ballhausplatz, the dangers of Romania’s changing foreign policy provided the final impetus for Austria–Hungary to renew the Dual Alliance and entrust the protection of Austrian interests in the Balkans to Germany. As a result, the strategic objective Tisza had formulated—a joint diplomatic offensive with the Germans—was elevated to the rank of official foreign policy in the Balkans. The so-called Matscheko memorandum, the composition of which Berchtold ordered at the behest of two influential diplomats (Ottokar Czernin, his minister to Bucharest, and Marquis Johann von Pallavicini, his ambassador to Constantinople) who hoped to enlighten and persuade leaders in Berlin,⁵⁴ adopted two fundamental elements of the approach the Hungarian prime minister had advocated in March of 1914, namely the prevention of a pan-Balkan alliance under Russian and French patronage and the necessity of forming an alliance with Bulgaria and possibly Turkey. Even so, this memo diverged from Tisza’s earlier conception insofar as it was modified in accordance with recent foreign-policy developments; the focus of the joint diplomatic offensive was no longer the isolation of Serbia, but

53 Hildebrand, *Das vergangene Reich*, 296–301; Angelow, *Kalkül und Prestige*, 427–29.

54 June 5, 1914; *Báró Burián István naplói*, 101.

rather the clarification of Romania's relationship with the Triple Alliance. The intention to use tact in efforts to improve the fraying relationship with this increasingly distant potential ally is evidenced by the recommendation that German and Austro-Hungarian diplomats attempt to steer Romania's foreign policy—and to form an alliance with Bulgaria and Turkey—not by taking confrontational steps, but by combining diplomatic pressure with a policy of economic concessions. Their chances of doing so, however, were hurt by the fact that the concessions to be discussed with the Romanians did not include talks about domestic conditions in Austria and Hungary—that is, debates over the situation of the Romanian minority in the Dual Monarchy. Despite its limitations, however, this memo offered some constructive suggestions for handling the Balkan crisis-zone in a peaceful manner. Only in the case of a complete failure of diplomatic action and Romania's defection to the Franco-Russian camp would the Dual Alliance be obliged to take defensive military measures and reinforce Transylvania's border-protection system. Nor was there any mention of a military solution to the Serbian problem; instead, they discussed strategic objectives like improving this perpetually tense relationship by means of economic concessions, and gradually pacifying their southern neighbor by incorporating it into their economic sphere of influence.⁵⁵

Starting in early June, the Hungarian prime minister received precise information about Berchtold's intentions to join the Germans in taking diplomatic steps in Bucharest to boost the Romanians' loyalty to the alliance, and about their joint efforts to promote an alliance with Bulgaria. A mid-June meeting between Kaiser Wilhelm II and Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Konopiště Castle did not lead to the expected breakthrough on the question of a joint Balkan policy, largely due to the Kaiser's lack of interest and despite the heir presumptive objections to Wilhelm's unwaveringly optimistic assessment of the Romanian situation and his striking passivity. In a confidential brief, the Hungarian prime minister summarized Franz Ferdinand's judgment of the Germans' handling of the Romanian and Bulgarian relationships as follows: "The heir presumptive did not have much to report. In his opinion, the Kaiser

55 Ö-U.A. vol. 8, no. 9918, 186–95. *Denkschrift des Sektionsrates Franz Freiherrn von Matscheko, vor 24 Juni*. See also Petersson, "Das österreichisch-ungarische Memorandum," 145–78.

did not actually wish to discuss the subject any further. [Wilhelm] expressed his confidence to his host that King Carol [of Romania] was not thinking of changing his political orientation or associations, which he insisted he was strengthening [...] But the German Kaiser has yet to begin a conversation in Bucharest about the future position of this kingdom [...] or the restoration of an irreproachable relationship between it and the [Dual] Monarchy. The heir presumptive added that he drew his exalted guest’s attention to—and lay particular emphasis on the importance of—the need for Germany to take a more objective view of the requirements of our policy in Bulgaria [...] According to Berchtold, the heir presumptive now recognizes the need for a warm relationship with—and political support for—Bulgaria so as to counterbalance possible future encroachments by the Romanians.”⁵⁶

Tisza invariably regarded the implementation of coordinated German–Austro-Hungarian diplomatic action as their most important foreign-policy task and urged Berchtold to be consistent in carrying out the planned initiatives, especially convincing Berlin to accept the notion of forming an alliance with Bulgaria and thereby preventing Romania’s estrangement from the Triple Alliance.⁵⁷ On the eve of Franz Ferdinand’s assassination in Sarajevo, Berchtold wrote a private letter indicating that the long-awaited memorandum necessary to put this plan into action was finally ready; this memo was to undermine German diplomats’ “rosy optimism with regard to Romania” and convince them of the need for serious, clarifying discussions with Bucharest. Given the impending retirement of the veteran diplomat László Szögyény-Marich, the effort to convince Berlin to accept a coordinated Balkan policy was apparently no cause for hurry; it was scheduled for August, when the new Austro-Hungarian ambassador was set to assume his post in the German capital. Berchtold was much more unsettled by the enthusiasm to go to war on behalf of Albania and its ruler, which mood was then prevailing in Vienna.⁵⁸ The Albanian state and its prince were both largely the creations of Austro-

56 Burián to Tisza, Vienna, June 16, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 47, item no. 67.

57 Galántai, *Die Österreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie*, 204.

58 Berchtold to Tisza, June 27, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44.b, Tisza–Balogh documents, batch no. 2, item no. 38.

Hungarian diplomats and their foreign policy. At Berchtold's behest, Lajos Thallóczy spent three days in Vienna in February of 1914 teaching the German prince Wilhelm of Wied about Albania so as to prepare him to take the Albanian throne.⁵⁹ Other figures who played a decisive role in preparing the Foreign Ministry to make such decisions, including the political section chief Count János Forgách and the ministerial chief of staff Alexander Hoyos, also considered coordinated diplomatic action to be a possible means of advancing Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkans and were very much afraid that clashes over Albania might spark a wider war. For example, on several occasions in May of 1914, Forgách told the Albania specialist Lajos Thallóczy that in dealing with the Albanian civil war, Austria–Hungary could not take any steps that might involve the risk of sparking a larger military conflict because the Dual Monarchy's financial situation would make it impossible for them to bear the costs of a war. Hoyos, on the other hand, repeatedly asserted that Albania's fate would be decided by another Balkan War which would take place within two or three years.⁶⁰ The chances of maintaining peace for some limited interval would define the fundamental attitude of Austria and Hungary's foreign-policy decision-makers, whose mood reflected these volatile international conditions and uncertain prospects.

COOPERATION AMONG THE ALLIES AND THE BURDENS OF A COORDINATED BALKAN POLICY

The Austro-Hungarians' aggressive reaction to the assassination of the archduke in Sarajevo, namely their attempt to eliminate the Serbians as a military power in the Balkans, in which effort they were backed by their German allies, did nothing to free the Dual Monarchy from the threat of nationalist irredentism. A decisive proportion of their military potential was engaged in a two-front war against Serbia and Russia, and their effort to gain

59 Thallóczy's journals, entries dated February 9 and 12–14, 1914.

60 Thallóczy's journals, entries dated May 24–25, 1914.

strategic military advantages created room for wartime diplomatic maneuvers which would affect both the rule of law in the Austro-Hungarian regions occupied by ethnic minorities and these minorities’ sense of belonging to the Dual Monarchy. Strategically sensitive areas along Austria–Hungary’s borders with Italy and Romania, were populated by significant communities of Italians and Romanians; these neighboring allies considered the military action Serbia and the confrontation with Russia to be Austro-Hungarian aggression and cited the defensive nature of their obligations in adopting a neutral, wait-and-see approach. The Dual Monarchy’s relationship with Italy was made especially fragile by the fact that the treaty which established the Triple Alliance obliged Austro-Hungary to compensate its southwestern neighbor to offset any position Austria–Hungary was to acquire in the Balkans. One condition of the Hungarians’ acceptance of the declaration of war on Serbia was an official proclamation of the Dual Monarchy’s lack of interest in acquiring territory in the Balkans and a renunciation of the idea of annexing the Kingdom of Serbia; in practice, however, this move did very little to improve relations with Italy, and proved complete ineffectual as a means of keeping Russia out of the war. The Italian and Romanian problems took on particular significance insofar as Germany’s strategic plans invariably called on both these reluctant allies to mobilize their armies and intended to motivate them to enter the war by making territorial and ethnic-policy concessions at Austria–Hungary’s expense.⁶¹ Even before the declaration of war on Serbia, German diplomats had successfully urged the Dual Monarchy to acknowledge the justice of Italian claims to compensation.⁶² Another proposal in early August—that in the interest of victory, Austria–Hungary should supplement the compensation Italy demanded by ceding the Italian-inhabited regions of the Dual Monarchy, above all Trentino, so as to assure Italy’s military cooperation—proved completely unacceptable to both Austria and Hungary’s governing elites. Hungarian prime minister István Tisza’s pointed rejection of this German proposal—which would have been disadvantageous to his Austrian partners—

61 Hanák, “Die ungarischen Staatsmänner,” 197–202; Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund*, 846–48, 858–59.

62 Burián to Tisza, Vienna, July 27 and 29, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 20, item nos. 123 and 127.

is notable evidence of intensifying dualist solidarity during wartime conditions. There is no doubt that Hungary's national perspective also played a significant role in Tisza's argumentation in rejecting this plan, insofar as ceding territory would have served as a precedent for the Balkan states' extortionate policies of exchanging cooperation for territorial acquisition, especially Romania's ethnically motivated demands for Transylvania. The harshness of the Germans' approach was especially galling given that in citing the principle of ethnic nationhood, they ignored the multinational composition of the Dual Monarchy and discredited its military objectives, namely the protection of its territorial integrity and its status as a Great Power. At the same time, the Germans' stipulation that Italy, "a neighbor inclined to betrayal," would receive territorial concessions prior to entering the war on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary, seemed preposterous to Tisza. With some malice, he pointed out the German leadership's strategic errors and ultimate responsibility for the Italians' increasingly firm intention to stay out of the war. He attributed the English declaration of war to the Germans' aggressive violation of Belgian neutrality and convincingly argued that in the geopolitical situation which had thus developed, Italy would no longer stand by the Dual Alliance because its long, indefensible coastline would not permit it to risk a confrontation with the maritime forces of England and France. Foreign Minister Berchtold came to the same conclusion, which the Joint Council of Ministers incorporated into resolution specifying that the diplomats of the Dual Alliance could no longer realistically expect Italy to do more than to maintain its neutrality.⁶³

For Tisza, coordinating their fundamental negotiating principles for handling the Italians' demands for compensation would not be sufficient to guarantee the security of the Dual Monarchy; he wanted Berlin to offer military assurances consistent the strategic demands of a Great-Power war, namely the promise of a joint defense against an attack from the south. In a confidential brief written in early August, the Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, pointed out the consequences of the Schlieffen plan, the Dual Alliance's joint military strategy, which involved concentrating the bulk of the Germans' forces on the western front, meaning that until France could be

63 August 8, 1914; see Komjáthy, *Protokolle*, 156–66.

defeated, Austria–Hungary would have to deal with the Russians’ numerical superiority in the east by itself. Given that the Dual Monarchy’s entire army would be required to man the Galician front and serve as the Germans’ rear guard during their invasion of France, the Hungarian prime minister considered it “a matter of Germany’s honor” that Austria–Hungary receive compensation and that joint action be taken to deny Italy the tempting opportunity to occupy the Dual Monarchy’s undefended southern border regions, from Tyrol to Trieste; he thus proposed that the German and Austro-Hungarian chiefs of staff should agree to station joint defensive forces there so as to demonstrate the two belligerent allies’ unity and their resolve to defend this region.⁶⁴ His proposal was accepted by Berchtold and Conrad, but leaders in Berlin were unwilling to take any step in support of the Dual Monarchy which might have jeopardized the Germans’ chief diplomatic objective, which was convincing Italy to enter the war quickly and to participate in a *blitzkrieg* takeover of France.⁶⁵

In reality, Austria–Hungary’s governing elites were also unprepared to harmonize their political and military goals with those of their German allies, given that they lacked a mutually accepted set of views which would have allowed their authoritative domestic power players to modify their conceptions of local Balkan conflicts in the context of an expanding Great-Power war. In the interest of effective cooperation, Tisza formulated the fundamental goal of coordinating German and Austro-Hungarian diplomatic activities, getting the two powers to agree on their military objectives, and getting the Germans to acknowledge the Dual Monarchy’s equal standing, given their mutual dependence as allies. However, in late August, given his skepticism (which resulted from Germany’s boundless global political ambitions), the Hungarian prime minister told Burián in confidence that as soon as the Dual Monarchy were to have any military successes, its foreign-policy decision-makers would have to consider the prospect of a signing an honorable peace agreement with the Russians and the French, and that they should inform Berlin that they

64 Tisza to Berchtold, August 10, 1914. TIÖM vol. 2, 53–55.

65 Berchtold to Tisza, Vienna, August 11, 1914. *Báró Burián István naplója*, 281. See also Afflerbach, *Der Dreibund*, 775–77.

desired this possible outcome.⁶⁶ Ultimately, though, Tisza believed that the Germans' strategic plan would be successful, and thus in the expectation that assistance would follow the German victory to be won on the western front, leaders at the highest levels of the Austro-Hungarian government and military consistently advocated the assumption of the colossal burden of fending off the Russian offensive with the Dual Monarchy's own military forces. Tisza thought that maximal exertion in waging a successful defensive war in Galicia was the only way to avoid revealing the Dual Monarchy's inner weaknesses, and that reliance on German aid would make Austria–Hungary vulnerable to political and military domination by the Germans.⁶⁷

By September of 1914, the failure of the Germans' *blitzkrieg* strategy had dashed their hopes of a quick military victory in the West and complicated the prospects for rapidly deploying German reinforcements to the eastern front, where Austro-Hungarian forces were suffering serious losses and relinquishing more and more territory in their struggle to hold back the numerically superior Russian army. German egotism—which subordinated the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Dual Monarchy's interests in the Balkans to the forcing of a victory in the west—became increasingly apparent as the military situation became more and more dire, causing disillusionment among the Hungarian politicians who had previously urged spirited perseverance. These conflicting interests clearly manifested themselves in the Dual Alliance's divergent policies with regard to Southeastern Europe. With unanimous Hungarian assent, the Dual Monarchy's foreign-policy leadership prioritized attaching Turkey and Bulgaria to the Central powers' alliance in hopes of defeating Serbia and putting Romania in check, while German diplomats focused on forming alliances with Turkey and Romania in opposing the Russians. For the time being, the Germans' plan to neutralize the Russians' advantage in Galicia did not involve redirecting a larger force toward the east; to alleviate the pressure the Russians were putting on the Dual Monarchy, they wanted to convince Romania to enter the war as quickly as possible. Kaiser Wilhelm II personally urged his diplomats to form an alliance between the Central powers and the Romanians and to assign

66 Tisza to Burián, August 30 and September 2, 1914. TIÖM vol. 2, 110–11 and 113. See also *Báró Burián István naplói*, September 2, 1914.

67 Tisza to Berchtold, September 3, 1914. TIÖM vol. 2, 116–18.

the latter the patriotic task of protecting Transylvania, which was threatened by the prospect of Russian invasion.⁶⁸ In proposing to invite the Romanian army to take up a position in Transylvania, the Germans disregarded the Hungarian concerns about their sovereignty and the integrity of their kingdom.

The outbreak of the Great War and the ensuing military developments made Austria–Hungary so dependent on its alliance with Germany that the resulting military state of emergency caused Hungary to lose a significant portion of the value the Germans had assigned to it in accordance with Bismarck’s political conception of the alliance; for decades, Hungary had served to offset anti-German sentiments and pro-Slavic tendencies in the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy. The “Iron Chancellor” had initiated this special German–Hungarian relationship by taking energetic steps to oppose Romanian irredentists’ claims to Transylvania, and the stability of the Hungarian-led, multinational “realm of St. Stephen” continued to be a particular focus of German power politics during the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II as well, given its role as a chief source of support for the Dual Alliance and as an important obstacle to a Czech (or generally Slavic) political breakthrough in Cisleithania.⁶⁹ Despite the consistently preferential treatment Hungary had received from the Germans, by the time of the July Crisis of 1914, Hungarian politicians and Austro-Hungarian diplomats were palpably uncertain whether the alliance with Germany would still be sufficient to guarantee the security of the Dual Monarchy and defend the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Hungary in its dealings with Romania. For this reason, it was certainly no coincidence that in a letter Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph wrote to Kaiser Wilhelm II to explain the reasons the Dual Monarchy was obliged to go to war, he cited the aforementioned German show of strength (which had taken place a half-century before) as an example to be followed, given that it had dampened the Romanians’ aspirations in Transylvania and driven the Romanian state in the direction of cooperation.⁷⁰

68 Hantsch, *Leopold Graf Berchtold*, 677. See also Jansen, *Der Kanzler und der General*, 39–43; Afflerbach, *Falkenhayn*, 197–208. Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*, 44–47.

69 Diószegi, *Bismarck und Andrásy*, 54–57; Pantenburg, *Im Schatten des Zweibundes*, 83–86 and 104–15.

70 Emperor-King Franz Joseph’s letter to Kaiser Wilhelm II, Vienna, Jul. 2nd, 1914: “Even at the beginning of Carol’s reign, they entertained similar political fantasies, which are now

Despite Austria–Hungary’s concerns, German military strategists still regarded Romania primarily as an active anti-Russian ally. Clearly, Romania’s entry into the war on the side of the Central powers would have made sense only if the latter could trump the territorial offer Russia had made to Romania; in the treaty in which the Romanians had promised their neutrality, the Russians had promised them that they could take Bukovina, Transylvania, and the Romanian-inhabited territories of eastern Hungary when the time was right.⁷¹ Of course, this plan said nothing about unifying the Romanian population living under Russian rule with the rest of the Romanian nation. In order to eliminate Russian influence and convince Romanian minority populations to support Germany, German diplomats recommended a plan involving a more promising future for the entire ethnic-Romanian population, raising the prospect not only of the emancipation of the Romanian ethnic minority in Hungary, but also—after the defeat of Russia—its unification with Bessarabia as well. The Germans were ready to move forward on the Transylvanian question and to assert their influence by offering the Romanians territorial compensation in the relevant regions of the Dual Monarchy. In September of 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm II himself told the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Berlin that in order to convince Romania to join the war against Russia, the Dual Monarchy would have to give up not just a piece of Bukovina, but an even larger piece of territory—obviously referring to Transylvania.⁷² In the first German strategic military plans which were formulated in Berlin at that time, an expanded Romania was regarded as an organic element of the future German-led, Central European economic alliance, one condition of achieving which was a modification of Hungary’s ethnic-minority policy, especially including Hungarian recognition of the existence and collective

repeated by the [Romanian] Cultural League, clouding the healthy political sense of Romanian statesmen and threatening the Kingdom with the pursuit of the politics of adventurism... Throughout his reign, Your blessed grandfather intervened in an energetic, determined manner and showed Romania the way to assume a position of importance in Europe and become a dependable pillar of stability. [But] now this same danger threatens the Monarchy...” Cited in Ö-U.A. vol. 8, no. 9482. 251.

71 Hajdu, “A céri Oroszország hadicéljai”, 29–35; Volkmer: “Der Einfluss der siebenbürgischen Frage,” 17–18.

72 Silberstein, *The Troubled Alliance*, 187–88.

rights of the German and Romanian communities who lived in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁷³

The basic features of Germany’s Romania-centered Balkan diplomacy bore a striking resemblance to the notions of the Austro-Hungarian heir presumptive, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who intended to use the unification of the Romanians into an ethnic nation-state as a way of acquiring a committed ally in Austria and Germany’s ongoing struggles against Russian and Pan-Slavism.

The archduke’s unchanging network of personal connections suggests a certain continuity, insofar as the prominent Transylvanian–Romanian politicians at his workshop in the Belvedere Palace included Aurel Popovici and Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, who maintained increasingly close relationships with German diplomats and were associated after the outbreak of the war with Germany’s increasing influence over Romanians’ hopes for ethnic emancipation, as well as their growing significance as a regional power.⁷⁴ In gauging the strength of the connections between Germany and these two Romanian politicians, one cannot underestimate the significance of the fact that by the eve of the Great War, plans had been formulated for the realization of the concept of Greater Austria which Aurel Popovici had popularized earlier in one of his books. Along with increasing the role of the Germans who lived in the Dual Monarchy and reinforcing the alliance with the German Empire, this scheme envisioned a restructuring of the Habsburg Empire which involved gradually increasing the autonomy of ethnic-minority communities while simultaneously reinforcing the unity of the Habsburg Empire by expanding the ruler’s supreme right to make decisions regarding joint Austro-Hungarian affairs. Among other measures, this particular plan to reform the dualist monarchy of Austria–Hungary prescribed the forcible introduction of universal (male) suffrage in Hungary so as to help ethnic minorities achieve a greater share of political power, put an end to Hungarian supremacy, and dilute

73 Bihl, “Zu den österreichisch-ungarischen Kriegszielen 1914”, 507. See also Ritter, *Die Tragödie der Staatskunst*, 44–53; Schödl, *Alldeutscher Verband*, 187–89; Elvert, *Mitteleuropa!*, 36–39.

74 Kann, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand*, 224–27; Szász, “Politikai élet”, 1691–92; Letters between Tschirsky and Tisza, 4. and 6. Oct. 1914: TIÖM 2, 190. and 197–98.

the overrepresentation of noble liberal elites in positions of political power. This proposal—which relied on the support of the heir presumptive’s network of German, Transylvanian–Saxon, and Romanian experts in Hungary—was edited by Edmund Steinacker, one of the founders of the national movement of Germans in Hungary; the Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*) provided institutional support for this group’s efforts to attract the backing of German foreign-policy decision-makers. A key figure in the Belvedere workshop’s network of connections with Germany was Lutz Korodi, a Transylvanian Saxon and a former member of the Hungarian parliament in Budapest whose harsh judgment of Hungary’s ethnic-minority policies led him to move to Berlin soon after the turn of the century. In the German capital, he served in an increasingly important series of offices in the Pan-German League—which embraced the party organization of the Germans in Hungary—and established a confidential relationship with the Foreign Office as an esteemed expert on Hungarian affairs.⁷⁵ In November of 1914, as István Tisza was negotiating in Germany, he was surprised to discover the extent of Korodi’s activities and influence there.⁷⁶ After a decade away, as the outbreak of the war was approaching, Korodi took a tour through the land of his birth, the two great multinational regions of Transylvania and the Banat, and drew some predictable conclusions. Under the influence of the information he had gathered and the impressions this trip made on him, he wrote a series of pieces—first a memorandum addressed to Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, and then some high-quality analyses and journalistic features—advocating a revision of the imperial government’s Hungarian policy in accordance with Franz Ferdinand’s aforementioned reform program. It did not escape Korodi’s attention that German leaders were increasingly concerned about the special treatment Hungary received from Berlin and were considering the possibility that the weakening of the Dual Monarchy might force them to reorient themselves toward the formation of new alliances.⁷⁷ In his judgment, given the proportions of Hungary’s ethnic

75 Schödl, *Alldeutscher Verband*, 97–100 and 174–85.

76 December 5, 1914. MREZsLt, file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 8, item 24/15.

77 Sutter “Die innere Lage Ungarns,” 188–224; Schödl, *Alldeutscher Verband*, 167–73; Mommsen, *Der autoritäre Nationalstaat*, 230.

composition and the failure of efforts to create a Hungarian nation-state by means of ethnic homogenization, it was facing serious crises and shocks which could jeopardize the existence of the Dual Monarchy and the Kingdom of Hungary itself. Moreover, the assimilation policies Hungary actually implemented had been counterproductive, insofar as they had completely alienated the ethnic-minority elites who otherwise tended to accept the conception of the Hungarian state; in fact, the apparent hopelessness of their national aspirations repelled them even further, making irredentism and separatism more attractive. Thus in order to avert an internal crisis in Hungary and the Dual Monarchy (the German Empire’s most important wartime ally), Korodi advised the government in Berlin to exploit Hungary’s dependence on German support over the course of the war and to intervene in Budapest so as ensure the introduction of voting rights which would provide Hungary’s Germans with proportional representation in its parliament, as well as the implementation of the 1868 Nationalities Law, which enshrined a broad range of linguistic rights. This sort of change might have made it possible to overcome Hungary’s internal ethnic strife and reconsolidate the Dual Monarchy, given that proportional representation in parliament and a greater share of power might have improved the Romanians’ (and other ethnic minorities’) attitudes toward the framework of the Hungarian state and the alliance with Germany.⁷⁸ In a published study related to this memo, he focused explicitly on the foreign-policy necessity of extending rights to Hungary’s ethnic minorities, particularly the Romanians. He pointed out that the Romanian political elites of the Kingdom of Hungary were demonstrably loyal to the Dual Monarchy and decisively in favor of the alliance with Germany, which could be useful in convincing Romania—which by the time of the Treaty of Bucharest had become an important power in the Balkans with Russian diplomatic support—to make a favorable decision in choosing between the two belligerent power blocs. In Korodi’s view, convincing Bucharest to join the Central powers was entirely the responsibility of the Hungarian government; an immediate expansion of the political rights of

78 A Hungarian translation of this memo was published in Kemény, *Iratok* VII. 71–74. For a more recent analysis, see Vermeiren, *The First World War*, 211–12.

the Romanians in Hungary was the only way to discredit the Russians' promise that Romania would be able to take the territories of Transylvania and Bukovina from the Dual Monarchy. In any case, when Prime Minister István Tisza wrote an open letter making amends with Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, a Romanian representative in the Hungarian parliament who had written a piece in the influential Bucharest newspaper *Adevărul* ("The Truth") detailing the advantages of a Romanian alliance with the Dual Monarchy and Germany (even though Tisza had previously, on the basis of faulty information, publicly accused Vaida-Voevod of Russophilia and participation in a Pan-Slavic conspiracy), Korodi took it as a sign of favorable policy developments within the Hungarian government and an intention to comply with Romanians' demands for political, cultural, and linguistic rights.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, in the fall of 1914, the German government, looking for a way out of the critical situation on the Western front and hoping to maintain the cooperation of the Hungarians, did not lend its support to the political aspirations of Hungary's German and Romanian minorities, but instead focused on territorial concessions to Romania, which plans were decisively rejected by the governing elites of both Austria and Hungary, just as they had responded to the notion of concessions to Italy. They considered the protection of the Dual Monarchy's territorial integrity and its Great-Power prestige to be among their undiscussable common interests, and thus the pressure applied by their German allies only reinforced the solidarity among Austrian and Hungarian politicians. Both halves of the dualist empire were in complete agreement with the criticism of the Germans' plans for Transylvania which the Austrian prime minister Karl Stürgkh voiced at a session of the Joint Council of Ministers in September of 1914, saying that offering territorial concessions to Romania would inevitably encourage the Italians to make similar demands. With his consistent rejections of the Germans' importunate *démarches*, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister also earned plaudits from the Hungarian prime minister, who responded to the indignation he encountered at sessions of the Joint Council of Ministers by warning his

79 Korodi, "Österreich–Ungarn–Rumänien–Rußland," 317–24. See also Dolmányos, "Károlyi Mihály," 185–86. Kemény, *Iratok*, vol. 8, 37–38.

colleagues not to air political grievances and recriminations against Germany, given that cooperation with their selfish ally was of life-and-death importance to the Dual Monarchy.⁸⁰

Together, the principle of equality between the allies and the German effort to induce Romania to enter the war—which initiative would affect Hungary directly—created the conditions for the Hungarian prime minister to play a key role in negotiating with the Dual Monarchy’s German contacts, particularly in the formation of their Romanian policy. Given the likelihood that Berchtold would acquiesce regardless of the circumstances, Tisza took the initiative in this sensitive area himself; he no longer considered Berchtold steadfast enough to be able to counter, energetically and convincingly, the Germans’ public pressure to accept autonomy for—or territorial concessions to—the Romanians, or to dispel the Germans’ intensifying apprehensions which could only be exacerbated by the Hungarians’ predictably contrarian reaction to such plans. For Tisza, the concessions which the Germans wanted to offer the Romanians of Hungary, including the prospect of increased territorial autonomy, could not serve as a basis for discussions, insofar as he did not accept the Romanian National Party as a negotiating partner and could not, under wartime conditions, risk a repetition of the failures of early 1914—that is, an open manifestation of Hungarian–Romanian antagonism. For this reason, he wrote impassioned letters to the two most important officials of the Romanian national churches, expressing his willingness to revise Hungary’s ethnic-minority policies. Declaring his political intentions in this way unquestionably represented a break with previous Hungarian governments’ focus on linguistic homogenization; Tisza made clear that he was ready to suspend the linguistic provisions of the public-education law which affected Romanian religious schools, expand the use of the Romanian language in public administration and legal affairs, and to modify laws on voting rights in the Romanians’ favor—though he did not touch on the subject of territorial autonomy. And just as Tisza had hoped, these ecclesiastical leaders, who had previously advocated compromise with the Hungarian government, replied immediately and

80 September 20, 1914; see Komjáthy, *Protokolle 1914*, 177–84. Dolmányos, “Károlyi Mihály,” 185–86.

positively. Tisza then made the tactical decision to publicize their response; referring to the moderate Romanian majority which was represented by the national churches allowed him to put moral pressure on radical nationalist politicians to lend their support to this proposal for a Hungarian–Romanian compromise; this maneuver was also an attempt to assure the Germans of his willingness to reform the Hungarian government’s ethnic-minority policies in the Romanians’ favor.⁸¹

In an effort to convince the Hungarians to accept these concessions, and in the interest of reassuring the increasingly impatient Germans, the Hungarian prime minister took it upon himself to provide continual updates to the most important foreign-policy figures who were interested in the relationship with Romania, including the Austro-Hungarian minister to Bucharest, Count Ottokar Czernin, and German diplomats in Vienna and Bucharest. He informed them of his correspondence with the Romanian archbishops of the Orthodox church in the Transylvanian city of Nagyszeben (now Sibiu, Romania), their discussion of an expansion of ethnic-minority rights, and his decision to delay publicizing it until early November—that is, until the defeat of the Russian forces which had attacked Hungary’s northeastern borderlands—so as to avoid the perception that a direct military threat had forced Hungary to make these concessions. In order to convey his political goals clearly, Tisza prepared guidelines for the Austro-Hungarian and German diplomats who would negotiate in Romania, and provided detailed explanations of the political and military disadvantages which would result from the dismemberment of the Hungarian nation-state. Among other criticisms, he disputed the wisdom of the Germans’ suggestion that the Romanians be granted autonomy or a semi-sovereign state in Transylvania, given that putting its 900,000 Hungarians and 250,000 Germans—the wealthiest and most educated stratum of the Transylvanian population—under Romanian majority rule would disturb the cohesion and military resolve of Hungary’s multi-ethnic political nation and create uncertainty among the 1.5 million Romanians who would continue to live under the authority of the Hungarian state, thus producing tensions

81 Tisza’s correspondence with the Orthodox Archbishop Ioan Mețianu and the Greek Catholic Archbishop Victor Mihályi, September 22 and 24, 1914 in *TIÖM*, vol. 2, 272–78; Szász, “Politikai élet,” 1691–92; Szarka, “Végzet és gondviselés,” 88.

between Hungarians and Romanians which could jeopardize the Dual Monarchy’s military capabilities.⁸²

In dealing with the personal aspects of his semi-official diplomatic activities, Tisza was unable to avoid a certain friction, given that Czernin, the Czech aristocrat who headed the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic mission in Bucharest, was among the confidants of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and had advocated a daring plan to diminish the Hungarians’ influence and establish an alliance with Romania by dissolving the Dual Monarchy, detaching Transylvania from the Kingdom of Hungary, and ceding it to the Kingdom of Romania, which would then be incorporated into the Danubian monarchy of Greater Austria as a protectorate, with rights resembling those which Bavaria enjoyed within the German Empire.⁸³ On the basis of his experiences in Bucharest and under the influence of the Russo–Romanian rapprochement, Czernin gradually lost his optimism about the prospects of forming an alliance with Romania. Starting with the outbreak of the war, he grew increasingly critical of the prevailing directionlessness at the Ballhausplatz and cooperated more and more closely with Tisza, whose managerial competence and familiarity with Romanian affairs he acknowledged.⁸⁴ By the fall of 1914, it was already standard practice for the Hungarian prime minister to respond directly to the reports Czernin filed with the Joint Foreign Ministry, or for Tisza to have Czernin’s diplomatic instructions prepared in accordance with his own intentions. The pressure the Germans applied concerning the Romanian question drew Tisza and Czernin closer to one another, given their mutual determination to maintain the Dual Monarchy’s status as a Great Power. They agreed on one essential aspect of their foreign-policy strategy, namely their assessment that the Romanians’ attitudes toward the two belligerent power blocs would not ultimately be determined by changes in Hungary’s ethnic-minority policies or the magnitude of the concessions they promised to Hungary’s Romanian community, but rather by the balance of power in the eastern theater of the Great War, the Romanians’ chances of emerging

82 *Denkschrift zur rumänischen Frage*. September 26, 1914. TIÖM, vol. 2, 159–66.

83 Kann, *Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand*, 173.

84 Czernin to Tisza, August 18, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 7, item 21/44.

victorious, and the prospect of territorial gains—particularly the acquisition of Transylvania. In contrast, German diplomats and military leaders faulted Hungary for its “maverick” policy of refusing to satisfy the Romanians’ national demands, which undermined Romania’s military commitment to the Central powers and thus jeopardized their war plans and their ultimate chances of victory.⁸⁵ The Germans’ strategic plan involved the opening of an enormous southern front; they imagined that Romania’s participation would encourage the Ottomans to enter the war, thereby blunting the Russian offensive in Galicia, reducing the pressure on the Dual Monarchy, and allowing German forces to continue their assault on the western front without modifying their plans.⁸⁶ Responding to the German ambassador to Vienna, the Hungarian prime minister dismissed as fantasy the Germans’ presumption that ceding Bukovina and granting political autonomy to Transylvania would necessarily convince Romania to enter the war on the Central powers’ side, given that the Russians’ obvious numerical superiority on the eastern front would discourage them from taking such a risky step, and that the Dual Monarchy’s dire military predicament could only encourage them to increase their territorial demands. This view was corroborated by information about the political climate in Romania, where a majority of the more influential groups of elites—in addition to the ruling party, which had adopted a wait-and-see approach—hoped that an Entente victory would allow them to annex the ethnically Romanian territories of the Dual Monarchy as soon as possible; even the minority who sympathized with the Central powers advocated neutrality, and no numerically substantial social group there wanted to cross swords with the Russians. For these reasons, trying to convince Romania to maintain its neutrality seemed like a much more realistic goal, and Tisza thus advocated shifting the focus of their military and foreign policies, forming an alliance with Bulgaria, and taking aggressive cooperative action to repel the Russian offensive.⁸⁷

German and Hungarian diplomats’ disputes over the principles and objectives of their Romania policy represented only a small portion of the

85 Tschirschky and Bethmann to Berchtold, November 4, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 7, item 21/64.

86 Jansen, *Der Kanzler*, 48–52.

87 Tisza to Tschirschky, November 5, 1914. TIÖM vol. 2, 266–68.

tensions which had built up between the two allies, the greatest source of which was the burning problem faced by Austria–Hungary’s military leaders, namely the minimal support the Germans had provided them in their struggle against the overwhelming Russian force in Galicia. The tactics embraced by the diplomats of the Ballhausplatz—first the threat to seek a separate peace, then servile support for the German plan adopted at the allies’ joint military headquarters—did not produce any results, insofar as they did not convince the Germans to redeploy to the eastern front a force capable of neutralizing the Russians’ military superiority in Galicia.⁸⁸ The Hungarian prime minister objected to the indecisive foreign minister’s striking reluctance to initiate direct negotiations, particularly because the leaders of the Dual Monarchy—including Tisza himself—had not been able, since the beginning of the war, to develop a clear picture of the Germans’ military objectives and strategic considerations. In reality, as noted above, Austria–Hungary’s governing elites were also unprepared to harmonize their political and military objectives. For this reason, in late October of 1914, at Tisza’s request, the Joint Council of Ministers ordered Austria–Hungary’s Foreign Ministry to summarize their military objectives in preparation for discussions with the German government, with a particular focus on the limits and conditions of the Dual Monarchy’s fulfillment of its duties to its German allies. The latter terms were closely related to the persistent problems of territorial compensation for the Italians and Romanians and the military situation on the eastern front.⁸⁹

In hopes of preventing the Germans from acting on their proposals to offer concessions to the Romanians and territorial compensation to the Italians, the Hungarian prime minister repeatedly stressed the need to schedule negotiations for a comprehensive political, military, and strategic agreement, given that no high-level government talks between the two allies had taken place since the beginning of the war; he assumed that Austria–Hungary would have a better chance of convincing the Germans of the justice of their positions in direct negotiations than in the course of small-scale bargaining and exchanges of notes between diplomatic representatives. Given the significance of the

88 Rauchensteiner, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 252–61.

89 October 31, 1914. Komjáthy, *Protokolle 1914–18*, 184–92.

Romanian question, there is no doubt that among the Dual Monarchy's political leaders, Tisza considered himself to be the most suitable candidate for this task. Count Berchtold, the Joint Foreign Minister—who was actually responsible for such discussions, and was therefore concerned about the prestige of his office—tried for a time to discourage Tisza from making his planned trip to Germany.⁹⁰ Even so, Berchtold considered the Hungarians' early-November response to the Germans' demands to be a diplomatic success insofar as it articulated a few "bracing truths" in rejecting the German chancellor's irrationally optimistic assessment of the possibility that Romania might enter the war as an ally of the Central powers. Berchtold observed that it had had a sobering effect on Germany's ambassador to Vienna when Tisza bravely denounced Bethmann-Hollweg for the "effrontery" of alleging that Austria-Hungary was entirely responsible for the outbreak of the war (when in reality, Germany's resolute support was an important factor in this decision), and then using that attribution of responsibility as moral justification for demanding that Austria and Hungary make territorial concessions in the interest of military success.⁹¹ Thus Berchtold now considered it an appropriate time for Tisza to visit Berlin and the Germans' military headquarters in order to assuage their mutual irritation over the issue of Romania and to convince their "hearing-impaired ally" to listen to Austria-Hungary's pleas for help with the serious military and diplomatic consequences of the Russians' continued dominance in Galicia. Berchtold had great hopes that the Germans might now be receptive because Tisza's correspondence with the Romanian ecclesiastical authorities in September—in which they discussed an expansion of the rights of the Romanian minority—had been made public in early November, along with an announcement of an amnesty for Romanian political prisoners.⁹² However, in a telegram sent a few days later, the German general Paul von Hindenburg suggested another unusual form of interference in Hungary's

90 Burián to Tisza, November 10, 1914; MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 7, item 21/2.

91 Berchtold to Tisza, November 5, 1914; MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 7, item 21/66.

92 Berchtold to Tisza, November 6, 1914; MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 7, item 21/68.

domestic politics. The commander of the German Eighth Army in East Prussia questioned the significance of the Hungarians’ concessions and appealed to Austria–Hungary’s *Armeeoberkommando* (“supreme military commander”) to satisfy all of the demands of Hungary’s Romanian minority so as to induce Romania to enter the war. He repeated the suggestion that the Hungarian government had played a role in preventing Germany from achieving its strategic objectives, which induced Berchtold to request that Tisza receive immediate authorization—as the Austro-Hungarian emperor’s personal representative and an expert on Romanian affairs—to initiate negotiations with Germany.⁹³ Tisza’s personal talent, his self-confident commitment to his vocation, and his dedication to the dualist foreign-policy tradition were the key factors in choosing him for this diplomatic assignment, as well as basis of the assumption that a Hungarian politician might be more successful in representing the interests of the Dual Monarchy in talks with the Germans than an Austrian–German official who was hobbled by defeatism and an excessive respect for the authority of his more powerful “brothers.”

AT THE GERMAN HEADQUARTERS AS THE COMMISSIONER OF FRANCIS JOSEPH I

During the course of war Francis Joseph considered the realization of dynastic loyalty between the monarchs as basic principle in the strategic consultations between Germany and Austria–Hungary, which meant that Austria–Hungary was ready to fulfill its obligations toward the German ally until the end, but it insisted on its territorial integrity and refused to make any voluntary territorial concession. Concerning the details Tisza was given free hand to discuss all questions related to the bilateral cooperation between the two allies. He regarded as his main task averting at any cost the obsessionist German thought that Romania took an active role in the military intervention. He also sought to have the German leaders acknowledge the Austro-Hungarian military

93 Burián’s letter and telegram to Tisza, November 13, 1914; MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 7, items 21/5 and 6.

achievements, and he wished to become acquainted with at least the broad outline of the German war plans.⁹⁴ Tisza was familiar with the ideas of the emperor, Wilhelm II, who was only one of several agents who actively shaped the German foreign policy. Tisza, however, accurately gauged the value and significance of the ruler's theatrical enouncements and impulsive improvisations.⁹⁵ Tisza's personal impressions and experience therefore appeared to be in contradiction with the information he received confidentially from Gottfried zu Hohenlohe-Schillingfürst, Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Berlin prior to Tisza's journey. Hohenlohe pointed out that the only able man at the Mezières headquarters capable of making viable decisions and finding solutions is the Kaiser himself.⁹⁶ Despite this difference Hohenlohe's evaluation of certain other decision-makers in foreign policy, such as the imperial chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, the leader of the apparatus dealing with foreign affairs, and Gottlieb von Jagow secretary of foreign affairs, coincided with the opinion of István Burián, Tisza's advisor in foreign political affairs. Burián had a very low opinion of them. He considered both politicians narrow-minded, shortsighted individuals who disregarded the economic and political interests of Austria-Hungary on the Balkans, and never even considered the Austro-Hungarian needs and demands.⁹⁷ This antipathy was based on the new foreign political tendencies observable in the foreign policy of Bethman-Hollweg from the 1910s, who kept a distance from the Austro-Hungarian actions in the Balkans in order to reach a *détente* in the

94 *Báró Burián István naplói*, November 18, 1914. 133.

95 Ress, "Tisza István német szövetségi koncepciójának genezise", 396–98.

96 Burián to Tisza, November 16, 1914. *Báró Burián István naplói*, 320.

97 A part from Burián's degrading opinion: "The chancellor has no tactical sense in foreign policy, and neither does he vindicate such for himself. Jagow lacks independent ideas and thinking. Their best head is Zimmermann vice-secretary, but he is afraid to look for farther horizons". Burián to Tisza, March 18, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 6, item 19/100.—He interpreted and transmitted the opinion of the ambassador to Berlin in such manner: "Perhaps he [Hohenlohe] wants to prepare you that Bethmann and Jagow are very subordinate-minded personalities, who hardly understand the significance of certain events, and who avoid to think about questions which we are interested in, until the events force them, and carefully avoid any statements and declarations". Burián to Tisza, November 16, 1914. *Báró Burián István naplói*, 320.

German–English relations, thus mitigating tensions between the two Power groups, too. After the Bucharest Peace Treaty had put an end to the two Balkan Wars, the imperial chancellor increasingly refused to recognize the Austro-Hungarian efforts to modify power relations in the region. Instead, Bethmann-Hollweg sought to further German economic penetration in the Balkans. The first months of the war, especially the debate on the extent of territorial concessions given to Italy and Romania confirmed the Austro-Hungarian reservations about his foreign policy.⁹⁸ So, unsurprisingly, Burián rather supported Arthur Zimmermann vice foreign state secretary, as he thought him to be a more open-minded, creative personality, whose “firm and sane” attitude had been the key to the Ottoman entry to war, after the state secretary successfully dismantled the concerns of the German diplomats in this question.⁹⁹ Zimmermann’s political influence exceeded that which would have directly come from his position in the diplomatic corps. However, it was not only his talent, but his connections to the Eastern Headquarters (Ober Ost) which made him strong and influential. He accepted the strategic concept that the Ottoman military potential should be utilized in an offensive way, by opening two new fronts in the Caucasus and near the Suez Canal, which could have tipped the balance in favour of Germany. But for the success of Ottoman offensives it was inevitable to secure continuous food and ammunition supply, which was becoming more and more complicated. Since under Russian pressure the neutral Romania prohibited the transit transportation of German military aid from October, there was no solution left other than a Danubian transport which was risky because of the Serbian mines and artillery.¹⁰⁰

Therefore, in order to be able to organize continuous supply, the Central Powers had no choice but to cooperate and elaborate a common strategy for the Balkans. The importance of this new challenge was demonstrated by the behavior of Zimmermann, who, in the foreign office (Auswärtiges Amt), immediately presented to Tisza the military and political obligations and tasks of Austria–Hungary, which emerged as the consequence of Ottoman

98 Hildebrand, *Das vergangene Reich*, 285–92. Canis, *Die bedrängte Großmacht*, 431–50.

99 Burián to Tisza, October 10, 1914. MREZsLt file 44.b, Tisza–Balogh documents, batch no. 10/a, item no. 8.

100 Janssen, *Der Kanzler und der General*, 41–44. Gardos, “Die Balkanstraße”, 287–88.

entry into the war.¹⁰¹ During this first meeting both alternatives of securing communication lines with Turkey (forcing Romania to reopen the transit routes and to open the way through Serbia by weapons) were discussed. The two allies judged the situation and the significance of Balkan states differently, which influenced the execution of the task. In order to modify the Romanian stance, Zimmermann urged the Hungarian politicians to adjust their policy towards the national minorities by giving concessions to them. He used a sharp tone when calling for government steps to satisfy Romanian demands. Based on the contributions of his informant Lutz Korodi, who was in close contact with the prominent Germanophile Romanian politicians like Aurel Popovici and Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, Zimmerman emphasized the necessity for, or rather the lack of a state guarantee for Tisza's long awaited reform promises, such as the announcement of said reforms in the Parliament. He also reiterated his former proposal once refused by Budapest that a minister with special portfolio for the Romanian minority affairs should be established in the Hungarian government.¹⁰² Tisza rejected this criticism and challenged the viability of the German concept that any concessions in minority rights would make the entente-oriented Romanian government change its course. Instead of concessions given to Romania, Tisza urged for diplomatic intervention in Sofia and Constantinople exploiting the favourable atmosphere created by the Ottoman entry to war, in order to win Sofia for the Triplice, since the initiative of Austria–Hungary failed due to the German indifference and the Ottoman distrust.¹⁰³ He counted on the alteration of the attitude of the Germans, who earlier refused the Bulgarian alliance, because the occupation of the northeastern quarter of Serbia (the Negotin district) might allow Central Powers to reach

101 [Stefan Tisza], *Meine Besprechungen in Berlin und in deutschem Hauptquartier*. (Nach unmittelbar nach denselben gemachten Aufzeichnungen). Budapest, 5. XII. 1914. f. 1–19. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 8, item 24/15. The key documents of Tisza's visit in Berlin were removed from the 3rd volume of his works and speeches (published in 1926) because of "national interests", as these documents contradicted to the canonized picture of Tisza of the Horthy-era. The removed parts were published by the "Franklin Társaság" in a separate booklet which is available at the National Széchényi Library and the Library of the HAS. Our study is the first attempt to analyze this unique source.

102 Tisza to Tschirschky. October 6, 1914: TIÖM 2, 197–98.

103 Friedrich, *Bulgarien und die Mächte*, 165.

Constantinople through an inland corridor or could secure the Danubian route and thus the Ottoman weapon supply. This task was evidently assigned to Austria–Hungary formerly. The third offensive against Serbia in the middle of November had just brought success—that is, the control of the Drin valley and the occupation of some western Serbian towns—by the beginning of the negotiations, but the evolving stalemate prompted Austria–Hungary to call for the intervention of the Bulgarian troops in order to corrupt the morale and break the resistance of the Serbs.¹⁰⁴ Instead of accepting the broadening of the alliance system, vice secretary Zimmermann advised an intrepid military solution and offered a contingent of 20–30 thousand German soldiers to be transported for the immediate occupation of the Negotin district. The German foreign policy was still insisting on the neutrality of the Balkan states, because a Bulgarian alliance—besides evidently serving the interests of Austria–Hungary—would imply territorial adjustments to such an extent that would alienate Bulgaria’s two jealous neighbors, Romania and Greece (ruled by German dynasties).¹⁰⁵

The overture in Berlin was therefore burdened by tensions and it foreshadowed the atmosphere, topics and debates of the 3-day talks in Mezières with the most important German military and political decision makers. The former diplomatic quarrel regarding the responsibility for the outbreak of the war had sparked personal tension between Bethmann-Hollweg and Tisza, and at the beginning stage of the negotiations the question of responsibility was raised again. However, because of the asymmetric interdependence between the two allies, Tisza usually avoided accusations and politics based on resentment when such sensitive questions were discussed. Tisza knew that Austria–Hungary needed Germany more than Germany needed Austria–Hungary. But when Bethmann-Hollweg (though acknowledging the excellent performance of Austria–Hungary in tackling the Russian overpower) equated the serious Austrian war losses in Galicia with the “noble and generous” German behavior which gave free hand to Austria–Hungary in settling the dispute with Serbia in the crisis of June, pulling Germany into the war, Tisza

104 Jeřábek, *Potiorek*, 166–72; Rauchensteiner, *Der erste Weltkrieg*, 281–84.

105 Janssen, *Der Kanzler und der General*, 41; Friedrich, *Bulgarien und die Mächte*, 164–65.

replied sharply. It is well-known that among Austro-Hungarian decision makers, it was only Tisza who opposed a military showdown and it was the German diplomacy that urged him to change his mind.¹⁰⁶ Because of his personal involvement, Tisza began to cite his arguments and memories that even the Germans considered the time apt for a great war, but Bethmann-Hollweg interrupted him vehemently, saying that he never wanted war, he merely acknowledged the necessity of the energetic Austrian steps against Serbia, and he thought that the conflict could be contained. He admitted being disappointed at the behavior of England and made Great Britain responsible for the subsequent events. Tisza in a diplomatic tone reinterpreted the behavior of the German chancellor during the July crisis by emphasizing that he had accepted the action against Serbia, because it seemed to be the most favourable timing for waging a war “forced on us by the entente”. This peaceful tone changed Bethmann-Hollweg’s mood who agreed and even added the following comment: “Let us rather say that later the circumstances and conditions could be more unfavourable.”¹⁰⁷

That way, during the conversation Tisza tactfully hindered the shifting of responsibility for the war to Austria–Hungary, which would have definitely weakened the negotiating position of Austria–Hungary. At the same time by tactfully handling the German responsibility in causing a worldwide clash, he managed to create the atmosphere of mutual trust for the later discussions, where Tisza strictly insisted on the equal rights between the allies and enforced the principle of mutual interdependence. He pointed out to everyone that Francis Joseph insisted on the principle of territorial integrity, and from then on his negotiating partners avoided touching on this sensitive question. Another decisive result was that the problem of the Romanian ethnic minority in Hungary and the relation towards Romania was discussed based on Tisza’s principles. In the beginning of the negotiations the chancellor immediately pointed out that the question of Romanians in Transylvania is an internal case of Hungary, so he abandoned the formerly interventionist policy. However—

106 Vermes, *Tisza István*, 248–53; Galántai, *Die Österreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie*, 251–65.

107 “Sagen wir lieber, es könnten später ungünstigere Momente eintreten.” *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 4.

with much theatricality—he also warned Tisza that the active cooperation or at least the benevolent neutrality of Romania was a matter of life and death for the Triplice and thus was worth any price, but refrained from mentioning territorial concessions explicitly. Tisza reacted to the unexpected change in mood and the dramatic remark with great flexibility and pointed out that he was ready to take Bethmann-Hollweg’s advice into consideration regarding the Romanian affairs. After that, in order to eliminate the misunderstandings that could have burdened the relation between the two allies and to establish a joint strategy, he outlined the possible failure of any Hungarian politics of concessions towards the minorities, which Germany desired so much, while he also depicted the advantage of an alliance with Bulgaria. His exposé about the devaluation of the authority and viability of Austria–Hungary in the eyes of Romania during the transformations of the European alliance systems was a real historical analysis. This was later communicated to Jagow, Falkenhayn (chief of staff then) and the Kaiser too. Tisza’s arguments overtly stressed that the liberal government of Romania and its public opinion fuelled by the propaganda of the entente wants to fulfill the national desire of Greater Romania by incorporating the whole of Transylvania and regions even beyond that. Thus, Tisza argued that by granting moderate political concessions—which the German military and political circles advised again and again—Romania could not be won any more to enter into war on the side of Austria–Hungary and Germany. The publication of the planned extension of minority rights of the Romanians in November, 1914 was not welcomed positively in Romania, and this—according to Tisza—proved the failure of the German political expectations. He stressed the contradiction that the Hungarian offer was refused not because of the unacceptably low level of the concessions, but rather because it was in the interest of the Romanian government to maintain the dissatisfaction among Transylvanian Romanians and that way facilitate national unification in the future. Despite the refusal from Bucharest, Tisza still considered his action successful because he thought that his efforts had favourable effect on the loyalty of Transylvanian Romanians. By citing the writings of prominent Transylvanian Romanians (mainly from the clergy) and several press releases, he tried to prove to the German leaders that the measures planned years ago (e.g. the broadening of Romanian language use in

administration, schooling and the reshaping of electoral districts in favour of the Romanians) were welcomed by the Romanians in Hungary. At the same time he optimistically pointed out that the rapprochement between Hungarians and Romanians in Hungary might create a firm basis in the future to make Romania return to the Central Powers. Through his agenda he aimed to hinder Romanian expansion while increasing pressure on and influence in the political life of Romania. In order to create a political constellation that would decrease Romania's leeway he advised the establishment of an alliance in the Balkans and the expulsion of Russians from Galicia as the most neuralgic points of the joint military and diplomatic action.¹⁰⁸

When he enumerated the concrete tasks to overcome the difficulties, Tisza ranked the Bulgarian entry to war (with the active support of Turkey) first. For the continuous supply of war material for the latter two countries he wanted to open the Negotin-corridor as soon as possible. It is highly probable that he accepted the risky German concept for tactical reasons—in order to eliminate German diplomatic and military reservations about the value of a Bulgarian alliance. His premonition was right. While Bethmann accepted Tisza's criticism on the German policy towards Romania and the primacy of Hungarian interests in this question without any objections raised, he insisted on maintaining the neutrality of Bulgaria, because a Bulgarian–Turkish alliance might turn into an instrument that would urge for the revision of Greece's territorial acquisitions in 1913. And this was against the German concept. Tisza knew exactly the personal and political reasons of the German reluctance: King Constantine, the brother-in-law of the Kaiser was here the main token for the neutrality of Greece. It is not surprising that Berlin refrained from the support of a Bulgarian–Ottoman combination in order not to weaken the precarious positions of King Constantine against the pro-entente political circles. Therefore Bethmann made the finalization of the joint Balkan policy dependent on the approval of the Kaiser.¹⁰⁹

Thus the principles of wartime diplomatic and military cooperation were elaborated in details and settled only after the one-on-one meeting between

108 *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 5–6.

109 Kielmannsegg, *Deutschland und der Erste Weltkrieg*, 104–5; *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 7.

Tisza and Wilhelm II followed by consecutive talks with the participation of Bethmann-Hollweg, too. The Kaiser acknowledged the necessity of relieving the burden from Austrian troops in the eastern front by launching a new offensive, which Tisza considered an evident success. The Kaiser also appreciated the principle of territorial integrity of Austria–Hungary which was considered as a pillar of internal stability and authority for a Great Power. Finally Wilhelm II gave his consent to the diplomatic action that would prepare the Bulgarian entry to war.¹¹⁰ Tisza managed to convince the hesitating Germans by promising that Constantinople and Sofia would respect Greek neutrality, and at the same time he offered territorial aggrandisement for Greece in return for its neutrality. This implied that he accepted the modification of one of the basic Austro-Hungarian Balkan doctrines, that formerly insisted on the maintenance of the territorial integrity of Albania which was established with the consensus of the Powers. He offered the harbor of Valona and the southern districts as a basis of compensations from the territory of the Albanian state as it was delimited by the London conference. To compensate the possible losses he wanted to detach Albanian-inhabited districts from Serbia and Montenegro and to attach these to the northern Catholic and central Muslim regions after having overrun these inimical countries. His intention was to include an Albania—strengthened that way—into the Austro-Hungarian sphere of influence. Among other war aims the thitherto strictly anti-annexionist Hungarian premier accepted the idea of strategical border corrections in Serbia, mainly regarding the Negotin district, that would secure the inland connection between Austria–Hungary and Bulgaria. On the enquiry of the German chancellor regarding the future fate of the sanjak of Novi Pazar, Tisza pointed out that he did not ascribe strategical importance to this region, and he also accepted the maintenance of the weakened Serbian statehood and even its unification with Montenegro. Nevertheless, behind the articulated modest territorial demands one can find the vulnerable equilibrium between the two constituents of the Dual Monarchy and of Hungary too—which any territorial aggrandisement would threaten, and which Tisza always kept in mind. The articulation of modest territorial demands implicitly meant

110 *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 10–13.

that he acknowledged the German military, political and economic interests on the Balkans and that he wanted to precede Italian demands on compensation.

The favourable reception of the independent Austro-Hungarian Balkan plan—besides Tisza's personal talent, convincing power and logical arguments—was mainly due to the failure of the concept of the '*Blitzkrieg*' and the definite need for the recalculation of the German strategy. Tisza's visit coincided with these crucial negotiations between military and political leaders. The new German chief of staff, Erich von Falkenhayn, like every strategic military thinker was well aware of the fact that Germany was unable to wage a successful war on two fronts at the same time in the long run against the entente which had greater material and human resources. That is why he came up with the plan of concluding a peace with one of the non-maritime Powers without annexation. Without achieving this, he did not see any opportunity to break the resistance of England, which was considered as the main obstacle of German ambitions and the 'evil genius' of the entente. Out of the several alternatives the separate peace with Russia gained priority, which was appreciated mainly by Wilhelm II, while Tisza's most important negotiating partners, the actors of foreign policy were hesitating as they came up with various excuses and raised objections.¹¹¹

The contradictory communications and the obscure allusions drove the Hungarian prime minister to recognize the basic differences in opinions among the leading German politicians. During the first round of the negotiations chancellor Bethmann considered that the annexation of the French and Belgian borderlands is of crucial importance and the integration of Belgium into the German economy and the acquisition of the French colonies were his primary military aims. But in the East he did not feel it possible to defeat Russia completely and to create a buffer zone from the Polish and Baltic states in order to push back Russia. From the Russian territories in question he only considered Bessarabia as a region to be given to Romania, conditionally, in order to win the hesitating ally to the German cause. He disliked the strong influence of Austro-polonism in Vienna and also the ambitious plan of unifying

111 Afflerbach, *Falkenhayn*, 198–205.

Galicia and Russian Poland.¹¹² But he refrained from revealing his political calculations in the background, namely that he wanted to use the occupation of Polish Russia as an instrument to exert pressure on the Russian government in order to urge it to conclude peace.¹¹³ It is undoubtful that Tisza was also pondering downplaying the Polish question in order to conclude peace with Russia, because he was worried by the possibility of a trialistic transformation of Austria–Hungary with the involvement of the Poles. That would urge for a restructuring of the dualist Austria–Hungary which, in turn, would decrease Hungary’s role in the empire and its influence on foreign policy.¹¹⁴ Despite his revulsions he argued for the Austrian solution of the Polish question with the German chancellor, and proposed interim Austro-Hungarian administration for those occupied territories that were not demanded by Germany, before the final decision, in order to maintain the benevolent attitude of Polish people which was essential for carrying out a successful campaign. In order to eliminate the differences and tensions between the two allies, he offered a verbal agreement, that neither of the parties would support the establishment of an independent Poland.¹¹⁵

However, on the closing eve of the negotiations, where Jagow was also present, it was with great surprise that Tisza recognised from the summarizing exposé of the chancellor that there was a remarkable turn in Germany’s attitude regarding the key questions concerning France and Russia. Bethmann repeated the moderation of territorial claims and emphasized the disruption of the alliance of the three inimical Powers as the main diplomatic goal, including the exit of France from the war. In that case he intended to totally isolate Russia, and thus to secure the longlasting conditions for peace in Europe. Tisza politely agreed to these new aspects especially with regard to the opening towards France, but he did not fail to recognise the hidden criticism of Falkenhayn’s strategy in this significant change of conception. The chancellor directly arrived from the lieutenant-general to the Diner where the closing conversations took place, and Falkenhayn overtly admitted that the war in the western front would

112 *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 7–9.

113 Afflerbach, *Falkenhayn*, 208.

114 Tefner, “Háborús szövetség és vetélkedés,” 81–82.

115 *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 9–10.

not draw to an end in the near future, because the German troops are not able to do more than simply hold the occupied areas. In order to increase the morale of the Austrian ally put under heavy pressure by Russia, Germany promised to launch a decisive offensive in the eastern front after the redeployment of German forces from the West. In order to make the necessary preparations for an active military policy in the East, he rephrased a positive opinion about the alliance plan proposed by Tisza, namely that the Austro-Hungarian southern army operating in Serbia would be able to control the strategically important central parts of the peninsula together with the Turks and Bulgarians, the future allies, and defend it even in the case of the worst scenario, a joint Romanian–Greek attack. Contrary to the opinion of the Hungarian premier, Falkenhayn did not have such fears: he even counted on the Romanian participation in an offensive against Russia, and in order to promote Romanian willingness, he presented the idea of a plebiscite in Bukowina regarding the future of the province.¹¹⁶ Despite the re-emergence of the once rejected and thus resolved question of territorial compensation, it was Falkenhayn's ideas that made the deepest impression on Tisza, while he considered Bethmann's opinion as 'flat' and he dismissed Jagow's ideas as wretched.¹¹⁷

In the apparatus of the German foreign affairs it was especially Zimmermann—who, despite using a critical tone earlier, paid special attention to Tisza's Balkan alliance plan, because his alternative concept aimed at concluding a separate peace with Russia under favourable conditions which necessitated a total victory over Serbia.¹¹⁸ He considered a Bulgarian–Turkish alliance as a decisive factor, and he entered into talks regarding this question with the Hungarian prime minister who had just returned to Berlin from the headquarters. The acquisition of the Negotin-corridor was considered as a precondition for entering into successful talks with Sofia and Constantinople, because securing the transit route for weapon and ammunition supplies to Constantinople would make the Ottoman Empire interested in concluding an alliance with Bulgaria. Their joint point of view regarding the Greek question received a new interpretation, as from then on the 'sparing' of Greek interests

116 *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 14, 16–17.

117 *Burián István világháborús naplója*. November 24, 1914.

118 Afflerbach, *Falkenhayn*, 208.

(*Rücksicht auf Griechenland*) were subjected to the interests of an active Turkish–Bulgarian cooperation, and this might bring the revision of the Bucharest Peace Treaty which put an end to the second Balkan War, closer.¹¹⁹ Concerning the war indemnities, the frames of the agreement were flexibly interpreted and broadened. This theoretical question was raised into the order of business of the negotiations due to two completely different actual political concerns. On the one hand Falkenhayn, the new Chief of Staff’s strategic war plan raised this question, since he wanted to make acceptable his “peace without annexation” for the German elite by claiming a war indemnity instead, in order to secure financial background for the postwar reparation of the German economy. Based on the principle of equality of the allies Tisza came up with the plan to negotiate Austria–Hungary’s share from the indemnity. For the second run Bethmann tacitly accepted Tisza’s proposal that war indemnity would be handled as ‘*somme globale*’ or, total sum, which later would be divided based on war performance and material losses of the allied parties. Zimmermann added a practical appendix to this verbal agreement (*procès verbal*), if the defeated Powers were unable or unwilling to pay this enormously huge sum, it would have been practical to acquire their railway and other industrial concessions in the Ottoman Empire until they settled the bill. Tisza expressed his interests in the acquisition of French and British railways in Anatoly in order to promote further economic penetration of Austria–Hungary, and that way he wanted to realize the colonial ambitions of Austria–Hungary, which were formerly thwarted by the Italian and German opposition.¹²⁰

On the very day of his return to Vienna Tisza gave a detailed account on the talks at an informal meeting considered as the equivalent of the joint ministerial council. Besides the joint ministers and the prime minister of Cisleithania, two Hungarian personal confidentials of Tisza, Baron István Burián and János Forgách, head of department (*Sektionschef*) at the Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs also participated in the meeting. Tisza found the change in German war plans favourable for Austria–Hungary because the shift of attention to the eastern front would relieve the dual state, while the abandonment of German

119 *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 17–18.

120 *Meine Besprechungen*, f. 10, 15, 19; Kolm, *Die Ambitionen Österreich–Ungarns*, 189–95.

annexation plans would promote peace negotiations. The abandonment of the idea of establishing buffer states between Germany and Russia and the acceptance of Austrian interest in the Balkan peninsula was also a favourable outcome of events. He mentioned the German desires to conclude a separate peace and referring to the example of Germany he stressed that Austria–Hungary limits its territorial demands to the strategic corrections at the Montenegrin and Serbian border, since Germany also localized its territorial aspirations to the “*französich lothringischer Grenzstreifen*” in France. He considered the German approval and contribution to the diplomatic preparation of Bulgarian alliance and Bulgaria’s involvement into the war as one of the most important results, which made possible the realization of Austro-Hungarian aims in cooperation with Germany, his master plan since his appointment as prime minister.¹²¹ The modification of the German Balkan-policy was the consequence of the personal decision of Wilhelm II, but not even the emperor’s personal intervention could diminish the German diplomats’ reservations regarding the Austro-Hungarian plan on the Bulgarian alliance. The latter concept was only supported by Falkenhayn, Chief of Staff, and Zimmermann, vice-state secretary of foreign affairs. At the same time the attempts of the diplomats in Berlin to utilize the peace mediation of the King of Denmark in order to conclude a separate peace with Russia, increased the value of Austria–Hungary’s diplomatic and military role on the Balkans in the German strategic calculations. The expectations of the quickly changing military and political situation were revealed by Wilhelm II and Falkenhayn, the protagonists of the Russian separate peace to Conrad von Hötzendorf, Austrian Chief of Staff and Crown Prince Charles. During their first official meeting the German emperor enchanted the future ruler of Austria–Hungary with the optimistic scenario about the outcome of the war, namely that the separate peace with Russia might end the war in the eastern front by Christmas, which might also open the way to the victorious end at the western front. Wilhelm II envisioned an alliance between the three emperors in order to

121 Burián István világháborús naplója, November 24, 1914; Thallóczy's journals, November 24, 1914. As far as we know, there are no official documents regarding the informal meeting discussing Tisza's visit in Berlin. It was the participating Burián who summarized the discussions in keywords, and Thallóczy, who—based on Bilinski's accounts—mentions it in his diary.

break England’s supremacy. He did not insist on the direct military contribution of his Danube ally at the western war theatre, because in the division of labour Austria–Hungary’s task was to control the Balkan Peninsula. This optimistic prognosis was based on the rumour of the occupation of Belgrade, which the German and Austro-Hungarian politicians—being far away from the frontlines—considered as the beginning of the Serbian collapse.¹²²

Tisza, knowing the verbal exaggerations of the Kaiser, did not take seriously the communications made to the ‘*Thronfolger*’, and commented them ironically: “I tend to consider his venturesome dreams as the expressions of his unleashed phantasy in conversation after lunch.”¹²³ However he did not notice that in the background of the discussions Falkenhayn suspended the military preparations on the occupation of the Negotin-corridor—which would serve to promote Bulgarian declaration of war according to the scenario accepted in Berlin, and which would modify the power relations in favour of the Dual Monarchy in the Balkans—due to the objections of Conrad. The decision of the Chief of Staff of the Austro-Hungarian armies, to use the arriving German forces to consolidate the situation in the eastern front was explained by the critical situation in this war theatre. The rumour, that he refused the cooperation of the German division offered by his ally as reinforcement to break through the enemy lines at Negotin and that he refused to provide additional Austro-Hungarian forces for this task is less likely verifiable. Reasons of personal prestige also have to be reckoned with when evaluating the background of this decision, since Conrad did not wish for the commander of the southern army (General Potiorek) to be successful, as certain political and military circles considered this commander as his successor.¹²⁴ Surprisingly the two politicians interested in the diversion at Negotin were also divided. Berchtold urged the attack because he expected a positive psychological effect from the sudden appearance of the German “*Pickelhaube*” at the Lower Danube, which was

122 Lorenz, *Kaiser Karl*, 176–77; Burián István világháborús naplója, December 3, 1914; Burián to Tisza, December 6, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 9, item 25/38.

123 Tisza to Burián, December 5, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 9, item 25/2.

124 Gardos, “*Die Balkanstraße*” 290–91; Jeřábek, *Potiorek*, 196–70, 180–81.

thought to prevent Romania from entering the war, and he energetically demanded the redeployment of k.u.k. forces to the southern war theatre from Conrad. The Hungarian prime minister gained supporters for his general Balkan policy by accepting the action plan against Negotin, but after his return to Austria–Hungary he called for crushing Serbia first in order to increase the authority of the state. So, he completely separated the question of the Turkish–Bulgarian alliance from this risky military situation, because he rather counted on the favourable regional effects generated by the successful offensive of Austria–Hungary in other Serbian fronts. In the beginning of December, the fall of Belgrade seemed to confirm his calculations on the collapse of Serbia. However, this success was overshadowed by the Russian offensive in the northeastern Carpathians, threatening with the invasion of Hungary, which fuelled the prime minister’s fears concerning a Romanian invasion targeting Transylvania.¹²⁵

In this atmosphere of double threat, especially from Romania, Tisza pressed for the Bulgarian alliance. To that end he offered new conceptual elements in order to dynamize the diplomatic activities in Sofia and Constantinople, which mutually strengthened the Ottoman interest in an alliance and Bulgaria’s willingness (tempted by several offers of the ‘entente’) to conclude a bilateral military agreement. He indirectly wanted to give new impulses to change the hesitating Bulgarian stance, and urged for more tolerant behavior and openness from the diplomatic circles of Austria–Hungary regarding the Bulgarian and Turkish ambitions towards Western Thrace. He proposed that the Bulgarians might be awarded without any contractual agreement Kavala and under certain conditions Saloniki too, in case of a victorious war, while the Muslim districts in Thrace should be returned to Turkey as a compensation.¹²⁶ Tisza’s new proposal with its territorial consequences created concerns at the Ballhausplatz. The head of division at the Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs, János Forgách, who was assigned the task to communicate the reservations of Berchtold regarding these new concepts, tactically avoided a personal meeting at Budapest. He admitted in a letter his reservations and drew the attention to the fact that

125 Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*, 33–35; Thallóczy’s journals, November 24, 1914.

126 Tisza to Berchtold, November 26, 1914: TIÖM 2, 323–25.

the (re)emergence of the Thracian question would be counterproductive in Bulgarian–Turkish relations, because the ‘entente’ has already raised the bid over Tisza’s offer by promising the restitution of the Enos–Midia line reached (and lost) in the first Balkan War. The territorial question in Thrace would destabilize Bulgaria and would threaten to destabilize the hesitating Radoslavov-cabinet that had been loyal towards Austria–Hungary and the neutrality of which was another important factor that kept Romania from making steps against Transylvania. He also notified Tisza about the coinciding and sceptic opinion of János Pallavicini and Hans von Wangenheim, ambassadors of Austria–Hungary and Germany to Istanbul, that any increase of the Turkish pressure on Sofia would be a futile effort, since the Ottoman government had already tried everything, because its vital interest was to secure war supplies and open the transit way through Serbia. So instead of a repeated intervention of Constantinople in Sofia, the ambassadors offered a separate and direct Austro-Hungarian intervention in Bulgaria in order to convince the ruling circles to enter the war.¹²⁷

The Joint Ministry finally gave up this defensive stance due to the energetic interference of István Burián. The influence of the *minister a latere* on foreign affairs had grown so considerable during the war, that through his daily presence at the Ballhausplatz and due to his knowledge about the administration and the content of documents, he held Berchtold and his decision-making apparatus in his hands. He convinced them rather easily to enforce Tisza’s ideas in the instructions given to the ambassadors to Sofia and Constantinople and to initiate a bipolar convincing campaign. Regarding the question of the military convention he counted on the breakthrough from the diplomatic activity of the Turks. Even though he was unable to give new arguments how to convince Sofia, he offered free hand to Pallavicini to realize this goal.¹²⁸ Forcing this indirect approach to convince Bulgaria via Istanbul was not simply a selfish attitude driven by the deflection of responsibility. Austria–Hungary

127 Forgách to Tisza, November 27, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 7, item 21/18. Forgách’s opinion was reasoned by the minister of foreign affairs in a separate letter. Berchtold to Tisza November 29, 1914. Ibid.

128 Burián to Tisza, November 28, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 7, item 21/20.

wanted to avoid direct interference because of its hesitating ally, Italy. Their agreement in 1909 stipulated for consultations if a military alliance is formed with a third party. Berchtold, while successfully trying to reduce Italy's demands on territorial compensation by stressing the maintenance of the 'status quo', tried to avoid any steps that could have been interpreted as the strengthening of Austro-Hungarian influence in the peninsula. That was the reason why he insisted on not jeopardizing the fragile Austrian–Italian relations by a direct Bulgarian alliance.¹²⁹

Driven by those fears even his diplomats related very carefully to the Bulgarian–Ottoman military convention. The long-serving Pallavicini, the disciplined doyen of the ambassadors obeyed, but his reports suggested that the task was a mission impossible due to the existing religious differences, century-long tensions and the Balkan Wars in the near past. The ambassador to Sofia, Adam Tarnowski came up with Bulgarian fears from Romania. After having received the new instructions he responded with a telegram in which he tried to convince his foreign minister to obtain a reassuring announcement from I. C. Bratianu through German interference, that Romania would stay neutral. The notice about the necessity of a German intervention in Bucharest was sent to Berlin so quickly, that even Burián came to know it only two days after the notice has been sent.¹³⁰ The Hungarian premier considered it a completely mistargeted, futile and humiliating step, which was against the principles of the separate Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy which has just been accepted at the German headquarters, since the principle of this Balkan policy was to exert pressure on Romania through the realization of a Bulgarian–Ottoman convention and not through Berlin (which would make Austria–Hungary subjected to Germany). Tisza hoped that the Bulgarian–Ottoman agreement would force Romania once again to align the 'Triplice' (Central Powers). He also warned that in German military strategy Romania was still considered a potential ally against the Tsarist Russia. Therefore asking for a German diplomatic interference in favour of Bulgaria, which would ruin the

129 Friedrich, *Bulgarien und die Mächte*, 165. Burián to Tisza, September 6, 1914. MREZsLt file 44.b, Tisza–Balogh documents, batch no. 10/a, item no. 7.

130 Burián to Tisza, December 7, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza's writings, batch no. 9, item 25/1.

positions of the Germanophile political wing in Bucharest, is a political naivety, which would only ruin the remainder trust of Romanian circles towards the Triple Alliance. Instead of this he drew the attention to the changes in military policy, that after the occupation of Belgrade the Monarchy gained favourable geostrategic positions in Serbia, therefore the diplomats task is to create the conditions of Austro-Hungarian–Bulgarian–Turkish military cooperation, that might secure Austro-Hungarian preponderance over the Balkans. He considered Burián’s main task to make the Ballhausplatz aware of the regional dominance of such a military block led by Austria–Hungary and to give advices regarding its diplomatic utilization, pointing out the following: “We do not need the consent of Romania for the Bulgarian alliance, rather we have to convince Bulgaria, that Romania would not attack, and if it attacked, it would be obviously repelled by our united forces. Our basic thought is that if Bulgaria and Turkey cooperates with us, we will be the strongest in the Balkans, and we do not have to care about anybody’s consent or displeasure”.¹³¹ He repeated his proposal to Berchtold, who then shared the scepticism of Pallavicini, and this did not change after Burián’s interference, but a polemy between the two politicians was about to evolve. Berchtold stated that Tisza set out from false premises when he assumed the possibility of a Bulgarian–Turkish cooperation.¹³² The Austro-Hungarian diplomacy was paralyzed by the numerous particular interests and concepts as Burián wrote sarcastically: “Diplomatic chaos in minds regarding the involvement of Bulgaria into the War. Tarnowski is urging, but is not convincing. Pallavicini is hesitating scrupulously, Tisza is speaking about principles and aspects, which Berchtold fails to understand. I’m explaining and mediating... Bulgaria follows its own considerations. One can only influence her with good arguments.”¹³³

The fruitless debate of decision-makers of foreign policy had thwarted the separate Balkan alliance plan of Austria–Hungary well before the Serbian counter attack destroyed its political and military basis. The Hungarian prime

131 Tisza to Burián, December 5, 1914. MREZsLt file 44.b, Tisza–Balogh documents, batch no. 10/a, item no. 9.

132 Berchtold to Burián, December 10, 1914; Burián to Tisza, December 11, 1914. MREZsLt file no. 44, István Tisza’s writings, batch no. 9, item 25/8.

133 Burián István világháborús naplója, December 10, 1914.

minister based his Balkan concept and the rearrangement of the southern slavic question within Austria–Hungary on Potiorek and his temporary military success. The governor of Bosnia, and the commander of the “*Balkanstreitkräfte*” was unically a positive character in the k.u.k. army from Hungarian aspect, vacause he was an unconditional protagonist of the dualist system and opposed to the plans on exaggerated territorial expansion.¹³⁴ His opinion was directly the opposite of Leon Bilinski’s concept (supervisor of Bosnia as the Joint Minister of Finance). The Polish politician was a protagonist of the annexation of Serbia even before the war, and the strong supporter of the trialist transformation of Austria–Hungary, then in August 1914, he became the proponent of the Austro-Polonist trialistic federation, which would include the united Galicia and Russian Poland. These ideas on trialism met with Tisza’s (and other Hungarian politicians’) firm refusal.¹³⁵ The refusal of the numerous competing national alternatives on the transformation of Austria–Hungary was the basis that secured the cooperation between the Hungarian premier and the Austrian military commander. Their informal relationship was realized and steered by Lajos Thallóczy, head of department at the Joint Ministry of Finance, who balanced on the narrow path between bureaucratic loyalty and national interests when he tried to settle the series of conflicts and tensions between Bilinski and Tisza. Potiorek regularly turned to Thallóczy in such questions like hindering the abolition of the cyrillic letters in Bosnia, or settling the debated legal situation of the two provinces the according to the interests of the dualist system.¹³⁶ In order to acknowledge the primacy of Hungarian interests in the South Slavic question, he insisted on recruiting officials from Hungary, Croatia and Bosnia to govern the occupied Serbian regions, which would bring the illusion of consolidation behind the frontlines.¹³⁷ Searching for political allies he insisted on the visit of Thallóczy prepared weeks ago, but his exposé at Petervaradin just two days before the loss of Belgrade lacked realistic approach. Potiorek spoke about postponing the final

134 Thallóczy’s journals, February 5, 1914.

135 Batowski, “Trialismus”, 8–9; Schmied-Kowarzik, *Die Protokolle 1908–1914*, 586–87; Tefner, “Háborús szövetség és vetélkedés,” 81–82.

136 Jeřábek, *Potiorek*, 170; Thallóczy’s journals, October 22, 1914.

137 Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*, 57.

showdown with Serbia for some months, border corrections, the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina as documented on maps, but the retreating demoralized troops along the Serbian borders as witnessed by Thallóczy could not verify the optimism of the commander-in-chief.¹³⁸

The collapse of the third Potiorek-offensive put an end to the separate Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy worked out and adjusted to the existing conditions by Tisza. His results achieved during his negotiations in Germany, like the alteration of the German policy preferring Romania, the successful refusal of the Romanian territorial compensations in Bukovina and Transylvania, the German diplomatic support to win Bulgaria as an ally, put heavy special military obligations on Austria–Hungary in return, as a direct consequence of a war coalition. The German shift in foreign political priorities was primarily motivated by the goal of increasing the morale of Turkish troops by securing the continuous /undisrupted flow of war supplies to Turkey. The aim of the Hungarian prime minister, the increase of regional activity to promote Bulgarian entrance to war harmonized with the German plans. But due to the tactical considerations and political prestige purposes of the Austro-Hungarian leaders the German strategic priorities regarding the Ottoman Empire could not be realized. The local military campaign, aimed at establishing a joint invasive force of the Serbian side of the Danube to open a corridor towards Bulgaria initiated by Falkenhayn, German Chief of Staff was not carried out. While the Bulgarians would not oppose this plan (which shows the significance of the German presence from the aspect of state security), they remained rather hesitating and reluctant towards a single Austro-Hungarian military campaign in Serbia. The successes following the early failures of Austro-Hungarian troops in Serbia were not so convincing for the Bulgarian government as to modify its policy determined by the and the territorial offers of the ‘entente’ and the fear of an attack from Romania. The proposed regional cooperation of local Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Ottoman forces—urged by Tisza—without German participation was considered too risky by Sofia: the combination of forces under the aegis of Austria–Hungary was though to be strong enough to tackle only a Romanian or Greek intervention,

138 Thallóczy’s journals, November 23, December 9, 12–13, 1914.

but not a Russian attack.¹³⁹ Considering this aspect it became clear that Tisza's Balkan policy was not an encouraging option for Bulgaria to conclude an alliance because of the limited military potential of Austria–Hungary, which failed to regain its functions as regional power. The Austrian defeat in Serbia made Austria–Hungary's military and political activities dependent on the German support once and for all.

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ALBERT MENSENDORFF'S 1915 MISSION TO SOFIA

Iván Bertényi Jr.

A confidential message the diplomat Albert Mensdorff addressed to Baron Stephan von Burián, the joint Foreign Minister of Austria–Hungary, begins, “In the course of my stay in Sofia—from November 20 to 28, [1915]—I had daily opportunities to engage in confidential conversations with King Ferdinand.”¹ The dates of these discussions are fairly important, insofar as the author of this report conducted these talks with King Ferdinand roughly forty days after Bulgaria had joined the Central Powers in attacking Serbia, which operation made clear that the Serbians’ final defeat was nigh. Thus Mensdorff’s report records the opinion of the Bulgarian head of state in a period in which the situation in the Balkans was undergoing a fundamental change.

1 This source, the entirety of which I have attached here as an appendix, has been analyzed by a number of researchers in related fields, including Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 118–24; Лалков, *Балканската политика на Австро-Унгария*, 325; and Votýpka, *Rückkehr des böhmischen Adels* (the chapter which deals with Mensdorff’s family: 89–110). Even so, given its importance, it merits a separate discussion.

BULGARIA'S ENTRY INTO WORLD WAR I

As is generally known, the Central Powers' military achievements in the spring and summer of 1915 convinced Bulgaria to enter the war. Having suffered a tragic defeat in the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria maintained its neutrality at the outbreak of World War I, as did the majority of Europe's smaller states. Even so, Bulgarian politicians soon divided themselves into three camps. The ruling parties consisted primarily of supporters of Austria–Hungary and especially Germany, and were inclined to go to war alongside the Central Powers. King Ferdinand himself carefully and unofficially maintained this same position. On the other hand, the opposition was pro-Entente and urged caution, though in the appropriate circumstances, they would have been willing to go to war against the Central Powers. The third group was made up of radical socialists and the peasant party, who advocated neutrality throughout the course of the war.²

The Central Powers' military successes in 1915 increased the influence of the Bulgarian politicians who supported them. The Germans' rather modest gains in France, the Central Powers' major victories over the Russians (beginning with the breakthrough on the Gorlice-Tarnów front), and the Entente's ineffectual attacks on the Dardanelles motivated the Bulgarian government—led by Vasil Radoslavov—to start making preparations to enter the war. On September 4, 1915, Radoslavov signed a treaty of friendship and alliance with Germany and Austria–Hungary, in which the latter powers promised the Bulgarians that they could take as much Serbian territory as they wanted—and, if Greece or Romania were to enter the war on the side of the Entente, take their territory as well. Two days later, they also signed a military agreement in which Bulgaria committed itself to a declaration of war on Serbia.³ That same day, they agreed to normalize relations with their archenemy, the Ottoman Empire; this accord also stipulated that Bulgaria would regain a small strip of territory along the Maritsa river near Edirne. And thus the

2 Lalkov, "Die Politik Österreich–Ungarns," 431–33. For an account written in the ideological spirit of committed Marxists, see Kossev, Christov, and Angelov, *Bulgarische Geschichte*, 304–7.

3 Czékus, *Az 1914–18. évi világháború összefoglaló történelme*, 240.

Quadruple Alliance—Germany, Austria–Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria—was formed.

Of course, the Entente powers also wanted to persuade Bulgaria to join their side, but their territorial promises were tied to a set of preconditions that made their ultimate fulfilment very unlikely. One of the many conditions of the Entente's territorial offer was that Bulgaria negotiate preliminary agreements with the Serbians and the Romanians in which the latter would consent to cede certain territories to Bulgaria and be compensated with territory to be seized from Austria–Hungary. However, despite the fact that Italy had declared war on the Dual Monarchy in 1915, Austria–Hungary was still holding together fairly well, and thus it seemed unrealistic to expect the sort of collapse that would allow Bulgaria to take possession of the promised terrain. Comparatively speaking, the Central Powers' promises seemed much more dependable: if Bulgaria were to help defeat Serbia, it would receive the territories east of the Great Morava river and most of Macedonia.⁴ Thus the Central Powers could obviously promise the Bulgarians more than the Entente Powers, insofar as the latter, as Serbia's allies, were in no position to partition its territory and transfer it to Bulgaria. A substantial German loan also helped tip the scales in the Central Powers' favor.⁵

While the Bulgarians considered Germany their most important ally, the primary beneficiary of their alliance with the Central Powers and their subsequent—almost immediate—victory over Serbia⁶ was Austria–Hungary. The occupation of Serbia and the grinding down of the Serbian army produced enormous advantages for the Dual Monarchy, insofar as it secured its southern border and freed up armies it could then deploy against the Russians and Italians. The Bulgarians' entry would also provide an important counterbalance if neutral Greece or especially Romania were to join the Entente. Furthermore, the defeat of the Serbians also allowed the Central Powers direct access to the

4 Lalkov, "Bulgarisch-österreichische Beziehungen 1914–1918," 30–38, especially 35–36; Bridge, "Österreich(–Ungarn) unter den Grossmächten," 348–49.

5 Prešlenova, "Bulgarisch-österreichisch-ungarische Wirtschaftsbeziehungen," 18–29.

6 For a detailed introduction to this military operation, see Czékus, *Az 1914–18. évi világháború összefoglaló történelme*, 239–62; Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 477–84; Hajdu and Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja*, 166–74.

Ottoman Empire, making it easier for them to send reinforcements and supplies to the Turkish troops who were defending the Dardanelles.⁷ In sum, Bulgaria proved to be an important ally in a number of arenas, not just by participating in the military campaign that crushed the Serbians.

In the wake of their defeat of Serbia and the development of a more favorable situation in the Balkans, the victors—as they often do—hatched some far-reaching plans to take advantage of these successes. Certain adherents of the theory of “Turanism,”⁸ which became popular in Hungary in the early 20th century, believed that the Hungarians and Bulgarians were related by blood, and thus that their wartime alliance was attributable to a more profound set of connections. Even so, there was no need for this sort of ideological justification for plans to engage in economic and commercial exploitation of the territories which came under the control of the Central Powers. The Germans, whose judgment was not clouded by any such pan-nationalist sentiments, were more interested in the commercial land routes which linked the Bulgarians and Turks directly. In a 1916 pamphlet, Paul Ostwald depicted Bulgaria as a fundamentally backward country, but predicted that it would enjoy a greater future and influence in the Balkans if it were to align its peacetime, post-war development plans with those of Germany and the Dual Monarchy.⁹ And while these sorts of views evinced a sense of superiority, the notion of blood ties inspired Hungarians to suggest a more balanced and mutually advantageous relationship. As Dr. Ferenc Nagy, a legal scholar and the president of the supervisory council of the Royal Hungarian Eastern Commercial Academy, put it in the foreword to a volume describing Hungary’s connections with Bulgaria and Turkey: “before the war, we would not have dared to imagine the bright prospects for our cultural and economic endeavors in the East which are currently unfolding before us... Given Hungary’s geographical position, [we] are destined to act

7 Lalkov, “Bulgarisch-österreichische Beziehungen 1914–1918,” 30–38, especially 30–32.

8 For a recent account of this school of thought, see Ablonczy, *Keletre, magyar!*

9 Ostwald, *Die kulturpolitische Mission Bulgariens*. See, for example, the section entitled *Schlussbemerkung*: “Bei den Zentralmächten wird es sich seine Lehrmeister, von dort wird es sich seine Rathschläge holen. So werden wir in Deutschland und Österreich–Ungarn mit dazu berufen sein, Bulgarien zu heben und zu fördern.”

as an intermediary in our mighty German ally's trade with the East," which was cause for even more optimistic expectations for the future. This, however, would require thorough preparations, among which a better understanding of their Bulgarian and Turkish allies, including their languages and cultures, would be indispensable.¹⁰ Given the impact of the events of the war, such calls to get acquainted with the territories that had been incorporated into the Central Powers' sphere of influence appeared roughly simultaneously in Germany and Austria–Hungary. Barely two years later, a Hungarian analyst produced a report on the Germans' more knowledgeable, more effective, and more productive organization, hoping that Austria–Hungary might be able to compete with its ally—which had become a rival in this region (as well)—by engaging in a more vigorous, systematic, state-supported effort.¹¹

This wartime alliance genuinely increased the importance of this region, which until then had been largely unknown except by a few experts interested in the "Eastern Question,"¹² as more developed Western countries significantly expanded their economic and cultural relationships with Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire. Of course, the Bulgarians strove to live up to the interest the Germans, Austrians, and Hungarians showed; Bulgarian politicians and specialists published a number of introductions to their country.¹³ The victory over the Serbians and the acquisition of control over the Balkan peninsula was the precursor—and in a certain sense, the precondition—of this intensifying relationship, and thus is it understandable that during the period of general disorganization and depression which followed the Central Powers' loss of the Great War, these links eroded significantly. For this reason, the three short years from 1915 to 1918 constitute one of the most important periods of

10 Nagy, *Előszó*. The excellent professional education and practical training provided by this institute was described in depth by its most famous student, Mátyás Rákosi, who attended the academy between 1910 and 1912 and went on to become the dictator of communist Hungary after 1945; see Rákosi Mátyás, *Visszaemlékezések*, vol. 1, 64–67.

11 Ratkóczi, *Bulgária–Magyarország*, 21–23.

12 See, for instance, Havass, *Magyarország és a Balkán*.

13 For example, Danailoff, and Cankoff, *Bulgária gazdasági fejlődése*. It is worth noting that one of these authors, Alexander Cankoff (Tsankov), who at that time was the chief secretary of the Bulgarian Economic Association and a professor at Sofia University, went on to serve as Bulgaria's prime minister between 1923 and 1926; in the 1930s, he would play an increasingly radical role in Bulgaria's right-wing politics.

Hungarian interest in Bulgaria, and though this attention waned after their defeat in the Great War, perhaps a more thorough investigation of this important period will allow historical scholars to help reestablish closer ties between Bulgaria and Hungary.

SOFIA'S DISTINGUISHED AUSTRIAN GUEST

Even as the generals Hermann Kövess of Austria–Hungary and Max Karl Wilhelm von Gallwitz of Germany were inflicting a decisive defeat on the Serbians on the territory of modern-day Kosovo (where they took particular joy in liberating 2,000 Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war who had been left behind in Priština by their retreating adversaries¹⁴), a high-ranking Austro-Hungarian emissary was arriving in Sofia—Count Albert von Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein, who was one of the Dual Monarchy's most important diplomats in the early 20th century.¹⁵ Austria–Hungary's last ambassador to London was born to Countess Alexandrine von Dietrichstein-Proskau-Leslie and Count Alexander Mensdorff-Pouilly on September 5, 1861 in Lemberg (now Lviv, Ukraine), and his distinguished origins blessed him with connections in the leading circles of the Habsburg Empire and important relatives across the horizon of Europe.¹⁶ His father first served the dynasty as a soldier, taking part in battles in Italy and Hungary in 1848–1849. (In the second battle of Komárom on July 2, 1849, in which the Hungarian commander Artúr Görgei suffered a serious head wound, Mensdorff-Pouilly led a cavalry charge with

14 Szomory, "A rigómezei győzelem," 8. Retreating toward the Adriatic, Serb forces dragged several thousand other prisoners of war off with them; these captives were then delivered to the Italian island of Asinara. Even among the innumerable tragedies of the Great War, their horrific suffering merits special attention. See Baja, Lukinich, Pilch, and Zilahy, *Hadifogoly magyarok története*, 142–66. For a more recent account, see Margittai, *Szamár-sziget szellemkatonái*.

15 Several scholars have written biographies of Mensdorff; the most thorough was the doctoral dissertation Eleonore Jenicek wrote 50 years ago (see note 1); for a more recent account of his life, see Detter, *Der Deutschordensritter*.

16 For more on his family's history, see Tassigny, *Les Mensdorff-Pouilly*; Slabáková, *Le destin d'une famille noble*; Votýpka, *Böhmischer Adel*, 53–64; Švaříčková-Slabáková, *Rodinné strategie šlechty*.

such gallantry that it earned him the Military Order of Maria Theresa.) In the 1850s, he was entrusted with several diplomatic missions, then fought in the Italian War of 1859 before being assigned a number of important political tasks in the early 1860s. In late 1860, after the October Diploma was issued, in his capacity as the commanding officer of Temesvár (now Timișoara, Romania), he was sent as a special imperial commissioner to the soon-to-be abolished Voivodeship of Serbia and Banat of Temes,¹⁷ then distinguished himself as the governor of Galicia starting in 1861. At the peak of his career, between 1864 and 1866, he served as Austria–Hungary's foreign minister, and thus oversaw the Habsburg empire's failures in its conflict with Prussia.¹⁸

Insofar as Alexander Mensdorff-Pouilly's mother Sophie was a princess of the Saalfeld line of the Saxe-Coburg dynasty, his son Albert was related to numerous members of Europe's ruling families; his godparents were Queen Victoria of England and her husband Prince Albert, both of whom were also members of the Saxe-Coburg dynasty (Victoria through her mother). Albert went to law school in Vienna, then embarked on his diplomatic career in 1885. Initially stationed in Paris, he was posted to London in 1896, where—with the exception of a two-year stint in St. Petersburg—he would remain until World War I. There in London in 1904, at just 42 years of age, he became the Dual Monarchy's youngest ambassador at the express request of King Edward VII.¹⁹ Over the course of his roughly ten years as head of mission there, he consistently strove to preserve peace and reinforce the friendly relationship between the two Great Powers. The outbreak of the war hampered his efforts to continue his diplomatic activities for a considerable period, though in 1917, he was assigned a role worthy of his abilities, which mission is mentioned in even the shortest summaries of the diplomatic history of the Great War: on several occasions, he participated in peace negotiations at the behest of Charles I (IV), the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary. In early 1917, while serving as Charles' personal envoy and conveying the official news of the new ruler's coronation to the royal courts of

17 Berzeviczy, *Az absolutismus kora Magyarországon*, vol. 3, 153; Jánossy, "Die Territorialfrage der Serbischen Woiwodschaft," 363–64.

18 Sommaruga, Franz Philipp von. "Mensdorff-Pouilly," 365–66.

19 Rutkowski, *Briefe und Dokumente*, 763.

Scandinavia,²⁰ Mensdorff tried in vain to make contact with a secret emissary sent by the British government. The trip he took in March of that year failed in similar fashion: having traveled to Bern at the behest of Foreign Minister Ottokar Czernin, he was unable to initiate negotiations with any French envoys, though he did manage a series of conversations with a well-informed English lady, Alix Barton, who made clear that London was interested in discussing a separate peace with Austria–Hungary.²¹ On December 17 and 18, 1917, he succeeded in arranging confidential negotiations in Geneva with a political figure of substance, the Boer General (and later Prime Minister of South Africa) Jan Christian Smuts, an ally of the Entente, though their two-day discussion produced no results. The British government's objective for these negotiations seems to have been to compensate for Russia's withdrawal from the war by convincing the Dual Monarchy to agree to a separate peace. Mensdorff, on the other hand, had been sent to Switzerland with instructions to avoid even the mention of a separate peace.²² Despite their failure, the importance of the negotiations conducted by Smuts and Mensdorff should not be underestimated; there is a great deal of truth to the observation of the Czech-born British historian Zbyněk Anthony Bohuslav Zeman, who asserted that this meeting was the most thorough and open exchange of views between (semi-) official representatives of the belligerent parties during the war.²³ In 1917, Emperor Charles offered Mensdorff a lifetime appointment to the *Herrenhaus*, the upper chamber of the Austrian parliament.

20 For more on this mission, see Steglich, *Die Friedenspolitik der Mittelmächte*, 19–21; Meckling, *Die Außenpolitik des Grafen Czernin*, 31–32. Tibor Hajdu has also mentioned this journey (Hajdu and Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja*, 241), though he erroneously asserted that given his fear of the Germans, “Czernin did not dare to send Mensdorff to Copenhagen,” whereas Mensdorff did make this trip, even if he failed to conduct any secret negotiations there. See, for instance, the various materials Mensdorff left behind, including the calling cards he received at his meetings in Copenhagen and news clippings in a variety of languages. ÖStA HHStA Sonderbestände. Nachlass Albert Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein. Karton 1. Politik, Zeremoniell (1907–1917).

21 Meckling, *Die Außenpolitik des Grafen Czernin*, 117–18.

22 Rauchensteiner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 885–87; Bridge, “Österreich(–Ungarn) unter den Grossmächten,” 362; Hajdu and Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja*, 294–95; Steglich, *Die Friedenspolitik der Mittelmächte*; Meckling, *Die Außenpolitik des Grafen Czernin*, 318–21.

23 Zeman, *A Diplomatic History of the First World War*, 157.

At that same time, given his support among Catholics and at the Viennese court, he was regarded as one of the leading candidates for the position of foreign minister, though the Germans considered him an anti-Prussian internationalist and tried to delay Czernin's departure; Kaiser Wilhelm once referred to Mensdorff as "ein elender jammerlappiger Anglomane" ("a miserable, cowardly Anglomaniac").²⁴

After the war, he dedicated himself to the service of Austria, acting as the new republic's chief delegate to the League of Nations in Geneva, where he was largely responsible for the negotiation of the 1922 loan which helped Vienna launch its economic and financial reconstruction program. In Geneva, he was able to meet with Hungary's delegate to the League of Nations, Count Albert Apponyi, who during the era of the Dual Monarchy had been an opposition politician and an advocate of more independence for Hungary; as Apponyi put it in his memoir, "one could hardly imagine two more disparate milieux than those in which he and I moved." Even so, love—which works in mysterious ways—was able to overcome these differences, insofar as Apponyi, at the age of 51, married Mensdorff's younger sister Countess Clotilde in 1897.²⁵

Having withdrawn from his former life as a diplomat, he spent his final years in the house of the Teutonic Order in Vienna, though even in the 1930s, he continued to pay regular visits to the English royal family and maintained a close friendship with former King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who had abdicated at the end of the Great War. Mensdorff died in Vienna in June of 1945 at the age of 84; the renowned 20th-century historian Egon Corti called him "one of the last paladins of the old Emperor Franz Joseph, a true Austrian patriot, and a warm, devoted friend of the great English nation..."²⁶

24 Steglich, *Der Friedensappell Papst Benedikts*, 512; Steglich, *Die Friedensversuche der kriegführenden Mächte*, 412. It should be noted that Franz Ferdinand did not trust Mensdorff, either. According to the heir to the throne, who was never stingy with cutting remarks, his ambassador to London was "unfähig" ("incompetent") "dumm" ("stupid") and "Hanswurst des Königs von England" ("the King of England's fool"). See Kronenbitter, "Krieg im Frieden," 252.

25 Apponyi, *Ötven év*, 264–65.

26 This citation from Egon Conte Corti was posted at <http://www.deutscher-orden.at/site/home/article/452.html> [downloaded September 8, 2019]. In addition to the works already cited, the following is also a source of information about Mensdorff's life: Breycha-Vauthier, "Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein," 224.

MENSENDORFF'S NEGOTIATIONS IN SOFIA

When the war broke out in the summer of 1914, the Dual Monarchy's diplomats were called home from the capitals of hostile powers. Just as Count Frigyes Szapáry was recalled from St. Petersburg and Count Miklós Szécsen from Paris, Count Albert Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein was summoned home from London, and as I have noted, he did not play any particular role in public life from then until 1917. Even so, his career took an important turn in November of 1915, when the Red Cross took up a significant collection on behalf of Bulgaria, which had recently entered the war. In a conversation with the organization's chairman, Prince Franz of Liechtenstein, Mensdorff suggested that he would be glad to lead a Red Cross delegation to Bulgaria. Stephan von Burián, Austria-Hungary's joint Foreign Minister, was sympathetic to the offer, and spent a considerable period coordinating his plans with Count Mensdorff before the latter's departure on November 17.²⁷

Given that Mensdorff was a relative of—and on friendly terms with—Bulgaria's ruler, he and Ferdinand were able to discuss matters thoroughly on several occasions. In his journal entries, Mensdorff cheerfully established that the king “ [was] well disposed towards us [and] very annoyed with the Entente.”²⁸ At that same time, Ferdinand noted his sense that certain figures in Vienna still lacked confidence in him, which distrust he attributed primarily to Burián. His somewhat unflattering opinion of the joint foreign minister was that “his entire policy was just a mathematical calculation.”²⁹

The disagreements between Burián and the Bulgarian sovereign stretched back a good two decades. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, Burián had been a young diplomat, just starting out as the Dual Monarchy's consul in Sofia; in that same period, the affairs of the Bulgarian state were under the control of

27 Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 118–19.

28 The journal of Count Albert Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein, vol. 5. Entry dated November 21, 1915. ÖStA HHStA. Sonderbestände. Nachlass Mensdorff-Pouilly. Karton 4. Tagebücher (1905–1923). Cited in Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 119.

29 The journal of Mensdorff-Pouilly, vol. 5. Entry dated November 28, 1915. ÖStA HHStA. SB. Nachlass Mensdorff-Pouilly. Karton 4. Tagebücher (1905–1923). Cited in Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 119.

Prime Minister Stefan Stambolov, who was friendly toward Austria–Hungary. For personal reasons, Prince Ferdinand got involved in several schemes against Stambolov, which—for obvious reasons—were not to the liking of a diplomat who was interested only in advancing the interests of the Dual Monarchy.³⁰ Of course, Ferdinand was in a difficult position, insofar as he had just arrived from abroad to rule a country which had only recently achieved autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, and thus he was simultaneously obliged to try to ingratiate himself with his subjects; to achieve a greater degree of autonomy or even complete independence for Bulgaria, even though it was nominally and legally still part of the sultan's realm; and to lead the Bulgarian state to acquire more territory and become the leading power of the Balkan peninsula. Moreover, he had to do all this in a fairly complicated international environment where all the neighboring Balkan states were rivals and competitors, and—even more importantly—in which the Bulgarians had to balance themselves between the two Great Powers with the most influence in the Balkans, Russia and Austria–Hungary. He also had to struggle with the problem that for a considerable period, he could not rely on the unequivocal support of any of the Great Powers in achieving Bulgaria's goals, insofar as the Russians—especially after the bloody May Coup of 1903 in which the Karađorđević dynasty took over Serbia—clearly regarded the Serbs as their primary Balkan protégés, while the Germans, if only as a result of dynastic relationships, considered Romania (ruled by Carol I, a member of a lateral branch of the Hohenzollern family) and Greece (also governed by one of Kaiser Wilhelm II's relatives) to be their most important partners in the Balkans. For these reasons, the Dual Monarchy—and particularly Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza, who by the spring of 1914 had worked out a set of policies involving Balkan autonomy and imposed a pro-Bulgarian approach—opposed the Germans for quite some time.³¹

30 For a general account of this discord, see the dissertation by Goreczky, *Burián István*, 95–139.

31 Tisza first proposed a new Balkan foreign policy based on the alliance with Bulgaria in memo written on March 15, 1914; see *Österreich–Ungarns Außenpolitik*, vol. 7, 974–79; Demeter, “Külpolitikai alternatívák”, 355–75.

In Vienna and especially in Berlin, Ferdinand was generally regarded as an unreliable politician who regularly changed his mind, and thus leaders there were not inclined to form a serious alliance with him. The Bulgarian social-democratic politician Yanko Sakazov, who clearly did not know the prince or his personality particularly well, said that, "Bulgaria is a constitutional monarchy, but it does not have a parliamentary government—that is, its governments do not succeed one another as the mood in the parliament or the country changes, but rather according to the changing moods of Prince Ferdinand. The factors which might change the prince's mood, however, cannot be determined."³² On the other hand, Count Adam Tarnowski, an Austro-Hungarian minister who was much more closely acquainted with Ferdinand, suggested in a confidential report that the king's vain and jealous nature might have been behind these sorts of mood swings.³³

Tarnowski was a tested and valued member of the Dual Monarchy's diplomatic corps, as evidenced by the fact that in late 1916, he was transferred from Sofia to Washington and assigned the unenviable task of maintaining the good relationship between Austria–Hungary and the United States. His status lends credence to the reports of Ferdinand's unpleasant personal characteristics, which also included rumors of the Bulgarian king's poor treatment of his (second) wife, whom he allegedly regarded as essentially nonexistent; he did not inform her of events which took place in the royal palace,

32 Cited in Varga, *A háborús nagyhatalmak*, 42.

33 As a result of the Bulgarians' military successes, the increasingly authoritative Prime Minister Radoslavov received recognition from their allies and became exceedingly popular, which got on Ferdinand's nerves—so much so that he even disparaged the alliance with the Central Powers, though Tarnowski did not expect this outburst to lead to any more serious consequences, such as the sacking of the prime minister, because "dies wäre aber nur eine ganz vorübergehende Laune gewesen" ("this was nothing more than a passing whim"). Tarnowski's report no. 6/P.B. to Foreign Minister Burián, January 22, 1916. ÖStA HHStA Politisches Archiv. XV. Bulgarien. Karton 79. Berichte 1916, f49–50. When another, not particularly serious incident infuriated Ferdinand, Prime Minister Radoslavov himself complained to Tarnowski about Ferdinand's unpredictably fluctuating moods, jokingly mentioning other, similar situations he had personally experienced and adding how embarrassingly careful he had to be to keep from losing His Highness' confidence. Tarnowski's coded telegram no. 95 to Foreign Minister Burián, January 27, 1916. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 79. Berichte 1916, f66.

kept track of her every move, and would not provide her with money even for her charitable activities without auditing her expenses.³⁴

Even so, it is worth emphasizing that despite Ferdinand's genuine personal shortcomings, his political vacillation resulted largely from the domestic and international political difficulties he faced. And if Ferdinand was the ruler who—under the influence of nationalist politicians—led his country into the two disastrous Balkan Wars and the defeat of World War I, he was also the prince who carefully and successfully manipulated his foreign policy in the period between 1887 and 1912 so as to maintain peace and (by Balkan standards) modernize and strengthen his country and his army.³⁵

Of course, in the fall of 1915, Ferdinand's chief concern was not Burián's opinion, but rather what would become of vanquished Serbia. In the course of his discussions with Mensdorff, he clung fiercely to the notion that his opinion should be sought whenever any decisions were made about the transformation of the situation in the Balkans, given that Bulgaria had done its part to defeat the Serbians.³⁶ As the weakest member of the Quadruple Alliance, however, he could not realistically have expected the leaders of Germany and the Dual

34 Tarnowski's report no. 8/P.A-E. to the foreign minister, January 29, 1916. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 79. Berichte 1916, f69–70. The queen, Princess Eleonore Reuss of Köstritz, who raised the children born to Ferdinand's first wife and dedicated herself to charitable work, made a fairly positive impression on one of the Hungarian nurses who went to Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War; see Szilvay, *A gyászoló Bulgáriában*, 31–35.

35 For more on Ferdinand, see Daneff, *Foxy Ferdinand*.

36 The journal of Mensdorff-Pouilly, vol. 5. Entry dated December 2, 1915. ÖStA HHStA SB. Nachlass Mensdorff-Pouilly. Karton 4. Tagebücher (1905–1923). Cited in Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 120. Count Adam Tarnowski, the Dual Monarchy's minister to Sofia, made special mention of this stance in the report he sent to Burián on November 29, 1915, in which he summarized the most important elements of Mensdorff's negotiations: "Count Mensdorff told me that the [king] is preoccupied by the Serbian question; His Majesty would (as I have already heard and had reported to me by other parties) prefer the utter disappearance of Serbia, and to that end, even an expansion of Montenegro. The [king] is also already preoccupied by speculation whether he, on the occasion of a reorganization of the Balkans, or [in dealing with] other post-war questions, will be able to have a say, or whether Vienna and Berlin will make their decisions [without consulting him]." ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 78. Varia 1915, f83^v and f93.

Monarchy to make sure that their actions conformed to Bulgarian expectations, though he did hope they would inquire about their allies' opinions beforehand.

In any case, Ferdinand emphasized his view that the Karađorđević dynasty would have to be toppled from the Serbian throne. Mensdorff recorded the king's words in his journal as follows: "To create a new Serbia would be folly. For him [Ferdinand] and Bulgaria, a threat. (Provocation) His idea would be that we take a good chunk [of it] along his border and that Montenegro be given something. He would especially like propaganda for Montenegro, which could and should be won over to our side. When I remarked that Montenegro would never be satisfied without Scutari [now Shkodër, Albania], he had to concede the point. Concerning Albania, he was for Greece's taking as much as possible in the south and expanding there. About central and northern Albania, he could not say anything positive, though he did hint at certain hopes."³⁷

Though they still continued to fight, it was clear by late November of 1915 that the Serbians would suffer a decisive defeat, and thus plans to transform the Balkans naturally returned to the foreground, including a variety of concepts which had already sparked numerous debates among the leaders of the Quadruple Alliance.³⁸ Intoxicated by their victory, and having seen their enemy's army destroyed, many argued for radical solutions; it was not just the ruler of Bulgaria who advocated the elimination of the Serbian state. In the November 30, 1915 issue of the Budapest newspaper *Az Ujság* [The news], which was generally sympathetic to the government, the university professor

37 The journal of Mensdorff-Pouilly, vol. 5. Entry dated December 2, 1915. ÖStA HHStA SB. Nachlass Mensdorff-Pouilly. Karton 4. Tagebücher (1905–1923). Cited in Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 120. Ferdinand's expressed and implied hopes for Albania might have been related to the earlier notion of establishing a personal union between Bulgaria and Albania—on the condition, of course, that he be the ruler of both countries. See Tarnowski's coded telegram no. 819 to Foreign Minister Burián, July 27, 1915. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 78. Berichte 1915. f298; see also Chargé d'affaires von Mittag's coded telegram no. 1572 to Burián, December 7, 1915. Ibid., f457. It should be noted that nationalist groups (the text mentions the Macedonian Committee) opposed this idea because the proposed state would have unified too many non-Bulgarian elements.

38 For more on this subject, see Rumpler, "Die Kriegsziele Österreich–Ungarns," 465–82; Szabó, *A magyar álláspontok helye*; Mitrović, Andrej. "Die Balkanpläne der Ballhausbürokratie," 343–71.

Károly Kmety—a member of the opposition independence party—argued that the Serbians had proven themselves unworthy of an independent state, and that the continued existence of a Serbian state “would be nothing but a constant danger to the tranquility of the neighboring states and to European peace;” for this reason, it would have to be eliminated and incorporated into a more cultured country. According to Kmety, if only by historical right, this country would have been Hungary—given, of course, “the complete satisfaction of Bulgarian demands.”³⁹

However, influential Hungarian politicians did not agree with this idea at all. Given that roughly one half of Hungary’s population was made up of native speakers of Hungarian, the incorporation of more predominantly Serbian territory would have been irreconcilable with the maintenance of so-called Hungarian supremacy, insofar as ethnic Hungarians would no longer be the majority in their kingdom. At the same time, other constitutional solutions for the conquered territories were also incompatible with Hungarian national objectives. Given that Austria was not contiguous with the Serbian territories, there was a serious possibility that the occupied Serbian territories, Bosnia, and perhaps Croatia could have been organized into a third constitutional entity within the Habsburg Empire. The Hungarians—especially Prime Minister István Tisza, a strict adherent of the principle of dualism—vigorously opposed this “trialist” solution and maintained their old anti-annexation views. At a July 19, 1914 meeting, the head of the Hungarian government had persuaded the Austro-Hungarian joint Council of Ministers to declare unanimously that despite “the action against Serbia, the Monarchy will not be associated with any plans for conquest, and apart from border rectifications necessitated by military exigencies, we do not wish to annex any part of Serbia.”⁴⁰ In an interview conducted by an American journalist two years after the outbreak of the war, Tisza was still insisting that he was interested only in adjusting the Serbian border, and that the Dual Monarchy was not fighting a war of territorial expansion.⁴¹ Tisza tried to postpone the final reorganization of the Serbian territories which Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian forces had

39 Kmety, “Szerbia ‘fuit,’” 1915, 5–6.

40 *Protokolle*, 153.

41 Glantz, “William C. Bullitt,” 21–26.

occupied and partitioned, as he must have felt that a trialist solution involving a Greater Croatia—that is, the unification of Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia under Croatian leadership—was gaining momentum. In early 1916, in an attempt to delay this outcome, Tisza pushed through the nomination of Lajos Thallóczy, a section head at the joint Ministry of Finance and an outstanding expert on Balkan affairs, as civilian governor of Serbia. In fact, Tisza succeeded in expanding his powers to the point where this action alone was enough to prevent the implementation of the trialist solution.⁴²

The most influential member of the parliamentary opposition, Count Gyula Andrássy (the Younger), whose fundamental principles were very similar to Tisza's, nevertheless took emphatically different positions on many practical issues. While Tisza was always stubbornly faithful to the dualist structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and ultimately allowed this principle to determine his stance on many of the foreign-policy issues which came up during the course of the war, Andrássy was more flexible. This was demonstrated by his attitude toward Poland, which he would have supported incorporating into the Austro-Hungarian Empire as part of a trialist arrangement, though as a Germanophile politician, he was also unwilling to rule out plans for a Pan-German *Mitteleuropa*. In relation to Serbia, however, there was no substantial difference of opinion between Tisza and Andrássy, who often spoke for the entire opposition on questions of foreign policy. The latter also rejected the notion, supported in certain circles in Vienna, that all the Serbs should be united within the framework of the Habsburg Empire. On the one hand, he feared that the Empire was about to absorb masses of people who were opposed to the Dual Monarchy and could not be integrated, and would thus have a destabilizing effect regardless of whatever concrete public-law solution would ultimately be implemented. He also suggested that the existing tensions between the Serbians and Croats would make it difficult to find a suitable solution. For these reasons, he proposed that the Dual Monarchy annex a much smaller, strategically important set of territories which would make it possible to rule the area between the Danube Valley and the Bay of Kotor, while leaving the larger portion of Serbia to function as an independent state,

42 See Vermes, *István Tisza*, 325–26.

possibly in a union with Montenegro, which would be tightly bound to Austria–Hungary.⁴³

And while the victory over Serbia—which had obviously given Hungary's political leaders cause to celebrate—created a new set of political concerns for them, King Ferdinand saw this great military success as an opportunity to expand Bulgaria's territory. Even before this operation had ended, Ferdinand was already trying to get the Austrian diplomat with whom he had the best relationship, Mensdorff, to convince his allies to accept his views on the transformation of conditions in the Balkans. Not only was Mensdorff Ferdinand's relative, he was also important because the Dual Monarchy's minister to Sofia, Count Tarnowski, shared many of his Berlin-based and Vienna-based colleagues' misgivings about the Bulgarian ruler. Even though they were couched in courtesies, the reports Tarnowski sent to Vienna often contained criticisms of the king's excessively capricious personality and complaints about the difficulty of keeping up with his rapidly changing views.⁴⁴

With more receptive interlocutors, Ferdinand would express his opinions not just about the future of the Balkans, but also about war-related issues which had no direct bearing on Bulgaria's situation. "Poland must not be given back to Russia at any price," he declared, instead expressing a preference for a nominally independent state which would be tightly bound to the Central Powers and governed by a Habsburg archduke. He had opinions about the Baltic territories, as well: he thought the Courland region of Latvia should be made into a German province.⁴⁵ Economic-policy questions also came up in

43 Andrassy subjected this issue to a thorough analysis in a book published soon after the war; see Andrassy, *Diplomácia és világháború*, 104–6. See also Szalai, *Ifjabb Andrassy Gyula*, 122–23.

44 For example, he once referred explicitly to the Bulgarian king's narcissism, though he of course expressed himself using a more polite circumlocution: when Ferdinand described himself to Mensdorff as a great expert on the art of governance, Tarnowski presented it simply as an element of his *modus operandi*, as similar incidents had taken place on other occasions. Tarnowski's report no. 5/P.A-B. to Foreign Minister Burián. January 8, 1916. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 79. Berichte 1916, f27–30.

45 Mensdorff, *Eindrücke in Bulgarien*. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 78. Varia 1915. f89^v.

the course of these discussions. With regard to Friedrich Naumann's 1915 *Mitteleuropa* plan,⁴⁶ which provoked a great deal of controversy among the leaders of Austria–Hungary and the broader public, Ferdinand proclaimed that “every young Bulgarian would enthusiastically accept incorporation into a great common economic space.”⁴⁷ Naumann, who foresaw the economic possibilities of stitching all of central Europe together into a military and diplomatic alliance, visited Bulgaria in 1916 as a member of a delegation of German parliamentary representatives, then produced an optimistic book which provided his audience with a great deal of information about the country and the Balkans in general.⁴⁸

At the end of his report, Mensdorff offered an optimistic summary of his negotiations with Ferdinand, suggesting that the king's “mood is generally good, and he now wants [Bulgaria] to move forward in the closest possible [relationship] with Austria–Hungary and Germany.” At the peak of their military successes, Bulgarian diplomats tried to convey this message to their allies as well. At that same time, Andrey Toshev, Bulgaria's minister to Vienna, publicly thanked the press in Vienna and Budapest for the kindness they had shown Bulgaria.⁴⁹ Adolf Wermuth, the mayor of Berlin, sent Prime Minister Radoslavov a congratulatory telegram, to which the latter responded with a warm cable of his own.⁵⁰ Given that these declarations were published in the press, their polite and diplomatic turns of phrase—among the many other techniques used to popularize the little-known country of Bulgaria—might have contributed to a sentimental rapprochement between the allies. This Balkan state's decision to join the Central Powers was cause for joy among the population of the Dual Monarchy, given that it had been barely a year and a half since Italy—their ally for decades—had done an about-face and declared war on them; it must have been a good feeling to know that there were still

46 Irinyi, *A Naumann-féle “Mitteleuropa”-tervezet*.

47 Mensdorff, *Eindrücke in Bulgarien*, f91.

48 Naumann, *Mitteleuropa und Bulgarien*.

49 “A bécsi bolgár követ a magyar–osztrák–bolgár barátságról” [The Bulgarian minister to Vienna on Hungarian–Austrian–Bulgarian friendship]. *Az Ujság* November 26 (1915): 5.

50 “A bolgár miniszterelnök üdvözlése” [The Bulgarian prime minister's salutations]. *Az Ujság* November 26 (1915): 8.

states which would take part in their “noble and just affair.” It is thus unsurprising that in the fall of 1915, as Bulgaria was taking steps to enter the war, it was welcomed with spirited salutes⁵¹ and had its national colors happily displayed over important public buildings in Budapest and in outlying Hungarian cities as well. A newspaper in Szombathely, for instance, wrote that the joint offensive with the Bulgarians was “advancing triumphantly through the land of the thuggish Serbian nation.”⁵²

In accordance with the European monarchical system of the era, Bulgaria was often identified with—and praised in the person of—its ruler. Furthermore, as a young man, Ferdinand had done service in a hussar regiment of the Hungarian army; he also owned property in northern Hungary and therefore often visited that region, which gave Hungarian papers regular opportunities to write about him.⁵³ Following Bulgaria's entry into the war, Budapest's leaders named segments of the downtown *Kiskörút* (“small boulevard” or inner ring-road) for Ferdinand and Sultan Mehmed V; at the November 16, 1915 session of the Metropolitan Public Works Council, the section known as “Museum Boulevard” was renamed *Sultan Mehmed Boulevard*, while the section known as “Customs House Boulevard” was renamed *Ferdinand, King of Bulgaria Boulevard*.⁵⁴ Of course, Ferdinand himself strove to make symbolic gestures worthy of his position among his allies. In Ferdinand's name, his minister to Vienna, Andrey Toshev, drove a nail into the *Wehrmann im Eisen* (“Iron Guardian”), a statue erected for the purposes of charity and wartime propaganda,⁵⁵ on which occasion the king

51 “Az első bolgár zászló Komáromban” [The first Bulgarian flag in Komárom]. *Komáromi Hírlap* November 14 (1915): 3.

52 “Új színek a vármegyeházán” [New colors on the County County Hall]. *Vasmegyei Független Hírlap* October 23 (1915): 2.

53 For instance, on the occasion of his visit to the thermal bath in Pöstyén (now Piešťany, Slovakia); see “Üdvözlőtávirat a bolgár királynak” [Congratulatory Telegram to the Bulgarian King]. *Pöstyéni Ujság* November 22 (1915): 2.

54 The Budapest Metropolitan Archives II. 1a. 51. k. X/5106/1915. See also the proceedings of the October 14, 1915 session of the Metropolitan Public Works Council: *ibid.*, IX/4665/1915. See also, for example, “Mehmed szultán és Ferdinánd bolgár király utja” [The Boulevards of Sultan Mehmed and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria]. *Az Est* November 20, 1915. Cited in Vörös, “Nemzeti Park, Vilmos Császár út,” 116–21.

55 For a recent account of the so-called “nail men,” see Bertényi, Iván Jr. “Szögelőszobrok,” 459–90.

donated 5000 Kronen to the Imperial and Royal Austrian Military Widows' and Orphans' Fund (*k. k. Österreichischer Militär-Witwen- und Waisenfonds*).⁵⁶

Insofar as Bulgaria was a relatively unknown country, it also benefited from presentations designed to popularize its image, among which the Bulgarian Gala organized at the Uránia Hungarian Scholarly Theater was particularly notable. Proceeds went to support the Bulgarian Red Cross; the highlight of the program was a discussion by Count Gyula Andrássy the Younger entitled *Bulgaria and the World War*, but the noted Balkan researcher Adolf Strausz delivered a presentation as well, and those in attendance also enjoyed a performance by the opera singer Erzsi Sándor.⁵⁷ Mentions of the suddenly sympathetic Bulgarians were often accompanied by references to the then-fashionable theory of Turanism, which posited a blood relationship between the Hungarians and Bulgarians.⁵⁸

In addition to Ferdinand, Mensdorff also met with other leading Bulgarian politicians, and thus his report is generally suitable as an introduction to the views of Bulgaria's elites in November of 1915. Prime Minister Radoslavov made a very good impression on Mensdorff, whose conversations with this "clever" politician focused primarily on the Entente's fruitless efforts to win Bulgaria over to the other side.⁵⁹ At the royal palace, he was introduced to the Minister of War and commander-in-chief Nikola Zhekov, who gave Mensdorff the impression that he was calm and reliable.⁶⁰ Given that the Austrian diplomat was officially visiting Sofia as a representative of the Red Cross, he did not meet with opposition politicians, lest he arouse suspicions about

56 "A bolgár király az osztrák katonai özvegyeknek és árváknak" [The Bulgarian king to Austrian war widows and orphans]. *Az Ujság* November 27, (1915): 9.

57 A poster advertising this event, which took place on January 26, 1916, is housed in the Theatre History Collection of the National Széchényi Library (OSZK Színháztörténeti Tár).

58 For example, Elek Benedek's poem entitled "Magyar és bolgár" [Hungarian and Bulgarian]. *Komáromi Hírlap* December 12, 1915, 1; see also Miklós Máthés poem "A bolgárokhoz" [To the Bulgarians], "Egy nemzet voltak hajdan őseink" [Our ancient ancestors were one nation]. In Máthé, *Édes hazánkért és királyunkért*, 115.

59 The journal of Mensdorff-Pouilly, vol. 5. Entry dated November 24, 1915. ÖStA HHStA. SB. Nachlass Mensdorff-Pouilly. Karton 4. Tagebücher (1905–1923). Cited in Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 119.

60 Mensdorff, *Eindrücke in Bulgarien*, f89–89°.

himself or the Dual Monarchy among Bulgarian authorities. Even so, he did look up Ivan Geshov, an opposition figure who had served as Bulgaria's prime minister between 1911 and 1913 and was at that time one of the directors of the Bulgarian Red Cross. Nevertheless, Geshov also understood the sensitivity of the situation, as he was awkwardly careful not to allow himself to engage in any detailed exchanges of political views with Count Mensdorff. He declared that since the war had begun, he had not regarded himself as an opposition figure, because "nous sommes tous Bulgares" ("we are all Bulgarians").⁶¹ Thus during the war, Bulgarians generally strove to avoid the political conflicts of the preceding years, and though this effort took many forms across the country, wartime Bulgaria was characterized by national unity—or was, at least, during its initial, successful phase.

Mensdorff departed the Bulgarian capital on November 28th, stopping on his way home for some confidential discussions in Bucharest. The Romanian king and queen served a breakfast in honor of their Austrian guest at Cotroceni Palace on November 30th, whereupon the count and the king retired to the latter's study for a conversation which lasted roughly an hour and a half. After arriving home on December 7, Mensdorff naturally submitted a detailed report on these discussions to Foreign Minister Burián.⁶²

Back in Vienna, Mensdorff relayed some of the Bulgarian ruler's wishes to Franz Joseph, then repeated his suggestion to Prince Franz of Liechtenstein that it would be good to have Archduke Charles, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, establish a personal connection with the Bulgarian king.⁶³ The Dual Monarchy's leadership took the initial steps to arrange the heir presumptive's visit to Sofia,⁶⁴ though the trip was postponed at Ferdinand's request, as the Bulgarian ruler's visit to German military headquarters

61 The journal of Mensdorff-Pouilly, vol. 5. Entry dated November 26, 1915. ÖStA HHStA. SB. Nachlass Mensdorff-Pouilly. Karton 4. Tagebücher (1905–1923). Cited in Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 119.

62 Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 120 and 122.

63 The journal of Mensdorff-Pouilly, vol. 5. Entry dated December 9, 1915. ÖStA HHStA. SB. Nachlass Mensdorff-Pouilly. Karton 4. Tagebücher (1905–1923). Cited in Jenicek, *Mensdorff-Pouilly*, 122.

64 The joint Foreign Ministry's directive no. 46 to Count Tarnowski, its envoy in Sofia. January 24, 1916. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 79. Weisungen 1916. f22.

obviously took precedence.⁶⁵ Charles' visit to Sofia (and Constantinople) did not ultimately take place until May of 1918, by which time he was already the ruler of the Dual Monarchy. However, it should be noted that this was not the first meeting between these two leaders, as the Bulgarian king had been born in Vienna and regularly visited Austria–Hungary; furthermore, he was the only foreign head of state who had personally attended Charles' coronation as King Charles IV of Hungary in the Buda Castle on December 30, 1916.

At the invitation of István Tisza, Mensdorff traveled to Budapest to provide the Hungarian prime minister with a personal account of his negotiations in Sofia and Bucharest. In his journal, Mensdorff described the influential Hungarian politician as follows: "He was very taciturn, allowing me to speak at length. He looked old for his age; there was something professorial about his appearance, nothing of the daredevil that one might imagine, but rather an impression of a haughty, very intelligent man." Tisza was surely comforted by Mensdorff's description of the anti-Romanian atmosphere in Sofia: "I had heard officers remark that [soldiers] in the Bulgarian [army] spoke of nothing else but a desire to give 'a beating' to the Serbs and the Romanians," given that doing so would have made it possible for them to regain Southern Dobrudzha, which they had lost to Romania in 1913.

Mensdorff's report, the German original of which is reproduced in its entirety below, is an important source for a number of reasons. First, it is an experienced diplomat's summary of the dominant views of Bulgaria's ruling elites—especially those of King Ferdinand, who expressed his opinions to Mensdorff openly on several occasions—around the time of the defeat of the Serbians. At the same time, this summary was also delivered to the leaders of the Dual Monarchy, and thus influenced the subsequent steps taken by Emperor Franz Joseph, Foreign Minister Burián (who had long since been familiar with conditions in Bulgaria), and Hungarian Prime Minister István Tisza.

65 Count Tarnowski's strictly confidential coded telegram no. 987 to Foreign Minister Burián, January 25, 1916. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 79. Berichte 1916, f59.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SOURCE

The following is a word-for-word reproduction of a report which can be found among the materials of the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Sofia.⁶⁶ The sixteen-page typed document features a few minor corrections and insertions, none of which is of any particular significance. There is likewise little meaningful difference between the typed copy and Mensdorff's 40-page handwritten draft.⁶⁷

The text below was prepared from the typed copy; I would like to thank Ariane Decker and Milla Ször for their help in re-typing the scanned material. In the interest of precise citations, I have reproduced the page numbers as they appear in the original source document; the smaller numbers (1–16) were inserted by the original typist, while the larger numbers (f85–92^v) were added by an archivist.

(1 – f85) Botschafter Graf Mensdorff.

Wien, den 7. Dezember 1915

Eindrücke in Bulgarien

Vertraulich

An seine Exzellenz den Herrn Minister des k. u. k. Hauses und des Aeußern, Freiherrn von Burián.

Während meines Aufenthaltes in Sofia – vom 20. bis 28. November – hatte ich täglich Gelegenheit, mit König Ferdinand vertrauliche Gespräche zu führen und möchte versuchen, im Nachstehenden Euer Exzellenz ein möglichst knappes Résumé derselben [the underlined word is a typed insertion], insoferne sie politische Themas betrafen, zu unterbreiten.

66 ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 78. Varia 1915, f85–92^v.

67 ÖStA HHStA SB. Nachlässe, Familien- und Herrschaftsarchive. Nachlass Albrecht Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein. Karton 1. Politik, Zeremoniell (1907–1917). The handwritten text can be found in a not particularly well organized box, in a folder labeled *Reise nach Bulgarien und Rumänien 1915*.

Ich fand den König, trotz mancher vorübergehenden Aufregungen und Depressionen, wenn einlaufende Telegramme ihn beunruhigt hatten, in vertrauensvoller, zuversichtlicher Stimmung.

Die französische Vorliebe, sonst bei ihm so ausgesprochen, ist bedeutend in den Hintergrund getreten. Er fühlt sich solidarisch mit Oesterreich-Ungarn und Deutschland, ist deutscher Prinz, Oesterreicher, Wiener, ungarischer Grundbesitzer etc. Das ist die jetzt vorherrschende Note!

(2 – f85^v) Er bemüht sich zu erklären, daß die jetzige Lage die Frucht seiner langjährigen Politik sei, die er konsequent mit genauer mathematischer Präzision aufgebaut hätte. Wenn nicht s. z. der Balkanbund gegründet worden wäre und der Balkankrieg stattgefunden hätte, wäre es Ihm unmöglich gewesen, die Bulgaren von ihrer Russophilie zu heilen. Deshalb konnte Er Sich auch nicht früher von Ratgebern wie Geschoff⁶⁸ und Daneff⁶⁹ trennen. Man habe dies in Wien und gar in Berlin nicht immer verstehen wollen und Ihm Mißtrauen entgegengebracht, das vielleicht in gewissen Kreisen auch jetzt noch nicht ganz überwunden sei. Er habe von Anfang an auf die Verständigung mit den Zentralmächten und die Emanzipation von Rußland hingearbeitet.

Dies alles brachte Er wiederholt, mit großer Länge und vielen Details vor, offenbar in der Absicht, über gewisse Abmachungen hinwegzukommen, die Bulgarien seinerzeit geschlossen hatte und die nun in Vergessenheit geraten sollen.

Für die Person Seiner Majestät unseres Allergnädigsten Herrn⁷⁰ fand der König wiederholt Worte wärmster, treuester Anhänglichkeit und Dankbarkeit. Seine k.u.k. Apostolische Majestät habe ihn auch in den schwersten und unsichersten Momenten mit Gnade (3 – f86) und Wohlwollen behandelt und die Schwierigkeiten seiner Lage voll verstanden und gewürdigt.

68 Ivan Evstratiev Geshov (1849–1924; in Bulgarian, Иван Евстратиев Гешов) was a Bulgarian politician and economic expert, who served as his country's Finance Minister several times and as its prime minister from 1911–1913 (the period of the first Balkan War). From 1899 to 1924 he was the president of the Bulgarian Red Cross.

69 Stoyan Petrov Danev (1858–1949; in Bulgarian, Стоян Петров Данев) was a Russophile Bulgarian politician who served as Bulgaria's prime minister in 1902–1903 and the summer of 1913.

70 Franz Joseph I (1830–1916), the Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary.

Was Euer Exzellenz betrifft, so besteht beim König noch immer etwas das Gefühl, daß Hochdieselben Ihm nicht völlig vertrauen. „Das alte Mißtrauen Baron Buriáns⁷¹ gegen mich, das noch von Stambulow'scher Zeit herrührt und auch jetzt noch manchmal durchklingt“. Ich versichert Seine Majestät, Euer Exzellenz hätten mir mit großer Anerkennung und Freude von der glänzenden [the underlined word is a typed insertion] Entwicklung Bulgariens unter Seiner Regierung und Führung gesprochen und daß bei dem gegenwärtigen Verhältnisse [sic] und erfolgreichen Zusammenwirken der beiden Länder es ausgeschlossen sein, daß der Leiter unserer auswärtigen Politik dem König der Bulgaren Mißtrauen entgegentringe.

Er hat noch etwas das Gefühl des Unbehagens gegenüber Euer Exzellenz, hielt aber nicht zurück mit Seiner Anerkennung der Bedeutung Euer Exzellenz, die er mehrmals mit „*c'est quelqu'un*“ ausdrückte.

Sowohl König Ferdinand wie Ministerpräsident Radoslawoff⁷² – dem ich einen längeren Besuch abstattete – stellten die Frage an mich, was unsere Absichten bezüglich Serbiens seien.

Ich erwiderte beiden, diese Frage werde auch bei uns in allen Kreisen lebhaft diskutiert, ich (4 – 86^v) hätte aber den Eindruck, daß die maßgebenden Stellen bei uns – und wohl auch in Deutschland – nicht geneigt seien, Fragen wie z.B die serbische zu entscheiden, bevor sie nicht absolut spruchreif geworden sind. Ich knüpfte daran die Gegenfrage, was die bulgarischen Wünsche betreffend die Zukunft Serbiens wären.

71 Stephan von Burián (1851–1922; from 1903 baron, from 1918 count). An (Austro-) Hungarian diplomat. From 1882–1886, he was the chief consul in Moscow and from 1887–1895 in Sofia; from 1897–1903, minister to Athens; from 1903 to 1912, joint Finance Minister. From 1913 to 1915, he was Prime Minister István Tisza's most important foreign-policy advisor and minister *a latere*. From January of 1915 to December of 1916, he was the joint Foreign Minister, then again served as joint Finance Minister, then returned to lead the joint Foreign Ministry from April to October of 1918.

72 Vasil Hristov Radoslavov (1854–1929; in Bulgarian, Васил Христов Радославов), a Germanophile Bulgarian politician. In 1886–1887, he was Bulgaria's youngest-ever prime minister, then later led an anti-Russian right-wing liberal party. From July 17, 1913 to June 21, 1918 (thus for most of World War I), he served as prime minister. After Bulgaria's defeat in the war, he emigrated to Germany; he was convicted in absentia of responsibility for the defeat and sentenced to death.

Während Herr Radoslawoff mir darauf eine vorsichtige Antwort erteilte, Serbien sei kein guter Nachbar für Bulgarien gewesen, so daß dieses kein besonderes Interesse an dem Bestande Serbiens haben könne, erklärte mir König Ferdinand, Er hielte es für einen großen Fehler, Serbien als Staat überhaupt weiter bestehen zu lassen. Es würde für uns, ebenso wie für Bulgarien eine stete Gefahr und die Quelle von Agitationen bilden. „*Ce serait une folie que de créer une nouvelle Serbie qui ne serait qu'un foyer de désordre et de propagande subversive et révolutionnaire.*”

Es wäre jedenfalls viel besser, wenn Bulgarien an die Monarchie direkt angrenzen würde, nicht nur an der Donau, sondern auch südlich derselben. Oesterreich-Ungarn sollte ein Stück Serbiens annektieren und sich nicht davor scheuen, eine Vergrößerung Montenegros zuzulassen. Er trat überhaupt wiederholt (5 – f87) für eine wohlwollende Behandlung Montenegros ein. Das montenegrinische Volk sei tüchtig und sympathisch und mit König Nikolaus⁷³ ließe sich auch reden und es wäre nicht ausgeschlossen, ihn für uns zu gewinnen. Jedenfalls könne man [the underlined words are a typed insertion] besser mit der Negus-Dynastie auskommen als mit den Karageorgevics,⁷⁴ die König Ferdinand um jeden Preis eliminiert sehen möchte.

(Vorsichtig gab mir der König auch zu verstehen, daß wenn bei der künftigen Aufteilung Serbiens das Bulgarien zufallende Territorium noch bedeutender wäre, als das ihm jetzt zugesagte, niemand dadurch geschädigt wäre und dadurch das Band zwischen Seinem Lande und der Monarchie nur noch fester geknüpft würde.)

Als ich bezüglich Montenegros bemerkte, dasselbe würde wohl vor allem Skutari⁷⁵ erlangen wollen, gab der König es bedauernd zu und meinte, man

73 Nikola I Petrović-Njegoš (1841–1921; in Serbian, Никола I Петровић-Његош), Prince of Montenegro (1860–1910) and later its King (1910–1918). When his country was occupied by Austro-Hungarian forces in early 1916, he abandoned his army and fled to Italy. In 1918, the Montenegrin national assembly announced that the country would be joining the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, at which point Nikola (who was often called Nikita), finally lost his throne.

74 The Karađorđević dynasty, in the person of King Peter I, had ruled Serbia since the bloody May Coup of 1903.

75 Possession of the city known in Italian as Scutari, now Shkodër in northern Albania, sparked a serious international crisis during the Balkan Wars, primarily involving the Serbians

müsse eben für die katholischen Malissoren-Stämme⁷⁶ Garantien schaffen oder sie zu einer Auswanderung bewegen.

Bezüglich Albaniens ist der König unbedingt dafür, daß im südlichen Teile Albaniens Griechenland möglichst viel erhalte. Bezüglich des nördlichen und mittleren Teiles konnte oder wollte Er nichts Bestimmtes suggerieren, doch klangen gewisse Hoffnungen und unausgesprochene Aspirationen durch.

(6 – f87^v) Bezüglich Griechenlands erklärte mir der König, Er sei stets Philhellene gewesen und hätte seinerzeit den Griechen gern den Besitz Salonichs gegönnt, wodurch Er für sich Kavalla, Drama und Seres⁷⁷ gerettet hätte. Er habe sich damals mit Herrn Venizelos⁷⁸ auf dieser Basis geeinigt. Seine Minister Geschoff und Daneff hätten es nicht akzeptiert, worauf Venizelos nach Nisch reiste und das Abkommen mit Serbien schloß.

Er plaidierte stark für die möglichste Vergrößerung Griechenlands durch albanisches Gebiet, wodurch sich der Gegensatz zwischen hellenischen und italienischen Interessen nur verschärfen könnte. Ueber bulgarische Wünsche, die sich auf gegenwärtig griechisches Gebiet richten, gingen wir stillschweigend hinweg, als jetzt unzeitgemäß. Daß aber sowohl bei König Ferdinand als im bulgarischen Volke sie Aspirationen auf Kavalla, Drama und Seres weiterbestehen, ist klar.⁷⁹

Von der Vergangenheit sprechend, kann es König Ferdinand trotz Seiner gegenwärtigen Neigung für Deutschland nicht unterdrücken, daß Kaiser Wilhelm gemeinsam mit Monsieur Poincaré⁸⁰ zur Zeit des Bukarester Vertrages⁸¹

and the Dual Monarchy. See the article by Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics, "The Causes of the Outbreak of World War" in this volume.

76 A Catholic mountain tribe from northern Albania.

77 Three northern Greek towns which were also claimed by Bulgaria.

78 Eleftherios Kyriakou Venizelos (1864–1936; in Greek, Ελευθέριος Κυριάκου Βενιζέλος). A pro-Entente Greek politician from Crete, one of the most influential national-liberal leaders of the early 20th century, and one of the most important founders of the modern Greek state.

79 The handwritten draft suggests that this paragraph was a later insertion, though it is not clear how much later Mensdorff added these details to the left column of this page of the draft, which he intentionally left blank.

80 Raymond Poincaré (1860–1934), a conservative politician who served as France's prime minister several times, and as the president of the Republic from 1913 to 1920.

81 The treaty which brought the Second Balkan War to a close, with Bulgaria on the losing side, and Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece among the winners. This agreement,

Bulgarien geopfert hätte, Oesterreich-Ungarn nicht! „Ihr habt damals die (7 – f88) richtige Empfindung für die Lage gehabt.“

Mit großem Nachdrucke sprach König Ferdinand die Erwartung und den Wunsch aus, bei Festsetzung der Pläne über die künftige Gestaltung der Dinge auf dem Balkan informiert und befragt zu werden. Er glaube, nach diesem Kriege ein Anrecht darauf zu haben, über diese Dinge gehört zu werden.

Ich würde die Hauptwünsche König Ferdinands folgendermaßen resumieren: Keine Neu-Errichtung Serbiens und bei Regelung der Neugestaltung der Dinge am Balkan konsultiert zu werden.

Auch von Rumänien sprach der König und meinte, die Monarchie sollte nur ja nichts von der Bukowina an Rumänien abtreten. Dies wäre ein verhängnisvoller Fehler. Vielmehr sollte man den Rumänen zur Strafe für ihre Haltung Turn Severin und den Roten-Thurm-Paß wegnehmen.

Die Stimmung in Bulgarien ist, wie ich mich auch außerhalb des Palais überzeugen konnte, im ganzen Lande eine gegen Rumänien ungemein gereizte. Von Offizieren hörte ich die Bemerkung, in den bulgarischen Schützengräben spreche man von nichts anderem als dem Wunsche, nach den Serben die Rumänen „zu verhauen“.

Die täglichen Stimmungen des Königs über die (8 – f88^v) momentane Lage wechselten je nach den einlaufenden Telegrammen.

Wie Euer Exzellenz bekannt, ist der höchste Herr sehr impressionabel. Eines Tags war Er durch die Nachricht von russischen Truppensammlungen in Reni⁸² aufgeregt, an einem anderen durch die Meldung von einem an Griechenland gerichteten Ultimatum der Entente-Mächte. Der kluge und gut informierte junge Kronprinz⁸³ bemüht sich, in solchen Momenten auf seinen Vater beruhigend einzuwirken.

signed on August 10, 1913, stripped Bulgaria of most of the territory it had gained in the First Balkan War and forced it to cede Southern Dobrudzha to Romania.

82 A smaller town in southern Bessarabia, near the Romanian city of Galați. Now in Ukraine, it was at that time part of Russia.

83 King Ferdinand's eldest son from his first marriage, Prince Boris (1894–1943); after his father's abdication in the fall of 1918, he ruled Bulgaria as Boris III until his death.

Bezüglich der momentanen Lage in Athen scheint dem König die größte Gefahr in der Möglichkeit der Ermordung König Konstantins⁸⁴ zu liegen, da er nicht glaubt, daß der Diadoch die Autorität und die Kraft, – vielleicht auch nicht den Willen – hätte, der Pression der Entente-Mächte und Herrn Venizelos' denselben Widerstand entgegenzusetzen.

Was die militärische Lage betrifft, die sich übrigens seit meiner Abreise aus Sofia weiter in Gott Lob günstiger Richtung entwickelt hat, so möchte ich nur bemerken, daß dort vor 8 Tagen die Meinung ausgesprochen wurde, die übrig gebliebene serbische Armee könne höchstens 40.000-50.000 Mann betragen und diese müßten erschöpft und schlecht bewaffnet sein. Die ausgezeichneten, modernen schweren (9 – f89) Geschütze sowie die [the underlined words are a typed insertion] der Feldartillerie (modernstes Creuzot-Fabrikat) hätten die Serben vernichtet, so daß sie leider nicht in bulgarische Hände fallen. Nur die Gebirgsartillerie hätte die fliehende serbische Armee mit sich geführt.

Der französischen Infanterie fühle sich die Bulgarische vollständig gewachsen; die französisch-englische Artillerie sei allerdings sehr überlegen und füge den bulgarischen Truppen empfindliche Verluste zu. Der Nachschub unserer oder deutscher schwerer Geschütze könne infolge der Zerstörung der Eisenbahnlinien und der sehr schlechten Straßenkommunikation nur sehr langsam [underlining in the original] vor sich gehen.

Bei Besprechung der verschiedenen militärischen Eventualitäten konnte ich konstatieren, daß eine entschiedene Abneigung dagegen bestünde, die Unterstützung türkischer Truppen in solchen Gebieten anzunehmen, die von der Türkei an Bulgarien abgetreten wurden. Gegen eine Kooperation der Türken gegen einen eventuellen russischen oder rumänischen Angriff hingegen schie-
ne kein Bedenken zu bestehen. Ich habe auch den Generalissimus Jekoff⁸⁵ im Palais kennen gelernt, der einen ruhigen zuversichtlichen Eindruck macht.

84 Constantine I (1868–1923) became ascended the Greek throne in 1913 after the assassination of his father, George I (born Prince William of Denmark), though his entire reign was marked by uncertainty. The Germanophile king married the daughter of Kaiser Wilhelm II, though the pro-Entente Venizelos and his supporters forced him to abdicate in 1917. He returned to the throne in late 1920, then abdicated again in 1922 after the loss of the Greco-Turkish War.

85 Nikola Todorov Zhekov (1865–1949; in Bulgarian, Никола Тодоров Жеков). From the summer of 1915, Bulgaria's Minister of War and the supreme commander of its army until 1918.

Von den ungeheuren Schneemassen sprechend, die vorige Woche in Bulgarien alle Kom- (10 – f89^v) munikation behinderten, meinte der General: „*Cela rend la chose plus difficile, mais pas impossible*“.

König Ferdinand sprach mir natürlich auch sehr viel von der allgemeinen europäischen Lage in Seiner Eure Exzellenz bekannten geistreichen, oft staatsmännischen und nicht selten von persönlichen Gesichtspunkten beeinflussten Weise. Gegen die Entente-Mächte ist er sehr aufgebracht und beklagt namentlich „*l'aveuglement de la France*“.

Was die speziell Oesterreich-Ungarn berührenden Fragen betrifft, so meint Er, Polen dürfe um keinen Preis an Rußland zurückgegeben werden, sondern auf irgendeine Art an die Monarchie und an Deutschland gekettet werden.

Seiner Imagination ist das Bild eines nominell unabhängigen Königreiches unter einem Erzherzog mit der allerfestesten Angliederung an die Zentralmächte am sympathischsten.

Auch Kurland sollte nach Seiner Meinung nicht wieder russisch werden, sondern in einen deutschen Bundesstaat umgewandelt werden. Er sprach auch von Zukunftsplänen über die Ukraina und diskutierte die Möglichkeiten der Lösung der südslavischen Frage innerhalb der Monarchie. (Ein großes Illyrien mit Kroatien als Basis und Zentrum. Ausdehnung der (11 – f90) Uniaten als Gegengewicht zur Orthodoxie). Ich bemerkte, wir hätten gerade mit den Uniaten wenig erfreuliche Erfahrungen gemacht, worauf Er meinte, diese bedauerlichen Vorgänge wären auf die verfehlte Politik des polnischen Régimes in Galizien zurückzuführen.

Wie Euer Exzellenz bekannt, ist es eine alte Neigung König Ferdinands, mit der Idee der Entwicklung der unierten Kirche zu kokettieren. Es schwebt Ihm dabei irgendein Gedanke vor, sein katholisches Gewissen und seine orthodoxen Untertanen zu vereinigen.

Was übrigens Sein persönliches Verhältnis zur Kirche betrifft, so hat mir der König wiederholt Erklärt, daß Er vollständig „*en règle avec le St. Siège*“ ist und der Heilige Vater außerordentlich gütig und gnädig für Ihn gewesen sei. Der König erfüllt auf das gewissenhafteste und pünktlichste Seine religiösen Pflichten.

Wie ich glaube, liegt Ihm viel daran, daß Seine vollständig korrekten Beziehungen zum Heiligen Stuhle in Wien bekannt seien, damit nicht Verstimmungen

aus der Zeit des Uebertrittes des Kronprinzen Boris⁸⁶ auf Sein jetziges Verhältnis zu erleuchten Mitgliedern unseres Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses nachwirken.

(12 – f90^v) König Ferdinand erzählte mir viel und Interessantes über die Weise, wie Er und Radolslawoff bis zum letzten Moment die Vertreter der Entente-Mächte irreführt hätte, die absolut nicht daran glauben wollten, daß Bulgarien jemals mit uns gehen würde. Man inszenierte eine Art von Ministerkrise, der König konferierte einen ganzen Tag hindurch in Vrana mit Herrn Malinoff, der sich schon berufen glaubte, ein Kabinett zu bilden; die Vertreter der Entente telegraphierten nach Hause, es bereite sich ein Umschwung der bulgarischen Politik in ihrem Sinne vor und Serbien wurde zurückgehalten, über Bulgarien herzufallen, wozu es sich vorbereitet hatte. In den damaligen Augenblick wäre, wie der König mir sagte, Bulgarien kaum [the underlined word is a typed insertion] imstande gewesen, einem serbischen Angriff erfolgreich zu widerstehen.⁸⁷

Der König erzählte mir auch manches über seine dramatischen Konferenzen mit den Führern der Opposition. Der eine, Stamboulinski⁸⁸ [the typescript says *Stambouloffski*, which was corrected with ink], habe Ihn direkt bedroht. Dieser ist, nachdem er seine Drohungen in Form eines Pamphlets veröffentlichte, nunmehr im Kerker.

Die übrigen Führer, Malinoff,⁸⁹ Daneff und Geschoff setzten ebenfalls Seiner Majestät tüchtig Zu; machten aber seit Kriegsbeginn „*des actes de soumission*“.

(13 – f91) Er sprach mir viel von den politischen Persönlichkeiten Seines Landes, über deren Moral Er wenig Illusionen zu haben scheint. Für den be-

86 The otherwise Catholic Ferdinand pursued pro-Russian policies at that time, including the 1896 decision to allow his first-born infant son to “convert” to Eastern Orthodoxy, with the Russian Tsar Nicolas II as his godfather. This caused a great deal of consternation in the Catholic church and at the court of the Catholic Habsburgs.

87 It is worth noting that Tarnowski later expressed serious doubts about the notion that this government crisis was in fact a hoax staged by the king in order to mislead the Entente. Count Tarnowski's report no. 5./P.A.-B. to the foreign minister. January 18, 1916. ÖStA HHStA PA XV. Bulgarien. Karton 79. Berichte 1916, f27–30.

88 Aleksandar Stoimenov Stamboliyski (1879–1923; in Bulgarian, Александър Стоименов Стамболийски) was a member of the Agrarian Union who served as prime minister (1919–1923) after Bulgaria's defeat in the Great War. He was killed in a military coup.

89 Aleksandar Pavlov Malinov (1867–1938; Александър Павлов Малинов), an anti-German, Russophile Bulgarian liberal politician who served as prime minister several times, first from 1908 to 1911. He opposed the alliance with the Germans and argued for neutrality in 1915.

deutendsten hält Er Herrn Genadieff,⁹⁰ der aber jetzt ganz ausgeschaltet ist. Ueber jeden Seiner Politiker scheint der König ein eigenes Dossier zu haben. Das habe Ihn seinerzeit Stambouloff⁹¹ gelehrt, zu tun.

Von diesen Herren habe ich nur Herrn Geschoff begegnet und zwar in seiner Eigenschaft als Mitglied des bulgarischen Roten Kreuzes. Er erinnerte mich daran, daß ich die Herren Daneff und Madjaroff⁹² kenne, und hatte offenbar die Hoffnung, ich würde den Wunsch aussprechen, mit denselben zusammenzukommen, was ich natürlich nicht tat, da es der König mit Recht mir hätte verübeln können, wenn ich, als sein Gast im Palais wohnend, mit den Führern der Opposition Begegnungen gesucht hätte.

Ich ging aber im übrigen der von Herrn Geschoff begonnenen politischen Konversation nicht aus dem Wege und diskutierte die nach meiner Ansicht wenig glückliche Tätigkeit Herrn Daneffs während der Londoner Konferenz,⁹³ worin mir Herr Geschoff vollständig beipflichtete und sein Bedauern darüber aussprach, nicht persönlich nach London gekommen zu sein statt seines damaligen Kollegen. Herr Daneff (14 – f91“) hätte durch zeitgemäßes Aufgeben Salonichs an Griechenland Kavalla für Bulgarien retten [the underlined word is a typed insertion] und durch rechtzeitige Konzessionen an Rumänien das weitere Unheil verhüten können.

Auf meine Frage, wie sich die Opposition jetzt zur Regierung stelle, erklärte mir Herr Geschoff, seit Kriegsbeginn „*nous ne sommes plus que des Bulgares*“ und daß er in einer gewissen Verbindung mit dem Ministerpräsidenten stehe.

90 Nikola Ivanov Genadiev (1868–1923; in Bulgarian, Никола Иванов Генадиев), a pro-Entente Bulgarian liberal politician and a minister in Radoslavov's government in 1913–1914, though he was removed from office on charges of abuse of power.

91 Stefan Nikolov Stambolov (1854–1895; in Bulgarian, Стефан Николов Стамболов), one of the most important founders of the modern Bulgarian state. After a pro-Russian coup forced Prince Alexander of Battenberg to abdicate in 1886, Stambolov came to power as the leader of a counter-coup; he initially served as regent, then—once Ferdinand had been elected prince—ruled Bulgaria with an iron fist as its prime minister.

92 Mikhail Madjarov (1854–1944; in Bulgarian, Михаил Иванов Маджаров), a Bulgarian politician and diplomat who served as a government minister several times before 1913.

93 The 1912–1913 conference arranged by the Great Powers in order to manage the situation, which had developed as a result of the First Balkan War.

In meinen Gesprächen mit König Ferdinand berührten wir auch das wirtschaftliche Terrain. Bei Diskussion der in Naumanns „Mitteleuropa“ angeregten Ideen meinte der König, alle jungen Bulgaren würden mit Begeisterung für eine Angliederung an ein großes gemeinschaftliches Wirtschaftsgebiet sein.

Wie Euer Exzellenz bekannt, interessiert sich König Ferdinand seit jeher ganz besonders für alle Verkehrs- und Eisenbahn-Fragen. Auch jetzt spricht Er viel davon und wünscht die möglichst rasche Herstellung direkter schneller Verbindungen zwischen Ost und West. Es sollten nach Seiner Ansicht tägliche direkte Züge zwischen Hamburg und Konstantinopel verkehren und zwar nicht nur Luxuszüge, sondern Züge mit dritten Klassen für Arbeiter, billig aber (15 – f92) bequem, praktisch und schnell, damit die Leute von der langen Reise nicht zu leiden hätten. Dies sei von eminentester politischer und wirtschaftlicher Bedeutung und ganz gut durchführbar, wenn unsere Eisenbahnen, namentlich die ungarischen, nur endlich einmal auf der Höhe ihrer Aufgabe und unserer Zeit ständen.

Ich erlaube mir, auf diese Verkehrsanfrage aufmerksam zu machen, weil sie gewiß im allgemeinen Interesse liegen, und in diesen Punkten man unbedingt auf die sehr tatkräftige fachmännische und energische Unterstützung König Ferdinands rechnen kann.

Wenn ich meine Eindrücke aus meinen zahlreichen und eingehenden Unterredungen mit König Ferdinand zusammenfassen darf, so würde ich sagen, daß Seine Stimmung im allgemeinen gut und Sein Wunsch jetzt aus Neigung und Interesse auf ein möglichst enges Zusammengehen mit Oesterreich-Ungarn und Deutschland gerichtet ist.

Er hält ein Wiedererrichteten Serbiens in was immer für einer Form für einen Fehler und wünscht sehr, bei Diskussion aller den Balkan betreffenden Fragen herangezogen zu werden.

Wenn sich die Gelegenheit bieten könnte, dem König durch dem Throne nahestehende Mitglieder unse- (16 – 92^v) res Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses und vielleicht auch durch das Armee-Oberkommando freundliche Botschaften zukommen zu lassen, so würde das, wie ich glaube, bei Seiner Empfänglichkeit für jede von höchster Seite kommende Aufmerksamkeit einen ausgezeichneten Eindruck auf Ihn machen und Seine lebhaftete Freude erwecken.

Albert Mensdorff

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WHEN BULGARIA AND AUSTRIA–HUNGARY WERE NEIGHBOURS: AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS ON THE NEW BULGARIAN WESTERN BORDER, 1915–1918

Martin Valkov

INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 1915 Bulgaria entered the European War on the side of the Central powers. In the following three years, large parts of the Balkan peninsula populated by numerous and diverse population, were under the control of Bulgarian troops and under the rule of the Bulgarian state: to the west, the regions of the Pomoravlje, Vardar Macedonia, and a large part of Kosovo; to the south-east, the regions of Serres, Drama, and Kavala; to the north-east, Dobrudzha. The territorial scale of the conquest was unprecedented, but at the same time it caused a number of conflicts with the allies of the Central powers.

This article studies such an aspect of the relations between Bulgaria and its allies during the First World War, one that has so far has been neglected by Bulgarian historians, namely, how the Bulgarian push to the west affected Bulgaria's relations with Austria–Hungary. This article examines both the diplomatic side of the conflict at the highest level, as well as the ways in which high politics influenced bilateral border relations on the ground. The article does not claim to exhaust the question, but only to initiate further research and discussion on a little-known side of relations between Bulgaria and the Central powers, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of Bulgaria's participation in the First World War.

TREATIES AND BORDERS

The officially proclaimed goal Bulgaria pursued when it joined the Central powers in the European conflict in 1915 was the same as in the two recent Balkan Wars—to achieve Bulgarian national unification. Bulgaria's participation in the First World War was retaliation for the defeat in the Second Balkan War of 1913 and an attempt to cancel the Treaty of Bucharest.

When the war between the two enemy European coalitions broke out in 1914, Bulgaria declared neutrality, which lasted a year. Gradually, however, it became apparent that neutrality alone could not bring about the implementation of the Bulgarian national ideal. Bulgarian claims included territories in all neighbouring states: Vardar and Aegean Macedonia, Dobrudzha, and Thrace as far as the Midye-Enez line.¹

The situation required goals to be prioritized, and it was obvious that the different territorial ambitions were not equal. Macedonia was the core of national unification; without it, the latter was impossible. Accordingly, the options the two coalitions had for satisfying Bulgaria's territorial ambitions were not equal, although the Entente's diplomacy was in a much worse position. The Entente's offers were very vague and conditional.²

In contrast with the Entente, the Central powers could offer much more, and, more importantly, they could offer the territory Bulgaria most coveted—the whole of Vardar Macedonia. If Romania and Greece had joined the Entente, Bulgaria would have regained Dobrudzha and Southeastern Macedonia with Serres, Drama and Kavala respectively.³ In addition, Bulgaria could have taken from Serbia as much territory as it wanted.

The region of Pomoravlje came as compensation for Bulgaria's participation in the forthcoming campaign against Serbia, and could only partially be justified by appeal to national unification. Until the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878, there was indeed evidence of the presence of Bulgarian population there, and a number of ethnographic maps designated these lands as populated

1 Марков, *Голямата война*, 55–110, 127, 129.

2 Илчев, *България и Антантата*, 55–209.

3 Марков, *Голямата война*, 155.

by Bulgarians.⁴ The main arguments supporting the Bulgarian cause were the participation of representatives of Pomoravlje in the movement for the establishment of independent Bulgarian church in the 19th century, the inclusion of the regions of Pirot, Vranje, Niš, and Leskovac in the Bulgarian Exarchate diocese, as well as the decisions of the Constantinople Conference of 1876–1877, which included approximately the same territory into the projected autonomous Western Bulgarian province. The Treaty of San Stefano gave Niš and Leskovac to Serbia, while only Pirot and Vranje remained within Bulgaria, but the Berlin Treaty gave these towns to Serbia.⁵

After the establishment of the Bulgarian Principality these lands were ‘half-forgotten’ by the Bulgarians and geography textbooks rarely included them within the territorial scope of the national ideal.⁶ The same was true for official Bulgarian foreign policy, which was entirely concentrated on the European territories of the Ottoman Empire–Macedonia and Thrace. Pomoravlje was very rarely part of the plans of Bulgarian foreign policy, and only as a by-product of an anti-Serbian Austro-Hungarian–Bulgarian coalition. In 1908–1909 Austria–Hungary planned to win Bulgaria for such a military-political combination.⁷ After 1911, when Bulgaria opted for an alliance with Serbia under Russian patronage, all such plans, as far as they were ever seriously considered by Bulgaria, were quite understandably dropped from the agenda. They re-emerged again after the Bulgarian defeat in the Second Balkan War, and as part of Bulgaria’s new direction of foreign policy aimed towards a union with the Central powers. These plans did not have any concrete form. Initially the territorial claims in this direction included only north-eastern Serbia as a corridor for a common Bulgarian–Hungarian border, then stretched to the former Exarchate borders, and finally reached the whole of Eastern Serbia, up to the confluence of the Morava and Danube rivers.⁸

4 Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics*, 33–111.

5 The establishment of the Exarchate church structure in these lands was not easy, and the Exarchate had to reckon with local conditions and strong Serbian influence in the years 1870–1878. Маркова, *Българската екзархия*, 120–23, 129–30.

6 Кайчев, *Македонијо, възжелана*, 96–98, 153, 158.

7 Mitrović, “Bugariska u planovima,” 57–90.

8 Тодорова, *Германски дипломатически документи*, vol. 1, 289–90, 374.

Bulgaria officially joined the Central powers on September 6, 1915, signing four separate agreements: a bilateral German–Bulgarian treaty of alliance, a secret convention, a trilateral German–Austro-Hungarian–Bulgarian military convention, and a bilateral Bulgarian–Turkish convention on border rectification. The key agreement was the secret convention. Germany “guaranteed Bulgaria the acquisition and annexation” of all Vardar Macedonia and Serbian territory to the Morava River. In the event of a Romanian or Greek attack against any of the allies, Bulgaria would annex Southern Dobrudzha with a border rectification and the lands acquired by Greece after the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913. The Bulgarian–Turkish convention provisioned for a border rectification in the Maritsa River valley.⁹ As regards Kosovo, it was not part of Bulgarian territorial aspirations in the west, and was not included in the territorial provisions of the treaties, but it was conquered during the battles.

The military convention settled the upcoming campaign against Serbia. The command of all armed forces, except those Bulgarian troops designated for action in Macedonia, was delegated to Field-Marshal August von Mackensen, the task of the army group being to “defeat the Serbian army, wherever it found it, and to open and secure, as soon as possible, the land connection between Hungary and Bulgaria.”¹⁰

NEW AMBITIONS: THE ABSOLUTE DESTRUCTION OF SERBIA AND PUSHING THE BORDER WESTWARDS

As mentioned above, of the four agreements, concluded on September 6, 1916, the treaty of alliance and the secret convention, which settled the Bulgarian territorial acquisitions, were bilateral agreements between Bulgaria and Germany; only the military convention was signed by Austria–Hungary. The monarchy was kept informed by the Germans during the negotiations, however, and its remarks and propositions were taken into account in the final

9 Христов, *Българска военна история*, 46–62.

10 Ibid., 59–60.

texts of the treaties. The line of the border, fixed in the secret convention, was drawn by Bulgaria and accepted by both Germany and Austria–Hungary.¹¹ The secret convention did not elaborate on the status of the lands to the west of the border, and there was no other German–Austro-Hungarian agreement on the subject.

For Austria–Hungary the question of the political future of the Serbian lands was extremely complicated, because there was a difference of opinion among the empire's leadership. The official foreign policy-making process reflected the monarchy's dualist structure, the different interests of Austrian and Hungarian ruling circles, as well as the influential position of the High Command (AOK). Generally, three main trends could be observed. The chief of staff General Conrad von Hötzendorf desired the full annexation of the Serbian lands lying west of the border with Bulgaria, as delineated in the treaties. Hungarian prime minister István Tisza thought otherwise, and was not willing to accept more Slavs into the empire, fearing that their growing number would increase internal national tensions and threaten Hungary's privileged position. Furthermore, the liquidation of Serbian sovereignty was seen as an obstacle to a compromise treaty with the Entente countries. Tisza stood for moderate annexations in strategically important regions, and the preservation of a reduced Serbian state after the removal of the Karadjordjevic dynasty. The man responsible for the official foreign policy of the monarchy, István Burián, had to find a balance between these two extremes.¹²

Unlike Austria–Hungary, Bulgaria had no dilemmas about the future of the territories it acquired. The Bulgarian leadership showed great interest in the future of the Serbian territories west of the projected border and supported the deletion of the Serbian state and full Austro-Hungarian annexation. In late October, minister of finance Dimitar Tonchev told the German secretary of state Gottlieb von Jagow that "Serbia had to disappear."¹³ King Ferdinand

11 Тодорова, *Германски дипломатически документи*, vol. 1, 367–68, 373–75, 380, 384, 415–16, 418–20, 422–23, 427, 430–37.

12 Serbian historian Andrej Mitrović studied the Central powers' plans for Serbia in detail. See Митровић, *Продор на Балкан и Србија*, 258–629. For a recent extensive study of Austro-Hungarian war aims in the Balkans, see Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*.

13 Quoted according to Марков, *Голямата война*, 210.

shared with the German minister in Sofia his wish for “Serbia as a state to disappear from the geographic map” and “from the map of Europe.”¹⁴ Bulgarian minister plenipotentiary in Vienna Andrey Toshev shared the same opinion, telling prime minister Vasil Radoslavov the following: “It is advisable that Serbia no longer exist as an independent state [...] we should insist on the erasure of independent Serbia from the face of the Balkan Peninsula.”¹⁵ The Austro-Hungarian military attaché in Sofia, Colonel Vladimir Laxa, reported to his superiors that Bulgarian commander-in-chief General Nikola Zhekov and chief of staff General Konstantin Zhostov asked him whether they would erase Serbia from the map.¹⁶

Less than two months after the alliance treaties were signed, the Bulgarian leadership began to view the projected border as unsatisfactory, and a desire for a westward shift emerged. The idea originated from the Bulgarian General Headquarters, more precisely from the chief of staff General Zhostov. On October 23, 1915 he expressed his regret to General Zhekov that Gnjilane was not included in the territories promised to Bulgaria, since it guaranteed possession of the Vranje-Skopje railway. Zhostov considered this a mistake that needed to be redressed. He also pointed out the strategic location of Prizren, which controlled the road along the Drina valley to the Adriatic, and also the Ohrid–Elbasan–Durrës strip, which gave access to the Adriatic coast and at the same time blocked Greece’s push to the north.¹⁷

The new territorial ambitions were strengthened by the fact that Bulgaria sent more troops to the battlefield than the military convention required. On November 2, 1915, after the Germans started withdrawing their units from the Balkan theatre and high command realized that the burden of combat would be borne almost exclusively by the Bulgarian army, Zhostov telegraphed Zhekov, who was holding a meeting with German chief of staff Erich von

14 Quoted according to Митровић, 9–10.

15 БИА–НБКМ [Bulgarian Historical Archives at the National Library of SS. Cyril and Methodius], F. 267, 1, a.u. 14, f. 8–11.

16 ВИБ, III 2235. Kriegsarchiv, fond 92, 93, 94. Archives of the Austro-Hungarian military attaché in Sofia (March–April, November–December, 1915). Translation from German by Stilian Noikov, 45.

17 Савов, Жостов, *Интимните причини*, 104.

Falkenhayn in the Serbian town of Paraćin at the time. Zhostov required territorial compensations: the regions of Prizren, Priština, the road to the Adriatic, and, as a minimum, Gnjilane, but also Castoria and Edessa from Greece.¹⁸ The same day he informed the prime minister. Radoslavov did not seem particularly enthusiastic about the new territorial demands, registering his doubts in his daily notes: “What about the treaties?”¹⁹

At the same time another territorial ambition in the western direction emerged—the desire to shift the borderline west of the Morava River in order to control the strategic railway line. In his meeting with von Jagow, Dimitar Tonchev informed him about this.²⁰

The question of the shift of the border to the west had two aspects, a political and a military one, and the two did not always coincide. The political aspect concerned the change of the border, delineated in the secret convention, but on purely military grounds it was necessary to fix the operational and rear zones of the different armies and divisions in the coalition were under the general command of Field Marshal Mackensen. The plan for the attack on Serbia was prepared in line with military considerations: the Germans attacked in the centre, along the Morava valley, and the Austro-Hungarians were situated west to them, while the Bulgarians attacked from east to the west and south-west.²¹ After the Bulgarians took Serbia’s wartime capital Niš and beat off the Anglo-French attacks from the south, the chasing of the Serbian army in its retreat towards Albania fell mainly to the Bulgarian troops. Priština was captured on November 23, Prizren on November 29, and Gjakova (Djakovica) on December 4. By the end of November all of Western Macedonia was under Bulgarian control; at the end of January 1916, Bulgarian troops entered Elbasan and reached the Adriatic coast.²² In the course of these battles the Bulgarian army reached much further west than the border set by the treaty and occupied territories in three states—Serbia, Montenegro and Albania.

18 Ibid., 108.

19 Радославов, *Дневни бележки*, 172.

20 Марков, *Голямата война*, 210–11.

21 Falkenhayn, *General Headquarters*, 162–66.

22 Марков, *Голямата война*, 205–19, 233.

Bulgaria's push to the west seemed to be motivated more by military considerations than simply political ones, and cannot be considered as merely a deliberate aspiration for conquering as much land as possible. Territorial appetite had its limitations. General Zhostov's diary testifies to the fact that the General Headquarters did not wish to send Bulgarian troops outside certain limits. Zhostov advised Zhekov to spare the army's strength and not to engage in a campaign deep into Albania and Montenegro, but instead to send troops to Western Macedonia. When, in early December 1915, General Kövess von Kövessháza, commander of the Austro-Hungarian 3rd army, insisted that the Bulgarian 3rd division advance towards Ipek, he was refused, as the division was exhausted and needed rest.²³

Indeed, at this time Bulgarian high command planned to transfer the 3rd division to the Austro-Hungarian 3rd army for the campaign against Albania and Montenegro. It even issued an order to this end, but quickly changed its mind, and the division remained under the command of the Bulgarian 1st army. Despite continued Austro-Hungarian insistence, Bulgarian high command refused to transfer the 3rd division to Kövess's army.²⁴ The disagreement about the 3rd division brought to the fore the military aspects of the problem with Bulgarian penetration beyond the treaty border. After the failure to use the 3rd division for the campaign in Albania and Montenegro, the Austro-Hungarians decided to transfer their own 57th division from Priština to the region of Prizren–Gjakova. They asked Bulgarian high command to withdraw the 3rd division from the region. The demand was rejected by Bulgarian high command, which ordered the 3rd division to stay where it was.²⁵

Apart from the purely military disputes on the regions of the different units, German diplomatic representatives in Sofia reported that the Bulgarian leadership openly raised the question of changing the treaty border.²⁶ On December 17, King Ferdinand and the crown prince paid an official visit of clearly political nature to Prizren, where the king was given "a solemn reception

23 Савов, Жостов, *Интимните причини*, 121–22.

24 *Българската армия в Световната война*, vol. 5, 661–64.

25 *Ibid.*, 664–65.

26 Митровић, "Стварање немачке окупационе зоне," 15.

by the citizens and was presented with gifts.”²⁷ On December 5, the Bulgarian liaison officer to the German high command (OHL), Colonel Petar Ganchev, who was in Sofia at the time, informed the Austro-Hungarian military attaché, Colonel Laxa, of the Bulgarian demand for territorial compensations, including lands to the west of the Morava River.²⁸

THE CONFLICT ABOUT THE BORDER IN KOSOVO

Although Austro-Hungarian leaders were not sure what to do with the Serbian lands lying west of the treaty border, they were unanimous that did not want to see the Bulgarians there, and so were unwilling to accept the current demarcation lines until the end of the war. The problem came to the fore in February 1916, when a Bulgarian delegation with King Ferdinand, Prime Minister Vasil Radoslavov, and commander-in-chief General Zhekov visited Germany and Austria–Hungary. On February 10, 1916, at the German headquarters in Pless, the Bulgarian delegation officially demanded a border rectification, which covered the western bank of Morava, the regions of Prizren and Priština, and all of Eastern Albania.²⁹

In contrast to the Pless discussions, in Austria–Hungary Bulgarian demands were concentrated on Kosovo. The talks at the general headquarters in Teschen were tense; Conrad von Hötzendorf vigorously opposed Bulgarian claims. Bulgarians cleverly pointed out that the treaty only defined the status of the lands to the east of the border, with no provision for those to the west. It was an argument Conrad was not able to deny, because, as he wrote to Burián in a critical tone, the Austro-Hungarians never had any clarity as to the future of these lands. Conrad was most of all concerned about the fact that the Bulgarians had begun to establish civil administration in the regions of Prizren and Priština, while Ferdinand’s visit to Prizren raised the suspicion that he had established close ties with the local Albanian leaders. Radoslavov, however, promised to sort out the disagreements on Gjakova. As to the future of Serbia,

27 *Българската армия в Световната война*, vol. 5, 683–84.

28 ВИБ, III 2235, 44.

29 Митровић, “Стварање немачке окупационе зоне,” 25–27.

both the Bulgarian leadership and Conrad agreed that “full annexation by Austria–Hungary was the only reasonable solution.” The Austro-Hungarian chief of staff wanted to avoid a military clash, but at the same time notified Burián that the Austro-Hungarians did not have enough troops on the ground to support their claims and that the only reprisal could be the suspension of military supplies to Bulgaria.³⁰

The talks with the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister in Vienna went more smoothly. Burián told the German ambassador that “Radoslavov was a very sensible man,” and King Ferdinand behaved much more reasonably in Vienna than in Teschen. Bulgarian arguments that their troops had conquered Prizren and Priština were rejected by Burián, who pointed out that Austro-Hungarian troops occupied lands to the east of Morava and could lay claim to them on the same grounds.³¹ The Austro-Hungarian foreign minister stuck to the treaty, considering the lands west of the border as being part of the Austro-Hungarian “sphere of interest.”³²

After the stormy talks in Teschen, in Vienna both sides avoided confrontation without renouncing their claims. The foreign minister was under the impression that the Bulgarians had withdrawn their demands for territorial expansion outside the treaty borders.³³ On the other hand, Radoslavov paid attention to the fact that Burián did not insist on the withdrawal of Bulgarian troops from Prizren and Priština, but only emphasized that it was not desirable for Bulgaria to introduce civil administration there, and that this fact did not predetermine the question. Burián assured Radoslavov that Serbia could be given certain rights but never full independence, while the plan was for Montenegro and Albania to be “semi-independent countries.” Burián did not mention Elbasan, but found it natural that Bulgarian troops should operate from there against the common enemy.³⁴ As a result of the negotiations, Burián informed Conrad

30 ВИБ, III 2469. Kriegsarchiv, Fond. General Headquarters of the Field Forces. Operations Documentation 1916, ‘the Balkans’ group, Case 538. The archival materials were found and translated by a colonel in the army reserve, Stilian Noikov, 6–7.

31 Тодорова, *Германски дипломатически документи*, vol. 2, 58–59.

32 ВИБ, III 2469, 11–14.

33 Тодорова, *Германски дипломатически документи*, vol. 2, 58–59.

34 ЦДА, F. 313K, 1, a.u. 53, f. 20–21.

that the withdrawal of Bulgarian troops from Prizren and Priština was a purely military question, one that had to be solved peacefully and through mutual concessions by both commands, without determining the future of the disputed regions.³⁵

While the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian leadership were still holding negotiations, a series of incidents on the ground occurred that seriously strained relations between the two countries. The first incident occurred on February 13, 1916 in Gjakova, where, upon the arrival of Bulgarian telegraph and postal functionaries and their subsequent attempt to establish a telegraph and post office, an argument ensued regarding possession of the telegraph line. The Austro-Hungarians cited the provisions for surrender of arms by the Montenegrin army and the AOK ordered that in Gjakova, being Montenegrin territory, no Bulgarian military and civil authorities could be established. The Austro-Hungarian commandant gave his Bulgarian counterpart 48 hours to remove the civil administration from the town and its hinterland. Bulgarian high command ordered the garrison to stand their ground and to retain the telegraph line, because the town had been taken by force by the Bulgarians, and the issue should be solved diplomatically. General Kövess blamed the Austro-Hungarian commandant for misunderstanding the orders from above and the problem was considered settled.³⁶

After the unsuccessful attempt at Gjakova, the Austro-Hungarians made another attempt to expel the Bulgarian troops. On February 16, the Bulgarian commandant of Prizren received a message from the Austro-Hungarian military authorities that AOK had issued an order defining the borders of the Austro-Hungarian military government. The zone stretched from Kačanik, through the ridge of the Šar Mountain, to the Albanian border at Karatas, then southwards, west of Debar, to include Elbasan. Within this zone, Bulgarian civil authorities had to be removed, and the export of food and supplies was forbidden. The commander of the Macedonian military inspection area, General Racho Petrov, recommended the high command “to put an end to these provocations once and for all [...] by ordering the 3rd division, at the

35 ВИБ, III 2469, 10–11.

36 ДВИА, F. 40, 2, a.u. 702, f. 40–45; Ibid. a.u. 537, f. 160–62.

moment stationed in Skopje, to chase away the Austro-Hungarian troops.” The high command did not issue such orders, but ordered Ganchev to inform Falkenhayn about the incident and threatened to ban all Austro-Hungarian purchases in Old Bulgaria in response. It was hinted that it was possible that the Bulgarians would resort to force in the future. From Vienna, General Zhekov ordered the Bulgarian military and civil authorities to stand their ground, not to respect Austro-Hungarian orders, and, if necessary, to reinforce the garrisons. He also asked Falkenhayn to persuade AOK to cancel the order and to stop “once and for all such unwarranted orders and disrespect for their military rights.”³⁷

The order was not cancelled, and new incidents followed. On February 18, the Bulgarian commandant of Priština also reported that he was asked to withdraw his forces from the town.³⁸ The most serious incident occurred in Kačanik. On February 19, the Austro-Hungarians attempted to establish their commandant’s office and administration in the town. General Racho Petrov ordered the Bulgarian commandant not to respect any Austro-Hungarian orders and demands. The Austro-Hungarians should retreat, and “if they didn’t wish to retreat voluntarily,” General Petrov stated, “they would be driven out by force.” After several Austro-Hungarian attempts at negotiations, they were given a deadline at midnight on February 26. After receiving information that the Bulgarian commandant really did have orders to chase them out by force, the Austro-Hungarian troops left Kačanik on February 27.³⁹

This caused a scandal. The military attaché in Sofia, Colonel Laxa, was sent to the general headquarters in Kyustendil to talk to General Zhekov in person. The conversation was tense, as Laxa insisted on the treaty border, and threatened the suspension of military supplies. “It cost me great effort not to expel him from my study,” General Zhekov wrote to King Ferdinand. Zhekov refused to withdraw the Bulgarian troops and told Laxa that neither did the treaty gave Austria–Hungary the right to consider all lands west of the border as its own, nor would he succumb to blackmail.⁴⁰ His impression, which he

37 Ibid., a.u. 537, f. 174–82, 200–1.

38 Ibid., f. 188–89.

39 Ibid., a.u. 702, f. 82–85, 90–92.

40 Ibid., a.u. 539, f. 268–69.

shared with the king, was that “the Austrians will yield to our stubbornness.” Colonel Ganchev reported the same from Pless.⁴¹

The German leadership was divided over the conflict. While the ministry of foreign affairs supported the Austro-Hungarians, high command was much more concerned about the possible escalation of the conflict between the allies than the future of the disputed territories, while Falkenhayn backed the Bulgarians, contrary to the official policy of the foreign ministry.⁴²

The suspension of military supplies forced Falkenhayn to react. He asked Conrad to cancel the order, since Bulgaria was fighting for the common cause and against the common enemy. Conrad agreed. At this stage Falkenhayn’s mediation was limited only to Elbasan, since in Teschen General Zhekov had promised Conrad to withdraw Bulgarian troops from the town, but had not done so. At the same time Falkenhayn remarked that before the war in the Balkans was over there could be no “justice or injustice on the question of Ferizović–Prizren–Priština,” but that the conflict had to be resolved peacefully, and he was ready to assist in this. At this point Conrad was not ready to accept Falkenhayn’s mediation, apart from on the issue of Elbasan, and wanted direct negotiations with the Bulgarians, especially since he had already made an offer to the Bulgarian side.⁴³

The offer was made on March 1, 1916, and attempted temporarily to solve the conflict, without predetermining the political future of the disputed territories and without excluding a further agreement between the two sides. The military occupation of the regions of Priština and Prizren should be have been joint, but the governments separated, with the Austro-Hungarians taking the Priština region and the Bulgarians taking Prizren. Because this was only a “provisional military measure,” no civil administration would be allowed. This would be purely military rule, which would be assigned to a high-ranking Austro-Hungarian officer in Priština and a Bulgarian one in Prizren. The reinforcement of occupation troops could be done only with the consent of the

41 Ibid., a.u. 702, f. 16–17.

42 Fried, *Austro-Hungarian War Aims*, 145–52.

43 ВИБ, III 2469, 24–26.

other side. Austro-Hungarians agreed for a Bulgarian garrison to remain in Elbasan, but not in Gjakova.⁴⁴

Conrad's offer was not accepted by the Bulgarians, who considered this 'condominium' to be unjust, since the bigger and richer Priština region would be retained by Austria–Hungary and the smaller and mountainous Prizren region by Bulgaria. Zhekov defended his position to Falkenhayn, saying that "their authority there was in its proper place, while the Austrian one was unnecessary, regardless of whom these territories would belong to in the future." He proposed to withdraw Bulgarian troops from Gjakova if the Austro-Hungarians withdrew theirs from Priština and Prizren.⁴⁵

In the meantime, rumours spread that Radoslavov's government might be forced to resign if they were not able to secure Prizren and Priština for Bulgaria. Radoslavov himself hinted at this in front of the Austro-Hungarian minister in Sofia—the king made common cause with the high command, and was able to force the cabinet to resign if it opposed the military. The king also made similar declarations in front of German diplomatic representatives, some of whom considered them a bluff, while others took them seriously.⁴⁶ The inability of the Bulgarians and Austro-Hungarians to come to terms led to the only remaining option coming into effect—the mediation of German high command.

On March 23, 1916 OHL offered mediation. The main point of the offer was that, within 14 days of concluding an agreement, the Austro-Hungarian troops would withdraw from Prizren and Priština and Bulgarian troops would withdraw from Gjakova and Elbasan. "Thus," declared Falkenhayn, "both sides will have to renounce approximately equal claims, which they consider justified." The possibility of future agreement between the two governments remained open; if such agreement was reached, the Bulgarian high command was obliged to withdraw its troops. If his offer was rejected, Falkenhayn refused further mediation.⁴⁷

44 ДВИА, Ф. 40, 2, а.у. 702, ф. 125–27.

45 Ibid., ф. 19–24.

46 ВИБ, III 2469, 19; Тодорова (ed.), *Германски дипломатически документи*, vol. 2, 66–70.

47 ДВИА, Ф. 40, 2, а.у. 702, ф. 28.

The Bulgarian high command accepted the offer in general and made a detailed proposal for the border.⁴⁸ Teschen and Vienna were not satisfied with the offer, however. Conrad wrote to Burián that Prizren and Priština were not necessary from a purely military point of view, and permission for a free supply route for Austro-Hungarian troops in Albania was enough. What bothered him was the question of the possession of these lands after the conclusion of peace: he thought the agreement virtually predetermined the issue. Burián defined the problem accurately. The offer abandoned Prizren and Priština, which were part of Serbia, and as compensation Austria–Hungary received the Montenegrin town of Gjakova; therefore the Austro-Hungarians had to “sacrifice the disputable in order to get the indisputable.” Still, he acknowledged that any other solution was impossible at the time, accepting a temporary evacuation of Prizren and Priština, but at the same time insisted on the withdrawal of the Bulgarian civil administration. Conrad considered the latter utterly impossible, and the two exchanged mutual accusations as to whether it was the imperfect provisions of the treaty or the belated occupation of these regions by the army that were responsible for this failure.⁴⁹

Facing a lack of alternatives, the Austro-Hungarians were forced to accept the proposal, but Conrad introduced several clarifications: clear delimitation of the line of the border, insistence on the temporary and purely military character of the agreement, clarification that the territory to the west of the new border was “an exclusive operational and military-administrative zone” of the Austro-Hungarian army, what that to the east was a similar zone of the Bulgarian army.⁵⁰

Falkenhayn’s new proposal included Conrad’s remarks and was sent to the allies on March 27, 1916. The agreement was of purely military character without representing an obstacle to future bilateral agreements between the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian governments. If, under such future agreements between the two governments, Prizren and Priština were not given

48 Ibid., f. 30.

49 ВИБ, III 2472. Kriegsarchiv, Fond. General Headquarters of the Field Forces. Operations Documentation 1916–1918, ‘the Balkans’ group, Case 539. The archival materials were found and translated by colonel Stilian Noikov, 20–23, 28–30, 40–43.

50 Ibid., 26–28.

to Bulgaria, the Bulgarian high command would be obliged to withdraw from these regions. The agreement came into force, without being signed, as soon as Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian leaderships confirmed their consent to OHL; in turn, OHL informed them of the other side's consent. The border was delineated in detail.⁵¹ Within 14 days of the agreement coming into force, the Bulgarian army had to withdraw from Gjakova and Elbasan, and the Austro-Hungarian army from Prizren and Priština. The territories east and west of the border were administered by the respective armies as their own zones.⁵²

Almost immediately, Conrad made several minor changes to the exact delineation of the border in the region of Blace and from the Kopaonik ridge to the Serbo-Montenegrin border.⁵³ Ganchev reported to Bulgarian high command Falkenhayn's request "not to make an issue of that" and to accept Conrad's remarks. Radoslavov agreed: "We should not raise difficulties, in order not to make a nuisance of ourselves."⁵⁴ Zhekov thought otherwise. He wanted a small rectification in the region of Prizren, because here the border ran just a few kilometres from the town, thus detaching it from its natural hinterland. Zhekov informed Falkenhayn that he accepted his offer "in principle," but with rectifications to the west of Prizren. Zhekov wrote to the king that "they would accept the offer only in the last resort, but they had good reason to want more."⁵⁵

However, General Zhekov was forced to succumb: the border was accepted as in Falkenhayn's offer, with Conrad's amendments. On April 1, 1916 Falkenhayn informed both sides that he had received their confirmation and that the agreement had come into force.⁵⁶

Even before April 1, 1916, Conrad was convinced that the region of Prizren–Priština was already lost, and that the Austro-Hungarians could

51 ДВИА, Ф. 40, 2, а.у. 631, ф. 179–81.

52 Ibid.

53 ВИБ, III 2472, 37–38.

54 ЦДА, Ф. 3К, 18, к. 53, dossier 8, ф. 12.

55 Ibid., ф. 124–26.

56 ВИБ, III 2472, 43–44.

never take it back without a struggle with Bulgaria.⁵⁷ The German military attaché in Sofia shared the same opinion. He reported to Berlin that the agreement was a “full success for the Bulgarian policy” and a “huge success for Bulgaria which, no doubt, [the Bulgarians] would never give up.”⁵⁸ The Bulgarians themselves were divided. While the government seemed satisfied with the agreement, the high command only considered it a partial success. At this stage the Bulgarian military leadership had to constrain itself to the regions of Prizren and Priština, occupied by the Bulgarian army, but it continued to insist on a move to the west and a change to the treaty border.

AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS ON THE BORDER

Even after the agreement of April 1, 1916, a few disagreements about some stretches of the border occurred, but nothing comparable in scale to the previous conflicts. These were minor incidents of technical character which, despite causing a certain exchange of correspondence between the military staffs, were in most cases solved in a spirit of compromise and understanding. As a whole the April agreement worked.

The first dispute occurred almost immediately after it had turned out that each side was using different geographical maps, which accordingly lead to different delineations of the demarcation line. Colonel Ganchev reported in Kyustendil Falkenhayn’s request not to start an argument for “such a small and uninhabited sector.” All the more, added Ganchev, this could create the impression that Bulgaria was considering the temporary line as the definitive border, while regarding it as unsatisfactory and wanting expansion to the west. Since it had transpired that the map used in Pless for the delimitation of the border was the Austro-Hungarian one, the Bulgarian high command yielded.⁵⁹

Disagreements occurred in the region of Debar in May 1916. They concerned several villages along the new border as well as the thermal resort of Debar Spa. After additional specifications, an agreement was reached on which

57 Ibid., 20.

58 Тодорова, *Германски дипломатически документи*, vol. 2, 68–69.

59 ДВИА, F. 40, 2, a.u. 631, f. 71–74, 83, 104.

villages would belong to which respective zones, and a procedure was established for Bulgarian soldiers and troops visiting the baths, which were in the Austro-Hungarian zone.⁶⁰

In September 1916 a new dispute erupted, this time around Madjarska Bara, an island in the Morava River. Initially, Bulgarian high command proposed the establishment of a joint commission, but the question dragged on, and Conrad contacted the OHL, which found that the island was really in the Austro-Hungarian zone. General Zhekov decided that it was not worth engaging in “such unessential and insignificant arguments” and on November 13, ordered the Bulgarian troops to withdraw from the island.⁶¹

In February 1917 there was a dispute about two villages in the region of Struga, where the Austro-Hungarians demanded the withdrawal of the Bulgarian civil administration. After further clarification, the Austro-Hungarians acknowledged the villages were within the Bulgarian zone. At about the same time, Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian authorities on the ground were also trying to clarify the exact borders of the Pogradec district and the border west to the Ohrid Lake.⁶² Even in the summer of 1918, two years after the agreement of April 1, there was a territorial dispute as to where exactly the border lay; a joint commission tried to establish the border southeast of Vučitrn.⁶³

Despite these small disagreements, it turned out that Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian authorities on the ground were able to cooperate on questions of mutual interest. There were some earlier precedents. Even before Bulgaria joined the Central powers, Austria–Hungary had been willing to release Macedonian Bulgarians, serving in the Serbian army, from the POW camps.⁶⁴ Later, Bulgarians reciprocated and delivered to the Austro-Hungarians all Serb officers and soldiers accused of committing war crimes against Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war.⁶⁵ In January 1916 both sides started negotiations to coordinate the custom tariffs in the occupied territories, but Bulgarian high

60 Ibid., a.u. 702, f. 147–56.

61 Ibid., a.u. 631, f. 186–91.

62 Ibid., f. 166–67, 172–79.

63 Ibid., f. 268–79.

64 Евстатиева, “Положението на македонските българи,” 20–31.

65 ВИБ, III 2235, p. 48.

command suspected it was an Austro-Hungarian “trick in order to fix the border according to the treaty.”⁶⁶

After the acute conflict was resolved and the temporary demarcation line established, the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian authorities gradually began to regulate border control. In June 1916 the two sides worked out regulations on how to police the border when chasing criminals who crossed it.⁶⁷

In September 1916 the Austro-Hungarian military general government in Belgrade turned to the Bulgarian Morava military inspection area in Niš with a draft agreement on land properties that had been split by the border, in order to facilitate their cultivation by the owners. The proposition was accepted, and came into force on 10 December.⁶⁸ The agreement applied to a five-kilometre strip on either side of the border, and envisaged a less strict passage and customs regime for the owners.⁶⁹ The Belgrade general government proposed that the Macedonian military inspection area in Skopje also join the agreement, which it did in March 1917, with only minor amendments.⁷⁰

This intensified cooperation led to the conclusion of a provisional agreement a month later, one that encompassed a wide range of problems regarding the internment of civilians, as well as going in and out of or passing through the Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian occupation zones. The provisional agreement was signed on April 23, 1917, and, besides the general government in Belgrade, that in Cetinje, and the 19th Austro-Hungarian corps, based in Shkodra, also joined it. For the Bulgarian side it was signed by representatives of the two military inspection areas and the general headquarters.⁷¹ The agreement on land properties remained in effect, and the general government in Cetinje and the 19th corps also signed up to it.⁷²

In the summer the cooperation was broadened to include the mutual extradition of criminals and deserters who had escaped from one occupation

66 Савов and Жостов, *Интимните причини*, 133.

67 ДВИА, F. 1548, 1, a.u. 3, f. 72–73.

68 Ibid., F. 40, 2, a.u. 631, f. 201, 205–8.

69 ЦДА, F. 242K, 2, a.u. 595, f. 1–3.

70 ДВИА, F. 40, 2, a.u. 631, f. 201–2, 209, 212–14, 220.

71 Ibid., f. 236–38.

72 Ibid., f. 238–41.

zone to the other. In order to put an end to this, representatives of the general government and the Morava military inspection area signed an extradition treaty in Belgrade on July 26, 1917.⁷³

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The agreement of April 1, 1916 managed to mitigate differences temporarily, but neither country would give up its territorial ambitions, as the final settlement between the two was left for once the war was over. Bulgaria considered the demarcation line as neither satisfactory, nor final, and insisted on the western bank of Morava and on border rectifications in the regions of Prizren and Debar.

Concerning Debar, it was not only a policy of the general headquarters—there was also pressure “from below.” As early as January 1916, the Bulgarians from the region sent a petition to the prime minister, citing strategic, economic and ethnic considerations. The influential Macedonian leader Hristo Matov supported the cause and solicited the high command. In the summer of 1916 the army staff sent the ministry of foreign affairs a detailed report, explaining the need for a border rectification in the Debar region, and proposing that the Austro-Hungarians be compensated somewhere else.⁷⁴

In the autumn of 1916, taking advantage of the difficulties Austria–Hungary experienced in Albania, Colonel Ganchev tested the ground with the German general headquarters. The instructions from the Bulgarian army staff were to “act with tact and skill” so it would not look like “blackmail,” but pointed out Bulgarian political, economic and strategic considerations for a border shift to the west.⁷⁵

In December General Zhekov informed Radoslavov of the western border as desired by high command. It included the whole western bank of Morava, with the railway line and the whole western bank of the Ohrid Lake.⁷⁶ Not only did Bulgaria not intend to give up Prizren and Priština after the peace, it

73 ЦИА, F. 176 K, 3, a.u. 652, f. 14–16.

74 ДВИА, F. 40, 2, a.u. 702, f. 160–76.

75 Ibid., f. 177–79.

76 Ibid., f. 180.

even found the demarcation line of April 1, 1916 to be unsatisfactory. The definitive border was to be situated even further to the west.

On May 17–18, 1917 in Bad Kreuznach, where Germany and Austria–Hungary tried to coordinate their war aims, the border with Bulgaria was also discussed. Austria–Hungary demanded the “restoration” of Northern Albania, with Priština and Prizren “if possible,” but would be “friendly” towards Bulgarian ambitions for the lower Morava. Germany recommended “that Austria Hungary should be conciliatory towards a Bulgarian desire for the left bank of the Morava (railway), and eventually for Priština also.” Besides, Germany wanted to have “a free hand” in the negotiations with Bulgaria on the exploitation of the natural resources in “New Bulgaria,” a condition that was specified as “essential.”⁷⁷

Later in his memoirs, Radoslavov claims that, according to the Kreuznach agreement, Prizren and Priština were given to Northern Albania.⁷⁸ The protocol shows that this is not exactly true. The Kreuznach agreement did not settle the issue of Bulgaria’s western border in any way.

A year later the question came to the fore once again. During the peace negotiations with Romania in the spring of 1918, Austria–Hungary demanded territory south of the Danube in order to build a canal to facilitate shipping along the river, and offered territorial compensations elsewhere. General Zhekov strongly opposed this. The government agreed, but only in exchange for the concession of the western bank of Morava. A declaration was signed, but Radoslavov claimed that the Austro-Hungarians were not satisfied with such an agreement, and thus their ambitions were temporarily deflected.⁷⁹

The loss of the war made all plans, both Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian, illusory. The question of the border, which for three years had been the most important one in these bilateral relations, became irrelevant.

77 Ludendorff, *The General Staff and its Problems*, 437–38.

78 Марков, *Голямата война*, 203–5; Радославов, *България и световната криза*, 136–37.

79 Ibid., 209–10; *Дипломатически документи*, 927; НА–БАН, col. IV, a.u. 57, f. 1027, 1072–73.

It is, however, important for historians of the First World War in at least two ways. First, its study sheds additional light on the relations between the allies in one of the two coalitions in the war. The few historians who have dealt with the question emphasize the conflicting nature of bilateral Austro-Hungarian–Bulgarian relations on the border issue. Surely this is true. The conflict over the border in Kosovo in early 1916 was so intense that at one point it nearly turned into a local armed confrontation. The agreement of April 1, 1916 did not settle the question definitively. Austria–Hungary, regardless of the serious differences between the leading actors, stuck to the treaty. Bulgaria not only did not plan to give any of the conquered territory back, but was also not satisfied with the wartime demarcation lines and insisted on a shift of the border further to the west. This was a policy of its high command, supported by the king, while Prime Minister Radoslavov was more moderate.

But it is also true that after April 1, 1916 relations on the ground got much better. The conflicting territorial claims were left for the future, and local authorities managed to cooperate on matters of mutual interest quite actively. In fact, after April 1916 Bulgarians had much more bitter conflicts with the Germans in Serbia, Kosovo and Macedonia, and later in Dobrudzha, than with the Austro-Hungarians on the border. It should also be taken into consideration that just a few years before, during the Balkan Wars, disputes with former Bulgarian allies Serbia and Greece had led to a full-scale war. The relations with Austria–Hungary never even came close to such a point of confrontation.

The question is also important for the study of Bulgarian war aims. Bulgaria's territorial claims to the west showed that it was not only the national unification that mattered. The Pomoravlje was overwhelmingly Serbian and Kosovo predominantly Albanian even according to Bulgarian wartime statistics. Thus Bulgaria claimed large territories populated by non-Bulgarians. The push to the west was motivated by strategic and political considerations: control of both banks of the Morava River with the railway, of the strategic roads to the Adriatic, an ambition to eliminate Serbia as a rival once and for all, and an aspiration for a Bulgarian-dominated post-war Balkans.

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NATIONALISM IN THE BULGARIAN ARMY ON THE EVE OF AND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1913–1915)

Kalcho K. Kalchev

The topic, formulated in this way, provokes the attention not only of any history *aficionado* more or less aware of the general course of military and political events in the Balkans, but also of the professional historian. It attracts attention with sharp twists—under the influence of partisan doctrines—that subjected Bulgarian warriors, officers and soldiers alike, who astounded the world with their legendary feats during the Balkan War (1912–1913), to both educational and emotional impact. As is well known, immediately after the London Peace Treaty (May 17/30, 1913) came the Second Balkan War against the recent allies, as well as against Turkey and Romania, which had indirectly assisted them. This war left the previously fully recovered Bulgarian Army defeated and humiliated, as it had been in the autumn of 1913 after signing two treaties in Bucharest and Constantinople (Istanbul), with its reputation and self-confidence crushed. No less importantly, the military strikes launched by all Balkan neighbours in June–July 1913 could only be dealt with thanks to indirect assistance from the so-called European powers, including the autocratic Russia, which several generations of Bulgarians had looked up to with hope and belief. It was hoped that the latter (the “Liberator”) would help Bulgaria to achieve national unity, as Russian diplomacy had envisaged in San Stefano.

Faith in Russia and *hope* that it would provide diplomatic assistance to complete the mission of liberation and let Bulgarian warriors crush the power of the Ottoman Empire—these were the two spiritual factors that made up the foundations of Bulgarian nationalism, regardless of changes to the cabinet and of complications in Russian–Bulgarian relations prior to 1913. The reality in June 1913, however, was disheartening—there was room neither for faith nor for hope. The core of Bulgarian nationalism in the early twentieth century remained the love of the fatherland and its culture, the pursuit of national unity with brethren across the Rila, Rhodopes and Strandzha Mountains in a single country, and the strong conviction that our neighbours outdid the Bulgarians. There remained that burning anguish over Macedonia, which some “allies-robbers, crafty, devious and with no shame” (L. Bobevski) had fragmented; a pain throbbing with the insult from Russia! Also the feeling that “the great truth” is on the side of the Bulgarians because they have been forced to “furl the flags” temporarily. This is the briefest summary of the nationalist outlook of young Bulgarians uncommitted to the ideas of socialism, not only in the army, in the late summer of 1913. Therefore, this nationalism should not be “pilloried,” if we strive for a minimum of historical objectivity.

It should immediately be pointed out that in historical studies devoted to the wars of national unification, attention was always paid to the spirit of nationalism common to the majority of Bulgarians in 1913–1915, even in studies where this concept is not verbally expressed and also in studies where diplomatic mechanisms for portraying Bulgaria in are the focus of study.¹ We should provide some further clarification: for nearly half a century, under the influence of alien ideology and paradigms, the concept of nationalism in academic and popular literature was overloaded with disdainful negativity, forever equated with chauvinism, with hollow verbal jingoism associated only

1 The list of research in which various aspects of the manifestation of patriotism during the period are examined would be too long for this article, so we will be content to mention only the names of those authors who touched upon this part of the spirit of the military training of the army. Besides N. Zhekov, L. Maleev and N. Nedev, between the two world wars and in the second half of the century, we should mention the names of T. Vlahov, D. Gotsev, D. Zafirov, I. Ilchev, I. Jovkov, G. Kamburov, M. Lalkov, G. Markov, D. Minchev, T. Tonchev, P. Tsvetkov, B. Cholpanov, who wrote the *History of the Bulgarian Army (1877–1919)*, and so on. As an exception, there are names of foreign researchers, such as W. Gotlib, Y. Turan, R. Hol, and others.

with hatred towards all neighbouring nations. For too long, it had been linked to the imperialist policy of conquest, especially of the “Bulgarian bourgeoisie.” In the early years of “the early transition to democracy” we witnessed other ugly interpretations of nationalism. However, we also saw the most mature research, if not for this chronological period, by a young and promising scientist at the then Institute of Military History, who, unfortunately, passed away prematurely.²

In the nationalism of 1913–1915, viewed as a concern for the future of a united Bulgaria, there appears room for the analysis of personal shortcomings and errors, both of politicians and of generals. In the beginning, especially in the summer of 1913, emotional factors such as bitterness, resentment and anger against anti-Bulgarian policy, mainly that of the Serbs and Greeks, were dominant. But such a policy was also present within the Kingdom of Romania and on the territory of the Ottoman Empire, which had restored its dominance in the Edirne district. The 55,000 refugees in the Bulgarian Kingdom were a reminder of that. Temporarily settled in south Bulgarian towns, and having caused a lot of problems for the cabinet of the new government, they remained somewhat detached from the nationwide ideal, because physical survival was what preoccupied them. These refugees seriously disturbed the new geopolitical orientation of the coalition cabinet of Dr. Vasil Radoslavov, which had started to build bridges of friendship with Germany and Austro-Hungary, already envisioning that it might attract the Ottoman Empire as a future geopolitical ally. In the army, as a national institution, it was impossible for the national ideal not to undergo some modifications that no longer retained memories from San Stefano. But modifications were partisan, as they followed the new international direction of the Bulgarian Kingdom, which had seemingly become alienated from the forces of the Triple Entente. The ruling coalition of Liberals, Popular Liberals (N. Genadiev) and Young Liberals, on the basis of past Russophobic persuasions and not without pressure from Berlin and Vienna, had come to the conviction that bilateral relations with the “Young Turk” government in Constantinople had to be normalized, because that government had been

2 Добринов, “Размисли за българския национализъм,” 190–208. A year later, on the pages of this excellent magazine edited by the ministry of defence, the same author published his original reasoning: „За националния нихилизъм на българина,” 153–64.

demonstrating intolerance not only to Russia but also to both the British and the French. No matter that the summer 1913 campaign of the Turkish army against the few remaining Bulgarian troops was significantly accelerated thanks to French capital! But the Young Turk leaders adopted the suggestions of German and Austro-Hungarian diplomats for them to regulate bilateral relations with Sofia, on condition that the Bulgarians would—with Ottoman help—deliberately and in an organized manner undertake re-Islamization in the Rhodopes in Western Thrace. Therefore, according to the pro-liberal nationalism imposed by the ruling parties, ‘real life’ explicitly required that the existence of ‘Bulgarian Mohammedans’, on whom Christianity had only recently had been imposed and their names replaced with Christian ones, be forgotten.

In 1912–1913, the main driving force behind this practice, along with the Orthodox clergy, was the army. It was necessary that such a mistaken “nationalism” be banished and that “cadres” be re-educated in confessional tolerance. Otherwise, the talks which started in August 1913 in the Turkish capital and were headed by G. Nachovich, General M. Savov and A. Toshev, on the conclusion of the bilateral agreement, were doomed to fail. And Turkey, albeit having sharply and categorically rejected the arrangements for the Midia–Enos line and having insisted on its European possessions, showed in the negotiations with the Bulgarians a willingness to retreat from the territories of Malko Turnovo, Mustafa pasha (Svilengrad) and Vasiliko (community of Tsarevo).

Moreover, the Empire promised that the Kingdom of Bulgaria would come into the possession of Western Thrace (a plane in the lower area between the Maritsa and the Mesta rivers) which had previously been occupied by the Bulgarian army. The Empire also promised to put an end to the separatist aspirations of the local Muslim community. This, in turn, called for some corrections to the pre-war nationalism cultivated until 1913 in the army by all educational institutions that aimed to impact society in the spirit of the San Stefano ideal³—tolerance towards all Muslims, whether Bulgarians or Turks,

3 Instead of the San Stefano ideal, the press speaks more frequently about United Fatherland, meaning United Bulgaria, without forgetting the words that the elder count N. P. Ignatiev (1832–1908) addressed to Bulgaria on his visit to Sofia in 1902: “There will be a San Stefano Bulgaria! There will be... But just you be patient...” After overt Russian favour for Serbia and Romania, abstaining from the San Stefano spirit does not seem illogical. Broad groups of

because Bulgaria had gained access to the Aegean Sea thanks to the latter. (We need to remind the reader that the Gyumyurdzhina area, the central area of Western Thrace, was not part of San Stefano Bulgaria, unlike, for example, the areas of Lozengrad and Lyuleburgas.) In other words, from having been the main enemy of the national unification of Bulgarians in the Balkans, Turkey began to turn into a country with which normal neighbourly relations should be maintained. In this way, the situational and specific Bulgarian partisan liberal nationalism began penetrating into the demobilized army, appointing vice commander-in-chief General Mihail Savov, who had already failed on June 16, 1913 in the field of diplomacy. In August 1913 we can already see him in his capacity as a “quality” diplomat of the state. Somewhat out of the sight of the ruling élite remained priority issues concerning the accommodation of refugees from Thrace and Macedonia. Significantly more important problems emerged, related to winning the sympathy of Vienna and Berlin while distrust of the coalition cabinet in Sofia continued to linger. The gesture made by the cabinet in Sofia—giving voting rights to the Muslim population of the Gyumyurdzhina area, and acquiring a small minority in parliament at the end of February 1914 thanks to this population—was duly noted in Istanbul, but not quite adequately in Vienna and Berlin. Twenty “member Turks” in the Bulgarian National Assembly were not so much a “fifth column” of the Sublime Porte as a crucial factor in achieving a parliamentary majority for liberal “forces” that decided by a narrow majority on the fateful issues concerning the future of the country. The newly pro-liberal nationalism, now with nuances of partisan spirit, gradually reached its peak in the army, along with ongoing gradual evolutionary personnel changes among the senior officers’ corps in 1913–1915, as well as with the deepening liberalization in attitudes towards the Muslim population in Bulgaria as a whole, not only in the Gyumyurdzhina area and the Rhodopes. In the worrisome summer days of 1914, when preparation for and indeed the start of the European war took place, the Bulgarian army needed urgent military credits, and career diplomats like Dr. Vasil Radoslavov, Nicola Genadiev, Andrey Toshev

the Bulgarian public were not aware of any territorial views of some of the émigré activists in Bucharest in 1876, nor of the ethnographic map of the Petersburg Slavic Charitable Society, dated 1890, which D. Rizov would later bring to light: *The Bulgarians in their historical, ethnographic and political boundaries. Atlas containing 40 maps.* Berlin, 1917, s. 40.

and Mikhail Savov from the Bulgarian side, and Talaat Bey, Ali Fethi Bey and Mustafa Kemal from the Turkish side, prepared and concluded the Bulgarian–Turkish Treaty of alliance and friendship (Sofia, August 6/191914).⁴ This means that under the watchful eye of international diplomacy, but without much fuss about this agreement among the public and the army, the entire ideological propaganda and educational work of the personnel and officers could no longer continue with business as usual. After complex struggles in the international financial arena and noisier scandals in the Bulgarian parliament, and a few days before the outbreak of the war, Bulgaria succeeded in taking a consolidation loan of 500 million francs from “Disconto Gesellschaft.”

But at the very beginning of hostilities on August 2, 1914 the Bulgarian prime minister, not without coordination with the monarch, proposed joining the kingdom to the Central European forces in exchange for their specific commitments to Bulgarian national demands. The one-year odyssey to involve Bulgaria in one of the two warring coalitions was to start, but the Bulgarian–Turkish Union, which caused so much concern among Entente diplomacy and Balkan neighbours, was *de facto* repealed in the autumn because the Ottoman Empire was in a hurry to intervene in the World War against Russia and the Entente. Bulgarian neutrality, declared in the name of the national interest, repeatedly resisted courtship from the Triple Alliance, but finally yielded to the bids of Wilhelmstrasse and Ballplatz in the summer of 1915. Diplomats from Germany, Austria–Hungary and Turkey, who knew all too well that Bulgarian neutral foreign policy was a fiction, had evaluated national aspirations rather better. These aspirations had been synthesized in readiness for military action, in the name of the national unification of the Bulgarians from undisputed and disputed areas of Macedonia and the Moravian region, as well as the desire for regaining territories that had been annexed from Bulgaria by the Kingdom of Romania and the Kingdom of Greece (August 24/September 6, 1915), in case the latter opposed the Central Powers. These arrangements, however, were accompanied by the newly-modified Bulgarian–Turkish Treaty of alliance and friendship of August 6/19, 1914 according to which the Turkish Empire would a year later, in addition to the kingdom, cede 2,287 sq. km. (August 23/

4 Калчев, *Българо-турски военнополитически отношения*, 149–66.

September 3, 1915)⁵ of Dimotika *kaza* and even the area near the eastern Maritsa river. As a result, the involvement of Bulgaria on the side of the Central Powers was driven by Turkish territorial concessions and promises that the Bulgarian army would be allowed, with military might, to fulfil the enosis of the territories located within the borders of Serbia, the majority of which it had occupied in 1913. Under these conditions, in which national unity with brothers from Macedonia still remained the ideal, but the ally and the reserves were already different, and the direction of the main attack was completely changed (against previously “brotherly” Serbia), pro-liberal nationalism managed gradually to gain ground, mostly in the army, due to army discipline. The new pro-liberal nationalism that had spread in the army, albeit to a lesser extent, “allowed” the Bulgarian Kingdom, during the phase of neutrality, to transport German military supplies to the Ottoman Empire for the war against the Allies, while decisively rejecting Russian demands that Petrograd be able to use the Danube as a supply artery for the Serbs in combat.

A significant part of German military supplies benefitted the Ottoman army in the war against Russia, while another portion of them went into the defence of the Dardanelles against British and French troops. Although disagreements often took place between the country’s political and military leadership, these foreign policy peculiarities of pro-liberal nationalism indirectly affected the Bulgarian army because its leadership knew its place, since Bulgaria achieved territorial benefits as a result of the negotiations with Turkey in the summer of 1915. In other words, the empire showed malleability, because the Young Turks realized the past and future role of the Bulgarians. The solo part of this escalating bellicose nationalism was exposed in the new poem entitled “Kill!” by the then popular Bulgarian poet Kiril Hristov (1875–1944) in the very first issue of “Отечество” [Fatherland], the magazine for sergeants, released shortly after the news of the treaties with Central European powers and with Turkey⁶

5 Having paid the price with minimal concessions, the Ottoman Empire gained an ally that could have been its most dangerous opponent. See: Трифонов, “Българо-турската конвенция,” 17. This is perhaps the essential characteristic of pro-liberal nationalism.

6 This happened on August 24/September 6, 1915. See the publicly accessible documents in: Георгиев, В., Ст. Трифонов, *История на българите в документи*, vol. 2, 382–86, and Тодорова, *Германски дипломатически документи*, 437–40, 441–45.

had come. The text of the verses was notated, probably to be sung by those soon to join the army. The fiery verses, with a specific audience and purpose, illustrate the new liberal nationalism as follows: "The coveted time has come. The combat has begun. Show no mercy! Kill! And win your liberty. Show no mercy! Kill! Stab! Shoot! Slaughter! Show no mercy! Murder! Die, if you must, but win! Your honour is at stake. Show no mercy! Murder! It is our turn to win. Open up a way ahead!"⁷ However, despite the fact that even ordinary soldiers summoned to join the army in the second half of September 1915 realized that the angry power of this poetry was aimed at the former Serbian allies of Bulgaria, nobody tried to learn the melody of the new Bulgarian military march. Incontestable historical sources show that instead of morale increasing due to such pseudo-poetry, as had been hoped, a soldier rebellion broke out on September 22, in the 27th Chepino Regiment (as if to act as a reminder of the anti-war unrest in the Bulgarian army in May–June 1913, which had been misunderstood by the senior Bulgarian officers' corps). But after October 1/14, 1915 the troops of the first and second Bulgarian army rushed so overwhelmingly at Serbia that it gave cause for Colonel-General E. von Falkenhayn to express the most flattering words for the Bulgarian ally,⁸ for the Turkish military to praise the feats of the Bulgarians and for the Sultan to award General N. Zhekov the highest Ottoman order. The background to the new Bulgarian nationalism were pompous words spoken not so much about new "Greater Bulgaria" but about "liberating our brothers in Macedonia," and to justify the verse "we remember everything and fiercely avenge it." This renewed Bulgarian nationalism, however, grew from the assumption that "the European war is to end up soon" (as stated in the Manifesto of Ferdinand) and from the principle that the Bulgarian army will solve national problems here in the Balkans. This frantic anger had a specific target: it was aimed at the Serbian political and military élite, but the treatment of ordinary soldiers who had surrendered, having until recently bravely fought against Austro-Hungary, was humane: "Go

7 Топенчаров, *Българската журналистика*, 614. These verses were the apotheosis of Bulgarian revanchism, which was dressed not in partisan clothes but was rather a response to audacious and bellicose Serbian nationalism (Vojislav Ilic).

8 In his assessment, Bulgarian soldiers in Serbia presented themselves as a "brilliantly belligerent Bulgarian army." See: Марков, *Голямата война и българският ключ*, 214.

home! Feel free to go back home!”⁹ Although the Bulgarian army conquered the towns of Piro, Vranje, Shtip, Veles and Skopje, which had always been considered Bulgarian, the public sentiment in the country was, generally, far from the enthusiastic nationalist spirit, despite the strong anti-Entente attitude to be found in the newspapers.

During the operations in Moravia, Kosovo and Ovche Pole, in the epic battles near Krivolak and Udovo, men from the Kingdom of Bulgaria fought shoulder to shoulder with those from Macedonia, which had recently been liberated from the Ottomans; some of the men had fled the Serbian army. They fought clear in their mind they would overcome the historical injustice of 1913, in defiance of the intention of their Balkan neighbours not to allow Bulgarian national unification. They fought enthusiastically and with inspiration, as if they had forgotten all about the mortal dangers stalking them from any populated or fortified post. There is no reliable data on the details of the ideological and propaganda work of Bulgarian soldiers but every single action of the regular troops, sergeants and officers shows that the new modified nationalism became the driving force of the Bulgarian army.¹⁰ Bulgarian Turks had already been conscripted to the army, in both complementary and regular units. The Bulgarian soldiers felt rather perplexed at the end of the year, when the offensive against the Anglo-French troops, which had been fought until that time in Southern Macedonia, had to be halted. It was necessary for the new Bulgarian army's nationalism to adapt to reality: the German and Austro-Hungarian allies were adamant that after entering Greece hostilities had to cease. King Constantine guaranteed the neutrality of non-combatant Greece. This neutrality had to be respected, although pro-Entente circles gravitating towards Eleftherios Venizelos had long been breaching it, having allowed the use of the port of Thessalonica for the concentration of the Entente troops so that they could be aimed at the Bulgarian army. Bulgaria's allies, especially Germany, insisted on the emergent southern front in Macedonia, as this would diminish troubles for the German army on the western front. But army nationalism, in unison with nationalism of the Bulgarian political élite, did not even consider the likelihood of the Bulgarians assisting their allies outside the Balkans.

9 Тончев, *Световният пожар и България*, 96.

10 On this modified partisan Bulgarian nationalism, which kept a tolerant and humane attitude to the civilian population, see: Мутафов, *През Сърбия: В поход с 9-та дивизия*, 160.

This is the reason Marshal E. Ludendorff later judged the operations of the Bulgarian army too critically. It should be remembered that the cult-like worship of German military might was the cornerstone of the Bulgarian army's new nationalism, and many of the officers and sergeants still spoke with enthusiasm about everything that was related to Germany, as expressed in one of Kiril Hristov's poems: "Oh, Germany! The best in the world! Fly your victorious flag with no rest! Your armies bring a rise in power and progress wherever they march!"¹¹ Further on, following the expansion of Bulgarian military activities in 1916, when the Dobrudzha phenomenon appeared, this modified Bulgarian nationalism was to undergo further metamorphoses, but it would be more and more at odds with the level of the Bulgarian national economy, the country's demographic potential, as well as the erosion that was starting to affect the spirit of the army and civil society. But this could be the subject for other research.

The consistent inconsistency of Triple Entente diplomacy¹² was what eventually marked the beginning of the pro-liberal modification of army nationalism during the first years after the national catastrophe of 1913. Despite being aware of the ethnic mosaic of the Balkan Peninsula, the ministers and officials of the foreign ministries in St. Petersburg (Petrograd), Paris and London were not capable of overcoming the gravity of openly subjective and non-motivated sympathies and antipathies, or of putting an end to the ostracism imposed on the Bulgarian state in the summer of 1913.¹³ The inadequate perception of Balkan reality was accompanied by retaliatory moves from Bulgarian politicians.

11 Cited by: Васил Радославов, *Дневни бележки*, 70.

12 Similar trends have been set in I. Ilchev's book: *Илчев, България и Антантата*, 22–104.

13 It is worth noting the opinion of the former minister of the navy and one of the organizers of the Dardanelles operation, W. Churchill (1874–1965). After he had already submitted his resignation at the end of 1915, he said to a close friend of his that the diplomacy of Britain, Russia and France had managed to do the impossible, namely to get the Bulgarians to fight alongside the Turks against the Russians (Gounev, G., Ilchev, I. *Winston Churchill and the Balkans*, 1989, 85). Even if we assume that his summary opinion is totally wrong, it is worth pondering if it were only the imposed pro-liberal nationalism in foreign policy and the megalomaniacal ambitions of the head of state that were to blame for Bulgaria's second national catastrophe.

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THE ENTRY OF BULGARIA INTO THE FIRST WORLD WAR AS REFLECTED IN THE HUNGARIAN PRESS

Csaba Katona

At first glimpse the present study¹ might make the impression that it essentially intends to deal with the topic, i.e. the entry of Bulgaria into the First World War, from the point of view of political or military history. This, however, is not the case. It hardly touches upon military history, and discusses political history only indirectly at most. My primary focus is on investigating the context in which the incorporation of Bulgaria into the Central Powers appeared in the contemporary Hungarian press. Nevertheless, I divide my text into five larger parts. After all, if only for the sake of a better understanding, a brief review of the circumstances under which Bulgaria joined the war will surely prove worthwhile. The same holds true of the attitude of Hungarian élite circles and the mutual fabric of interests. There is no place to discuss these here in detail. Yet it needs to be emphasized that approximations as well as tensions between different states can only be described as a rather flexible set of relations of instantaneous conflicts and solidarities subject to continuous change in both speed and extent. In the sphere of political decision-making, the dynamism of the alterations to this set of relations was unanimously and almost exclusively dominated by economic and political interests. This is why

1 I hereby would like to express my gratitude to Penka Peykovska and Gábor Demeter for the assistance I received from them while writing this study.

it can hardly be denied that these were not alliances based on solid grounds but instead tools meant to achieve momentary aims.

On the other hand, I will examine a Hungarian context that had at least some idea about Bulgaria. By this I mean the ideological, cultural and political background due to which a respectable part of the Hungarian public, influenced by the press and other sources of information, proved open and willing to embracing a kind of sympathy towards Bulgarians. In fact, at least in its more cogent form, discarding more nebulous features, this was the increasingly popular idea of Turanism that had started its conquest at the beginning of the century.² Only after a review of all these aspects will I address the characteristics of the press response to the Bulgarian entry into the war. Finally, in relation to all of this, I will pay special attention to the person of Bulgarian tsar Ferdinand, as in the given context he was the central figure in press news. This was only partly due to the fact that as sovereign he was meant to embody the envisaged character of his nation. It was important that, on account of his close Hungarian links, the Hungarian press brought the figure of Tsar Ferdinand into the foreground. In the eyes of Hungarian public opinion, the rulers of the allied powers essentially incorporated the national character of their peoples. In the case of the allies, the simplifying narrative of the propaganda exploiting national typologies was continuously searching for connections. In this vein they used similarities to foster sympathy, while trying to picture actual differences as exotic and interesting. Hungarian propaganda proved active in this, especially at the outset of the war.³ Let me be perfectly clear: the press, which the present study is about to investigate, was only a segment of the all-embracing propaganda that intended to stress the significance of commitment to the allies. Alongside the various newspapers, books, orations at festivities and other occasions, several other phenomena of symbolic expansion must also be mentioned, such as the naming of streets and squares and the erection of statues. Last but not least, products of mass culture must not be neglected, either: articles for personal use and ornament,

2 On Turanism in Hungary, cf. Ablonczy, *Keletre, magyar!* In Bulgarian–Hungarian Relations see: Peykovska, "The Effect of Politics on Bulgarian–Hungarian", 122, 126–27; Пейковска, *Българо-унгарски научни взаимоотношения*, 38–40.

3 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 88.

posters in streets, toys and cards,⁴ etc., also echoed the alliance and firm friendship with the Central Powers.

1.

On October 11, 1915, with the announcement from Prime Minister Vasil Radoslavov (1854–1929) and an attack launched against Serbia,⁵ Bulgaria officially joined the First World War on the side of the Central Powers. It had two interrelated aims: the reconquest and retention of the Macedonian and Aegean territories lost in the course of the Second Balkan War, on the one hand, and the restoration of Bulgarian dominance in the Balkans, on the other. These two purposes could not be imagined separately.⁶ In the First Balkan War,⁷ Bulgaria still fought along with the other nation-states of the Balkan Peninsula against an Ottoman Empire conceived of as a conqueror. The borders drawn after the war in London on May 30, 1913 were advantageous for Bulgaria: the parts lying to the north of the Kiyıköy–Enez (Midia–Enos) line in Thrace were given to Bulgaria. Furthermore, the inner parts of Macedonia could be occupied by Bulgaria and Serbia, whereas Thessalia was held by Greece. However, all the victorious allies mentioned, namely Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, voiced and laid territorial claims in Macedonia. At the same time, Romania wanted to attach the Silistra region to its territory, although it belonged to Bulgaria. It was this territory, in reference to which Robert de Bourboulon (1861–1932), French secretary to Tsar Ferdinand, made an entry into his diary on January 13, 1913 that, in return for its neutrality, Romania stated a claim to Silistra, as well as part of the territory lying over the Varna line, which was hardly an acceptable preliminary condition; nevertheless, a

4 See for instance the cover of Gábor Demeter's book: Demeter, *Diplomatic Struggle for Supremacy*.

5 Airapetov, Oleg R. "October 1915," 19.

6 Cf. e.g. Friedrich, *Bulgarien und die Mächte*; Hall, *Bulgaria's Road to the First World War*.

7 Regarding this, see e.g. Vukov, "The great expectations," 129–48; Demeter, "Bulgarian Attempts," 69–112. Most recently the question of Balkan nationalisms has been discussed in: Stamatopoulos, *The Eastern Question*.

coalition with Romania would be perfect precisely because Romania could thereby safeguard the security of Bulgaria from the direction of the Danube.⁸ The accumulating tensions soon erupted, in the form of a new war. The Second Balkan War ended with the defeat of Bulgaria in summer 1913. Petar Abrashev (1849–1924), the Bulgarian minister of justice, remarked bitterly in his diary in July 1913 that even Romania will acquire territories at the expense of Bulgaria, whereas in Bulgaria there was little awareness that the country's weapons would prove insufficient against the Serbs and the Greeks.⁹ Ivan E. Geshov (1849–1924), prime minister of Bulgaria from 1911 to the summer of 1913, maintained in one of his letters, on March 17, 1914, that Romanian–Bulgarian ties were important to him,¹⁰ but, according to the peace treaty signed on August 10, 1913 in Bucharest, Bulgaria, which had formerly been victorious, lost a respectable part of the territories it had gained in the course of the First Balkan War. Dobrudzha was annexed to Romania, Macedonia divided between Serbia and Greece, while Eastern Thrace again came under Turkish rule.

The Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand I (1861–1948) and his prime minister had the clear goal of obtaining a prompt revision of the Bucharest Treaty. Nonetheless, Bulgaria did not join the war in 1914. As both the Central Powers and the Entente endeavoured to win them over as their allied partner, they waited to see which of these two potential alliances would give them more hope of being able to realize their aims.¹¹ The Englishman George Buchanan (1854–1948), who had served as ambassador to Russia from 1910, characterized him by saying that it was the cornerstone of his policy not to commit himself unanimously in any of the directions, that he always kept his options open, and that he only cared for his own interests.¹² Petar Abrashev mentions in his diary of 2 July 1913 that a German professor characterized the

8 Бурбулон, *Български дневници*, 495.

9 Абрашев, *Дневник. Минало и личност*, 397.

10 Гешов, *Лична кореспонденция*, 275.

11 Airapetov, "October 1915," 17.

12 Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia*, 71.

tsar much more rudely, describing him as clever, a real genius, but one whom people did not like, as he often told lies.¹³

There is no doubt that Tsar Ferdinand made deft and consistent use of the principle of *politique d'oscillation* ("shuttlecock policy") for a long period of time.¹⁴ In 1915 the British and French allied forces dispatched to occupy the Dardanelles and the Gallipoli Peninsula would have welcomed Bulgarian help against Turkey, but, as regards territorial claims, they would only have yielded in the case of Serbian Macedonia at most. (In the case of Greek Macedonia this was not even possible.) They refused Bulgarian claims that would have violated Greek or Romanian interests. Quite the contrary was true of the Central Powers: Prime Minister Radoslavov signed the so-called treaty of partnership, the essence of which was that Bulgaria committed itself to support Germany, Austro-Hungary and Turkey for five years, in return for which the three great empires promised to back them in extending Bulgarian territory. Accordingly, some parts of the territory of Serbia lying to the east of the South Morava river, as well as a part of Macedonia, would be annexed to Bulgaria. The promise of serious territorial gain did indeed decide the matter.

Thus, in October 1915, six divisions of the Bulgarian army, alongside the offensive launched by Austro-Hungary, invaded the Macedonia that had been promised to them. They encountered the Entente forces there, pushing them back to Greece. In the words of Radoslavov, the French and British had arrived in support of Serbian tyranny over the tortured Bulgarian people, clashed with Bulgarian troops, and were defeated and pushed to Saloniki. These victories were enthusiastically hailed by the entire Bulgarian population.¹⁵

Consequently, in both Paris and London, war was declared on Bulgaria; therefore, the country joined the combatant parties. We should be aware that in the long run this Bulgarian participation would turn out to be as fruitless as the armistice of Thessaloniki signed on September 29, 1918 proved this. Alongside the fall of the tsar, the defeat had a number of other consequences, such as the renewed loss of South Dobrudzha and the loss of access to the Aegean, as well as the loss of some parts of neighbouring Serbia. To give a

13 Абрашев, *Дневник*, 384.

14 Demeter, *Kisállami törekvések*, 70–71; Demeter, "Bulgarian Attempts," 111.

15 Радославов, *България и световната криза*, 135.

foretaste of the role the press played, let me mention that these events were evaluated in the British press as the first sign of the disruption of the Central Powers.¹⁶ Not without reason: even the military command of the Dual Monarchy shared the same opinion. In their view, the collapse of the Italian front only intensified the defeat and worsened the circumstances.

The question inevitably emerges of what the reasons for the entry of Bulgaria into the war were from the point of view of Austria–Hungary and, within it, the Hungarian Kingdom.¹⁷ It is fairly well known that the military command of Austria–Hungary urged a war against Serbia, having looked upon it as a powder-keg as early as in autumn 1913. The argument ran that a determined move would restore the respect of Austria–Hungary as a great empire. Thereby the confidence of Romania would also be confirmed. They were allies of the Central Powers in principle, yet were gradually distancing themselves, and had very cold relations with Hungary because of the Transylvanian question. An integral part of this plan was that Bulgaria would actively support the military actions of the Dual Monarchy, in return for a chance to enlarge its territory.¹⁸ Interestingly, although politicians do not always agree with soldiers, on this question even the former had the same standpoint: most of them did not support the further expansion of the territory of the Dual Monarchy on account of the Slavic question. They thought it more expedient to reward the coalition partners in this way.¹⁹ Shortly before the declaration of war leading to the outbreak of war, at the council of ministers held on July 7, 1914, Count István Tisza (1861–1918), Prime Minister of Hungary, voiced his conviction that in order to avert war Serbia should be given an ultimatum that it was really able to fulfil. War should be only the very last resort. At the same time, he declared that although he would do everything in his power to localize the military conflict, in the event of war he would vote against the annexation of Serbia but would propose that it be weakened.

16 Baškaya, “İngiliz Basımına,” 64.

17 The question is treated in detail here: Demeter, “Expanzió vagy önvédelem,” 91–107. In English: Demeter, “Expansion or Self-Defence,” 113–38. From the older Hungarian literature: Szabó, *A magyar álláspontok helye*.

18 Bertényi, “Az első világháború okai,” 13.

19 Cf. Kronenbitter, “The perception of the ‘wars before the war.’”

Greece, Albania and Bulgaria should be rewarded at the expense of Serbian territory.²⁰

Bulgaria's territorial claims were acceptable to the Dual Monarchy, even though Austria and Hungary differed on some details.²¹ On October 22, 1918, István Tisza recalled the outbreak of the war in the House of Representatives with these words: "What was the effect of the peace treaty of Bucharest for the world closest to us? In the Balkans we were facing a Serbia which had grown enormously and a Greece which had grown, too. Their sentiments could be called anything but friendly to Austria–Hungary. The state confronting them, Bulgaria, was totally exhausted and broken, in an almost impotent situation. Romania had become estranged from the Triple Alliance. We could not help feeling that we had lost Romania in part and had to reckon with the possibility that we would lose it for good."²² This was true even if some doubt arose as to Bulgaria's significance. One example for this was furnished by Count István Burián (1851–1922), former consul in Sofia, at that time the personal minister to the King, in August 1913: "We cannot commit our forces for the sake of the Bulgarians. They will do the job as enemies of Serbia that is necessary for us to do in any case, as it is vital for them. But it is impossible to co-operate with those who have spoilt everything in a mad and suicidal way."²³ Notwithstanding this, he, like Tisza or the similarly great Balkan expert Lajos Thallóczy (1851–1916), deemed Bulgaria especially important as a factor in counterbalancing Romania.²⁴

In 1913, however, the diplomatic circles of Austria–Hungary were aware that Bucharest reckoned with the approach of the monarchy and Bulgaria to each other.²⁵ There were articles in the Hungarian press openly covering the tensions in Bulgarian–Romanian relations, too. For example, Vilmos Pröhle (we will come back to him later) wrote: "Meanwhile it is well known that the king of Romania [...] made grave claims and demanded from Bulgaria that it

20 Barta, "Tisza István és a preventív háború koncepciója," 214.

21 Demeter, "Expansion or Self-Defence," 120.

22 Quoted in: Maruzsa, "Tisza István és az első világháborúhoz vezető válság," 62.

23 *Báró Burián István naplói*, 71.

24 Demeter, "Expansion or Self-Defence," 126. See also: Demeter, "Külpolitikai alternatívák," 355–75.

25 From the Romanian literature see e.g.: Dabija, *Amintirile*; Garoescu, *Războaiele balcanice*.

hand over Silistra along with important territories along the river Danube. This gave rise to the Romanian–Bulgarian tensions that have not been alleviated to this day.”²⁶ Duke Karl Emil zu Fürstenberg²⁷ (1867–1945), Austria–Hungary’s ambassador to Bucharest from 1911 to 1913, kept the head of the diplomacy of Austria–Hungary, Count Leopold von Berchtold (1863–1942), informed on how the position of the Dual Monarchy and of Bulgaria was seen and evaluated in Bucharest. Fürstenberg even drew attention to the possibility of a marriage between the members of the Russian and the Romanian ruling dynasties. He maintained that the Romanian Duke Charles (1893–1953), the would-be Charles II, son of the Romanian heir to the throne, Ferdinand (1865–1927), the would-be Ferdinand I, could marry one of the daughters of the Russian tsar. Fürstenberg also remarked that not everybody supported this plan and, furthermore, with a partial satisfaction of Romanian territorial claims, Austria–Hungary could counterbalance this idea.²⁸ On another occasion he made it perfectly clear: Romania would not diminish its claims on Bulgarian lands. He argued that for the sake of avoiding Romania accusing its ally, i.e. Austria–Hungary, of betrayal and treason, one had to back the idea of an area like Silistra being annexed to Romania.²⁹ What is more, there were even times he took the stand that the monarchy should support Romania’s claims for compensation Bulgaria in order to maintain “true, friendly and confident” relations.³⁰

Meanwhile Bulgaria, at least at an explorative level, tried to soothe confrontation with Romania in Vienna. Ivan Salabashev, who served as Bulgarian envoy to Vienna, mentioned the idea that Romanian territorial claims could be satisfied not at the expense of Bulgaria, but rather at that of the common enemy, Serbia, thereby leaving South Dobrudzha untouched.³¹

26 Pröhle, “A Balkán szláv államai és a balkáni háború,” 3.

27 On Fürstenberg see: Hannig, “The Land of Contrasts and Contradiction,” 73–95.

28 Fürstenberg’s letter to Berchtold, February 21, 1913 and March 3, 1913. Moravský Zemský Archiv Brno (hereafter MZAB) G 138. Rodinný archive Berchtold u Buchlov. PPB, Inv. 464, K. 134.

29 Fürstenberg’s letter to Berchtold, March 3, 1913. MZAB G 138. Inv. 464. K. 134.

30 Fürstenberg’s letter to Berchtold, February 21, 1913. MZAB G 138. Inv. 464. K. 134.

31 Централен държавен архив F. 176 K. 2. a.u. 1369. f. 219. Quoted in Demeter, “Expanzió vagy önvédelem,” 395.

Let me interject here that Fürstenberg paid close attention to public opinion, and was well aware of the power of the modern press to influence it. While drawing attention to the propaganda of Russia and France, he would often urge Berchtold to exercise an impact on the public in Vienna with respect to Romania, while he himself endeavoured to influence public opinion in Bucharest.³²

On May 28, 1913, Fürstenberg reported in summary that the antipathy and mistrust of Romanian king Charles I (1839–1914) towards Bulgaria was strong. He also mentioned the king's claim that Austria–Hungary “esteemed Bulgaria higher than Romania.”³³ The approach to Romania of Russia,³⁴ which had formerly supported Bulgaria, must clearly have played a role here, including the fact that Russian diplomacy urged Romania to tear off a part of Bulgaria and of Hungary alike in the event of a Serbian–Bulgarian war.³⁵ It was not without good reason that Fürstenberg stated that “in the eyes of His Majesty the King, Bulgaria has always been a black sheep.”³⁶ Earlier, in a letter written to Berchtold, he referred to the fact that the Romanian press shared the view that Austria–Hungary had not supported Romanian territorial claims and that this was the main reason for the mistrust and inconstancy of King Charles I. In fact, Fürstenberg reported an ongoing and deep resentment on the part of both the Romanian government and public opinion.³⁷

One must not neglect the fact that King Charles I was of German origin (actually a Hohenzollern) and Greek ruler Constantine I (1868–1923) also had German roots. They insisted on traditional dynastic policy. Charles' son, Ferdinand, as well as Ion I. C. Brătianu (1864–1927) and Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936), the Greek prime minister, favoured nationalist-expansionist ideas. The question was which of the two political orientations would win and prevail. In the lifetime of Charles I Romania did not join the combatant parties. During his reign German influence was strong and almost exclusive.

32 Fürstenberg's letter to Berchtold. January 30, 1913. MZAB G 138. Inv. 464. K. 134.

33 Koszta, “A háborúzó Balkán és Románia,” 38. The original of the report: Ö-U.A. vol. 6, no. 7189. 540–43.

34 On the role of Russia in the entry of Bulgaria into the war: Airapetov, “October 1915,” 17–23.

35 Clark, *Alvajárók*, 289.

36 Koszta, “A háborúzó Balkán és Románia,” 39.

37 Fürstenberg's letter to Berchtold. February 21, 1913. MZAB G 138. Inv. 464. K. 134.

Fürstenberg noted that King Charles had made it clear that he regarded Bulgaria as a potential enemy, while he saw Serbia as a strong coalition partner.³⁸ This was in fundamental contrast to the interests of the Monarchy: "Bulgaria is a historic enemy of Romania; it is an opponent whose growth hides dangers. This is why it is Bulgaria that has unanimously to declare its goodwill before Romania can commit itself in any way. Serbia, however, which has never had animosities with Romania, must be strengthened to such an extent that it can constitute a counterbalance to Bulgaria in the Balkans."³⁹ In autumn 1916 the fear of Bulgarian expansion no doubt played a role in Romanian entry into the war, as was clearly alluded to by Romanian prime minister Brătianu: "We are facing the most important decision here. If the peace is concluded without us, we will be annihilated between Greater Hungary and Greater Bulgaria."⁴⁰

At the same time, the Romanian king very much resented the monarchy's reluctance with regard to the Treaty of Bucharest.⁴¹

Taking all this into account, Fürstenberg wrote, without any doubts, that it was evident to him that in its own interests Romania would interfere in a potential Serbian–Bulgarian conflict on the side of Serbia,⁴² thereby conspicuously avenging the lack of support from the monarchy of which it was in theory an ally. This view was not altered by the fact that, in his private letters written to Berchtold, this professional diplomat described the Romanian ruler as old, frail and precarious.⁴³ According to Radoslavov, his standpoint coincided with that of the Bulgarian diplomacy, too. He maintained that preparations for war had been evident in Romania since early 1916, something the Bulgarian government warned Berlin and Vienna of.⁴⁴

Less than a year after the Bulgarian entry into the war, Tisza, as prime minister, clearly echoed the above statements. He underlined the role of leading Bulgarian

38 A summary on this question is given by: Clark, *Alvajárók*, 284–92.

39 Koszta, "A háborúzó Balkán és Románia," 40.

40 Quoted in: Koszta, "Romania's Day. Románia belép a háborúba," 470.

41 Clark, *Alvajárók*, 289.

42 Marghiloman, *Note politique*, 155. Referred to in: Koszta, "A háborúzó Balkán és Románia," 41.

43 Fürstenberg's letter to Berchtold. March 3, 1913. MZAB G 138. Inv. 464, K. 134

44 Радославов, *България и световната криза*, 142.

politicians, pointing out that, next to Serbia, the significance of the Bulgarian entry into the war from a Hungarian point of view was increased by Romania:

The government did what was essential for the diminution of the Romanian danger: it forged an alliance with Bulgaria. [...] This is first of all the achievement of King Ferdinand and Prime Minister Radoslavov. [...] The confidential, warm, truly friendly tone of our allies, as I have seen in the telegram of Prime Minister Radoslavov published today, shows that the accusation of the honourable member [of Parliament] that we have been unable to find friends for the Monarchy is false. We have found friends—true, staunch and strong friends.⁴⁵

Quite a bit later, on October 22, 1918, in the lower chamber of the Hungarian parliament, Tisza reiterated the importance of Bulgaria as opposed to hostile Romania.

“In my estimation the key to the situation was in Bulgaria. With Bulgaria, which by the peace treaty of Bucharest had been deprived of all the fruits of its victories, deprived of the opportunity to unite with the members of its tribe living in Macedonia, we had to endeavour to make an agreement which at the given time could peacefully ensure that Bulgaria could realize the unification it justly deserved with the members of its tribe in Macedonia, on the one hand, and, on the other, it could provide an opportunity for peaceful terms between Bulgaria and Romania. Also, by means of our coalition with Bulgaria, we had to exercise an impact on Romania’s decision so that we could regain Romania for the alliance. We wanted to fortify Romania’s position in the coalition as it would depend on Romania’s fidelity to the coalition whether relations between Bulgaria and the Dual Monarchy be able to guarantee Romania that it would not be attacked by Bulgaria, else it would constitute a danger for Romania.”⁴⁶

45 “Az 1910. évi július hó 21-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházainak naplója,” 91–92.

46 Maruzsa, “Tisza István és az első világháborúhoz vezető válság,” 63.

As we can see, recurring sentiments can be detected in Tisza's public arguments. These seem to refer to a sort of *ex natura* good relations between Hungarians and Bulgarians. The soberly rude argumentation of Bulgarian prime minister Radoslavov is almost dispiriting in comparison:

In our times what we see is that nations do not fight for ideas but exclusively for their financial interests. In consequence, the more we are committed to a country in terms of finances, the more that country will be interested in our survival and growth. [...] Our trade, our interests and our entire economy are inseparably linked to Turkey, Germany and Austro-Hungary.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, it is still worth paying an attention to the expression “members of its tribe”, as we can come across it in Tisza's other speeches. This was by no means unusual for contemporaries. This in fact leads us to another important question, i.e. that of Turanism gaining more and more significance in Hungary in the period right before the Great War. When Bulgaria entered the war, for which it received a favourable reception in the press, Hungarian newspapers were not treading entirely new ground. They did not have to start widely distributing a positive image of Bulgaria from scratch.

2.

In 1910, a couple of years before the outbreak of the First World War, the Turanian Society (Hungarian Asia Society, from 1916 Hungarian Eastern Cultural Centre) was established. This society, which comprised geographers, orientalist, linguists and ethnographers, as well as representatives of influential social circles (aristocrats, bankers, politicians), alongside other intellectuals equally supportive of the idea of Turanism, openly threw its weight behind this Eastern notion. The revived “Ugrian–Turkish War” in the late 19th century contributed to the strengthening of the idea of Turanism, which was further shaped in political terms, depending on the extent to which people endeavoured

47 Tarján, “1915. október 11. Bulgária belép az első világháborúba.”

to see Hungarian political-economic dominance stretching beyond the framework of the Carpathian Basin: to the Balkans, to the Middle East, or even further than that. The growing popularity of Pan-German and Pan-Slavonic ideas gave a further strong impetus to the rise of the Turanian project. Fear of these two notions cherished the hope that a kind of Eastern alliance might evolve that could help maintain and perhaps strengthen the positions of Hungary. The boundaries defining Turanism were “naturally” broad, as is pointed out by Balázs Ablonczy in his book on the topic. Herewith I would like to stress one of the elements of these: the gaining of cultural and economic influence, a sort of Hungarian imperialism in the Balkans, in a broader sense in the Middle East, Asia Minor, southern Russia, Ukraine, and, even further, in the whole of Asia.⁴⁸

The main purpose of the Society was research into Asian and other peoples deemed to be relatives of the Hungarians from an economic, political, ethnographic and cultural point of view. At the same time, it cannot be doubted that the popularity of the idea stressing the solidarity of the so-called Turanian peoples was from the early 20th century onwards largely fostered by Austria–Hungary’s Balkan alliance policy that nurtured positive sentiments towards Turkey and Bulgaria alike.⁴⁹ In the period directly preceding the war, fairly mixed reports arrived from Bulgaria. On the one hand, these described the country as a peculiarity of the Balkans. In this vein were written for example the lines of Béla Székely in the Bulletin of the County of Békés in 1908. In this publication Bulgaria was called “the very centre of a restless environment” as well as “the most flamboyant country on the political horizon.” Actually, he characterized the entire Balkans in this way, i.e. Bulgaria came to the foreground as a part of this, not as a uniquely interesting country: “The Balkans, which confines the mystical legends of the charming East, the sympathetic features of its modern peoples, even in their wildness, as well as rather peculiar political circumstances, all within the walls of century-old traditions, and that starts to feel Western culture in both its blessings and its disadvantages.”⁵⁰ This mysticism, interwoven with romantic pathos, was tinged first by the ideology

48 Ablonczy, *Keletre, magyar*, 15.

49 Farkas, “A turánizmus,” 862. Also see: Dupcsik, *A Balkán képe Magyarországon*, 90–120.

50 Székely, “Levél a Balkánról,” 3.

of Turanism, then, later, to an extent hand in hand with the former, by the *Realpolitik* approach. This made it evident that Bulgaria could be the Dual Monarchy's partner in the Balkans.

This phenomenon was excellently exemplified by a report, also from the year 1908, which appeared among the columns of *Zalavármegye*, the *apropos* of which was evidently given by the fact that this was the time when Ferdinand went from Bulgarian prince to tsar. The anonymous author of the text claims that

Bulgaria has declared itself independent for good⁵¹ and has made Prince Ferdinand a King. It bravely confronts the Turks, who continue to lay claim to it on the basis of the right of the conqueror; it disregards Serbian endeavours that would have liked to annexe Bulgaria to a Greater Serbia. It wants to be free, independent and autonomous, and it actually will be, as the will of the people is the greatest power.⁵²

After this the author enumerates the arguments for sympathy towards Bulgaria in Hungary. He argues that

the historic mission of our nation is to constitute a wedge between the nations combating one another, the Germanics and the Slavs, and thereby preventing the clash between peoples. As long as we are encircled by a strong and huge Slavonic mass, we will fall to pieces, whereas if there are independent, freedom-loving, and autonomous little states, they will become our companions-in-arms for the sake of their own interests. Bulgaria cannot threaten Hungarian rule. A large southern Slavonic state, however, could be a peril for our national existence [...] actually, the decision of Bulgaria was observed with joy all over Hungary and we shouted with Bulgarians gathered in ancient Tirnovo: long live free and independent Bulgaria.⁵³

This is not yet Turanism, but it is the beginnings of it; not in a settled way, and yet the basic notions of Turanism are clearly present. In the shadow of a Pan-

51 Demeter, "Conspiracy or Coincidence," 67–87.

52 "Bulgária." *Zalavármegye* 27, no. 41 (1908): 4.

53 Ibid.

Slavonic and Pan-German threat, Hungary had to look for allies, and Bulgaria was in all aspects suitable to be one. As for Turkey, in this context it still appeared as an enemy of Bulgaria. This furnishes evidence, too, that the supremacy of the idea of Turanism was not exclusive.

The writings of the orientalist Vilmos Pröhle (1871–1946)⁵⁴ highlighted the spread of Turanism and, within this, his pronounced interest in and sympathy for Bulgaria. His work appeared in *Nyírvidek* in 1913. The renowned turcologist was at that time a teacher at the Lutheran grammar school in Nyíregyháza. His academic approach is borne out by the fact that in 1919 he became professor of Turkish language and literature at Debrecen University, while in 1923 he was appointed professor of Eastern Asian languages and literatures at Budapest University, heading the East Asian Institute that had basically been established for him.

According to this rather overblown text, Bulgaria, having acknowledged the role of Russian support in this, “organized its army and popular education directly to back the Bulgarian policy of conquest. Bulgarian teachers [...] rekindled patriotism and hatred of the Turks in the hearts of tender Bulgarian children.”⁵⁵ All this was accompanied by the fact that the Bulgarian nation was “earnest by nature, always ready to work and make efforts” and “could hardly wait to show the world what it was capable of.”⁵⁶

The military successes (we are in 1913) were mainly linked to the correspondent by the name of general Mikhail Savorov (1857–1928), but, of the members of military command, he also paid tribute to Radko Dimitriev (1859–1918), “the young general Dimitriev is an ideal soldier whom, after his splendid victory at Kirkilise,⁵⁷ his compatriots like to call the Bulgarian Napoleon.” Thus, the article suggested, “the Bulgarians, led by highly skilled energetic people who were Bulgarian to the core, attacked the enemy with almost fabulously dauntless valour and carried their flag through a veritable

54 Ormos, “Adalékok Pröhle Vilmos alakjához,” 33–65.

55 Pröhle, “A Balkán szláv államai és a balkáni háború,” 2.

56 Ibid.

57 The battle was fought on October 24, 1912 and the Bulgarians achieved a splendid victory over the Turks.

bloodshed from victory to victory.”⁵⁸ It is another matter that Dimitriev later deserted to the Russians and served in the Russian army; what is more, he was one of the leaders of the Brusilov offensive.

The author even ventured the extravagant and rather obscure idea that the Bulgarian military genius would have been sufficient to take Constantinople, but the Bulgarians dropped the idea as the Turks controlled the line of Chataldja, the Dardanelles, Edirne, Scutari and Janina.⁵⁹

The affection of the author for the Bulgarians is evident from the entire article, yet what really matters here is that the journal published Pröhle’s text as an edited version of a lecture: the author read it on January 13, 1913 at the Free Lyceum of the Bessenyei Circle of Szabolcs county.

Citing the above articles may have directed readers to coverage in the press, the primary topic of this study, yet I have done this merely to illustrate that the vehement press campaign in favour of Bulgaria did not begin with its entry into the war, when sympathy towards the country and its people had already become fully-fledged.

Let me turn back to Turanism for a moment: among the most important members of the Turanian Society was the geographer Count Pál Teleki (1879–1941). He was to become Hungarian prime minister twice. That the Society was a broad church is well demonstrated by the fact that Count Mihály Károlyi (1879–1955) was just as much a member of it as his ardent opponent Count István Tisza. Their journal entitled *Turán* appeared from 1913 onwards. Also, this Society, which clearly enjoyed the wide and open support of the social élite, organized modest conferences, language classes, and so on. The rise and success of its ideology, its presentation to the public, and its advance in political terms, was eased by the status of its members.⁶⁰

As we have seen, the “Turanian ideology” included the Bulgarian and Turkish peoples; it therefore facilitated not merely research into these peoples, but also, due to their ‘closeness’, the elaboration of intensive links to them.⁶¹ Turkey and Bulgaria, the two states conceived of in Hungary as bulwarks of

58 Pröhle, “A Balkán szláv államai és a balkáni háború,” 2.

59 Ibid., 3.

60 On its members, see: Ablonczy, *Keletre, magyar*, 16–17; 53–56.

61 Nagy, *A Konstantinápolyi Magyar Tudományos Intézet*, 11.

Turanism, traditionally had bad relations, something that was further intensified by the outbreak of the First Balkan War, a war that ended with the grave defeat of Turkey and the improvement of the positions of Bulgaria. The Second Balkan War then brought the clash of the two countries again, and this time Bulgaria was defeated.

All this greatly eroded the Turanian notion based equally on Bulgarians and Turks, although this difficulty did not dissuade the champions of the idea. In fact, their optimism did not prove unfounded: in autumn 1915—and may reiterate that the ups and downs of military and political alliances were dictated by practical concerns—both Bulgaria and Turkey positioned themselves on the same side in the Great War. The alliance thereby established naturally had a positive effect on both Turanism and the activity of the Turanian Society. This was evidently sensed by the Society itself, although later, in 1918, it tried to feature this in a subtler way: “When our journal started in its present-day form, the Hungarian–Turkish–Bulgarian brotherhood-in-arms gave the impression of a special current relevance to our endeavour. We, however, were not led by the consideration of current relevance. We did not do politics at that time, either, but only undertook scholarship.”⁶² Yet it was surely no coincidence that exactly in those years young people came to Hungary from Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania, Bosnia etc. to study, including e.g. some 200 Turkish students.⁶³

We should also mention the Eastern Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (between 1914 and 1916 called the Balkan Committee).⁶⁴ Pál Teleki, who had a key role here, too, developed the proposal for the Balkan and Asia Minor Geographic Institute, which was to carry out comprehensive research while trying to establish contacts and co-operation with similar institutes in the allied countries, especially with those of Bulgaria and Turkey. In January 1916, however, the realization of the project at the Academy was scuppered, citing the war situation.⁶⁵

62 *Turán*, 1918. nos. 11–12. 515.

63 Farkas, “A turánizmus,” 864. On the presence of Bulgarian students in Hungary, see: Пейковска, “Българи-студенти в унгарски университети.”

64 Nagy, *A Konstantinápolyi Magyar Tudományos Intézet*, 11.

65 *Ibid.*, 12. Also see: Hajdú, *Az intézményes Balkán-kutatás*.

Notwithstanding this setback, politics had not given up the idea of Turanism. Quite the contrary. In January 1916, for example, Gyula Andrassy Jr. delivered a speech in the *Urania* theatre in Budapest, at an event organized by the Red Cross, where he gave voice to his sympathy towards Bulgarians because “they are our relatives, because they have the same Turanian blood in their veins as we do. [...] Thereby we are at least not totally alone and abandoned, supported as we are by our relatives in blood, and we do not perceive of our situation as so separate and isolated amongst peoples and races as we used to.”⁶⁶

Revitalizing the Turanian Society demanded less effort than establishing a new institute. Moreover, as prime minister, Tisza was aware that the ideology of the society coincided with the direction of Hungarian foreign policy. Thus the consolidation of the Turanian Society, established anew by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on May 3, 1916 under the title of Hungarian Eastern Cultural Centre, can be viewed as a gesture to both Bulgarian and Turkish allies.⁶⁷ Count Béla Széchenyi (1837–1918) became the president and the Ministry of Religion and Public Education gave significant financial support to safeguard the undisturbed work of the Centre; what is more, with the help of the Office of the Prime Minister, they were even accommodated within the parliament building. The renaming of Budapest’s Museum Boulevard as Sultan Mehmed Boulevard was a conspicuous success of theirs. This was also the time that the Hungarian Eastern Economic Centre⁶⁸ was formed. It was led by economist Kálmán Balkányi (1883–1965). This was co-ordinated with the Turanian Society by the so-called Eastern Association in which the government was represented by either prime minister István Tisza or minister of foreign affairs István Burián.⁶⁹ In line with this, from 1916 onwards, the Balkan Committee continued its work under the title of Eastern Committee, a move that also brought countries and peoples to the east of the Balkan

66 Székely, “A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza,” 96.

67 Farkas, “A turánizmus,” 864; Ablonczy, *Keletre, magyar*, 64.

68 On Bulgarian and Turkish economic links, cf.: Nagel, “A magyar kereskedő a világháborúban.”

69 Ablonczy, *Keletre, magyar*, 64.

region into its focus.⁷⁰ In summary, in the years directly preceding the war, the idea of Turanism had aptly prepared the way for an interest in and a positive attitude towards Bulgarians. Thus the vehement press campaign started at the outbreak of the war, the purpose of which was to increase sympathy towards Bulgarians, fell on fertile soil.

3.

In the following we will concentrate on how the entry of Bulgaria into the war and its military activities were covered in the Hungarian press. We are limited to the frameworks at our disposal, so this examination will not be comprehensive. As has been mentioned, Bulgaria was generally regarded by Hungarians with strong sympathy from a number of aspects (the idea of Turanism, a potential ally in politics, as well as the Hungarian links of its ruler). In fact, Hungarian general opinion looked forward with great expectation to Bulgaria's potential entry into the First World War from the outbreak of the war onwards. By autumn 1915, when it could be anticipated that the country would join the war on the side of the Central Powers, these expectations had become even more intensive. Afterwards, when, following the explorations delineated above, Bulgaria joined the combatant parties as an ally of Austro-Hungary, the newspapers endeavoured to apply even more positive attributes to its partner in the coalition to constrain Serbia and Romania.

Contemporaries were well aware of the efficacy of the press. The envoy to Bucharest, Fürstenberg, for instance, who has been quoted on several occasions, strongly recommended the intensification of the pro-Habsburg and anti-Entente press campaigns to counterbalance the growing influence of Germany in Romania and in order to strengthen the positions of Austria-Hungary in Bucharest.⁷¹

In late September, the most popular weekly of the time, *Vasárnapi Ujság*, succinctly reported the following: "From September 21, Bulgaria orders general mobilization."⁷² On September 26, 1915, the work *The fiasco of the Entente in*

70 Nagy, *A Konstantinápolyi Magyar Tudományos Intézet*, 12.

71 Fürstenberg's letter to Berchtold. February 21, 1913. MZAB G 138. Inv. 464. K. 134.

72 "A háború napjai." *Vasárnapi Ujság* 62, no. 39 (1915): 629.

Bulgaria appeared. It maintained that the representatives of the Entente had failed to establish contact with Prime Minister Radoslavov upon learning the news of Bulgarian mobilization; he happened to be in the summer palace in Euxinograd and arrived in Sofia only later. British envoy O'Brien called the situation critical, but the mobilization was, naturally enough, not stopped, and "the troops that joined the army were spectacularly clad in great uniforms and excellent boots. It is believed that the Bulgarian army will be ready to fight in a couple of days."⁷³ The next two editions of *Vasárnapi Ujság* keep briefly reporting on the Bulgarian participation in the war. "Russia severed diplomatic relations with Bulgaria"⁷⁴ and "The Bulgarians attacked the Serbs at Knjashewatz."⁷⁵ At the same time, *Budapesti Hírlap* republished an article that had appeared much earlier in order to prove that it had been highly sympathetic towards Bulgaria as early as the time of the Balkan Wars.⁷⁶

The "religious popular paper" *Harangszó* reported on Bulgaria joining the war as early as October 3, 1915, understandably sympathizing with this step. It highlighted the fact that in the Second Balkan War Bulgaria had been humiliated, and deprived of its former supporter, Russia, and Pan-Slavism along with it, and had allied itself with its former enemy, Turkey. The officers' corps of the Bulgarian troops was well-trained, their weapons excellent, and the army characterized by glowing patriotism and enthusiastic ambitions. The country was now taking up arms so as to regain what it was entitled to. The anonymous author gave expression to his hope that this move would perhaps lead to the end of the war: "The peace treaty of Bucharest in 1912 gave the rightful territory of Bulgaria to Serbia and Greece. Now the country is taking up arms to regain its rightful possessions. This bellicose decision means a new and perhaps final turn in the World War."⁷⁷ As we can see, arguments meant to justify Bulgaria's entry into the war are also listed here.

It is worth mentioning that what was seen by the Central Powers, and thus the Monarchy, as absolutely positive, was regarded by Russia in a totally

73 <http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/1915-szeptember/politika/az-entente-bulgariai-kudarca>.

74 "A háború napjai." *Vasárnapi Ujság* 62, no. 41 (1915): 661.

75 Ibid., 677.

76 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 96.

77 "A világháború eseményei." *Harangszó* 6, no. 12 (1915): 94.

different way. The Russian tsar, Nicholas II (1868–1918), was shocked by Bulgaria's step,⁷⁸ in spite of the fact that, as has been mentioned, Russia had made steps towards Romania and against Bulgaria. He had hoped that Slavonic solidarity would determine Bulgarian policy. As he put it, he would have called anybody mad who told him that one day he would sign a declaration of war against Bulgaria.⁷⁹ Maurice Paléologue (1859–1944), the French diplomat of Romanian descent who represented his country in Bulgaria between 1907 and 1912 as well as in Russia between the years 1917 and 1917, did not forget to mention that Bulgaria's move compelled the Russian press to break with its previous goodwill towards the country: "Saturday, September 25, 1915. The behaviour of Bulgaria sparks vehement indignation among the Russian community. Even papers that hitherto have shown the greatest forbearance towards Bulgarians join the general indignation, although they still endeavour to contrast Tsar Ferdinand's personal policy with the sentiments of his people."⁸⁰

Russian propaganda⁸¹ tried to discuss the question of Bulgaria in an alternative way inasmuch as it made efforts to separate the person of the ruler, Tsar Ferdinand, from the Bulgarian nation. In this vein it prepared proclamations for the soldiers of the Bulgarian army in which they argued: "You, Bulgarian soldier, are now the unfortunate victim of the doings of the British, the Swabians and the Hungarians. Now the Hungarian lieutenant Ferdinand Coburg wants to lead you against the troops of the tsar. When the great protector of Bulgaria will decide to liberate his beloved nation from under Hungarian–Swabian tyranny, you, Bulgarian soldier, will not approach your liberator as an enemy but with tears of joy and loud cries of hooray."⁸² Of course, Bulgarian propaganda did not fail to give an answer: after the bombing of Varna on October 27, 1915 an anti-Russian campaign was started, with the

78 Airapetov, "October 1915", 19–20.

79 Бобчев, *Страници из моята дипломатическа мисия*, 64.

80 Paléologue, *A cár országa a Nagy Háborúban*, 82.

81 On the way Bulgaria featured in Russian public opinion during the Balkan Wars, see: Гусев, *Болгария и Сърбия*.

82 Halász, *Bismarck és Andrássy*, 234.

claim that there were only civilian casualties, 13 injured and 6 dead, with only 3 men among them.⁸³

To return to the Hungarian press: positive responses were further reinforced by the fact that the entrance of Bulgaria (and Turkey) into the war strengthened the idea of a swift end to the war. Somewhat surprisingly, *Pápai Lapok* published a leading article under the title “Heralds of Peace” on November 14, 1915:

The World War is still going on and devastating, the troops of the new Alliance of the Four, Germany, the Monarchy, Bulgaria and Turkey, are pushing forward victoriously and unstopably, and within a week two prime ministers made statements in which they did not disregard the possibility of peace in an off-handed way, but in which we could even hear some positive words on the most important problem of the near future. The word peace has even been voiced officially, and this is a sign that the war is inclining to its end and we are approaching peace, which will be the laurel wreath of our efforts, fighting and sacrifices.⁸⁴

However, the newspaper conceived of this peace in a rather peculiar way. It was claimed that the Entente powers should realize that it was in vain to fight against the “victorious Central Powers”, as “every victory brings us closer to the long-desired peace, the basis of which is the fulfilment of the destiny of Serbia.”

In the same edition of the newspaper, on November 14, 1915, Artúr Földes (1878–?)⁸⁵ published an article under the title *The Balkans in flames*. Földes, who had studied law, worked for the paper *Külügy–Hadügy*⁸⁶ as a foreign policy expert, attracting attention with his publications foretelling the war. When war broke out, he became the editor of the newspaper. He also excelled

83 Российский Государственный Архив Военно-Морского Флота. Ф. 609, Оп. 1, Д. 676, л. 7. Cited by: Airapetov, “October 1915”, 19.

84 “Békehírnökök.” *Pápai Lapok* 42 no. 46 (1915): 1.

85 <http://mek.oszk.hu/08700/08756/html/szocikk/1041480.htm>.

86 Hábóruban nélkülözhetetlen a “Külügy–Hadügy” heti szemle.

<https://www.darabanth.com/hu/gyorsarveres/268/kategoriak~Kepeslapok/Reklam~200088/Haboruban-nelkulozhetetlen-a-Kulugy-Hadugy-heti-szemle-reklam-Hungarian-military-newsp~II1197266/>.

as a playwright under the pseudonym Andor Kapos and he published numerous volumes of his writings on the war.⁸⁷

His essay that appeared in the paper issued in Pápa was full of sympathy towards Bulgaria, along with some pathos and strong anti-Russian and anti-Pan-Slav sentiments: "So far the Balkans have been the hotbed for Muscovite imperialism and a continuous source of a European military threat." Földes maintains that the military achievement of Bulgaria in the Balkan Wars can only be evaluated "with the highest admiration. It was Bulgaria which pulled the chestnut out of fire and hell for the other three nations." This means that Bulgaria goes to war again for the revision of the peace treaty of Bucharest but at the same time "the beast of Pan-Slavism should be cleansed from the jungle of the Balkans." The 'honest nations', the Germans, Hungarians, Austrians, Bulgarians and Turks, allied themselves at last, and this association "does not only extinguish the monster of the war, but also prevents for good the haggard, hungry beast of Russian imperialism from getting loose from the vast, unfertile Russian plain with a yowling roar and setting foot again in the primitive forests of the Balkans."⁸⁸

It is obvious that the author of the article explicitly came to Bulgaria's defence; what is more, he was sometimes carried away by his sentiments, as is reflected in his expressive style. His writing, filled with exaggerations, luxuriates in peculiar ideas:

The Slavs will only have a right to world domination when they will no longer endeavour to devastate and annihilate the cultural gardens of mankind but rather feel that with their racial, characteristic and original seeds they can inseminate the Romanesque and Germanic cultural vegetation that has almost become blasé and started to wither. Thank God, however, we are still very far from that point! This is true even if one can already overtly speak of the decline of Romanesque culture. The French gloire only lives in the glory of the past; this war only brings the destruction of the miserable French nation closer. In contrast, the sun of Germanic culture is only now rising. What was done by the German nation in the World War belongs to

87 Földes, *Háború és politika*; Földes, *Háborús írások*.

88 Földes, "A lángban álló Balkán," 2.

the sphere of tales and miracles. The grand German militarism that is victoriously defying the passionate hell of the entire world was not built on the rock of raw Teutonic power. German militarism is nourished by great Germanic culture. This culture strikes root in the broad classes of the people, and when the crown of the Germanic oak is torn by a gale, even the last, thin strand of its root is aware that one needs to fight and die for the life of the oak, as it gives life, bread and sunshine to all Germans.⁸⁹

This rousing pathos triumphed on other occasions as well. On April 9, 1916, in the paper *Esztergom*, rather exaggerated news was published in Romantic style under the title *Tragedy in Bulgarian Macedonia*, claimed to be “based on the narration of a Bulgarian soldier born in Macedonia,” referring to the *Kölnische Zeitung*. This news supposedly provided “splendid proof of the steadfastness, loyalty and unshakable bravery of Bulgarian soldiers.” In April 1915, near Krushevo, the Serbs compelled some 4,000 young Bulgarian men to go to arms in order to form a regiment in Kragujevac. When it came to taking the oath, the Serbian general emphasized that it was important for the “Serbs” from Macedonia to take the oath to King Peter, as he had “emancipated the people of Macedonia from century-old slavery.” Thereupon a student from the village Smolnevo remarked that he was ready to die for his homeland, would serve his country and tsar loyally, and that the tsar was nobody else but Ferdinand, “as we are Bulgarians by blood and our country is beautiful Bulgaria.” His example was followed by eleven others, and eventually all 4000 soldiers were shouting: “We all pledged loyalty to the mighty tsar of the Bulgarians!” The first twelve were executed; of the others, some 250 managed to escape, “they defend their country in the ranks of the Bulgarian army and are ready die for their country.”⁹⁰ It is evident that, even if this was not groundless,⁹¹ what we have here is a rather coloured, folkloristic story that makes use of *topoi*. The obvious aim of the text was to strengthen the sympathy of Hungarians towards

89 Ibid.

90 “Tragédia Bolgár-Macedóniában.” *Esztergom* 21, no. 15 (1916): 3.

91 On violence against civilians in the Balkan Wars, see: Panagiotis, “Violence and Civilians,” 547–63.

Bulgarians, at the same time strongly increasing their antipathy towards Serbians.

As we can see, based on the news, Bulgaria was a loyal, strong, steadfast and tenacious friend of Hungary. Therefore, the Hungarian press took care to note that the enemies of Bulgaria were trying to denounce it. (We have seen some of the Russian counter-moves above.) Thus on March 25, 1916 *Esztergom* reported on how Bulgaria was attacked by its enemies using false accusations made within the complex circumstances of the Balkans. According to this, the core of the accusation was that the Bulgarians desired to expand as far as the Adriatic coastline at the expense of Albanians. In reply, prime minister Radoslavov underlined at the session of the *sobranje* that Bulgaria would not hinder the independence of Albania, "the pleasure with which this remark was received in Bulgarian public opinion is witness to the fact that there is a great amount of self-restraint in Bulgaria."⁹² It is worth noting the emphasis on Bulgarian self-restraint: this was a recurring aspect in the Hungarian press, which stated again and again that the Bulgarians were willing to give up a part of their rightful claims in the interests of the desired peace.

4.

Sympathy towards Bulgaria was increased in unique fashion by the person of Ferdinand, Bulgarian prince and later tsar, who, through his grandmother (Antónia Koháry, the mother of Ferdinand II, King of Portugal), had some Hungarian blood. Moreover, he spoke Hungarian; the family bore the name Saxo-Coburg-Koháry, and had estates in Hungary, in Murány, Gömör county.⁹³ As a soldier he was an officer of the Honvéd Hussars: in 1884–1885 he served in the 26th Hungarian hunter battalion,⁹⁴ of which he became the proprietor,⁹⁵ as well as in the 60th heavy artillery regiment, of which he similarly became the

92 A. Z., "Az albán kérdés." *Esztergom* 21, no. 13 (1916): 2.

93 For this see: Holec, *Coburgovci a Slovensko*, 463.

94 Bálint, *Az ezredtulajdonosi rendszer*.

95 Ibid.

proprietor in 1917.⁹⁶ In the case of the 11th Hussar regiment, with its headquarters in Szombathely and established in 1762, the situation had been the same since 1909.⁹⁷ Presumably this was connected to the fact that Prince Ferdinand, who had ruled since 1887, had become tsar (king) of Bulgaria in the previous year.

As we have seen, the person of Ferdinand was in every aspect suitable to become the key figure in pro-Allied propaganda. Accordingly, especially at the time of the entrance of Bulgaria into the war, he received the attention from the press that could be expected. His widely-known Hungarian connections, as delineated above, helped positive articles to highlight his personal virtues. To all this was added the general advantage that it was *ab ovo* easier to idealize the rulers of allied countries than the leaders at home, as Hungarian readers could have little idea of the domestic problems of remote countries.⁹⁸

When he became tsar, the quoted edition of *Zalavármegye* summarized with an exemplary compactness all the features that were to be especially emphasized in connection with his person at the outbreak of the war: "Tsar Ferdinand was a Hungarian Hussar, he speaks our language well, he has the ancient blood of the Kohárys in his veins, he has estates in Hungary, and thus we have the right to presume that he would not tolerate any kind of anti-Hungarian policy."⁹⁹

His adherence to Hungary, his service as a hussar, and the Koháry family line were emphasized by everyone. So did even Miklós Horthy (1868–1957) when he made a special mention in his memoirs that Ferdinand was present at the coronation of Charles IV in Buda on December 30, 1916. "The representatives of high-ranking state dignitaries all turned up, as did the arch-dukes, the papal nuncio and Bulgarian tsar Ferdinand, who at an early age served as a hussar officer and was descended from the united branch of the Coburg and the Hungarian ducal Koháry families."¹⁰⁰ A conspicuous example of how important the service of hussars was in Hungary is shown by the fact

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 89.

99 "Bulgária." *Zalavármegye* 27 no. 41 (1908): 4.

100 Horthy, *Emlékirataim*, 90.

that the paper *Kócsag*, which otherwise specialized in natural science, referred as late as 1931 to his former service as a hussar. The short article reporting on the ornithological collection in Sofia published a portrait of the tsar with the following inscription: "Ferdinand still as a Hungarian hussar officer when he was elected prince of Bulgaria (1887)."¹⁰¹

Ferdinand himself loved to exploit his familiarity in Hungary. In a telegram addressed to the community of Gömör and Kishont county, which he also made public, he clearly intended to influence sentiments, although one cannot doubt that he confessed true affection: "My heart is always filled with endless joy and happiness whenever I can step on the soil of my beloved Gömör, which I am connected to by so many dear memories, and which I have loved ever since I was a child."¹⁰²

The familiarity of his Hungarian contacts is well exemplified by the case of the pharmacist of Ruse, György Szilágyi, who was of Hungarian origin, and who in the 1890s turned directly to Ferdinand himself in a quest for a solution to a grievance. He called the ruler "my Prince" and emphasizes his loyalty among others by referring to Ferdinand as a Coburg who was half Hungarian. This letter, besides evidently serving practical purposes, partly reflects Szilágyi's, and partly Ferdinand's Hungarian background. Obviously, Szilágyi first of all tried to reach a solution to his grievance, and therefore made an attempt to add some sentiment to his arguments, part of which was an allusion to the common Hungarian origin of Ferdinand and himself. It must be noted that, just like for Ferdinand, a certain level of the sincerity of sentimental identification cannot be denied, and the same holds even more true in Szilágyi's case: he cherished his double identity, and in 1916, shortly before his death, an identity card was issued for him by the police of Ruse on which it was remarked that he was Hungarian.¹⁰³

101 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 97; Szilágyi, "A Bolgár Cári Múzeum," 43. Ferdinand als ungarischer Hussarenoffizier zur Zeit seiner Wahl zum Fürsten v. Bulgarien (1887).

102 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 97.

103 Pejkovszka, "Egy magyar gyógyszerész," 92. See also: Pejkovszka, "Magyar gyógyszerész karrierék," 140–48.

In order not only to mention the press, we can state that it was no surprise that, along with the Turkish sultan, Ferdinand soon occupied a place in the Hungarian “iconography” of the rulers who were allies in the war, for example on chinaware that served different propaganda purposes. These originally only depicted Francis Joseph I and German Kaiser William II. From August 1915 onwards, however, these portrayals came to include Emperor Mehmed V and Tsar Ferdinand I.¹⁰⁴ Objects only showing the tsar also soon appeared, such as a framed plaquette made of tin with a diameter of 69mm.¹⁰⁵ Of course, because of the Hungarian aspect, attention was always paid to Ferdinand, as is well exemplified by the portrait of the tsar, 35.7cm x 23.7cm in size, drawn with pencil by Gyula Benczúr (1844–1920) in 1886.¹⁰⁶

In an article filled with optimism and written after Bulgaria’s entry into the war, *Pesti Napló* did not fail to remark that the colours of the Bulgarian tricolour and those of the Hungarian flag coincided: “King Ferdinand unfurled the white-green-red colours of his nation. Our flag is sown from the very same colours, and we will not have to wait long until we celebrate together the 30th anniversary of the triumph of Bulgaria over the Serbs in 1885 on the ruins of Serbia.”¹⁰⁷

Only a few days after the Bulgaria’s entry into the war, *Képes Újság* published a report, illustrated with several pictures, under the title *Our faithful friend*. It was emphasized that the Entente had tried to win Ferdinand, too, but their attempt had failed. This is explained by the newspaper with nothing other than the claim that the tsar with some Hungarian ancestry remained loyal to himself and his Hungarian friends. In a text overtly intending to affect national sentiments, there was no mention whatsoever of sober reconsideration, the advantage that could be gained, or of Bulgaria’s strategic aims:

In spite of all the bluff and debauchery and all the threatening of Bulgaria on the part of the Entente in the chaos of the Balkans, the Hungarian hussar officer, then Bulgarian prince, and present Bulgarian tsar, Ferdinand Coburg, with blood in his veins from the ancient Hungarian Koháry family, has

104 Závodi, “A hétköznapi propaganda,” 18.

105 Beck, “Különleges alakú és anyagú érmék,” 199.

106 Basics, “A Fővárosi Képtár,” 281.

107 Székely, “A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza,” 95.

remained a true friend of Hungarians and Hungary alike. Ferdinand Coburg used to be popular as a Hungarian officer, as the landlord of Murány, and now he is the beloved King of his people in the Balkans.¹⁰⁸

A recurring contradiction in the characterization of Ferdinand was that, whereas his Hungarian roots and their significance was underlined, constant reference was made to the fact that the monarch had become a Bulgarian (most often completely ignoring the German ancestors of his family). The article cited above almost evokes the figure of King Matthias from legend: "The King mingles with the people, listens to all the complaints of Bulgarian peasant women and heals all the problems. We can see him wearing the national dress, which is a sign that he has become a Bulgarian and wants to feel Bulgarian."¹⁰⁹

Examples could be enumerated at length: *Pesti Napló* focused primarily on Ferdinand's Hungarian affiliation, mixing all this with the ideas of Turanism and of the relationship between races, pointing out that the legendary reunification of the Hungarian and Bulgarian nations after a thousand years was the outcome of Ferdinand's genius, as he was the one who forged together "the Bulgarian nation, which is our relative" with Hungarians.¹¹⁰ Another article from *Pesti Napló* introduces Ferdinand to his readers, with impressive immodesty, as "the most romantic figure of Europe," then emphasizes his puritanical lifestyle as one of his many virtues, almost like a hagiography.¹¹¹ Likewise *Pesti Napló* pointed out Ferdinand's personal commitment in connection with the siege of Niš: "It is the most personal matter for a prince blessed with the Turanian excellent virtues of a monarch, who is so close to us, speaks our language, and is our dear guest."¹¹² Again, the idea emerged in the background, as it was claimed that by striving for rule over Macedonia, its rightful property, Bulgaria also served the benefit of Hungarians, after all: "it gives Macedonia back to the Bulgarian people, thereby bringing them closer to their relatives in race, the Hungarians."¹¹³

108 "A mi hűséges barátunk. Ferdinánd, a bolgárok királya." *Képes Újság* 1, no. 30 (1915): 9.

109 Ibid., 10.

110 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 97.

111 Ibid.

112 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 96.

113 Ibid.

The writings of Artúr Földes quoted above (*The Balkans in Flames*) also pay special attention to the person of Ferdinand. He does not fail to deal with Ferdinand's service as a hussar and his metamorphosis into a Bulgarian, either. He does not contest former Russian influence, but he does maintain that Ferdinand "did not become the vassal of the Russian tsar" and was only compelled by "higher reason of state to defer to the overwhelming Pan-Slav trends," doing so only externally. This way, although he brought up his sons in the Greek Orthodox faith, he saw to it that the Bulgarian prince did not necessarily have to be a follower of this denomination. Földes attached great importance to the fact that, in 1908, when Ferdinand decided to become a leader of an independent Bulgaria as tsar, he consulted not the Russian tsar but Francis Joseph: directly prior to the *coup d'état*, he had negotiations with the Hungarian king in Budapest and only after he had received the consent of the silver-haired Hungarian monarch did he become the "Tsar of all Bulgarians."¹¹⁴

The famous scholar, Adolf Strausz (1853–1944),¹¹⁵ wrote an article in *Pápai Lapok* on February 6, 1916, similarly failing to depict Bulgaria's real intentions. This was essentially a eulogy to Tsar Ferdinand. This was not unusual for him: the Balkanist folklorist, professor at the Budapest University of Economics and then at the Eastern Academy, published on Bulgaria on a regular basis.¹¹⁶ His affection for the country was widely known; he had even served alongside Ferdinand when they were soldiers.¹¹⁷

In this text the author claims that Ferdinand was a man of broad erudition "who developed Bulgarian schools to a level at which [...] they can compete with the schools of the 'civilized West.'"¹¹⁸ He was well-versed in science; he founded a museum and the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Sofia. He had the National Theatre of Sofia built. The tsar "speaks almost all European languages. He is acknowledged as the best Bulgarian orator in Russia. With his Greek

114 Földes, "A lángban álló Balkán," 2.

115 Róbert, "Strausz Adolf, a Balkán tudósa," 98–112; Ábrahám, "A Balkán képe," 50–52. Adolf Strausz was a fellow-officer of Ferdinand in Bosnia, later his advisor in the Prince's early years in Sofia.

116 Strausz, *Bolgár népköltési gyűjtemény*; Strausz, *Bolgár néphit*; Strausz, *Grossbulgarien*.

117 Róbert, "Strausz Adolf, a Balkán tudósa," 99.

118 Strauss, "Ferdinánd cár." *Pápai Lapok* 43, no. 6 (1916): 1.

subjects he speaks in Greek; with his Spanish he speaks Spanish. Of course he speaks fluent German and French. And what I think is needless to mention is that he loves to speak Hungarian, of which he is a master. Ferdinand is an excellent observer of human nature. He is very accurate and conscientious.”¹¹⁹ The Hungarian affiliation as a *topos* found its place here as well, not unlike the severing of links with Russia, and Bulgarian patriotism. These were recurring elements, too: “When Prince Ferdinand came to power, his entire country stood under Russian influence. People were beaming with joy over the liberation from being under Russian rule, yet they blinked with fear at their mighty and tyrannous neighbour. King Ferdinand recovered Bulgaria. From a Russian Bulgaria he created a Bulgarian Bulgaria that did not have Russian interests in sight, only Bulgarian ones.”¹²⁰ The depiction of his transformation into a Bulgarian appeared here, too, again in the form that the tsar sort of embodies the best characteristics of his chosen people: “He has embraced the most beautiful features of the Bulgarian character: political honesty, steadfastness, the know-how of bearing the severe plagues of destiny, and [...] temperance.”¹²¹ Needless to say, Strausz’s writing is rather propagandistic and, the author’s thorough expertise notwithstanding, it lists the usual commonplaces of Balkan studies.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the positive bias towards the tsar present in the Hungarian press even in the decades that followed. The newspaper *Kőszeg és Vidéke* reported on the unveiling of a memorial plaque, the text of which read as follows: “In this house the royal Hungarian lieutenant-colonel of the Hussars and later royal Bulgarian lieutenant-colonel, adjutant of the Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand I, the avowed figure of the reconstruction of Bulgaria, lived between the years 1904 and 1908. This memorial plaque was initiated by Zoltán Barcsay Amant, made by Dr. Zoltán Farkas, and erected by the township of Kőszeg. It was unveiled in the presence of Stoyan Petroff Schomakoff, the envoy of the King of Bulgaria, on October 9, 1932, at the time of Mayor Lajos Lambrits.”

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid. Strausz was a “persona grata” at the palace, he even helped Ferdinand to make a prime minister from Stambolov in the 1880s. Пейковска, “Българо-унгарски научни отношения”, 155; Peykovska, “Hungarian–Bulgarian Scholarly Relations in Humanities”, 303.

The newspaper pointed out that Boris M. Andreeff, “the especially sympathetic” and “excellent-looking” secretary of the Bulgarian embassy in Budapest, gave thanks for this gesture in a speech he delivered in German, in which he underlined that

the memorial plaque does not only reflect the respect of the community of Kőszeg towards Tsar Ferdinand and the Hussar lieutenant-colonel Géza Dobner, but also the true, cordial friendship that has connected the Bulgarian and Hungarian nations for centuries, a link that has become even stronger through the common blood shed in the Great War. The common destiny of the two nations after the World War is an even more significant guarantee that this friendship between the two countries will endure for future centuries.¹²²

Several other similar examples could be mentioned. Herewith, however, I would like to resort to only one of these, that published on November 5, 1937 in the *Békésmegyei Közlöny*. It reported that, twenty years before, the Bulgarian Tsar had had his rheumatism cured in Pöstyén (Piešťany), where King Charles IV and Emperor William II came to see him. It was claimed that it was here that the rulers learned of America joining the war. The mention of that fact that Ferdinand was a regular in Pöstyén, that he was sometimes registered in the spa’s visitors’ book as “Count Murányi,” sometimes as “Dr. Murányi Jr.” or as an “unhappy wanderer,” clearly served to enhance sympathy towards the tsar. He was said to have communicated with locals in Hungarian, albeit in a thick accent.¹²³

A year earlier, on November 29, 1936, in an article entitled “How does the King amuse himself?” *Szabolcsi Hírlap* made mention of the triple summit in Pöstyén on February 3, 1917, but the emphasis was not on the summit itself.¹²⁴ Here the old commonplaces are reiterated, claiming that “he has worked

122 “A bolgár király képviselőjének jelenlétében leplezték le Dobner Géza emléktábláját.” *Kőszeg és Vidéke* 52, no. 42, (1932): 2.

123 Gerenday, “Nevezetes húszéves évforduló,” 3.

124 “Hogyan mulat a király?” *Nyírvidek* 4, no. 275 (1936): 5–6.

miracles in his country,”¹²⁵ that “he is a devout Catholic and remained a Catholic on the Bulgarian throne,” etc.¹²⁶ First and foremost, this article discussed in detail how Ferdinand listened to and had Hungarian songs played. A fact that must have been dear to the hearts of the readers, namely that as a hussar he also loved the gypsy songs of Nyíregyháza, was not neglected, either: “One Hungarian song is followed by the other, Ferdinand’s face is brightening, he is beating the tempo with his hand, and sometimes he himself thrills to lyrics like ‘Why the blonde for me, when I love brunettes?’ His Majesty then whispers to the gypsy: ‘Now the song called Sparse wheat, sparse barley, sparse rye.’”¹²⁷ Such pathos is increased in the article with what is, to put it mildly, an exaggerated turn of events: following the entertainment that made him weep, he returned to his chamber “where nineteen years ago the course of the war might have been decided.”¹²⁸

As we can see, the personality of Ferdinand was strongly idealized in the press, as late as the interwar period. Needless to say, all this demands heightened criticism of sources and thorough reconsideration. However, let me mention one example that shows, naturally enough, that in other places and in other contexts Ferdinand is featured in a completely different way. Paléologue, quoted above, did not, to say the least, show his support for Ferdinand in a work of his that was also published in Hungary in 1929: “Friday January 28, 1916. Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand Coburg surpassed himself in terms of dishonesty. *Qualis artifex!* Ten days ago Emperor William arrived in Niš, where Tsar Ferdinand gave a state dinner in his honour. One thing is sure, the meeting was solemn and the fact that Niš, the birthplace of Constantine the Great, was chosen, further increased its historic importance. Thus it does not take me by surprise that Ferdinand, who is so much in favour of the glory of the past and of historic spectacles, was luxuriating in his grand ambitions on this day.”¹²⁹

125 Ibid., 5.

126 Ibid., 6.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.

129 Paléologue, *A cár országa*, 167.

5.

To conclude my study, I provide a glimpse into the way Bulgaria was featured in the Hungarian press in the later years of the war, including the collapse of 1918. Alongside the tsar it was prime minister Vasily Radoslavov who was a constant and key figure in the news. Some *topoi* used to depict his activity were of the same nature as the ones used to describe the tsar. On January 7, 1917 *Harangszó* pointed out that Bulgarian foreign policy was very much reserved and, apart from the country's justified claims, it was in search of peace. This was also a recurring element in the description of Bulgarian aims. In this sense Prime Minister Radoslavov "declared that Bulgaria would make concessions in the name of humanity and for the sake of the welfare of nations. They are our great coalition partner who in the war enlarged their territory to roughly two and a half times its former size, which means that they would not insist on keeping all their conquests. They will be satisfied with having liberated their Bulgarian brothers but will not want to keep all the territories they have conquered."¹³⁰ The reiteration of this point was meant to make the impression that the war was justified and was not an aggressive war with the aim of conquest.

The commitment of Bulgarians to peace was also underlined in the report of *Nyírvidek* on December 28, 1917, in which the attention of readers was drawn to the fact that the traditional Bulgarian–Turkish hostility over the centuries was over, something that was partly made possible by the willingness of Bulgarians to strive for compromises accepted by everyone. As an important practical step in this, bearing in mind the further unanimous reinforcement of cordial links between Bulgaria and Turkey, it was mentioned that Prime Minister Radoslavov despatched a committee with the outspoken purpose of resolving the question of mixed possession of the Karagata district.¹³¹

Referring to the coverage of *Est* from Sofia, *Nyírvidek* wrote on December 30, 1917 that at the session of the *sobranje* Prime Minister Radoslavov announced the concluding of peace between Bulgaria and Russia and that this was received with acclamation. It was claimed that the main reason for the

130 "A világháború eseményei." *Harangszó* 8, no. 2 (1917): 14.

131 "Török–bolgár tárgyalás." *Nyírvidek* 38, no. 286 (1917): 1.

peace was that “the freedom and independence” of Macedonia and Dobrudzha had been acknowledged by the Russians/Soviets, which was an exceedingly significant step for Bulgaria. It was made clear, however, that peacemaking was to mean a preliminary peace.¹³²

On February 2, 1918 it was again *Nyírvidék* that reported on the visit of Prime Minister Radoslavov in Budapest. Preceding his visit, he declared in the *sobranje* that it was the aim of Bulgaria to join the Bulgarians separated from the motherland to Bulgaria again. Therefore he insisted on joining the province of Morava as well as Dobrudzha and a part of Macedonia to Bulgaria.¹³³ It was a common element of the two reports that a country otherwise ready for compromise could and would not give up the claims it considered to be justified.

This was reinforced on February 5, 1918 by the brief coverage of *Nyírvidék* under the title *Radoslavov on the Bolsheviks*. It was claimed that the prime minister had explained that bolshevism was a threat to the entire world, not merely to Russia, where it meant the rule of anarchy. Also, he pointed out that there could be no talk of negotiations with Romania unless it capitulated. In this case, the prime minister explained, “we orchestrate the peace that is in accordance with its rightful national claims.”¹³⁴

On October 2, 1918 *Nyírvidék* used quite a different tone: the enthusiastic attributes disappeared, while the news of the truce of Saloniki was shocking. “In Sofia order is restored. The Bulgarian ceasefire has been concluded,” wrote the paper. Readers were informed that the Bulgarian envoys accepted all the terms made by commander-in-chief Louis Franchet d’Espérey (1856–1942) and made an appeal to the Bulgarian army to keep order after all. The desired peace was close, and thus “we need only be led by fervent love of Bulgaria.”¹³⁵ Patriotism remained a constant element, but there was no more word of territorial conquest, or of an enduring and strong allied partner and steadfast friend.

132 “Cím nélkül.” *Nyírvidék* 38, no. 288 (1917): 1.

133 “A bolgár miniszterelnök Budapesten.” *Nyírvidék* 39, no. 28 (1918): 1.

134 “Radoszlavov a bolsevikiekről.” *Nyírvidék* 39, no. 38 (1918): 4.

135 “Szófiában helyreáll a rend. Megkötötték a bolgár fegyverszünetet.” *Nyírvidék* 39, no. 222 (1918): 1.

Lethargy was even more pronounced the day after. On October 3, 1918 coverage appeared with a straightforwardly tragic tone: *The Bulgarian nation will be the vassal of the Entente*. The ceasefire of Saloniki came into force, readers learned, and the terms were the following: the evacuation of the occupied territories in Greece and Serbia, the disarmament of Bulgarian troops, the handing over of the means of transport and the laying down of arms. The allies gained the right freely to cross Bulgaria and they occupied its points of strategic importance. The negotiation of territorial questions would be an issue for after the war. *Nyírvidek* warned that the peace would be dictated by the Entente, so Bulgaria would definitely not make a peace that could be advantageous for the Central Powers. The newspaper did not fail to mention that Berlin made it clear that by signing the truce of Saloniki Bulgaria had lost the confidence of the Central Powers, which meant that it could not expect their goodwill at all.¹³⁶

As we have seen, the strong sympathy towards Bulgarians no longer played a role here. A report of October 13, 1918 laconically mentioned that, according to a telegram from Rotterdam, Radoslavov escaped from Sofia in the uniform of a German warrant officer.¹³⁷ (He never returned to his country; he lived and died in Berlin, but was buried in Sofia.)

Yet the person of the tsar was treated as an exception in the conservative Hungarian press. He was supported even when he relinquished the throne: it was claimed that he left out of wise consideration and not under pressure after signing the separate peace treaty and abdicating on his son's behalf: "he joined us in the most critical moment in order to help us avenge the Wallachian perfidy and to open the corridor or breathing apparatus of the Central Powers between Berlin and Constantinople."¹³⁸ By contrast, I note that in the British media Ferdinand's act was interpreted quite differently. It was claimed that on September 23, 1918¹³⁹ he asked Berlin and Vienna in vain for support, ultimately being forced to escape, because he was afraid of street battles, demonstrations, and the accidental unrest of workers and soldiers. In summary, we can conclude that the Hungarian press had strong sympathy towards

136 "Bulgária területi viszonyait csak a háború után rendezik." *Nyírvidek* 39, no. 223 (1918): 1.

137 "Radoszlavov elmenekült." *Nyírvidek* 39, no. 232 (1918): 2.

138 Székely, "A szövetséges uralkodók kultusza," 98.

139 Başkaya, "İngiliz Basınına Göre," 60–61.

Bulgaria, both before the war and after its outbreak. It was repeatedly emphasized that Bulgaria could serve as a counterweight to Serbian and Romanian efforts as well as to Pan-Slavism and Russia. Its territorial claims were justified since they affected only the lands that had been its due but which were torn away in the treaty of peace of Bucharest. These were territories basically populated by Bulgarians. Moreover, Bulgaria gave proof of its moderation for the sake of peace. The country was advancing, the most developed state on the Balkan Peninsula, the true ally of the monarchy, with a steadfast and enduring, diligent people and a well trained and equipped army. Goodwill towards Hungary was further reinforced by the person of Ferdinand, the tsar of partly Hungarian descent who had estates in Hungary and spoke the language. The biased and propagandistic writings in praise of him, lacking any kind of sharp criticism, created a parallel reality in which an almost faultless leader was portrayed as showing the way to the brotherly Bulgarian people, the allies of Hungarians.

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ENTHUSIASM FOR WAR IN THE HINTERLAND: A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL SZÉCHÉNYI LIBRARY, BUDAPEST

Zoltán Oszkár Szóts

THE HINTERLAND AND THE GREAT WAR

At the outbreak of the First World War, all belligerent nations went to war with full enthusiasm, with seemingly never-ending celebrations on the streets of major cities. Although recent studies have dismantled certain aspects of this phenomenon, it nevertheless cannot be stated that war enthusiasm was manipulated; it did, indeed, exist, was massive, and, moreover, was not exclusive in nature.¹ The era beginning with the French Revolution and lasting until 1918 was an epoch also known as the “Europe of Nations,” when, first and foremost, members of a society defined themselves as members of a nation. From this perspective, the war enthusiasm and the desire to contribute to the national war effort may be regarded as a general characteristic of the period. It was also the epoch when mass armies emerged, as conscription was introduced,² and, in theory, the entire male population could have been sent to the front.³ At the beginning of the war, the population at large emotionally identified with the war and gradually developed a distaste, even fierce hatred towards the

1 See: Hajdu and Pollmann, *A régi Magyarország utolsó háborúja*, 63–78. For further exceptions: “Naplók az első világháború idejéből.”

2 Diószegi, “A nemzetek Európája,” 1–11.

3 Furet, “Az első világháború,” 62–107.

enemy. As the war years passed by and this hatred grew, the chance of concluding a fair peace vanished. On the fronts, the Great War was fought by conscripted civilians far removed from their everyday lives, while, in effect, the whole population was mobilized for the effort to defeat the enemy. Intellectuals were also an integral part of the war, and played a crucial role in shaping the ideology of the war and public opinion, often by justifying the war cause as a civilizational imperative of the nation.⁴ Undoubtedly, the Great War had an extraordinary impact on the intellectual, military and political thinking of Europe, as the wartime experience left no stratum of society intact.⁵ As the hinterland became involved in the war effort,⁶ the population emotionally identified with the war and wanted to have its share in the future victory.⁷ State intervention in the economy paved the way to the state-capitalism of the 20th century.⁸ Subordinating itself to the war cause, like many other institutions throughout belligerent Europe, the National Széchényi Library (NSzL) in Budapest, Hungary (then Austria–Hungary) provides a fine example to showcase the hinterland’s war enthusiasm between 1914 and 1918.⁹

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL SZÉCHÉNYI LIBRARY DURING THE WAR YEARS

The National (Széchényi) Library of Hungary was founded by Ferenc Széchényi, an enlightened and progressive Catholic aristocrat, in 1802, and was expanded six years later into a newly-established museum called the

4 Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker, *1914–1918: Az újraírt háború*.

5 Nagy, “A katonai erőszak elmélete,” 146–75.

6 On the Hungarian Hinterland, see *A Hadtörténeti Múzeum értesítője = Acta Musei Militaris in Hungaria*, (2011): 12. and Bihari, *Lövészárkok a hátszágban*.

7 Bihari, 1914. *A Nagy Háború száz éve*.

8 This process prepared the way of radical authoritarian nationalisms in Europe, such as Nazism or fascism after the war. See: Galántai, *Az első világháború*, 242–43. and Póczik, “Modernizációelmélet és faszizmusértelmezés,” 32–44.

9 About the full war-time history of the National Széchényi Library see: Szőts, *Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár*.

Hungarian National Museum (HNM).¹⁰ From 1808 to 1949 the Library operated under the supervision of the HNM's director.¹¹ With the Library, the HNM consisted of total of seven departments, which in terms of their size and collections all could have functioned as separate and independent museums. In 1914 six departments of the seven operated in the same building and under the same supervision.¹² (The seventh department was situated in a separate building.) The seven departments under HNM included (1) the National Széchényi Library, (2) the Collection of Coins and Antiques, (3) the Collection of Animals, (4) the Collection of Plants, (5) the Collection of Minerals, (6) the Collection of Folklore, and (7) the Queen Elisabeth Memorial Museum.¹³ As the aforementioned structure was radically reorganized, the National Széchényi Library became an independent institution in 1949. With this restructuring, the Hungarian National Museum then included only the Collection of Coins and Antiques of its former departments. At the same time the Hungarian National History Museum was established, which received the former plant, animal, and mineral collections of the HNM. Additionally, the Collection of Folklore also became a separate museum in the form of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography.

The structure and organization of the Hungarian National Museum, established by its founder, Ferenc Széchényi, remained intact until the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (1867), when it came under the supervision of the Ministry of Religion and Education. This also meant that from this time the Museum received regular support from the annual state budget.¹⁴ Since the National Széchényi Library structurally belonged to the Museum, its budget and financial matters were handled by the same fiscal office until 1920, when a separate financial office was established for the former.¹⁵

10 About the circumstances, see Berlász, *Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár története*, 9–85.

11 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*.

12 Gerelyes, *A magyar múzeumügy*, 6.

13 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*.

14 Somkuti, "Szervezet, igazgatás és személyzet," 227.

15 Szabadrné Szegő, "A könyvtárügy állami támogatása," 123–72. esp. 134; *A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum szervezete és szolgálati szabályzata*, 42–45. § and *Archive of the National Széchényi Library* (hereafter ANSL) 1920/474. Quoted by Dezsényi, "Szervezet, ügyvitel és igazgatás," 124–81. esp. 157.

From the December 26, 1894 until his retirement on March 4, 1916, the Hungarian National Museum was headed by Baron Imre Szalay. (He passed away on July 24, 1917.)¹⁶ Then, László Fejérpataky, a professor of history at the University of Budapest, was appointed as his successor. Having directed the institution before, Fejérpataky's second term as the director lasted until his death on the March 6, 1923.¹⁷ From March 4, 1916 to June 30, 1916 János Melich was the head of the Library.¹⁸ In effect, Fejérpataky's leadership could be regarded as formal, as in practice the NSzL was led by the aforementioned János Melich, then head of the Print Department, and Gyula Sebestyén, head of the Manuscript Department.¹⁹

At the beginning of the First World War, the library consisted of four departments, of which the first and largest, also functioning as the core of the library, was the Print Department. The second department, established in 1866, was the Manuscript Department, while the third, founded in 1882, was the Archival Department.²⁰ The latter was disbanded in 1926, while its collection was transferred to the National Archives of Hungary.²¹ The fourth department, established in 1888, was the Newspaper Department.²²

The National Széchényi Library published its own journal, called the *Hungarian Book Review*. The journal still exists, but now it is issued by the Institute of Literature at the Research Centre of Humanities for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.²³ Published in 1876, it was the first journal in Hungary to specialize in library science,²⁴ while it also gave space to the quarterly and annual reports of the library. Four issues were published in each war year, and the editor-in-chief was Pál Gulyás.²⁵

16 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 5.

17 *Ibid.*

18 ANSL 1916/220.

19 ANSL 1916/250.

20 Ferenczy, "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár olvasószolgálatának története," 210–34.

21 Németh, *Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár története*, 11.

22 Dezsényi, "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Hírlaptára," 84–107.

23 <http://www.iti.mta.hu/mksz.html>. Accessed on January 16, 2016.

24 Pogány, "A magyar könyvtári szaksajtó vázlatos története. 1. rész," 585–96.

25 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 42.

The lack of storage space had been a recurring issue for the whole Museum. Director Szalay desperately wanted to solve this problem, and issued a memorandum in 1906, which suggested the construction of another facility. Construction costs for the new building soared, and although the first sum had been allotted in the state budget of 1912, Szalay's plan was in the end rejected by the Ministry of Religion and Education. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, the construction was completely removed from the plans,²⁶ despite the war making the lack of storage space an even more serious issue. Among the few temporary solutions trying to cope with the situation was the use of former service flats in the building for storage.²⁷ Besides this, the deterioration of the building was also a persistent problem. The lack of sufficient funds made neither renovation nor the installation of a modern heating system possible. Worst of all, in 1917 the copper parts of the roof and the lightning rods were requisitioned by the state for military purposes.²⁸

As regards human resources, at the end of 1913 the National Széchényi Library had forty employees.²⁹ Only eight of them were called in for military service during the war; consequently, most employees remained in the hinterland.³⁰ Of the eight, Dr. Ödön Hupka was the sole person not to return: he was found dead after the battle of Kalnikow, Galicia, on May 28, 1915.³¹ In 1917, the Library had 36 employees,³² four employees fewer than at the outbreak of the war. Out of these 36, five were women and employed as librarians with the exception of one. The employment of women at NSzL mirrored the gradual wartime trend of broadening opportunities for women to pursue intellectual careers.

26 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 5–6.

27 Somkuti, "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár elhelyezése," 169–94.

28 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 33.

29 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 5–6.

30 Szöts, "Könyvtárosok frontszolgálatban," 223–27.

31 Szöts, "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár első világháborús hősi halottja," 449–57.

32 ANSL 1917/95.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Besides founding a special war collection, several changes were made to the collection of NSzL during the Great War. One of the most significant initiatives was the foundation of a utility library for the Collection of Coins and Antiques, which still serves as the basis for the present-day library of the National Museum. Emperor and King Francis Joseph appointed Elemér Varjú as head of the Collection of Coins and Antiques on November 5, 1913.³³ Before him, the scientific emphasis of the department on archaeology; Varjú, however, wanted to divert the focus to the national history of Hungary, and thus he soon enacted several changes.³⁴ One of his innovations was to encourage the specialization of the utility library, making it the largest library of museology and archaeology in Hungary. Financially backed by the Ministry of Religion and Education with extra funds independent of the NSzL's budget, a significant number of purchases were made to expand the book collection.³⁵

Between 1916 and 1921 a special folklore collection, initiated by the Hungarian division of Folklore Fellows, operated under the framework of NSzL. Headed by Gyula Sebestyén, it was transformed into a separate department in 1917.³⁶ Eventually, on January 10, 1921, it was structurally entirely detached from the library.³⁷

At the end of 1919, the library began collecting material from the era of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic. Together with the War Collection, these became separate collections on January 1, 1920. While these collections were established, the management recognized the importance of small prints, which lead to the foundation of the separate Small Prints Department in 1935.³⁸

After the First World War, the library had to reorganize the collection of documents from the territories lost in the Peace Treaty of Trianon (June 4,

33 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 53.

34 AHNM, 1915/301.

35 Szabadné, "A könyvtárügy állami támogatása," 140.

36 "Jelentés (1917)," 246–49.

37 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 44.

38 Dezsényi, "Szervezet, ügyvitel és igazgatás," 142; Németh, "Aprónyomtatványok," 205–33.

1920), entrusting Antal Sikabonyi with the task.³⁹ Maps had been separated from other prints in 1919 by Samu Garda,⁴⁰ which later, in 1939, made the establishment of the Map Collection possible.⁴¹ Additionally, there was also a plan to create a collection specializing in documents concerning the Balkans. In a memorandum written in 1917, Joseph Bajza⁴² stated that knowledge of the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula was in the fundamental interest of Hungary, and therefore the region should have its own library established in Budapest. Although Director Fejérpataky agreed with Bajza's suggestion, he nevertheless dismissed the idea, doubting whether it could be accomplished during wartime.⁴³

THE WAR COLLECTION

Wanting to have their own share in the Danubian Monarchy's war effort, the library employees came up with the idea of the foundation of a special war collection. *The Kriegsbibliothek von 1870*, a Berlin archive founded by Emperor William upon the advice of Louis Schneider, and containing documents from the Franco-Prussian War (1870), set the example and model for the Hungarian plans.⁴⁴ Examining the contemporary records of the National Széchényi Library, it can be stated that the earliest document to mention the First World War collection was filed on September 2, 1914. The file contained three letters with the same body of text. One of them was addressed to the Mayor's Office in Budapest, one to the Royal Hungarian State Printing House, and one to the Hof- und Staatsdruckerei in Vienna. All three letters requested copies of future documents issued in connection with the war. The overall idea was summarized as follows:

39 *Jelentés (1913–1923)*, 43–44.

40 ANSL 1919/292 Quoted by Dezsényi, "Szervezet, ügyvitel és igazgatás," 143.

41 Németh, "Aprónyomtatványok," 221.

42 On the life of Bajza, see Szóts, "Bajza József halálának 75. évfordulójára," 23–25. The memorandum can be read here: Szücsi, "Könyvtárunk balkáni feladatai," 1–13.

43 On the memorandum and the background to it, see Szóts, "Balkáni gyűjtemény," 116–28.

44 K. I. "A háború könyvtára," 355–56.

...one of the main aspirations of the National Széchényi Library of the Hungarian National Museum is to collect a preferably complete series of all classes of prints concerning the present state of war, and to preserve them for posterity, as precious historical mementoes of the present time.⁴⁵

The employees realized that the Great War was of great importance in the history of mankind, and were eager to gather and collect documents relating to it.⁴⁶ Until the Treaty of Trianon was signed, the expansion of the war collection had remained a top priority for the management of the library, who had, in effect, subordinated the entire budget to this task.

In the course of the war, NSzL librarians contacted several official authorities, which all fulfilled the requests made on the behalf of the library.⁴⁷ Besides these requests, there were other methods of acquiring materials for the collection. Being the national library of Hungary, NSzL collected (and still collects) each and every edition of publications issued in Hungary. The library relied primarily on legal deposit copies provided by various printing and publishing houses. The second method of acquisition was to shelve all legal deposits relating to the war in the war collection.⁴⁸ As for the third, appeals were made in newspapers for material donations. These appeals informed the general public about the war collection project and asked for war-related prints to be sent for the benefit of NSzL.⁴⁹ The fourth method was the purchase of materials, mostly outside Hungary. Both individuals and foreign bookshops were assigned to this task.⁵⁰ The terms of the contracts signed with purchasers

45 ANSL 1914/566.

46 Holub, "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár háborús gyűjteménye," 99–101.

47 About the full details of acquisition, see Szóts, *Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár*, 47–69.

48 "Jelentés (1914)," 343–46.

49 Holub, "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár háborús gyűjteménye," 99–101.

50 Examples of bookshops: Hiersemann Bookshop in Leipzig (ANSL 1914/570), Gilhofer und Ranschburg (ANSL 1914/595), Mirko Breyer in Zagreb (ANSL 1914/601), Schweitzer Sortiment in Munich (ANSL 1915/177), Argus Suisse de la Presse (ANSL 1915/180), Ferenc Walla in Vienna (ANSL 1915/234), Sala & Co. in Berlin (ANSL 1915/231), Olschki in Switzerland (ANSL 1915/299). Examples for individuals: Ferenc Eckhardt (ANSL 1914/581), Tibolt Schmidt (ANSL 1914/587), József Zolthai-Zehrer (ANSL 1914/594), Károly Feleký (ANSL 1914/597), Karl Bernhard Wiklund (ANSL 1914/613), Miklós Jankó

operating in neutral or enemy countries included several interesting clauses. For instance, the shipment of 'purchased materials' and their payment was delayed until such time as the war was over. In theory, the payment and the shipment would have happened at the same time, once the war was concluded. With this and similar commitments and arrangements, NSzL tried to get accustomed to the situation created by the war. Delivery of book packages remained problematic, regardless of whether they were shipped from enemy or allied countries. Due to wartime censorship and precautionary measures and regulations, every item of cargo, package or piece of mail had to be inspected. For this reason, the managers of the library officially requested the state authorities to make an exception for the war collection, thus allowing packages to be received without inspection.⁵¹ In accordance with this request, Prime Minister Count István Tisza ordered the authorities to return all seized printed materials to NSzL, and, moreover, enabled the employees of the library to examine all other seized packages containing printed products for the benefit of the war collection.⁵² Subsequently, this became the fifth method of acquisition, while the sixth aimed to barter documents that the NSzL possessed more than one copy of.⁵³

The commitment undertaken by NSzL employees was a comprehensive and unprecedented enterprise in the history of Hungarian libraries, setting out to collect every type of war documents from all over the world. For this reason, the director of the Library, László Fejérpataky, and the manager of the War Collection, József Holub, visited several German libraries that had war collections.⁵⁴ After returning to Budapest, Fejérpataky summarized their experience in the *Hungarian Book Review*,⁵⁵ requesting the ministries of Hungary to order all state offices to send a copy of their press products to

(ANSL 1914/641), Sándor Domanovszky (ANSL 1914/661) and László J. Reininger (ANSL 1914/668).

51 ANSL 1915/88.

52 ANSL 1915/93.

53 The first exchange was arranged with the Hofbibliothek in Vienna. (ANSL 1914/624).

54 The travel was permitted by the minister of religion and education with decree number 72.341/III. (ANSL 1915/258).

55 Fejérpataky, "A háború irodalma németországi könyvtárakban," 1–18.

NSzL.⁵⁶ Additionally, he also requested to be allowed to exchange books with those libraries he had visited.⁵⁷ The most significant decision was the promotion of the War Collection to become a separate department by removing it from the auspices of the Archival Department. At the outset, the Collection was supervised by the Archival Department, but by 1916 it became a fully independent collection.⁵⁸

During the war years, great sums were spent on the acquisition of materials. Due to the aforementioned delays in payment, the library almost collapsed financially after the war, and only the intervention of the state was able to save it. In 1918 only a small portion of the wartime orders was paid in time; the rest became debts for subsequent years.⁵⁹ The most important partner of NSzL was *Argus Suisse de la Presse* in Geneva, which delivered newspapers until December 6, 1919, when further orders were cancelled.⁶⁰ This company desperately wanted to make the library pay its debt of 14,712.05 Swiss francs.⁶¹ After years of debate, a mutual agreement was reached and a final sum of 24,312.90 Swiss francs with interest transferred with help of the Ministerial Budget and the permission of the Council of Ministers.⁶² Nonetheless, the Minister of Finance ordered the library to reduce its debts. The managerial board offered to sell documents of which there were multiple copies.⁶³ Additionally, there were similar issues with other wartime purchases. In 1921 the library received bills from the Gilhofer und Ranschburg Company, and also from Schweitzer Sortiment.⁶⁴ A larger debt owed to the Olschki Company was only paid in 1925.⁶⁵

56 ANSL 1915/292.

57 ANSL 1915/293.

58 "Jelentés (1916)," 225–28.

59 Ferenczyné Wendelin, "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár ún. világháborús- és proletárdiktatúra-gyűjteménye," 263–75.

60 ANSL 1919/337.

61 ANSL 1919/306.

62 Dezsényi, "Fejezetek az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár gyarapítási politikája," 85–156. esp. 93.

63 ANSL 1922/99.

64 ANSL 1921/360 and ANSL 1921/367.

65 Dezsényi, "Fejezetek az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár gyarapítási politikája," 96.

Attempts had previously been made to sell documents with multiple copies. In 1919, Colonel Romanelli requested a list of documents in Italian, and soon he received a list with 68 items.⁶⁶ In 1921, 473 documents were sold for 2500 Swiss francs to the American Relief Administration, which collected wartime materials for the Hoover War History Collection.⁶⁷ In 1922, the Imperial War Museum in Great Britain was contacted and sent forty-two posters. In return, the British offered to send sixty-seven other posters, but no money.⁶⁸

Important negotiations were carried out with the Bibliothèques et Musée de la Guerre in Paris. First, József Holub visited the institute and gave a thorough report on the occasion in 1921. The Museum and its collection had been established by Henry Leblanc and his wife, but in August 1917 the French state nationalized it in a quest to transform it into a future centre for research in the Great War.⁶⁹ Its director, Camille Bloch, personally travelled to Hungary to purchase items from the War Collection of NSzL.⁷⁰ Eventually, he bought 103 documents for 800 Swiss francs.⁷¹

In 1920 the War Collection lost its independence and was attached to the Prints Department. In 1922 the acquisition of the collection, containing 176,751 documents, was officially completed, and the journals of the acquisition were closed. Afterwards the former War Collection was restructured and divided into different collections; these are nevertheless still to be found in NSzL. Most documents of the War Collection became the part of the Collection of Posters and Small Prints. 14,622 documents, including books and newspapers, remained in the core collection of the NSzL, while about 8,000 photos were reallocated to the Photo Collection. Additionally, eleven folders of manuscripts were relocated to the Manuscript Collection. The archive continuously and systematically collects, processes and services special image and text-based documents. The most important among these are graphic posters, engravings and lithographs, *ex libris* bookplates and graphic works of

66 ANSL 1919/204.

67 ANSL 1921/475, 1921/615, 1922/269.

68 Dezsényi, "Fejezetek az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár gyarapítási politikája," 91.

69 ANSL 1921/303.

70 ANSL 1922/65.

71 ANSL 1922/81.

specific events, loose-leaf albums, picture postcards, text posters and leaflets, obituaries, speeches and poems written for special occasions, theses of dissertations, invoices and invitation cards, dance cards, miscellaneous calendars, catalogues and registers, as well as prints used by companies and other institutions for official and everyday purposes. About 120,000 documents from the former war collection can be found there.

In effect, the librarians involved in the war collection project had wanted to transform the collection into an archive for war victory, a goal that it could never achieve. Examining the official records of the library, it is clear that, like most people in Europe, the librarians had not expected the Great War to last for five years. Agreements made with foreign bookshops clearly testify to this. With the prolonging of the war, the economy became adjusted to wartime. After the collapse of Austria–Hungary, the National Széchényi Library was on the verge of going bankrupt due to the debts of the War Collection. As the Great War had been lost, the War Collection was disbanded after the arrival of Camille Bloch, director of the Parisian *Bibliothèques et Musée de la Guerre*, in Budapest in 1922. The PBMG, which had its own building, operated with 70 employees and received generous donations from the French state, made a strong impression on the NSzL. The library was close to collapse, with a sole employee working on the war collection, and it was beyond doubt that it could not compete with the PBMG.

In 1922 the collection was disbanded, but its 176,000 documents have been preserved in the library as a memento of the irrational war enthusiasm of its former wartime employees. The fate of the collection could have been different with wiser, smaller, rational objectives like limiting the focus solely to wartime documents from Austria–Hungary. Nevertheless, its megalomaniac objective undoubtedly fitted the war aims of the belligerent states. The Great War was fought until complete victory, as each party wished to fulfil its goals—often paired with megalomaniac objectives—without compromise. The absurd and destructive nature of such a political attitude later took a long-lasting toll on European society and economy, regardless of who ended up on the winning or losing end of the war.⁷² Conclusively, the Great War and its events were

72 Hobsbawm, *A szélsőségek kora*, 33.

reflected in the wartime history of the National Széchényi Library, Budapest. Although the war was lost, the former employees of the library were nonetheless successful in creating the largest First World War archive in Hungary. If for no other reason, their efforts, enabling research on the Great War to be conducted at an international level, could and should be appreciated.

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EXTERNAL MIGRATION POLICIES AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE MECHANICAL MOVEMENT AND TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN BULGARIA (1912–1920)

Penka Peykovska

In this text we have summarized the policies of the central authority in Bulgaria relating to the external migration processes; the Bulgarian state was highly centralized and state policy was central in deciding foreign migration issues. (Local authorities had more limited functions, and their decisions were usually passed on for approval or confirmation through state representatives at the regional level). In particular, we have studied the policies that influenced the character, directions and quantitative parameters of international migration processes. The policies and measures in question have been outlined only schematically, as most of them have been thoroughly studied in the scholarly literature related to Bulgaria's foreign policy, refugee problems, Bulgarian minorities abroad, minorities within Bulgaria, Bulgarian legal history, etc. We have been interested in the aspects of these that relate to external migration and the impact on refugees' and immigrants' displacement flows in the interior of the country in so far as they can be considered as the final destinations of external migration. We have tried to give some insight into the ways in which wartime Bulgarian state policies shaped migration processes and to determine the role of the state in migration processes between 1912 and 1920.

In our statement we have proceeded from the following features of the external migration situation in the Balkans and the foreign migration policies of the Balkan countries:

- The processes of disintegration of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires caused the birth of nation states in the Balkans; the latter were the heirs of these empires, where the existence of ethnic minorities nourished national aspirations for territorial change. This was the reason for the wars of the second decade of the 20th century, during which an effective method was being sought for solving the problem of minorities and achieving national homogenization. The governments of the warring nations applied the ethic policy of the “unmixing of peoples,” based on Lord Curzon’s principle, as well as various coercive methods and means (physical destruction of the “other,” the deprivation of property, assimilation). The most important among them were the external migration ones. This was the reason for one of the types of forced migration, namely those caused by military conflicts in which intense violent migration processes took place: firstly, as the result of military action, the repeated occupation and re-occupation of various regions of Thrace and Macedonia by the states participating in the wars (Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Serbia and Turkey) and fighting for these still Ottoman territories, and, secondly, as a result of changes to state borders. This took the form of expulsion, exodus, repatriation of the refugee population, deportation, and bilateral (obligatory or voluntary) population exchange—born exactly at that time, here in the Balkans, and legitimized by contracts, which were in principle in accordance with international law.
- In light of the above, the correlation between migration policies and nationalism in the Balkan countries during the research period was evident;
- Politicians aimed to use the emigration of indigenous ethnic elements or immigration of homogenous ones as a means of nation building;
- States pursued an ethnically differentiated emigration policy.

There were a number of reasons why Bulgarian governments turned their attention to external migration. More precisely, during the wars and revolutions between 1912 and 1923, these were the problems arising from the extremely high number of refugees that poured into Bulgaria—mainly Bulgarians, but also Russians, Armenians and others. The intensive influx of refugees into the

country started with the outbreak of the First Balkan War and continued with less intensity up to the early 1930s; for this whole period this involved about 200,000 people, 70% of which came during the wars. Meanwhile thousands of Turks and Greeks left Bulgaria. During the wars, people were compelled to leave their homes either under threat or due to actual use of force or insecurity caused by a fear of being persecuted. In addition, population displacements were undertaken that were to eliminate alien ethnic groups and increase national cohesion in the annexed territory. As far as Bulgarians are concerned, this kind of policy led to the de-Bulgarization of the territories inhabited predominantly by a Bulgarian ethnic population that remained outside the national state.

THE MIGRATION SITUATION

In the war period international migrations were very intense, due to military action, national border changes, peace agreements concluded, and the ongoing policy of ethnic cleansing. Until the beginning of the Balkan Wars, including in 1912, labour emigration from Bulgaria was prevalent. It continued with considerably smaller volume during the wars, especially in the intervals between them. The state was interested in labour emigration, because its contribution to Bulgaria's national income was significant—before the Balkan Wars the income from “gardeners and other emigrants” amounted to 33,950,000 leva (1911).¹ On the one hand, this was the emigration of Bulgarian market gardeners, which was predominantly seasonal, although some of the migrants remained in their host countries for several years to care for the gardens during the winter season, while others began settling for permanent residence—especially in more distant destinations like Russia. Host countries for Bulgarian market gardeners were European countries that were rapidly urbanizing and developing capitalist industries, and needed to feed a growing urban population. As Bulgarian market gardeners produced large quantities of cheap vegetables, the authorities in these host countries encouraged and supported their work.

1 Иванов, *Националният доход на България*, 30.

Their main destination in the years preceding the Balkan Wars was (Austria–) Hungary, where in 1912 there was registered a total of 9,595 entrepreneurs (*gazdák*) and workers;² they were admitted in large numbers after the Hungarian government launched a programme in 1911 for the development of vegetable production through wider application of the Bulgarian method of production and its use by Hungarian market gardeners.

On the other hand, it was overseas labour emigration, directed mainly towards North America, which was truly significant until 1920,³ although in Bulgaria there was an Emigration Act in force (passed in 1908) that regulated mainly overseas emigration; in the first decade of the 20th century the latter was very large in size and also took wealthy farmers away from the country.⁴ After the Balkan Wars and until the outbreak of World War I, this emigration flow was quite large, since emigrants who had returned to their homeland to participate in the wars went back to America after they ended, this time accompanied by more disillusioned emigrants; some took their families with them, while others married and took their wives. During the First World War, however, the influx of Bulgarian emigrants stopped as United States authorities introduced measures to control travel from (and to) Europe.⁵

During the Balkan Wars, due to the oppressive pressure of the military authorities, there was forced emigration of a small number of the Turkish population (precise statistics are not available) from the territories annexed to Bulgaria.⁶

In the war period two immigration flows were observed. One of them was directly related to the announcement of the two mobilizations: for the First

2 See Révész, *A hazai bolgár és bolgárrendszerű kertészetek*, 10–11.

3 According to statistics and research concerning Bulgarians abroad, at this time Bulgarians in the USA numbered 70–75,000. It should be taken into account that these were emigrants who arrived in the US and settled there for a period of fifty years. Most of them were Bulgarians from the detached territories of the Bulgarian ethnos (Macedonia, Thrace and Dobrudzha). See: Трайков, *История на българската емиграция*, 6; Гаджев, Ив. *История на българската емиграция*, 24.

4 СД, 1906, XIII ОНЧ, IV PC, с. XXV-3/201.

5 Ibid.

6 Илиева, “Миграциите на турското население,” 147; Стоянов, *Турското население в България*, 77; Turan, “Turkish Migrations from Bulgaria,” 84.

Balkan War on September 17–18, 1912 and before Bulgaria's entry into the First World War on September 9, 1915, when thousands of market gardeners from Europe (not only seasonal migrants, but also permanent residents in the host countries) and emigrants from America came back to Bulgaria to participate in the wars. Many of them were imbued with patriotic motives, but not only these: the Armed Forces Act (1903) imposed compulsory military service in the event of war for the entire male population of the country with Bulgarian citizenship and capable of military service aged 20–46, and provided for disciplinary punishment in case of delay or failure. And, according to the Law of Bulgarian Nationality (1904), a Bulgarian citizen living abroad lost his Bulgarian citizenship if during a war they did not satisfy the invitation they had been given to return to the country within the given period. The citizens also lost it if they were mobilized in an enemy army (which was a danger for Bulgarian men in the US during the First World War). The other (and the major) immigration stream was that of the refugees flowing into the country as a result of military conflicts and subsequent revolutions and civil wars (the 1917 October Revolution in Russia and the subsequent civil war, the Hungarian Aster Revolution in the autumn of 1918 and the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919).

EXTERNAL MIGRATION POLICIES

Bulgaria's external migration policies from 1912 to 1920 focused on the achievement of international agreements with the neighbouring countries with which it fought for the national unification of the Bulgarians,⁷ and concerned the Bulgarian refugee population coming from the neighbouring countries and seeking salvation from the atrocities of the war and from the repression of foreign authorities. Until the Second Balkan War there had also been refugee

7 After the Russian–Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin (1878), when the Third Bulgarian State was established, and after its unification with Eastern Rumelia in 1885, parts of the territories inhabited predominantly by Bulgarians still remained beyond the borders of the Bulgarian state (the borders drawn by the unfulfilled Peace Treaty of San Stefano were and are considered to cover the then ethnic territory of the Bulgarian people).

inflows of Bulgarians coming from territories beyond the borders, but they increased after this because of the great territorial and border changes to the Balkan countries. The main task of the policy pursued by Bulgarian governments was to stop the Bulgarian refugee inflow and to return refugees to their native places in order to prevent the de-Bulgarization of the territories (left) in the neighbouring countries from which this Bulgarian population had arrived. In connection to solving the problem of Bulgarian refugees the question also arose of the exodus of the local Turkish and Greek population and of the exchange of the latter for the (already) displaced Bulgarian population.

The policies and the resulting measures undertaken concern the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for voluntary or forced exchange of population, and the instrument was the formation of joint bilateral international commissions that compiled lists of the exchangeable population and its property left in the country of origin, as well as the way and amount of compensation for losses incurred by the policy of 'un-mixing peoples' being applied.

The Bulgarian position regarding the emigration of the Turkish population from Bulgaria was determined by the fact that the Turkish diaspora was quantitatively significant⁸ and, despite the decrease in the number of Turkish population in the period between the creation of the Third Bulgarian State and the Balkan Wars due to external migrations (including the period of 1877–1878 Russo–Turkish War, about 390,000 people were displaced), it displayed increasing natural growth.⁹ This was the reason why Bulgarian governments were trying to exchange refugee Bulgarians for the exodus of Bulgarian Muslims (Turks) into Turkey. As we will see, in the long term these attempts were not successful enough. Furthermore, much of the population of Turkish ethnicity Pomaks–Bulgarian-speaking Muslims, descendants of Bulgarian Christians who converted to Islam during the period of Ottoman rule, while retaining the Bulgarian language as well as certain Orthodox practices—was also displaced.

8 According to the 1910 census it numbered 465,641 people by nationality ("*nationalité ethnique*").

9 Илиева, "Миграциите на турското население," 144.

This was not the case with the displacement of the Greek population, which was small in number,¹⁰ and the Bulgarian state had no interest in expelling it on the account of ethnic Bulgarians from Greece and thus forcibly de-Bulgarizing the Aegean Macedonia and Western Thrace.

The results of Bulgarian governments' external migration policies on the Bulgarian refugee population were predetermined by the fact that Bulgaria led unsuccessful wars and was a defeated country. Certain arrangements were reached during the negotiations when signing the Constantinople Peace Treaty of September 16/29, 1913 that would govern relations between the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire after the Second Balkan War. It included a separate clause allowing Bulgarian refugees to return to Eastern Thrace within two years. In practice it remained unimplemented.

The subsequent Adrianople Agreement of November 2/15, 1913 between Bulgaria and Turkey was considered the "first interstate treaty for the exchange of population in modern history."¹¹ The two sides agreed to exchange on a voluntary basis the population living in a 15-km zone on both sides of the common border between Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire, together with its property. Over 93,000 people were to be included in the "exchange:" 44,764 ethnic Bulgarians from Eastern Thrace to be exchanged for 48,570 ethnic Turks from the Bulgarian territory. In fact, the right of refugee Bulgarians from Eastern Thrace (whose numbers reached about 70,000 people) to return to their homes was abolished. Turkish refugees from the new territories of Bulgaria were simply put in their place. A mixed Turkish–Bulgarian commission was set up to assess the property left by the emigrants, but the entry of Turkey into the war in 1914 led to the cessation of its work. However, by this time about nine thousand Bulgarian refugees "had been exchanged" for ethnic Turks from Bulgaria.¹²

After the end of the First World War, until the peace treaties were signed, the Bulgarian government took steps *vis-à-vis* the Turkish government to return to their native places some of the Eastern-Thracian Bulgarian refugees

10 According to the 1910 Population Census it numbered 43,275 people.

11 Найденова, "Миграционни процеси в България," 11; Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities*, 20; Schechtman, *European Population Transfers*, 12.

12 Pekesen, *Expulsion and Emigration of the Muslims*.

who expressed this wish, but the Turkish authorities did not allow this to happen.¹³

The Adrianople Agreement¹⁴ prepared the ground for the idea of population exchange as a means to solve the problem of ethnic minorities in the Balkans, and was considered the forerunner of the *Greek–Bulgarian Convention on Voluntary Population Exchange* of November 27, 1919, concluded on the day of signing the Neuilly Treaty at the insistence of Greece. In July, at the Paris Peace Conference, Greek prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos presented his project of “racial adaptation” between Greece and Bulgaria, based on the reciprocal emigration of Greeks residing in Bulgaria to Greece and of Bulgarians living in Greece to Bulgaria. The Convention addressed the Bulgarian population in Macedonia and the small group of Greeks in Bulgaria. The intention of the Greek leaders was to expel the Bulgarian population from Aegean Macedonia and Western Thrace (and in its place to settle Greek refugees from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace), which was in complete contradiction with Bulgarian interests. But Britain and France supported Greece’s proposal, and ultimately the treaty was imposed on Bulgaria under the threat that the Armistice of Salonica of September 29, 1918 would be cancelled, with all consequences this would have for Bulgaria. Its implementation started on October 26, 1920 and was scheduled to have ended by 1930.

At the end of the period studied, Bulgarian authorities also realized external migration policies and measures relating to Russian refugees in Bulgaria. The contact Bulgarian cabinets had with the South Russian governments of General Denikin and General Wrangel created favourable conditions for the admission of a large number of Russian refugees, who in turn were dependent on Bulgaria’s sovereignty¹⁵ limited by the International Commission and were accordingly guided by the Entente’s requirements.

By the end of 1920 two waves of Russian refugees had reached Bulgaria. The first one was in the autumn of 1918 and throughout 1919, along with the deepening of the military failures of the Volunteer Army; it entered the country

13 ЦИА, F. 176K, 3, a.u. 1444, f. 12–13, 22–23, 50–51.

14 Along with the Greek–Turkish agreement of 1913 on the exchange of minority populations. See: Schechtman, *European Population Transfers*, 13.

15 Спасов, “България и южноруските правителства,” 18.

having come from the Russian sea ports of Sevastopol, Odessa and Novorossiysk and from Constantinople. Then separate Russian refugees also headed to Bulgaria. The first larger group of about 1000 people arrived in the autumn of 1919; these were mostly people of high social status.¹⁶ The Bulgarian government did not engage with them directly, leaving the initiative in the hands of the Slavic Society and some humanitarian organizations. The second wave of Russian refugees—wounded and military—came to Bulgaria in January–March 1920. When this group was being admitted the Bulgarian government and Russian diplomatic and military representatives were working together to facilitate the situation of refugees. The commanders of the retreating White Army intended firstly to have the Russian refugees admitted to Bulgaria and then for some of them gradually to re-emigrate to Belgrade and Western Europe.¹⁷ Because of the country's difficult financial and economic situation, the initial position of the Bulgarian government was not to accept Russian refugees for permanent settlement in Bulgaria but only for transit or temporary accommodation. Under the pressure of the Entente forces it failed to hold firmly to its position and “accepted the settlement of the Russians as an inevitable necessity.”¹⁸ In this period its external migration policy efforts to solve the crisis with the Russian refugees followed two directions: for the quota and for the maintenance of the Russian refugees. Initially the Bulgarian government was trying at least to set a quota of several thousand refugees that could be accepted; forced to change the quota several times, it finally reached the figure of eight thousand people, only later to be exceeded many times. The Bulgarian government was also trying to engage the Entente forces in the maintenance of the Russian refugees. Loans for millions of leva were repeatedly granted.

The domestic migration policy measures of the central authority for the regulation of the refugee issue mainly concerned Bulgarian refugees and (in connection with them) residents who had not returned from their escape to

16 ЦДА, КМФ 19, Doc. 9, f. 113.

17 Къосева, *България и руската емиграция*, 41.

18 Ibid., 47.

the newly-liberated lands—Greeks and Turks—as well as Russian refugees and immigrants in Bulgaria.¹⁹

At this time accommodation options for Bulgarian refugees who had come to the country after 1912 were limited. In the beginning, accommodation was arranged without any plan: refugees themselves squatted and sheltered depending on their opportunities and personal preferences as to whether to be with their acquaintances, relatives or co-villagers/co-citizens. In the course of the refugee events in the period after the Balkan Wars and until Bulgaria's entry into the First World War (1913–1915), the central authority was quickly organized to solve refugee problems. However, the creation of packages of measures was complicated by the fact that an agreement on refugees had been concluded only with Turkey, moreover under conditions unfavourable to Bulgaria. The relevant decisions taken by the central authority and the measures applied had the following goals:

To provide Bulgarian refugees with smooth entry into the country, ensuring the fastest administration possible at border crossing points and minimizing their stay there. In this case the target was to avoid crowding them at the border.

Common guidelines for targeting refugee flows to the interior of the country were drafted. Most of the Eastern Thracian refugees were expected to be accommodated in Bourgas County, whose territory was the largest and most sparsely populated. As for the refugees from Macedonia and South Dobrudzha, as well as a part of the Eastern Thracian refugees, they were directed to the newly-liberated lands (the counties of Gyumyurdzina and Edirne) where there was a large number of unprofitable properties, that had in the past mainly belonged to rich representatives of the Greek and Turkish ethnicities. On December 11, 1913 the Bulgarian council of ministers adopted Decree No. 4, declaring all their movable property to belong to the state.²⁰ This mostly referred to the newly formed Unions of Gyumyurdzina and Strumitsa, where

19 For further detail, see: Димитров, *Малцинствено-бежанският въпрос*; Караганев, *България и нейната национална кауза*; Косатев, *Тракийският въпрос*; Стоянова, "Българите в Турция," 291–302; Стоянова, "Българската политика," 57–68.

20 ЦДА, F. 242K, 2. a.u. 491, f. 46. Decree № 4 of the Council of Ministers from December 11, 1913.

the main mass of Bulgarian refugees began to be accommodated. Part of the property of the displaced Greeks and Turks was under the decree to be given to the refugees, who, in turn, undertook within a year or two “to pay the state the value of the goods given to them.”²¹ The ultimate goal of the act was to strengthen the ethnic Bulgarian presence along the coast of the Aegean Sea.²²

The measures outlined by the central authority were without a preliminary and long-term plan and, ultimately, the actions taken were insidious, due to the unstable and very dynamic international situation.

A central instrument for the implementation of the measures taken by the government was the established Central Commission for Refugees at the Ministry of Interior and Public Health, which organized a network of local refugee committees. One of its important tasks, which was relevant to the issues under consideration and on the basis of which the measures for assistance for the refugees were being developed, was the compilation of detailed statistics on Bulgarian refugees after the Inter-Allied War; the latter was realized in the summer of 1915.

In the period 1916–1920 the Bulgarian governments did not take specific measures relating to external migrants, refugees and immigrants in Bulgaria. They made policy decisions and took practical action to supply financial support only in some extremely serious cases for the benefit of individual refugees. For example, some Eastern Thracian Bulgarian refugees were temporarily placed in border villages released by the Turkish population.²³

Some district colonization commissions performed certain local activities in their efforts to shelter newly arrived refugees and provide them with means of a livelihood.²⁴ Towards the end of the war, projects were drawn up to indicate where refugees should be accommodated, namely in abandoned and deserted areas. It was also envisaged that, after the end of the war and once borders were established, the refugees would be accommodated in state properties and in newly established settlements, defined by the law of internal colonization.

21 Ibid.

22 Трифонов, *Тракия*, 224.

23 ЦДА, Ф. 321К, 1, а.и. 2222, ф. 51–52.

24 Димитров, *Настаняване и оземляване*, 20; Вачков, “Интегрирането на българските бежанци,” 62–63; Вачков, “Финансово-икономическите аспекти,” 141–51.

The Ministry of the Interior and Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture and State Property were to take up this issue.²⁵

The domestic aspects of the measures taken by the Bulgarian authorities regarding the mobility of Russian refugees were related to their entry into Bulgaria (the local authorities were delegated the task of dealing with quarantining, housing and security, and the reception and initial settlement of Russian refugees), and also to overcoming the huge concentration of refugees in coastal areas and to their relocation within the country. Sanitary stations in Sofia, Varna, Nova Zagora, Shipka, Sozopol, and Anghialo (Pomorie) were organized for the sick and the wounded. Healthy Russians were offered the opportunity to settle in organized groups in the counties of Tarnovo, Plevna, and Shumen. Due to the transport strike of December 1919–February 1920, displacement was very slow. It actually took place after the end of the strike, beginning in April 1920. Those refugees who had the means of subsistence were allowed to remain in the cities, while the rest were ordered to move to the villages and earn their living from farming.²⁶

THE STATISTICAL SOURCES USED TO MEASURE DEMOGRAPHIC EFFECTS

It is difficult to study wartime immigration and emigration flows, as statistics on natural population movements are incomplete and statistics on displacement and resettlement are not available at all. In our case, an excellent statistical source for the quantitative dimensions of the external migratory flows during the Balkan Wars and the First World War is the 1920 Bulgarian population census, when data was collected about Bulgarians and other ethnicities—refugees and immigrants—who had arrived in Bulgaria after 1912 and until the end of 1920, according to their birthplace. There is also a variation of these statistics, referring to the household population, which was recalculated in 1926 in relation to the then population census and to the administrative-

25 Дренски, "За бежанците," 217–19.

26 ЦДА, Ф. 176К, 4, а.и. 1099, ф. 53, 85.

territorial changes that occurred between the two censuses. These statistics were, respectively, published in the volumes of the so-called *Short Results of the Population Census in the Kingdom of Bulgaria on December 31, 1920 by Districts, Counties and for the Whole Kingdom* (Sofia, 1925)²⁷ and in some issues of the journal of the Directorate General of Statistics, entitled “Monthly Statistical Review” between 1928 and 1930.²⁸ We have used these as historical sources of quantitative information to study certain aspects of refugee waves of the time, in particular the ethnic structure, temporal dynamics, points of departure, destinations (points of attraction) of the refugee inflow to Bulgaria, and the territorial distribution and concentration of refugees.

What categories of people does the statistical data include that are the subject of our analysis? For 1920 we have two types of data on refugees: a) the population actually present on the basis of *de facto* criteria, i.e. it includes all refugees who at the time of the census were in a certain locality, but not those temporarily absent; this data is published in *Short Results*; and b) the household population, which means each person was counted who happened to be in the host’s house at the time of the census night, i.e. all persons present, household members or persons with different residence (from another city or town or from abroad), who were temporarily present in the household as passengers, guests, on leave, etc.; this also included each person—a household member who on the said night was outside the household—who happened to be in another location (city or village of the country), or abroad, i.e. temporarily away from his permanent residence. But the 1920 census data on refugees by household was published together with the 1926 data, which was recalculated according to new correlations and territorial units changed in 1926.

As for the character and nature of data on refugees, we would like to clarify some details about data collection and census documents containing this data. Data was filled on the so-called family or household (‘B’) card, which (except demographic and economic information) contained information on the migratory status of members of each household.²⁹ On household census card

27 Кратки резултати.

28 Месечни статистически известия.

29 Although the ‘Family (household) card B’, ‘Identity card B’ and ‘Census package B’ were all filled in, during the 1920 census the identity card was left out of the census record. For details, see: Щерионов, “Карти за пребояване на населението,” 117–23.

form 'B,' however, the term "refugee" did not appear anywhere, nor was there a question as to whether the person being counted was a refugee. Refugee status was indirectly concluded from the answers to questions and sub-questions concerning residence: the 1920 census household card comprised a question about the former residence (i.e. before the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913) of immigrants who had crossed the frontiers of Neuilly Bulgaria after the Balkan Wars. In fact, the former place of residence was always included in all Bulgarian population censuses conducted before the Second World War, if only because of the large migratory movements resulting from the wars and from the frequent border changes, respectively.³⁰ When answering the question of "former residence" the respondent indicated precisely where it was (city or village, county/district and state) and when (month and year) they came to their new residence. States were designated according to their names and boundaries as established by the 1919 Paris Peace Conference.

In the case of the 1920 census, data on refugees was published concerning not only those of Bulgarian ethnic origin but also those from other ethnic groups who came to Bulgaria after the Balkan Wars. The data was organized in two tables:

- "refugees, Russian emigrants and other foreigners" among the *de facto* population that immigrated to Bulgaria after the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 from regions and places outside Bulgaria after the Treaty of Neuilly, indicated by county (Bg: okrag, *sing.*) and district (Bg: okoliya, *sing.*) in Bulgaria as host country, and correlated with "nationality/nationalité ethnique" determined by origin/birthplace and gender;
- refugees of Bulgarian ethnic origin among the *de facto* population in Bulgaria, who came in between 1912 and 1920, correlated with a county in Bulgaria as host country, gender, year/period of immigration (1912, 1913, 1914, 1915–1917, 1918–1919, 1920 and "not shown") and former residence (prior to the Balkan Wars), the latter given by country and within this by county/district, according to the composition of countries after the First World War and the international agreements that were valid at the time of the census, namely December 31, 1920.

30 Балевски, "Основни програмни," 9.

When recalculating the 1920 census data³¹ with the purpose of making it comparable to the 1926 census data, the “Russian emigrants” were separated from those listed as “refugees,” and further developments were given by county and district, and gender.

Here we would like to provide a terminological clarification: nowadays a migrant is a person who is living and/or working in a state of which he/she is not a national; a refugee is a person who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his/her nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.”³² Unlike in our times, when “refugee” and “migrant” are separate categories, in the period examined refugees were considered migrants. Bulgarian censuses exactly reflected this interpretation: for instance, the title of the aforementioned table from the 1920 census says that it contains statistics on the ethnicity of “refugees and other immigrants;” the term “refugees” was used only with reference to Bulgarians. Within the database recalculated for 1926 the categories of “refugees” (which supposedly covered all refugees except for Russians) and “Russian emigrants” are to be found separately.³³ In our case, in the Bulgarian census(es) examined, the term “Russian emigrants” was used as an equivalent to “Russian refugees” by both the official Bulgarian institutions and the International Commissioner of the League of Nations; this also applied to official statistics, despite the existing semantic differences in content, and included not only the officers, nobility and wealthy citizens who left Russia during the Civil War because of ideological and political beliefs and for fear of retaliation,

31 These data were published in the *Monthly Statistical Review*, where the data for most counties (with the exception of Sofia, Tarnovo and Shumen) was marked as preliminary results in the footnotes.

32 There was a more specific definition of the term “refugee” in 1926, when the international conference dealing with the Russian and Armenian refugees adopted a convention, under which refugee status concerned merely stateless persons belonging to one ethnic group, and a further clarification was made in the agreement of 1928, where refugees’ rights and obligations in host states were regulated. See also: Кюсева, *България и руската емиграция*, 198. The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. See also: Long, “When refugees stopped being migrants,” 4–26.

33 Кюсева, *България и руската емиграция*; Kránitz, “Orosz és örmény menekültek,” 465.

but also the victims of forced emigration after 1917. In the present study we apply the term “refugee” broadly as it was used by the international community in the interwar period, namely to identify individuals and groups forced to leave their country of origin because they were politically excluded.³⁴ In the census in question and its recalculated household population data the variations of “refugees” and “Russian emigrants” were correlated with Bulgaria’s administrative-territorial division of the period—with counties and districts, and gender. Hereafter, when using this recalculated data, territorial-administrative changes of districts and counties should of course be taken into consideration, as well as the formation of the new county of Haskovo in 1922 (in 1920 the latter did not exist and its territory belonged to the county of Stara Zagora) and the fact that Kardzhali town and its district were attached to Mastanli (Momchilgrad) county (previously it was within Stara Zagora county).

It is worthy of note that with regard to the number of all refugees (including Russians) for the examined period, whether calculating the *de facto* or the household population, the difference in the data for both features is minimal—only 140 more people in the case of the household population, which means that it does not affect the evaluation of major demographic phenomena (*Table 1*).

TABLE 1: ALL REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS IN BULGARIA, AMONG THE *DE FACTO* AND HOUSEHOLD POPULATION, WHO ENTERED THE COUNTRY AFTER THE BALKAN WARS OF 1912–1913, REGISTERED BY THE 1920 CENSUS, IN FIGURES³⁵

De facto population	Household population			
	Refugees*	Russian emigrants**	Total	Growth
135,491	135,491	6676	142,167	+140

* Bulgarians and other persons of foreign ethnic origin.

** Refugees and immigrants.

34 Long, “When refugees stopped being migrants,” 4–5.

35 Sources: *Кратки резултати* and *Journal Месечни статистически известия*, 1928, no. 1–2, no. 5–no. 12, 1929, no. 1–no. 5.

THE ETHNIC STRUCTURE OF THE REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT INFLOW

There is specific statistical data on the ethnic composition of the refugee inflow to Bulgaria and it relates to the *de facto* population. The total number of refugees (including immigrants) in Bulgaria, fixed in the 1920 census for the entire period from 1912 to 1920, was 142,167 people or 3% of the population, which represented the largest number of immigrants ever to arrive in the country in the 20th century. 84% of them were Bulgarians; among other ethnic groups, the share of the distribution of ‘Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Finns’ (5.2%) was more substantial (*Table 2*).

Among refugees from other ethnic groups in the 1920 census immediately after the “Russians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Finns” the next most important group was that of “Turks and Albanians” (3.3%), but there were also about one thousand five hundred people in each of the groups of Jews, Armenians, and Greeks, one thousand “Romanians and Tsintsars”³⁶ (1% each), several hundred people in the groups of Germans, “Croats, Serbs and Slovenes,” “Czechs and Slovaks” and “Hungarians” (0.3% each), and Pomaks (0.1%). As we will see, the data on some of these ethnic groups brings new knowledge about their migration processes to Bulgaria during the wars. To throw some light upon the specific reasons for their emigration and to specify their social composition, further studies and retrieval of information from other kinds of sources are needed. The 1920 census data on the gender structure and on the territorial distribution by county and district could offer assistance in this (*Table 2*).

Men dominated in almost all ethnic groups of refugees and immigrants (generally in non-migrant communities women are in the majority because they live longer): the ratio of women to men varied from 1:1.1 to 1:1.6, and the sex ratio was balanced on the whole, which is a sign of family (im)migration. The situation was different in the groups of “Russians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Finns” and “Turks and Albanians,” where the preponderance of men was great (the number of women per 1000 men was 343 and 491, respectively), which in

36 Tsintsars was another name used to refer to the Aromanians.

the case of Russians is explained by the presence of a great number of military personnel (Tables 2, 3).

The statistics analyzed give no information as to exactly when (per year for the period 1912–1920) and from where refugees from other ethnic groups came—more often than not, they moved together with other flows of refugees. Thus, for instance, within the Russian refugee flow coming from European Russia we observe two hundred Jews (1920).³⁷ The 1920 data on Russian refugees aggregated statistical information from two previous waves of immigration to Bulgaria: firstly, in mid-1918 a small number of civilian Russian refugees arrived, fleeing from the horrors of the Civil War;³⁸ at the end of 1919 it was mainly representatives of the wealthier strata of Russian society who came; after the defeat of Denikin's army in 1920, many civilian refugees immigrated along with the military.³⁹

As for Armenians, it is known that their mass exodus to Bulgaria occurred as a result of the Greek–Turkish war of 1919–1922, but this refugee wave cannot be observed domestically based on just these refugee statistics, as it is not specifically reflected in them. Before it there was another exodus of a significant number of Armenians—this happened after the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire from 1915 and was provoked by the fact that the Turks, fighting on the side of the Central powers, accused the Armenians of supporting the Russia's invasion of the Caucasus. The majority of the dispelled Armenians headed north-east towards Russia and reached the Caucasus; others went to Syria and Egypt. At the end of 1918 some proceeded to the Armenian Republic, then left it after the establishment of Soviet power in late 1920; many returned to their homelands. During these wanderings some of the Armenian refugees headed to Bulgaria and figured in the 1920 census refugee statistics, according to which a third of them were concentrated in Plovdiv county, with other larger groups in the counties of Varna (21%), Sofia (8.5%), Burgas (9%) as well as Ruse and Stara Zagora (6%) (Table 3).

37 Пейковска, *Миграции от Австро-Унгария и Русия*, 169.

38 The major wave of Russian refugees was after 1920: the largest refugee group (35,000 people) came in 1921, after the defeat of Wrangel's army in the Crimea in October 1920. See: Къосева, *България и руската емиграция*, 12.

39 Даскалов, "Бялата руска емиграция," 57; Даскалов, *Бялата емиграция в България*, 24.

Jews came to Bulgaria from Poland, Galicia, Russia, Ukraine where anti-Jewish pogroms took place during the war and until 1920. One third of them were concentrated in Sofia county and the rest in the counties of Ruse (10%), Stara Zagora (9%), Varna (7.5%) and Burgas (6%).

Almost half of immigrants within the group of “Romanians and Tsintsars” were concentrated in Vidin county (more precisely in Kula district) and 19% in Sofia county (primarily in the capital city of Sofia), where they had long-established traditional communities (*Table 4*). The same was true for Greek immigrants who were attracted principally to the counties on the Black Sea coast, where the population of Greek ethnic origin had traditionally been living: 40% lived in Burgas county, with half of this in the districts of Burgas and Malko Tarnovo; 10% in Varna county, principally in the city of Varna; we see them also in a larger share in Stara Zagora county (19%), predominantly in Svilengrad district, adjacent to the place where the three borders (between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey) meet, and the districts of Harmanli and Haskovo on the main road to Sofia and the interior of the country (*Table 3*).

The group of “Turks and Albanians” was the most numerous after that of “Russians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Finns” in the period of 1912–1920, but their inflow dated from the summer of 1920. After the International Conference in San Remo from April 19 to 26, 1920 (which was a continuation of the Paris Peace Conference and aimed to prepare the peace with Turkey), Thrace to Chataldja was under the governance of Greece, and on May 27, Greek troops occupied Western Thrace. In late July the Greeks broke the resistance of the Turks to the east of Maritsa River; it was then the Turkish refugees—the smashed troops of Cafer Tayyar and a number of civilians—burst into Bulgaria. According to other sources their numbers amounted to several tens of thousands of people, and according to the Bulgarian paper *Osvobozhdenie* [Liberation] the numbers of the civilian Turkish population that passed into Bulgarian territory at Golyam Dervent, Kaybilyare (today Strandzha), Urumbegli (today Islambeyli, Turkey), Konstantinovo and Malko Tarnovo exceeded 22,000 people by September 1, 1920.⁴⁰ There is a serious discrepancy between the aforementioned number and the 4,692 people (moreover, all

40 Трифонов, “Съдбата на българите в Тракия,” 206–7.

grouped together with the Albanians) reported in the census at the end of 1920, which we believe is due to their repatriation undertaken by the Bulgarian government, although the Greek government sought to hinder this endeavour.⁴¹ Then, at the insistence of Bulgarian Prime Minister Alexander Stamboliyski, a special Turkish–Greek–Bulgarian commission established by the French embassy in Sofia was allowed to repatriate back to their homes the Turks who had escaped from Eastern Thrace and who were in dire need of assistance (report of December 10, 1920).

The “Turks and Albanians” were scattered all over the counties, with a greater concentration (80%) in half of the counties: 17.4% lived in Stara Zagora county, in the districts of Harmanli, Haskovo, Stara Zagora and Kazanlak; 13% in Burgas county, in the districts of Yambol, Sliven and Ajtos; 13% in Varna county, chiefly in the districts of Varna-villages, Varna-city and Provadia; 11% in Plovdiv county, half of them in the district of Plovdiv-city; 11% in Shumen county, largely in the district of Shumen-city; 8% in Ruse county, in the districts of Ruse-city, Ruse-villages and Razgrad; 7% in Petrich county, in the districts of Nevrokop, Petrich and Gorna Dzhumaya (*Table 3*).

After the collapse of Austria–Hungary, there was an inflow of Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, and Germans. More than a hundred Hungarians emigrated to Bulgaria after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic. They were “political refugees” or “somewhat red workers” as Sándor Nemeskéri-Kiss, then diplomatic representative of Hungary in Sofia, defined them in his memoirs.⁴² They were concentrated in the counties of Sofia (where a half of the Hungarian community lived), Vidin (10.5%) and Ruse (9%) (*Table 3*).

41 Ibid., 207.

42 Пейковска, *Спомени на унгарския дипломат*. Изв. на държавните архиви, Кн. 66 (1993), 278.

EXTERNAL MIGRATION POLICIES IN BULGARIA (1912–1920)

TABLE 2: ALL THE REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS* WHO ENTERED BULGARIA IN 1912–1920, REGISTERED BY THE 1920 CENSUS AS *DE FACTO* POPULATION, BY NATIONALITY AND SEX, IN FIGURES AND %⁴³

Nationality ('nationalité ethnique')	In figures			%
	Men	Women	Total	Total
Armenians	920	586	1506	1.0
Bulgarians	63,024	56,578	119,602	84.1
Czechs, Slovaks	208	198	406	0.3
Germans	261	218	479	0.3
Greeks	808	653	1461	1.0
Hungarians	77	57	134	0.1
Jews	936	805	1741	1.2
Pomaks	47	39	86	0.1
Romanians, Tsintsars	572	516	1088	0.8
Russians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Finns	5514	1893	7407	5.2
Serbs, Croats, Slovenes	307	169	476	0.3
Turks, Albanians	3147	1545	4692	3.3
Others	1774	1455	3229	2.3
Total	77,595	64,712	142,307	100.0

* In the census: "Refugees, Russian emigrants and other persons of foreign ethnic origin".

43 Source: *Кратки резултати*.

TABLE 3: REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS* (WITHOUT THOSE OF BULGARIAN ETHNIC ORIGIN)
WHO ENTERED BULGARIA IN 1912–1920, REGISTERED BY THE 1920 CENSUS AS DE FACTO POPULATION,
BY COUNTIES, IN FIGURES AND %

	Total In figures	<i>From them: in %</i>	Arme- nians	Greeks	Hun- gar- ians	Jews	Roma- nians & Tsin- tsars	Turks & Al- ba- nians
Burgas	5002		9.2	39.7	4.5	6.1	3.8	12.7
Kyustendil	331		0.1	1.2	0.0	1.6	0.4	3.7
Mastanli (Momchilgrad)	106		0.9	2.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.9
Pasmakli (Smolyan)	9		0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Petrich	722		0.1	0.6	0.7	3.5	2.7	6.9
Pleven	541		0.3	1.1	2.2	0.9	5.2	2.9
Plovdiv	2148		34.7	14.7	0.0	23.5	3.3	10.7
Ruse	1587		5.6	1.9	9.0	9.9	6.2	8.1
Shumen	969		1.5	1.3	0.7	1.2	1.3	11.1
Sofia	4013		18.5	4.5	52.2	34.8	18.8	5.7
Stara Zagora	1954		5.8	18.8	5.2	8.8	3.3	17.4
Tarnovo	747		0.5	1.3	7.5	0.0	4.1	2.1
Varna	3318		21.0	10.0	1.5	7.5	3.4	13.3
Vidin	848		1.0	0.7	10.5	1.8	44.1	2.5
Vratsa	410		0.8	1.5	6.0	0.3	3.4	1.8
<i>Total</i>	22,705		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* In the Census both “Russian emigrants” and “Refugees and other persons of foreign ethnic origin”.

The temporal dynamics, departure points and destinations of the refugee and immigrant inflow

For the period from 1912 to 1920 the dynamics of the Bulgarian refugee inflow can be traced independently. It is possible to do this by year or shorter period of time (*Table 4*), by points of departure and destinations. In the 1920 Bulgarian census the departure points of Bulgarian refugee inflow were given by countries and within them by geographic regions, counties, districts or sanjaks,⁴⁴ and the migrant destinations (points of attraction) were also given by counties and districts in Bulgaria; however, data was omitted at the settlement level, i.e. the villages and cities/towns the Bulgarian refugees came from and settled in remained unknown. Another specific feature of this particular census was that the 'Pomaks' were considered a distinct group within the refugees of Bulgarian ethnic origin, and statistical information on them was published separately, in a footnote below the table: they amounted to 932 people or 0.9% of all refugees shown.

The 1920 census recorded a total of 119,602 Bulgarian refugees for the period from 1912 to the end of 1920 (the data for those not shown in this refugee flow concerned 11,643 people or 9.7%),⁴⁵ which was 84% of the total refugee inflow during the war period.

One of the factors influencing ethnic Bulgarian refugee inflow was the military conflicts and hostilities on the front lines that drove civilians from their native settlements. This was exactly the case in 1912: the ethnic Bulgarian

44 Greece: Old Greece (until the First Balkan War of 1912), Macedonia (districts of: Voden, Demir Hisar, Drama, Enidzhe Vardar/Giannitsa, Kostur, Kukush/Kilkis, Lerin, Syar/Serres, Solun/Thessaloniki, and other districts from the former Solun vilajet), Thrace (sanjaks of: Gyumyurdzhine/Gümülcine, Losengrad/Kırklareli, Odrin/Edirne, Rhodos, Chataldzha/Çatalca, Chorlu/Çorlu), and elsewhere in New Greece. Romania: Bessarabia, Southern Dobrudzha (districts: Balchik, Dobrich, Kurt-Bunar/Tervel, Silistra, Tutrakan), Northern Dobrudzha (county of Kyustendzha, district of Tulcha/Tulcea), and elsewhere in Romania. European Turkey (sanjak of Tsarigrad/Istanbul). Yugoslavia (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes): Western Old Bulgaria, Macedonia (counties of: Bitolya/Bitola, Kumanovo, Ohrid, Skopje, Strumitsa/Strumica, Tetovo, Tikvesh, Shtip/Štip), Serbia, i.e. the old kingdom (till 1912), and elsewhere in Yugoslavia. The region of Bursa (Asian Turkey).

45 *De facto* population, without taking mortality into account.

refugee inflow started with the outbreak of the war between the Ottoman Empire and allied Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro (the Balkan Union), known as the First Balkan War (5 October 1912). Bulgarian troops began a successful offensive in Eastern Thrace and Eastern Macedonia and created two military governorships under Bulgarian control there—the Thracian one⁴⁶ and the Macedonian one,⁴⁷ which existed till the end of the Second Balkan War in mid-1913, for eight months and seven months respectively. Despite the presence of Bulgarian administrative authorities, half of the 1912 ethnic Bulgarian refugee inflow originated exactly from the territory of the Thracian military governorship, i.e. from the sanjaks of Odrin/Edirne and Lozengrad/Kirklareli (according to the administrative units before the war, as used in the census); a further 22% was from the Macedonian military governorship, mostly from the districts of Kukus/Kilkis, Syar/Serres and Solun/Thessaloniki. Obviously Bulgarian refugees in 1912 came from the Bulgarian settlements near the front lines and fled from the atrocities of the war.

Another factor that affected the refugee inflow of ethnic Bulgarians was the aforementioned political concept of 'unmixing peoples' within the territories detached or occupied by other, non-Bulgarian troops. As a result, Bulgarian communities were forcibly displaced in these territories: they were subjected to mass persecution, repression, and physical and economic destruction, which made them take the road to the Bulgarian nation-state. In addition, the population exchange agreements signed between Bulgaria and Turkey in 1913 and between Bulgaria and Greece in 1919 aimed to put an end to further territorial expansion.

46 The Thracian Military Governorship existed from mid-October 1912 to August 1913. In the beginning, until 15 March 1913, it was named the Lozengrad Military Governorship. Its territory reached the Black Sea to the East, the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara to the north, and the river of Mesta to the west. See: Трифонов, *Тракия*.

47 The Macedonian Military Governorship existed from mid-November 1912 until the end of June 1913. It included four counties (Drama, Syar/Serres, Solun/Thessaloniki and Shtip) and 24 districts.

TABLE 4: REFUGEES OF BULGARIAN ETHNIC ORIGIN, WHO ARRIVED IN BULGARIA AFTER 1912 AND WERE REGISTERED AS *DE FACTO* POPULATION IN THE 1920 CENSUS, BY GENDER, IN FIGURES, BY YEAR⁴⁸

Year/Period	Number of refugees of Bulgarian ethnic origin who arrived in Bulgaria every year/period			Total number of refugees of Bulgarian ethnic origin
	Men	Women	Total	
1912	1,755	1,522	3,277	3,277
1913	+22,057	+20,774	+42,831	46,108
1914	+4,866	+4,416	+9,282	55,390
1915–1917	+5,036	+4,540	+9,576	64,966
1918–1919	+9,031	+7,361	+16,392	81,358
1920	+13,755	+12,846	+26,601	107,950
Non-shown in 1912–1920	6,524	5,119	11,643	119,602

Table 4 shows that the refugee inflow of Bulgarians was greatest in 1913 (42,831 people or 40% of the total Bulgarian refugee inflow in 1912–1920). The majority of Bulgarian refugees came from Western Thrace (firstly from the Lozengrad/Kirkclareli sanjak, and secondly from the Odrin/Edirne sanjak) and from Eastern Macedonia (from the Kukus/Kilkis and Syar/Serres kazas and also from Demir Hisar kaza) (*Figures 1–2*). This year saw the beginning of the refugee influx from South Dobrudzha (2.3%), mainly from Silistra and Dobrich districts. The aforementioned refugee flows took place mostly with the end of the Second Balkan War (mid-June 1913) and predominantly in the second half of 1913, when the countries involved negotiated the division of the Ottoman Empire's European heritage, and when Bulgaria, having led the wars striving for the liberation of the Bulgarians who remained under Ottoman rule and for its national unification, was treated as the defeated party. The departure points of the 1913 Bulgarian refugee inflow were predetermined by the provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest (10 August 1913), under which Bulgaria

48 Without taking into account mortality. Source: *Кратки резултати*.

had to cede Southern Dobrudzha (the territory to the north and east of the Tutrakan/Turtucaia–Kranevo/Ekrene line, including both settlements) to Romania and was granted only Pirin Macedonia (Vardar Macedonia went as far as Serbia and the coast, Aegean Macedonia to Greece), and the Treaty of Constantinople, signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Bulgaria (29 September 1913), under which the latter had to acknowledge the Ottoman gains of Edirne, Kirkclareli/Lozengrad and Didymoteicho/Dimotika as well as the surrounding territory.

The 1913 highest peak of the inflow of ethnic Bulgarian refugees was followed by a lower one (26,601 people) in 1920, after Bulgaria signed the Neuilly Peace Treaty, when Bulgaria was treated by the victorious nations as the defeated party, and land of 2,563 km² was taken from Western Bulgaria and given to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia); this cession of land was seen as recognition that Bulgaria had forcibly occupied parts of Serbia between 1915 and 1918 and that this was part of Bulgaria's punishment. Bulgarians started leaving 'the Western Old Bulgaria' (as it was called in the census) in even greater numbers in the period of '1918–1919' and this continued in 1920. The same process was true of the Bulgarian refugee wave coming from Southern Dobrudzha, which was caused by the region being returned to Romania and the restoration of the border set by the Treaty of Bucharest (1913) after Bulgaria had succeeded in returning it for the period from May 1917 to September 1918. In 1920 the most numerous inflow of Bulgarian refugees (75%) came from Western Thrace, which was withdrawn from Bulgaria under the terms of the Treaty of Neuilly and handed over to the Entente (which, in turn, at the San Remo conference, awarded it to Greece), thereby cutting off Bulgaria's direct outlet to the Aegean Sea. These refugees chiefly originated from the region of Odrin/Edirne, which Turkey ceded to Bulgaria under the Bulgarian–Ottoman Convention of 1915 and which was later given back in accordance with the Treaty of Neuilly.

EXTERNAL MIGRATION POLICIES IN BULGARIA (1912–1920)

TABLE 5: POINTS OF DEPARTURE OF BULGARIAN REFUGEE INFLOWS TO BULGARIA FOR 1912–1920, AS DE FACTO POPULATION, REGISTERED BY THE 1920 CENSUS, IN FIGURES⁴⁹

Countries	1912	1913	1914	1915– 1917	1918– 1919	1920	Non- shown	Total
Greece	2,806	39,919	5,028	5,813	8,342	22,217	7,664	91,789
Romania	96	963	777	614	3,677	1,358	1,601	9,086
Yugoslavia (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes)	249	1,316	649	2,592	3,956	2,448	2,008	13,218
European Turkey (the sanjak of Tsarigrad/ Istanbul)	86	277	121	186	38	133	94	935
Asian Turkey (the region of Bursa)	15	303	2,633	233	146	167	103	3,600
European Russia	8	12	13	57	146	98	80	414
Other European countries	9	23	42	75	79	90	44	362
States in the Americas	2	7	9	5	3	59	27	112
States in Africa	0	0	1	0	0	8	2	11
Not shown	6	11	9	1	5	23	20	75
Total	3,277	42,831	9,282	9,576	16,392	26,601	1,643	119,602

49 Source: *Кратки резултати*.

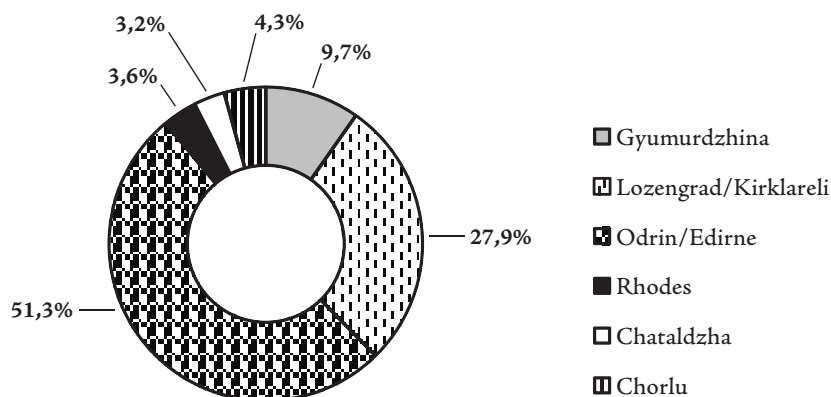


FIGURE 1: SHARE OF THE REFUGEE INFLOW OF ETHNIC BULGARIANS COMING FROM WESTERN THRACE IN 1912–1920, BY SANJAKS AS POINTS OF DEPARTURE, 1920⁵⁰

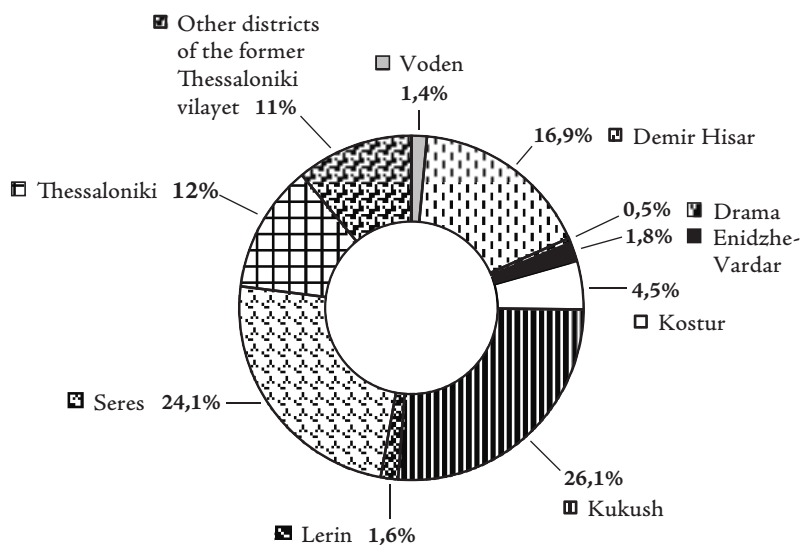


FIGURE 2: SHARE OF REFUGEE INFLOW OF ETHNIC BULGARIANS COMING FROM AEGEAN MACEDONIA TO BULGARIA IN 1912–1920, AS DE FACTO POPULATION, BY DISTRICT, REGISTERED BY 1920 CENSUS⁵¹

50 Source: *Кратки резултати*.

51 Source: *Кратки резултати*.

The largest refugee inflow of ethnic Bulgarians caused by the Balkan Wars originated from Western Thrace⁵² (Greece) (60%) and from Aegean Macedonia (Greece)⁵³ (32%); another 2% came from Southern Dobrudzha and 3% from Vardar Macedonia. the ratio in quantitative terms of Bulgarian refugee inflows with these departure points during the First World War was almost the same: from Western Thrace (Greece) 47%, from Aegean Macedonia (Greece) 20%, from Vardar Macedonia 11% and from southern and northern Dobrudzha a total of 10%.

The destinations of the inflow of Bulgarian refugees and of “Russians emigrants” can be traced by county and by district. This depended on the availability of arable land, the state of development of industry in the region and on opportunities for finding a livelihood. Many Bulgarian refugees were settled in place of the displaced Greek and Turkish population.

We have measured the level of the refugee flows to a certain destination (a county or a district) as a share of the refugees headed for a county or a district compared to the group of all refugees, first as *de facto*, and secondly as household population.

80–81% of the entire refugee inflow (Bulgarians and others, including Russians) was directed towards southern Bulgaria, principally to the counties of Burgas, Sofia, Petrich, Plovdiv and Haskovo, with a growing relative share in Sofia and Plovdiv counties and a decreasing one in Burgas county. Counties in northern Bulgaria accepted far fewer refugees; there only Varna county stood out (*Table 6*).

Table 6 shows that the points of attraction for Russian immigrants were different from those for other refugees. Thus in 1920 we find Russian refugees in the counties of Burgas and Varna, where they arrived, but afterwards they orientated towards the capital city of Sofia and its district. The rest of the refugees (mostly Bulgarians) also orientated towards Burgas county, while other preferred destinations were the counties of Petrich and Sofia; their share was significant in the counties of Plovdiv, Haskovo and Varna, too.

At this time the county of Burgas was the largest in the country, with an area of 13,389 sq. km and a population of 484,028 people, i.e. an average of 26 people

52 The region between the Nestos and Evros rivers in northeast Greece.

53 A term that refers to the Greek region of Macedonia in northern Greece.

per square km, below the average density for the country. In addition, almost all Greeks lived in this county, falling under the Convention for the voluntary emigration of minorities which was imposed at the request of the Greek government and which became an integral part of the Treaty of Neuilly, and which was later



MAP TO TABLE 6

used for the forced expulsion of the Bulgarian population from Greece and especially from Western Thrace. Burgas county had quite large reserves of state and municipal land funds, non-drained swamps and non-uprooted forests. It also provided opportunities beyond arable farming, with some other crafts such as viticulture, horticulture and fishing to be practised.⁵⁴ For this reason, the majority of refugees spontaneously settled in Burgas county.

From the statistical description it can be seen that—with the exception of Petrich and Haskovo counties—in Bulgaria's border regions (especially with Greece and Turkey) there was no concentration of refugees. The reason lies in the Peace Treaty of Neuilly, which defined a fifty-kilometre zone from the Yugoslav and Greek border and ten to fifteen-kilometre zone from Romania and in Mastanli (Momchilgrad) county, within which the settlement of refugees, coming from neighbouring countries, was banned; border areas with Turkey as well as along the Danube river and the Black Sea coast remained outside the ban. As we will see later, although not strictly observed, it constituted an obstacle to the accommodation of refugees.⁵⁵

54 Journal *Месечни статистически известия*, 1928, no. 1–2, no. 5–no. 12, 1929, no. 1–no. 5.

55 Косатев, "Настаняване на бежанците в Бургаски окръг," 60.

EXTERNAL MIGRATION POLICIES IN BULGARIA (1912–1920)

TABLE 6: "REFUGEES"* AND "RUSSIAN EMIGRANTS" IN BULGARIA AS HOUSEHOLD POPULATION (1926 RECALCULATED DATA), BY COUNTY, IN %, 1920⁵⁶

<i>Counties</i>	1920		
	"Refugees"*	"Russian emigrants"	Total
Burgas	27.6	36.3	28.0
Varna	6.5	23.2	7.3
Vidin	1.3	0.7	1.3
Vratsa	1.1	1.2	1.1
Kyustendil	1.5	0.3	1.5
Mastanli (Momchilgrad)	4.0	0.0	3.8
Pashmakli	0.2	0.0	0.2
Petrich	12.4	0.1	11.9
Pleven	1.6	0.7	1.5
Plovdiv	9.5	3.2	9.2
Ruse	3.4	2.4	3.3
Sofia	11.9	23.9	12.5
Stara Zagora	5.2	2.6	5.1
Tarnovo	1.4	3.3	1.5
Haskovo	9.2	0.4	8.7
Shumen	3.2	1.7	3.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

* Refugees of Bulgarian ethnic origin and other persons of foreign ethnic origin (excluding Russians).

56 Journal *Месечни статистически известия*, 1928, no. 1–2, no. 5–no. 12, 1929, no. 1–no. 5.

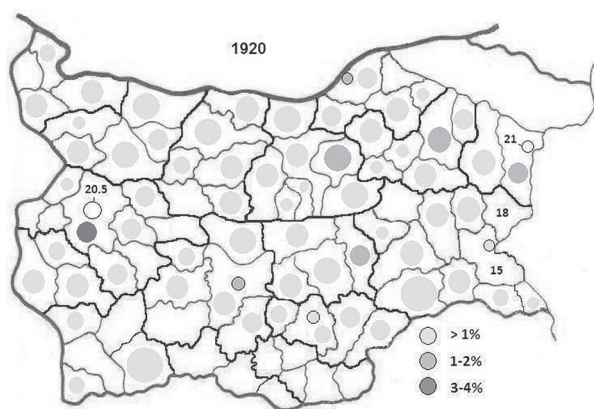


DISTRICTS IN BULGARIA, 1926

1. **Co. Vidin:** 1 – Vidin, 2 – Kula, 3 – Belogradchik, 4 – Lom;
2. **Co. Vratsa:** 5 – Ferdinand (Montana), 6 – Berkovitsa, 7 – Vratsa, 8 – Byala Slatina, 9 – Oryahovo;
3. **Co. Pleven:** 10 – Nikopol, 11 – Pleven, 12 – Lukovit, 13 – Teteven, 14 – Troyan, 15 – Lovech;
4. **Co. Tarnovo:** 16 – Sevlievo, 17 – Gabrovo, 18 – Dryanovo, 19 – Tarnovo, 20 – Svishtov, 21 – Gorna Oryahovitsa, 22 – Elena;
5. **Co. Ruse:** 23 – Byala, 24 – Ruse, 25 – Balbunar (Kubrat), 26 – Kemanlar (Isperih), 27 – Razgrad;
6. **Co. Shumen:** 28 – Popovo, 29 – Osman pazar (Omurtag), 30 – Preslav, 31 – Eski Dzhumaya (Targovishte), 32 – Shumen, 33 – Novi pazar;
7. **Co. Varna:** 34 – Provadia, 35 – Varna;
8. **Co. Sofia:** 36 – Tsaribrod, 37 – Tran, 38 – Breznik, 39 – Sofia, 40 – Orhanie (Botevgrad), 41 – Novoseltsi (Elin Pelin), 42 – Ihtiman, 43 – Samokov, 44 – Pirdop;
9. **Co. Kyustendil:** 45 – Kyustendil, 46 – Radomir, 47 – Dupnitsa;
10. **Co. Petrich:** 48 – Gorna Dzhumaya (Blagoevgrad), 49 – Sveti Vrach (Sandanski), 50 – Petrich, 51 – Nevrokop (Gotse Delchev), 52 – Razlog;
11. **Co. Plovdiv:** 53 – Pazardzhik, 54 – Panagyurishte, 55 – Karlovo, 56 – Plovdiv, 57 – Stanimaka (Asenovgrad), 58 – Peshtera;
12. **Pashmakli (Smolyan):** 59 – Dyovlen (Devin), 60 – Pashmakli (Smolyan), 61 – Dara-dere (Zlatograd);
13. **Co. Mastanli (Momchilgrad):** 62 – Egri-dere (Ardino), 63 – Kardzhali, 64 – Mastanli (Momchilgrad), 65 – Koshu-kavak (Krumovgrad), 66 – Ortakeuy (Ivailovgrad);
14. **Co. Haskovo:** 67 – Svilengrad, 68 – Harmanli, 69 – Haskovo, 70 – Borisovgrad (Parvomay);
15. **Co. Stara Zagora:** 71 – Chirpan, 72 – Kazanlak, 73 – Stara Zagora, 74 – Nova Zagora;
16. **Co. Burgas:** 75 – Sliven, 76 – Kotel, 77 – Yambol, 78 – Elhovo, 79 – Kara-Bunar (Grudovo), Sredets, 80 – Karnobat, 81 – Aytos, 82 – Anhialo (Pomorie), 83 – Burgas, 84 – Malko Tarnovo, 85 – Vasiliko (Tsarevo).



MAP 1: TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF REFUGEES OF BULGARIAN AND OTHER ETHNIC ORIGIN AS HOUSEHOLD POPULATION, BY DISTRICT (BG. OKOLI), IN %, 1920 (ACCORDING TO THE 1926 ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE RECALCULATED STATISTICS)⁵⁷



MAP 2: TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF RUSSIAN REFUGEES, AS HOUSEHOLD POPULATION, BY DISTRICT (BG. OKOLI), IN %, 1920 (ACCORDING TO THE 1926 ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE RECALCULATED STATISTICS)⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Journal *Месечни статистически известия*, 1928, no. 1–2, no. 5–no. 12., 1929, no. 1–no. 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

Let us have a look at the distribution of refugees in Bulgaria at a district level teasing out the trends based on the size of the refugees' stock in each district of the country (what percentage of the total flow of refugees headed to each district). When examining both groups surveyed in the 1926 census on the household population (i.e. "refugees" of Bulgarian and other ethnic origin, excluding Russians and "Russian emigrants") we find that they demonstrate different demographic behaviour. For "refugees" in 1920 the major point of attraction was the district of the capital city of Sofia (10.7%) and the border districts of Petrich (4.5%) and Svilengrad (Haskovo county) (5.4%), where there were extensive fertile areas; near the city of Svilengrad there was a checkpoint, and several roads intersect(ed). There were 'refugees' in all the administrative sub-units (here: districts). It is worthy of note that in most of these the proportion of refugees was usually under and rarely exceeded 1%. Within the group of "refugees" in the counties with the highest share of "refugees," such as Burgas, Petrich, Haskovo, Varna and Stara Zagora, in most of their districts the share of "refugees" was between 1% and 3%. Thus, for instance, the leading position of Burgas County as a major point of attraction for refugee inflow was determined by the high proportion of refugees in the district of Yambol (4%) and the fact that in all its districts (except for Kotel) the refugee population was between 1% and 3%. The distribution differed only in the counties of Sofia and Plovdiv, where the main points of attraction were the districts of the central cities of Sofia and Plovdiv, the two biggest cities in the country; the rest of the districts there attracted less than 1% of "refugees."

The geographical representation of the "Russian emigrants," who were many fewer compared to the group of the "refugees," shows that in 1920 in 21% of the districts there were no Russian refugees at all. Coming from southern Russia, great masses of them arrived in the Black Sea ports of Varna and Burgas, which became their major points of attraction, namely the districts of Varna-city (21%) and Burgas-village (15%) as well as Anhialo (Pomorie) (18%), where there was a medical post and a position for their internal displacement. Inside the country the major point of attraction for them was the district of Sofia-city (20.5%) (*Map 2*).

The concentration of refugees and immigrants

The concentration (or density) of refugees and immigrants by county and district is an indicator of eventual or potential changes to the demographic structure (ethnicity, age, etc.) within the administrative units (counties) and sub-units (districts). We ascertain this from the proportion of all refugees (Bulgarians and other ethnicities together with Russians) to the total population of the county/district based on the data of household population using the equalized statistics from the 1926 census.⁵⁹ As seen in *Table 7*, in 1920 the share of refugees and immigrants was under 1% in half of the districts, and in the counties and districts of northern Bulgaria refugees had a significantly lower concentration (*Map 3*, *Table 7*) than was the case in the counties of southern Bulgaria. In southern Bulgaria their largest concentration was in the counties of Burgas (9.2%) and Petrich (8.9%), followed by the counties of Haskovo (5.9%) and Varna (5.1%); a quite visible refugee and immigrant concentration of 20–23% was also observed in the districts of Petrich, Malko Tarnovo and Svilengrad; in Burgas city the figure was 17%. In northern Bulgaria their concentration was prominent only in the district of Varna city. Except Plovdiv city—the greatest urban centre in southern Bulgaria and second after Sofia—and Burgas city, all the other districts mentioned as points of high refugee and immigrant concentration were geographically located along the southern border of the country and represented a part of the territorial enlargement/extension to the south.

A summary of the external migration policies of the Bulgarian central authority, the measures implemented in the period 1912–1920 and their effect on the mechanical movement and territorial distribution of population in Bulgaria makes it possible to draw the following conclusions:

Due to military action, and the repeated occupations and reoccupations of different regions of Thrace and Macedonia on behalf of the countries involved in the wars and fighting for these still Ottoman territories, due to changes to state borders, intensive migration processes took place. They were forced, as the governments of the warring parties applied the ethnic policy of the

59 All the more so for the fact that for 1920 there is almost no difference in the concentration of refugees based on the data of the *de facto* and household population.

TABLE 7: CONCENTRATION (%) OF ALL REFUGEES IN BULGARIA AS HOUSEHOLD POPULATION IN 1920, BY COUNTY (ACCORDING TO THE 1926 ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE RECALCULATED STATISTICS).⁶⁰

Burgas	9.2	Pleven	0.5
Varna	5.1	Plovdiv	2.7
Vidin	0.7	Ruse	1.6
Vratsa	0.5	Sofia	3.1
Kyustendil	0.9	Stara Zagora	3.0
Mastanli (Momchilgrad)	3.4	Tarnovo	0.4
Pashmakli	0.4	Haskovo	5.9
Petrich	8.9	Sumen	1.4



MAP 3: CONCENTRATION (%) OF ALL REFUGEES IN BULGARIA AS HOUSEHOLD POPULATION, BY DISTRICT, 1920 (ACCORDING TO THE 1926 ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION OF THE COUNTRY AND THE RECALCULATED STATISTICS).⁶¹

60 Source: Journal *Месечни статистически известия*, 1928, no. 1–2, no. 5–no. 12, 1929, no. 1–no. 5.

61 Ibid.

“unmixing of peoples,” based on Lord Curzon’s principle, as well as the mechanism of population exchange in order to eliminate minorities.

The definition and realization of the external migration policies of the Bulgarian central authority was directly related, on the one hand, to the wartime conditions, to the refugees and migratory flows to and from Bulgaria caused by military action, and, on the other hand, to the terms and Bulgaria’s obligations set out in the peace agreements that brought its exit from the wars.

They concern several categories of the population—Bulgarian refugees who arrived in the country from the neighbouring countries as a result of the unsuccessful wars fought for the national unification for Bulgaria, the local Turkish and Greek populations subject to emigration due to the first attempts to exchange populations, and the Russian refugees, immigrants following the Civil War in Russia and the October Revolution of 1917.

There was an effort to see the further internal homogenization of Bulgarian society around the main Bulgarian ethnicity, the numerical expression of which was an increase in the share of Bulgarian ethnicity in the ethnic structure of the country’s population from 80.6% in 1910 to 81.4% in 1920 despite the significant numbers of victims during the wars. However, due to external circumstances set out in the aforementioned peace treaties, there was a need for a change in the means and methods of its subsequent achievement. In the 1920s, Bulgaria’s external migration policy took a new course in terms of the targeted settlement, regulated by legislation, of (mainly) Bulgarian (but also Russian and Armenian) ethnic elements as a means to increase the demographic potential of the country. Unlike before the wars, in the period under consideration a migration policy was set that aimed to return Bulgarian refugees to their native places in order to avoid the threat of the de-Bulgarization of Macedonia, Southern Thrace and the detached territories of Dobrudzha and the Western Outlands, which at this point were predominantly or entirely of Bulgarian ethnic population. The respective measures were ineffective; this is why the exchange of the Bulgarian refugee population with the local Greek (and later Turkish) population to be expelled was implemented, since the Bulgarian refugee population was not allowed by the foreign authorities to return to their native homes.

These forced migrations led, within a short period of time, to changes in the ethnic make-up of Southern Thrace, Macedonia, Dobrudzha and the Western Outlands⁶² that in terms of the Bulgarians have been defined as the forced de-Bulgarization of these geographical areas: ethnic shifts were caused, during which the Bulgarian population of these areas was forcibly pushed into the territory of Bulgaria, and Greeks, Turks, Romanians and Serbs were settled in their place. Along with this went a process of forced displacement of the Bulgarian population in Asia Minor. On the other hand, the huge numbers of Bulgarian refugees coming from there and heading to the free homeland (and let us not forget the most important foreign ethnic refugee flows to Bulgaria at the time—the Russians fleeing from revolutionary Russia and the Armenians escaping from Turkey, especially after the Greco–Turkish War of 1919–1922) really strengthened the demographic potential of the country: in the war period the number of refugees and immigrants not only compensated for the human losses caused by the wars,⁶³ but even surpassed them. In the interwar period Bulgarian refugees gave a powerful impetus to human resources in Bulgaria, though in the 1920s the refugee issue created additional social tensions and provoked significant economic problems related to the placement, settlement, employment and social integration of refugees. The refugee problem also affected the local population.

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1906, XIII ОНС, IV РС, с. XXV-3/201.

62 'Western Outlands' is a term used in Bulgaria for the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad and Bosilegrad in Serbia, and Strumica in Macedonia—awarded to Serbia, i.e. to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, after the First World War.

63 Put at about 140,000 people.

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THE INVASION OF THE HUNGARIAN TERRITORIES OF AUSTRIA–HUNGARY BY THE RUSSIAN ARMY AND THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE SLOVAK POPULATION

István Janek

The centenary of the Great War gave impetus to a great amount of renewed interest in the war. The events of the First World War and the events thereafter determined the fate of Europe and that of Central Europe in particular, so the emphasis placed on the investigation of this period is understandable. Hitherto little attention had been given in Hungarian historiography to the military events of the First World War in the Carpathians over the years 1914–1915, to the three Russian invasions there, to the way they treated the population of the area, as well as to how the Slovaks reacted. The data and proceedings of the period hardly ever emerge in the historical literature. Historians have tended to concentrate on the reconstruction of the military campaigns at the expense of everything else; we hereby intend to fill this gap.

The people who lived in the territories of present-day Ukraine and present-day Northern Slovakia in the Carpathian Mountains were completely surprised by and unprepared for the outbreak of the Great War. Military developments soon became the chief matter of discussion. In fact, whether old or young, very few people living here welcomed the war. Those who lived close to the border were afraid that the front would reach their homes and that they would become outlaws. As a result of Russian advancement the front line came into the neighbourhood of the range of the Carpathians and thus the northern parts of the area that is today Slovakia and the Subcarpathian region became significant

military territories. First they turned into staging areas and zones for lines of communication; later, in the north, even the front lines appeared.

With only a few exceptions, the settlements affected by the military manoeuvres were among the most underdeveloped in the Kingdom of Hungary. Therefore, it could happen that in some settlements, such as Felsőpágy (Vyšná Polianka), the news of the outbreak of the war reached the population only after the arrival of the mobilization and draft orders that shocked the local population. That is, no newspapers were delivered there. Some people only obtained the draft order when they learned of the outbreak of the war and had to go to defend their native land right at once.¹ In small villages it was a custom at the time for news of the outbreak of war to be reported by means of drumming. The chronicle of Hosszúmező (Dlhá Lúka) near Bátfá (Bardejov), for example, reports on how this happened. The drummer declared the will of Francis Joseph to call the entire nation to war. This meant that all who were of military age had to appear in front of the scrivener. The chronicle also relates that the entire settlement mourned the departure of their sons who were of military age and that “there was weeping everywhere.”²

At the outset, demonstrations of sympathy for the war were organized here just like in other townships and larger villages in Hungary. In a number of towns there were marches organized and supported by local administrative bodies, such as in Zboró, where in the second half of 1914 the local intelligentsia and the Jewish community organized a torch-lit tattoo. In front of the march rode a man on horseback, waving a flag with the inscription “Long Live the War!”, as a way to demonstrate their patriotism.³ Behind the horseman the clerks of the settlement strode in black suits, led by the local scrivener. The Slovaks watched the march diffidently and with fear.⁴ Marches like this were

1 Slepšov, “K problematike I. svetovej vojny,” 56.

2 SAP, Chronicles, *The chronicle of Dlhá Luka*.

3 Slepšov, “K problematike I. svetovej vojny,” 57.

4 It is written in the Zboró chronicle that the inhabitants were unprepared for the war in their hearts and minds. From the outbreak of the war to its end, Slovaks who stayed at home were anxious for their relatives fighting on the front. Nobody felt like singing; people only whispered to one another. When they learned that someone in their village received a letter and thereby learned that somebody had fallen or had been injured they grew very much exasperated. They came to hate letter-carriers as they were afraid that they would receive bad news of their relatives. SAP, Chronicles, *The chronicle of Zboró*.

positively evaluated by the authorities. In other towns in present-day Slovakia, such as Pozsony (Bratislava), Liptószentmiklós (Liptovský Mikuláš), Zsolna (Žilina), and Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica), similar torch-lit tattoos were organized in order to hail the war.⁵ In Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica), a march was held on July 29, 1914, the war was praised and the crowd chanted the words, “Down with the Pan-Slavists!” On the following day the police held a search in the homes of those suspected.⁶

After the outbreak of war, the issue of passports for persons of military age was forbidden throughout the territory of Austria–Hungary. Letters and telephone calls were restricted and controlled. The same was true of the freedom of the press. An order of the prime minister forbade coverage of the monarchy’s military measures in press. Preliminary censorship was introduced. If the authorities found a disallowed report, it could conduct a criminal action against the author. Periodicals had to be sent for censorship three hours before distribution—other publications one week before. The limitation on the right of association and assembly was also ordered in the northeastern regions.⁷ This was in accord with the extraordinary law, the first chapter of which determined the character and extent of power and stated that in the event of a threat of war the responsibility fell to all the members of the ministry, who could assume the exceptional authority described in law. Government commissioners could resort to the units of the gendarmerie, the police and the border police for services that were not within the scope of their normal activities. Measures had to be issued and published in the form of orders.⁸ The severe defeats and losses of the Austro-Hungarian army on the fronts in Serbia and Galicia as well as the defeat of the German troops along the Marne rendered it evident in October 1914 that the war could be drawn out. The leadership of the monarchy realized that it could reckon with a protracted war. Therefore, it mobilized its police forces and prepared them to be able to crush any kind of dissatisfaction, anywhere. With different approaches but the same aim, extraordinary authority

5 *Slovenské noviny*, August 2, 1914, 3.

6 ALSM. Vansová Terézia: Momentky zo svetovej vojny. fond Terézia Vansová. Signatúra 41. YY7, 4–5.

7 Galántai, A *Habsburg-Monarchia alkonya*, 308–9.

8 *Ibid.*, 307.

was introduced in both halves of the monarchy. These measures gave the authorities the opportunity for several abuses against the Slovaks, too. At the time of the outbreak of war, some 600 persons were considered suspicious on the territory of present-day Slovakia. In a number of places, especially in territories populated mainly by national minorities, the observation of persons by the police was strengthened, and the persecution of persons regarded as Pan-Slavists began, along with a hunt for Russian spies and for traitors to Hungary. Local administrative bodies compiled lists of the people who, if need be, could be removed to towns populated exclusively by Hungarians.⁹ The approaching of the Russians to the Hungarian frontier and the campaign against the Serbs gave rise to anti-Slavic hysteria all over the country, which rendered all movements on the part of national minorities suspicious. The secret police monitored everyone and everything. A Slovak contemporary, Vavro Šrobár,¹⁰ remembered this period in his memoirs with these words: "Both our flat and our movements were observed by snitches. If we stayed at home we became suspicious, as if we were forging some kind of secret conspiracy in our flat. If we went to the railway station, where the trains were just arriving with the injured or soldiers were leaving for the front, we were reproached for spying or silent anti-war demonstration or simply being happy with the large number of the injured."¹¹

THE INROADS MADE BY RUSSIAN TROOPS, AND RELATED MILITARY EVENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

The inroads made by Russian troops into the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary were made possible by the fact that the German and Austrian general staff had hoped that the Russians would need a long time to mobilize and therefore sent the majority of the common army to fight Serbia while the Germans concentrated on the western front. At the very outset it turned out

9 Kováč, *Prvá svetová vojna*, 21.

10 Vavro Šrobár: 1867–1950, Slovak physician, politician, member of parliament, and minister in Czechoslovakia.

11 Šrobár, *Pamäti z vojny*, 9.

that the Tsarist general staff had finished mobilization, and thus a good part of the army of Austria–Hungary had to be transferred to the eastern front. In consequence, the military power drawn up on either of the two fronts was weak, resulting in huge numbers of fatalities both in Serbia and in Galicia. Vienna was forced to fight a war on two fronts, against Russia and Serbia. They had not even finished their mobilization when the Russians launched attacks in Eastern Prussia against the German troops and in Galicia against the Austro-Hungarian ones.¹² The latter retreated to the Carpathians, the large part of Galicia was lost, and the fortress of Przemyśl, with 120,000 Austro-Hungarian troops, was encircled by the Russians on September 15, 1914. The Russians appeared in the Carpathians in late September and one could assume that, if they could cope with the mountains, they would invade the inner parts of Hungary. On October 3, 1914 István Tisza, Prime Minister of Hungary, issued an order for civil servants on how to behave if their posts were occupied by the enemy. Regulations were also set as to when and under what circumstances they could leave their posts of service and how to evacuate.¹³ The military command of the monarchy did not provide for the defence of the Carpathians, for two reasons. First, they did not constitute the borders of the entire monarchy but only of the Kingdom of Hungary; second, they did not think that the Russian army would advance that far. The Carpathians were defended by the 3rd army, which was put into a difficult situation by the Russians. The first intrusion of the Russians into the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary happened on September 24, and lasted until October 22. By appearing in the Carpathians, the Russians forced Austro-Hungarian chief military command to draw forces away from the troops originally dispatched to relieve Przemyśl. The Tsarist army was led by General Alexei Brusilov, whose units invaded the territory of Hungary via the Uzsok, Verecke and Tatár passes. The Russian inroads indirectly endangered the aisle and rear of the 2nd Austro-Hungarian army. Counter-attacks to reconquer the passes were advancing only very slowly. The Russians deftly furnished the neighbourhood of the passes with its defences, and the Cossack cavalry often carried out

12 Galántai, *Magyarország az első világháborúban*, 138–39.

13 *Slovenský denník*, October 6, 1914, 2.

successful attacks on the hilly territory covered with forests. The Russians could record successes even in the Verecke pass, as on September 30 they managed to roll back the Hungarian troops as far as Szolyva. The Russian units conquering the Tatár pass swept forward into the valley of the Upper Tisza, conquered Máramarossziget, and tried to advance along the Iza valley in the direction of Transylvania.¹⁴ The Russian attack affected the northern zones of the counties of Ung and Bereg, as well as the greater part of Máramaros. A total of 28 villages were destroyed. In Ung county the district of Nagyberezna suffered the most. The people living there experienced the worst atrocities. The Russians who intruded were the units of the 8th army, infantry regiments Nos. 257, 258, 259, 260, and 261, artillery regiment No. 33, as well as Kuban and Don Cossacks. In the Carpathians the units of the monarchy, led by Lieutenant-General Sándor Szurmay, countered the Russians.

From September 1914 to May 1915 severe battles were fought for the possession of the Carpathians. The situation sometimes became really critical for the army of the monarchy. The battles were not fought on a continuous front line; rather, there was a set of smaller and larger battles taking place, with interruptions. This was due to the diffuse nature of the area: in some places 2000-metre-high mountains and forests and narrow passes rendered it impossible to pursue comprehensive military manoeuvres. In the neighbourhood of every pass, front lines evolved specifically, i.e. there might be an advance in one of them, perhaps necessitating a retreat in another. The aim of Russian chief command was to break through the passes of the Carpathians and thereby cope with natural hindrances and advance to the inner parts of Hungary: the Great Plain and Budapest. On October 4, 1914 the town of Máramarossziget was also occupied by the Russians. They levied an indemnity toll of 180,000 roubles on the town. Moreover, the town also had to provide bread, sugar, coffee and tea in great amounts. The Russian list of demands contained 58,968 tons of hay, 49,140 tons of oats, 100,000 cigarettes and 100 horses. They would receive all of these.¹⁵ A local doctor relates in his memoirs that Cossack troops even started looting many places, taking away the pocket-

14 Szabó, *A nagy temető*, 90.

15 Botlik, *Egestas Subcarpathica*, 131.

watches of many local citizens. Near Kőrösmező, 28 watches and 1,800 crowns in cash were found together with the corpse of a dead Cossack soldier.¹⁶

The Austro-Hungarian counter-attack was launched early in October 1914. This was a great success, thanks to which the majority of Russian troops were expelled from the north-east of Upper Hungary. The troops of the monarchy even reached the river San, and on October 9 the Russian forces that had encircled Przemyśl from the west were driven away and the blockade was broken.¹⁷ On October 20, the Russians attacked with four armies from the Warsaw region.¹⁸ The Austro-Hungarian troops were forced to retreat to the Krakow area and the Carpathians. The fortress of Przemyśl again stood alone and was encircled by the Russians for good. The Russians arranged their ranks and launched new manoeuvres. The second attack of the Tsarist army against the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary started on November 17, 1914, and lasted until December 9. Again, severe battles began in the Carpathian Mountains. The Russian troops attacked via the Uzsok pass and this time reached the villages on the northern edge of Ung and Zemplén counties. They managed to conquer some 83 settlements. The evolving new situation was rather dangerous for the monarchy, as in the event of further eastward expansion the Russians could have reached the Great Hungarian Plain, where they could have exploited the better manoeuvring abilities of the cavalry and it would have been difficult to stop them after this point. Sensing this possibility, one of the Russian generals attempted to put this into action. General Lavr Kornilov pushed forward with his units on November 22 and 23. He occupied the town of Homonna (Humenné), which was quite an adventure.¹⁹ Well-to-do citizens, as well as the majority of the intelligentsia and women, escaped from Homonna on hearing the news of the advancing Russians.²⁰ The town was mostly destroyed in the course of the military manoeuvres. Kornilov moved forward, especially with his mounted units, along with some artillery and infantry. In the course of his action he managed

16 Ibid.

17 Szabó, *A nagy temető*, 91.

18 Tunstall, *The Carpathian Winter War*, 211–12.

19 Kováč, *Prvá světová vojna*, 56.

20 MNL OL, K-149 Belügyminisztérium-1915-10-22. Nos. 8473, 8718.

to capture one enemy general, forty officers and 3,500 soldiers. He also seized three trains, along with their entire cargo.

The situation on the Russian front was described by a contemporary military report with these words:

The passes of Uzsoz, Zemplénorosz and Palota are lost, the troops around the Dukla dip still managed to assert themselves, but the situation here was so to speak on the brink of collapse, too. The resistance capability of the troops was dwindling. Although they made superhuman efforts to halt the recurring attempts of the Russians, it was evident that as a result of their exhaustion and debilitation they would only be able to keep their positions for a short period of time. The troops could, that is, only be provided with supplies at the expense of indescribable hardships, and could by no means be protected against the vicissitudes of the weather [...] Lacking appropriate shelter, there could be no chance of night rest in the trenches, either, as the men did not dare fall asleep for fear of freezing to death. Troop numbers were dwindling at frightening pace.²¹

The Russian invasion brought panic to Austro-Hungarian military command. There were false rumours that Germany had already started peace negotiations with Russia, and that they would soon come to agreement at the expense of the monarchy.²² There were talk of Austria–Hungary having to hand over territories in Galicia to the Russians to ensure the peace, but these rumours proved to be false. The military situation created a deadlock for both sides in the Carpathians. Nevertheless, the Russian military command was more confident and optimistic. The report of the British ambassador to Saint Petersburg gives evidence of this: he reports that the Russian tsar was very much satisfied with the outcome of the military manoeuvres in the Carpathians, and had expressed the hope that his troops would soon be able to cross the Carpathians and thereby the road to Hungary and Silesia would lie open. The situation turned out not to be this advantageous, however, and Russian troops had to cope with

21 *Az I. Világháború (1914–1918)*, vol. 4, 286.

22 Kováč, “Karpátská zima,” 26.

difficulties with supplies and ammunition. Parts of Brusilov's units were transferred to support other critical parts of the front line. The monarchy's military command attempted a new counter-attack between November 21 and 23, 1914. The fighting was going on to the north of Zboró, more and less with success. After quickly reshuffling the Austro-Hungarian troops, a counter-attack was launched on November 28, during which the Russians were driven out of Homonna and retreated to the passes of the Carpathians. Simultaneously, in the pass of Dukla a new Russian attack started on November 28, 1914. They conquered the town of Zboró on November 30, and even Bártfa (Bardejov) and its neighbourhood on November 31. Both towns suffered heavy losses.²³ The Russians advanced in the Ung and Laborc valleys and eventually reached the Homonna–Szinna line. The Russian advance again saw panic and fear emerge in the military command of the monarchy. In this difficult situation, the territory as far back as Eperjes (Prešov) would be evacuated; here reinforced posts would await the troops. What is more, it was even considered that, should it prove impossible to halt the Russians, the army would in the worst case scenario retreat to Budapest, where the bridgeheads would constitute the new posts.²⁴ Yet the successful resistance bore fruit: the Russian march was provisionally stopped at Bártfa (Bardejov). This was at once exploited by Austrian military command and a counter-attack launched. Greater military events stopped because of the cold weather, and a certain kind of static warfare evolved between the two similarly exhausted combatant parties. The units of the monarchy would be able to expel the Russians from Hungary as late as on December 9.²⁵

23 MNL OL, K-26 Miniszterelnökség-1915-IX. res.-1586.

24 Had the Russian breakthrough been realized, the wreck of the army of the Central Powers would have retreated behind the Zimony–Budapest–Vác–Krakow line and would have prepared for defence there. This would have had unpredictable internal and external political consequences. The Russians could have conquered the major part of the monarchy step by step, and could have aided the Serbs, with whom they could have united along the Orsova–Zimony line. Romania could have entered the war by that time and could have united with the Russian troops in Transylvania. Hungary would have become a theatre of war, and Budapest would have been in the line of fire as bridgehead and post of resistance. Szurmay, *A magyar katona a Kárpátokban*, 65, 78–79.

25 Ibid.

The advance and reception of the Russians on the part of Hungarians is well demonstrated by the following instance. The occupation of Bártfa is related in the diary of the mayor, Elemér Fekete. On November 30, 1914 Fekete awaited the Russians in front of a wooden bridge with bread and salt.²⁶ On behalf of the town, Mayor Fekete declared that the inhabitants of Bártfa were neither enemies nor friends of the Russians, and said the following: "Our friends and your enemies are both outside the town. I guarantee neutral tranquillity in the town. I ask for mercy for the town and its citizens."²⁷ He characterized the Russian soldiers as follows: "Dirty brown- and fair-haired, and breathing a sickening odour."²⁸ Elemér Fekete agreed with the Russian commander of the town that a civil militia would be organized to maintain order. The militiamen wore armbands with Cyrillic letters on them, and their documents and IDs were also issued in Russian. On December 3, 1914 the Russian commander of Bártfa had explosives put under the mayor's home, just in case any kind of resistance or unrest happened, when it would be activated.²⁹ The Russians also demanded that all the horses and carts in town be put at their disposal. In Bártfa shops had to keep open until 8 o'clock in the evening, but after that time it was forbidden and only officers could go there. The following products could only be sold with the permission of the town commander: alcohol, paraffin, petrol, iron and carts. The leadership of the town abided by these rules. Notwithstanding this, on December 7, 1914 all the houses and shops of the town were plundered. Fekete maintained that the Russians looted with the permission, what is more, on the explicit order of their commander, and took everything they needed. They halted citizens in the street, and if they were wearing boots under their trousers, they took away them from them, too. The civil guard composed of local Hungarians and Slovaks reported these atrocities to the Russian commander, who listened to them but did nothing to prevent similar instances. The Russians only spared the Franciscan church and monastery. Fekete mentions that of the goods obtained this way and not really needed, some would be given away as presents

26 Slepcev, "K problematike I. svetovej vojny," 61.

27 *Az Oroszok a Kárpátokban*, 201. August 22, 1915.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

to the peasants who spoke “Slavonic” to them, i.e. to the Ruthenian and Slovak population.³⁰ In Homonna, too, the majority of the homes were looted and their furniture smashed. An eyewitness reported the following of what he had experienced: “They took away what they could use and what they needed. Bedlinen, shoes, boots, blankets, food.”³¹ They took the boots off the feet of the retired local judge and confiscated them. Moreover, they removed and burnt the wooden furniture of homes and the fences of houses. They looted the local pharmacy and then burnt it, but spared the local church and parish house. Similar cases are likely to have occurred elsewhere, too, and this might therefore be the reason why in contemporary Hungarian recollections the Russians were depicted as a primitive, uncivilized people who plundered. In one of the flats of Bártfa they slashed the furniture with their spurs, took away the underwear and sporting rifles, but spared the silverware.³² Also, some funny events happened under Russian occupation. Memoirs relate that on several occasions the Russian soldiers wanted to pay with Kossuth banknotes and were surprised to find local inhabitants reluctant to accept them. Their grandfathers had probably brought these back from Hungary in 1849.

The 3rd Austro-Hungarian army, exploiting the fact that the 8th Russian army had been weakened by the advance as well as by the transfer of a part of their forces, expelled the Russian troops from Hungarian soil. Yet this counterattack stopped at Krasno-Jaslo and the battles fought between December 12 and 17, 1914 had the features of a static war. It was fundamentally in the interest of the leadership of the monarchy to drive the Russians out from the Carpathians. Thereby they wanted quickly to make up for former fiascos and deter the Romanian and Italian governments from entering the war. The forces of the monarchy launched several counterattacks, but their success was minimal. Meanwhile, the Russians received reinforcements, too, and by the end of December the 8th Russian army managed to conquer all the passes of the Carpathians, with the exception of the Dukla pass.³³ The troops were depleted on both sides. In the course of the four and a half months of the war,

30 Ibid., 203.

31 Ibid., 207.

32 Ablonczy, *Nyombiztosítás*, 30.

33 Szabó, *A nagy temető*, 101.

44 per cent of the mobilized and deployed Austro-Hungarian troops were lost, and the staff of officers had to register severe losses as well. The situation was better for the Russians only inasmuch as they could always safeguard a rest for a part of their troops, and the northern slopes of the Carpathians were more densely populated so they found more suitable quarters. On both sides, the soldiers who died due to illnesses outnumbered those who were killed in battle. By December 1914 the Austro-Hungarian army found itself in critical condition. It was completely exhausted, and there were shortages with provisions. Meanwhile Austrian military command managed to persuade German military command to dispatch three German infantry divisions and one cavalry division to the Carpathians; they were deployed at once. With this German assistance, the Austro-Hungarian troops managed to reconquer the passes of Uzsok, Dukla and Lupkov, while the other passes remained in Russian hands, and a new static war came about for their possession. Of the 378 settlements in Sáros county, 126 were occupied by the Russians during the invasion.³⁴ The newspaper for Slovaks in Hungary, *Slovenský denník* reported on the Russian invasion as follows. "Our army started vehemently fighting Russian troops in the eastern half of Sáros county. The invading enemy is being expelled from all directions towards the border, and thus within a few days the last Russian will be expelled."³⁵ Nonetheless, this was premature optimism on the part of the Slovak press in Hungary; the battles went on for a long time.

The third Russian attack, the purpose of which was to reach the Great Hungarian Plain and Budapest, was launched on January 26, 1915. Finally, on May 7, 1915, it proved possible to expel the Russians from the territory of historical Hungary and present-day Slovakia. These battles found their place in Hungarian military history under the title "Winter Combat in the Carpathians."³⁶ The Carpathians played a role as a collateral theatre of war; they only became a main theatre of war in early 1915. It was in the Carpathians where the Austrian military command wanted decisively to crush the Russians in 1915. Much was at stake on both sides. The decisive clashes happened

34 Zatlková, "Vypálenie Zborova," 109.

35 *Slovenský denník*, December 18, 1914, 1.

36 Szabó, *A nagy temető*, 107.

between March 26 and 31, and between April 1 and 5, 1915.³⁷ The Russian invasion primarily hit the parts of Ung, Zemplén, and Sáros counties lying to the west of the pass of Uzsok. The Russians entered via the pass of Dukla. They occupied the valley of the river Ondava and asserted themselves there for almost four months. In Sáros alone they conquered 80 settlements, which amounted to almost a fifth of the territory of the county. On both sides, there were enormous casualties due to the battles fought in deep snow, amongst high mountains and chill. In the mountains the soldiers were forced to fight a static war day and night, in snow, with poor food provision at their disposal. The fortress of Przemyśl was taken by the Russians on March 22, 1915, taking more than 120,000 Austro-Hungarian soldiers captive as POWs.³⁸ The forces relieved this way at Przemyśl were transferred to the Carpathians with great speed, which meant that Hungary found itself in danger again. The Russian officers were given the following command by their commanders: "Within a week the Great Hungarian Plain has to be reached, and, irrespective of casualties, Budapest by Russian Orthodox Easter (i.e. mid-April)."³⁹ On March 25, 1915 the town of Zboró was occupied by the Russians again.⁴⁰ The Russians hoped that if they succeeded in achieving this aim, the monarchy would fall apart, Romania and Italy would join the Entente powers, and they would win the war. Meanwhile the German military command sent a further reinforcement to the Carpathians with whose assistance the Russians could be halted. Extremely bloody battles were being fought at this time in the Carpathians. The army of the monarchy suffered enormous losses and was only able to halt Russian attacks at the cost of heavy losses. Many of the Slavic soldiers of the monarchy simply surrendered. One of the cases like this resulted in an especially difficult situation for Austro-Hungarian military command. The surrender of the 28th Prague regiment to the Russians with 2,800 troops as a closed unit at the beginning of April 1915 stirred a big scandal.⁴¹ It was only early in May 1915 that the Austro-Hungarian troops managed to expel the Russians from the Carpathians. The territory which had been poor to

37 Zatková, "Vypálenie Zborova," 109.

38 Galántai, *Magyarország*, 135.

39 Szurmay, *A magyar katona*, 70.

40 Zatková, "Vypálenie Zborova," 110.

41 Žipek, *Válka Národu*, 20–27.

begin with was completely plundered in the course of the struggle. Not even after having been rebuilt could it actually recover from the war damages it had to suffer. The return of the front a number of times deepened poverty further. Moreover, in places in Upper Hungary and Subcarpathia hit by the front battles or close to them, the number of population and houses was considerably diminished.

THE SLOVAK ATTITUDE TO THE WAR

Part of the Slovak population took notice of the outbreak of war with fear or indifference, but loyalty to the sovereign and the state made many of them participate in demonstrations at which they hailed the war. In the Slovak press in Hungary the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne, was reported with awe and sorrow and was considered a national tragedy. They had hoped that if he succeeded to the throne he would transform the monarchy into a federal state based on nationalities. *Slovenský týždenník* wrote the following:

We, Slovaks, have always been devoted to the Habsburg Empire based on the equality of nations. Devotees of an empire the late Franz Ferdinand wanted to create [...] We are more in need of an empire like this than the Romanians, the Southern Slavs or the Germans in Austria. Because if the Habsburg Empire dissolves, the Romanians find a homeland in Romania, the Southern Slavs in Serbia, the Germans in Germany. It is only us who have nowhere to join. Nowhere is national future safeguarded for us more than within the framework of a just Habsburg Empire.⁴²

The leading political class endeavoured to reassure both the Hungarian government and the ruling family of their loyalty.

Our standpoint is given by the inborn affection and faithfulness towards the highest ruling family, as well as by the numerous benefits and graces which our people have received, especially in critical periods, from the highest

42 *Slovenský týždenník*, July 3, 1914, 1.

place, and, finally, it is given by that glowing and indissoluble desire to preserve our most precious treasure inherited from our ancestors, our Slovak nationality.

On behalf of the Slovak National Party and the entire Slovak community, Matúš Dula said the following:

We are commanded by our heart, mind, thousand-year-long tradition, respectful loyalty and adherence to our glorious dynasty, as well as the affection we feel towards our common homeland, not to abandon the principles held by our ancestors and to give voice to them now, on the eve of the great times that are approaching. [...] It is important for us that our country and monarchy preserve their unity, not suffer any kind of damage in the war to come, and turn out to be victorious. This is why we risk our lives and goods.⁴³

Dula announced on behalf of his party that for the time during the war they would suspend their activities.⁴⁴

The official Slovak standpoint regarding the war was reported by *Slovenský denník* on August 1, 1914. Here they underlined the self-sacrificing patriotism of the Slovaks in Hungary: "All the citizens of the motherland, including us, Slovaks, have to see and understand our situation clearly and have to make ourselves conscious of our duties. Hard days are ahead, but everybody has to face the suffering and is expected to defend our native country and the dynasty."⁴⁵ Through *Slovenské noviny* the official press covered with enthusiasm the torchlit marches of Liptószentmiklós (Liptovský Mikuláš), Zsolna (Žilina) and Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica), where Slovaks also participated.⁴⁶ On August 8, 1914 there was pronounced number of tasks undertaken by the Slovaks for the country: "Our nation within Hungary, our fathers and ancestors, have always joined forces as brothers to protect the country whenever our dear Hungary has been endangered." The author of the article maintained that they had always excelled in patriotism, loyalty and a sense of duty, and had always

43 Kemény, *Iratok a nemzetiségi kérdés történetéhez*, vol. 7, 35–36.

44 Ábrahám, "Szlovák sajtó és kormányzati sajtópolitika," 566.

45 *Slovenský denník*, August 1, 1914, 1.

46 *Slovenské noviny*, August 2, 1914, 3.

been devoted to fulfilling their duties towards their country and their apostolic king.⁴⁷ We can get a glimpse into the attitude of simple Slovak people in the days following the outbreak of the war on the basis of the events in the stronghold of the Slovak national movement, Rózsahegy (Ružomberok). At the beginning, in Rózsahegy, too, patriotic torch-lit demonstrations were organized every night, and locals were shouting patriotic slogans. They marched to the houses of known Pan-Slavs and chanted slogans like “Death to the traitors!” The participants in the demonstration were appalled if they did not see tea-lights or candles in the windows of a house or no light was lit upon their arrival to show support for the war. Not to light candles and the like was taken as a silent demonstration against the war. Nevertheless, there were no significant incidents between the Slovak minority and the authorities, and no atrocities occurred in the town, either. As time passed, this initial enthusiasm faded away in town populated by Hungarians and by Slovaks alike. The same was true of pro-war demonstrations. In places where news of those killed in the war arrived first, or where trains first arrived with injured soldiers, enthusiasm and festivities of joy soon disappeared.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that the reports of the Hungarian administration related that, with only a few exceptions, the Slovaks in Upper Hungary welcomed the outbreak of the war with enthusiasm. This was not entirely true, however. Local authorities reported the following on the farewell to soldiers in Vágsellye (Šaľa) in the county of Nyitra on August 1, 1914. “There were no traces of sorrow or reluctance. The general mood was very enthusiastic.” As the train was leaving, the soldiers were shouting: “Long live the king, long live the country, long live the war!” The person who compiled the report even mentioned that pro-war patriotism was not merely characteristic of Hungarian-populated territories but also of regions where Slovaks were in the majority.⁴⁹ The weekly newspaper *Liptó* wrote that Slovaks received news of the war with feelings of affection and attachment to the homeland.

47 *Slovenské noviny*, August 8, 1914, 1.

48 Kováč, *Pramene k dejinám Slovenska a Slovákov*, 32. Document no. 6.

49 SAN, fond Župa Nitrianská, Hlavný župan-dôverný spisy 1914, kartón 33, No. of document: 298/414.

The entire Slovak nation is not influenced or led by any other consideration, for if there were a single voice that carelessly looked for criticism of the present-day situation outside historical unity and common historical points of view, this would be crushed not only by state authorities but also spontaneously by the Slovak people, as they would prove that they do not tolerate anyone in their ranks who seeks to destroy a sense of unity and an enthusiastic brotherly sense of unity.⁵⁰

At the outset, as it is evident from the reports, the so-called *hungarus* identity was recurrently emphasized for the Slovak people. With the intensification of the war their commitment on the front as well as in the hinterland was underlined. A comprehensive article even stressed Hungarian–Slovak brotherhood:

Of the many national minorities it is perhaps the Slovaks who have come closest to our hearts to an extent that they can hardly be separated from us. [...] The truth of my words is best demonstrated if I refer to our Slovaks in Nyitra county. They have proved they can be Hungarians and they want to remain Hungarians not only in peace but also in time of war. They offer their assistance, and give their life and blood against our common enemy. [...] After all, a Slovak is Hungarian, too. He has lived with us for centuries, has for centuries eaten our bread, has lived on our territory and has enjoyed our protection for centuries, too. [...] Pan-Slavism is an empty slogan which will not mislead a single one of us Slovaks.⁵¹

Making the Slovaks of Hungary aware of the Pan-Slav danger was important in the face of Russian propaganda.

Even Austro-Hungarian military command was taken by surprise by the smooth mobilization, without any atrocities, in counties mainly populated by Slovaks.⁵² The leadership of the monarchy calculated that there would be pro-Serb and pro-Russian voices in Upper Hungary. On the order of the ministry

50 Vörös, “A leghazafiasabb magyarok,” 39.

51 Ibid., 43.

52 The Hungarian military command reckoned with resistance, as at the time of the Balkan Wars some 12,000 Slovaks of military age had left the Monarchy in 1913 to avoid having to join the army. Dangel, “Slovenská idea,” 13.

of the interior, both administrative organs and the police reported in detail on the way mobilization was running, as well as on the mood of the inhabitants and on expressions of loyalty. In the first days, in some townships, the monarchy police took preventive measures, like gathering up members of the Slovak intelligentsia who were deemed to be suspicious.⁵³ The behaviour of Slovak inhabitants and the Slovak intelligentsia in towns in Upper Hungary was monitored by the Hungarian police and regularly reported to the highest level of leadership during the war, and also before it. One of these reports relates how, in November 1914, when Russian troops were advancing through the Carpathians, dissatisfaction arose within the Slovak population and some traitorous voices were heard, but these were considered by higher Hungarian authorities to have been a consequence of Russophile propaganda.⁵⁴ The Hungarian political élite considered the Slovak national movement to have been the weakest within Hungary, and therefore it was not taken seriously. Due to their material, demographic and intellectual potential, Serb and Romanian politicians constituted a much greater danger to the idea of the unified Hungarian political nation, and thus they were in the foreground. The Hungarian leadership was surprised to find any traitorous voices on the part of the Slovaks at all. The Hungarian leadership explained this negative tendency at the end of 1914 by claiming that this can only have happened because of the bad influence of the Czech soldiers who lived in the garrisons in Upper Hungary and went to the taverns. The Czechs sang songs which denounced the Habsburg dynasty and hailed and envisaged a quick victory for Russia.⁵⁵

Prime Minister István Tisza tried on several occasions to convince Vienna that the national minorities of Hungary had always been more loyal than the ones living outside the Kingdom of Hungary. He maintained that there were huge differences between the Czechs and Slovaks and they should not be treated in the same way.⁵⁶ In his view it was a fact that Czech soldiers were reluctant to go to war as early as the beginning of the war.

53 Kemény, *Iratok a nemzetiségi*, manuscript no. 14. b. 77–78.

54 Kováč, "Karpátská zima," 28.

55 Soukup, 28. říjen 1918, vol. 1, 287.

56 Ibid., 28.

THE WAY SLOVAKS REACTED TO THE RUSSIAN INROADS

It was mainly Ruthenians,⁵⁷ Slovaks, Hungarians and Jews who populated the area affected by the Russian inroads. Most of the Slovaks lived in the river valleys of Zemplén and Sáros counties. In the townships the inhabitants were rather mixed with a respectable number of Hungarian families or families who chose to be Magyarized. The Ruthenians were characterized by a great division. There were Greek and Roman Catholics as well as Orthodox believers in their ranks. Their identity and political affiliation was also diverse.⁵⁸ The attitude of the Slovaks living in this area to the Russians was similar to the attitude of the Russians towards them in the occupation period. They were influenced by the good and bad experiences they had with the Russian soldiers. A similar question is to what extent they were aware of their national identity and conviction. In the beginning they were essentially passive towards the Russian troops. The well-to-do escaped, and only the poorer people stayed. They continued to live their everyday lives, even under the occupation, to the extent this was possible at all. A contemporary eyewitness wrote as follows: "In fear of the advancing Russians, the people drove their cattle out from the stables, killed their pigs, put their goods on carts and endeavoured to hide themselves in the neighbouring mountains and then go further to secure places from there."⁵⁹ The majority of Russian soldiers tried to behave reasonably with the Slovaks or other Slavonic-speaking populations, yet atrocities and lootings did regularly occur. They mostly moved to houses that had been abandoned by their owners. These they looted and sold the goods obtained to the local population at a cheap price. Russian soldiers claimed that the owners had evidently escaped, as they must have been their enemies. In the village called Zábave, near Bártfa (Bardejov), Russian soldiers took away the foodstuffs from one of the families. The housewife who stayed at home reported the case to the Russian commander, whereupon she was granted 8 roubles in compensation,

57 We make use of the term "Ruthenian," as in contemporary documents this was the term used to refer to both the "Rusinian" and Ukrainian peoples.

58 On the Ruthenians, cf. Tutuskó, "A kárpátaljai rutén nép reagálása," 54–68.

59 Kypr, *O vojne v Karpatech a Haliči*, 110.

and the guilty soldiers were sentenced to 5-10 strokes each in front of their units. In the same village the Russian soldier who had stolen from the cellar of the church was publicly beaten by his officer.⁶⁰ The Russians also helped the local population: in Bártfa, for example, they distributed salt among the starving inhabitants. In other settlements, bread and sugar were distributed among the people.⁶¹ The Russian military command forbade plundering; however, there were still instances of the soldiers adding to their rations by looting and confiscating goods. One of these cases happened in the village of Becherov, where a peasant woman killed and prepared the chickens given to her by the Russians. It only later turned out that these had been her own chickens, and she was compensated for them.⁶² According to later memoirs, the Russians were welcomed in a number of places, but this atmosphere did not last long. In the Slovak population, too, there was some kind of sympathy and curiosity towards the other Slavic brother, the Russians. The following case, from the end of October 1914, bears witness to this: A Hungarian hussar managed to capture a Cossack horseman who was taken to Zboró command, while a huge crowd gathered in the town to admire the prisoner. The local Slovaks stated that he was a man just like any other and spoke a language that was very easy for them to understand.⁶³ The Russian soldiers received the order to behave as friends in the Slavonic territories, which was part of the Russian propaganda that would have been indispensable in Slavonic territories in the event of a potential westward expansion in the future. The army of the monarchy took it for granted that the people living there were loyal to their native country. With hindsight, we can state that the majority of the inhabitants living there remained faithful to their homeland during the military events. The Slovaks living in the territories hit by the operations were passive towards the Russians. There were only rare occasions of treason on the part of the Ruthenians or the Slovaks. The Russian invasion only affected the loyalty of the Slovak and Czech population and intelligentsia who lived in the hinterland.

60 Krpelec, *Bardejov a jeho okolie*, 112.

61 Ibid.

62 SAP, Chronicles, *The chronicle of Dlhá Luka*.

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‘THE MAN WHO UNLEASHED THE GREAT WAR’ THE SHOW TRIAL OF *DRAGUTIN DIMITRIJEVIĆ-APIS*

Árpád Hornyák

On 26 June 1917, Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis, colonel of the Serbian general staff, former head of the Serbian intelligence service and leader of the secret organization of officers known as the Black Hand, was executed in Saloniki with two of his associates. The Serbian court martial found the colonel and his associates guilty of activity intended to overthrow the order of the state as well as of preparing and attempting the assassination of crown prince Alexander Karađorđević, heir to the throne, and prime minister Nikola Pašić.

The trial in Saloniki was characterized by contemporaries and witnesses of times to come as one of the most shameful and darkest events in Serbian history. There is little doubt that the culprits were virtually innocent of the charges of which they were accused, at least as far as the realization of the crime was concerned. At the same time, there were significant reasons for the proceedings being conducted without actual proof and for the court eventually sentencing them to death. There are essentially three opinions as to what the background of the elimination of Apis and his associates might have been.

According to the first view, it was the change in the military situation in late 1916 which caused the fall of Apis. Even within this school of thought, there have been two diametrically opposed opinions. One claims that Apis' execution was necessitated by his intention to make peace. Proponents of this view maintain that he negotiated with the Central Powers and was preparing for

treason. Therefore, he can be accused of defeatism and the destruction of the Serbian army, an easily defensible standpoint for the Serbian government and the crown prince, and one meant to explain the necessity of the liquidation of the colonel, primarily to the French.¹

The other opinion is a bit more complex. This claims that the colonel had to die because his death would facilitate a separate peace between Serbia and the Central Powers. By sacrificing the colonel, who was blamed for killing Francis Ferdinand and thus made responsible for unleashing the war, Serbia could have won Vienna's goodwill.

Nevertheless, this claim can hardly be upheld. It implies that the Serbian government would have taken responsibility for unleashing the war by accusing Apis: he was, after all, a Serbian officer, indeed a very high-ranking one. On the other hand, the Black Hand, even if it was depicted as a completely secret organization, established contact with the government right after it was established. It also announced its foundation and purposes. Consequently, the responsibility of the government could easily have been called to account. No wonder these charges were not mentioned in the proceedings. He was, however, in the greater interest of Serbia, forced to sign a declaration on 28 March 1917, shortly before his execution, in which the colonel admitted to having prepared the assassination of Francis Ferdinand.²

Linked to these, a further, not officially mentioned charge was also filed. According to this, Apis had intended to unleash the war. This charge can also be refuted; after all, as a soldier, an officer of the general staff, the colonel must have been aware that his country was not in a position to start a new war after having been exhausted in the Balkan Wars, especially not against the Monarchy, which was much stronger. Serbia first had to regain strength and settle its affairs in the newly acquired provinces, i.e. Macedonia and Kosovo.³ This

1 There is, however, no actual proof of this, even if we know that some Serbian diplomats who were close to the Black Hand organization were on the lookout for links with Berlin. Mitrović, *Istorija Srpskog naroda*, 133.

2 Živanović, "Pukovnik Apis", 558–60.

3 "We need some years of rest but then we will return to you"—Apis said to his reliable confidant, the Bosnian Moslem Serb, Muhamed/Mehmed Basić shortly after the Balkan wars. Pribičević, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, 240.

certainly did not mean that it had abandoned the idea of annexing further territories to Serbia or that it would not have considered the assassination. Francis Ferdinand constituted an outspoken danger to Serbian national goals inasmuch he represented the concept of a federal reorganization of the empire which for Serbia would have been tantamount to the enduring or final loss of the territory of Bosnia.

Others saw the other reason for the fall of the colonel in the personal conflicts between the crown prince and Apis. Personal factors can never be totally ignored; this, however, would certainly not have been enough to conduct proceedings against the colonel and his associates. Crown prince Alexander, heir to the crown, was an extraordinarily conceited and proud man who tried to obtain absolute power. Among other factors, it was the actions of Apis that prevented him from achieving this aim. This in itself provided enough grounds for him not to sympathize with the colonel, who had a low opinion of his would-be ruler and made no attempt to conceal this. Apis and his friends referred to the crown prince, in belittling terms, as “that kid”, while he called Pašić “Judas”. This means that they thought of the heir to the throne as unfit and too immature to reign, while regarding the prime minister as a traitor to national interests.⁴ On a number of occasions the colonel offended Alexander’s honour as regent, which the latter was unable to counter. The strengthened position of Apis following the Balkan Wars and the embedded nature of his organization in political power circles made retaliation impossible. Alexander, however, did not forgive and forget. When the opportunity came to settle the score, he did not show mercy.⁵

Thereby we have arrived at the third, most important and most likely cause of Apis’ demise, the domestic political power struggle. After the elimination of the Obrenović dynasty in 1903,⁶ three fundamental power factors evolved in

4 *Istorija Srpskog naroda*, 131.

5 Karađorđević, *Istina o mome životu*, 360–61.

6 On 11 June 1903 a group of conspiratorial officers led by Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis murdered Alexander Obrenović, King of Serbia, and his wife, Draga Mašin, and helped the rival Serbian dynasty of the Karađorđević to power. The conspirators were dissatisfied with the foreign policy of Alexander Obrenović, and resented his morganatic marriage to one of the ladies-in-waiting of his mother, the widow of an engineer.

Serbian political life. One was the Radical Party that had earlier been neglected and then came to play a determining role after the change of dynasties, along with its leader, Nikola Pašić, who single-handedly embodied both the party and the government. The two other political factors were the two groups in the officers' staff of the Serbian army, the Black Hand, as mentioned earlier, and the White Hand, formed in opposition to it. The core of both groups was made up of the officers who planned and realized the assassination of 1903. Several of these officers were dissatisfied with the situation following the change of dynasty, in which the spectre of the assassination, Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis, assumed too much power and influence in Serbian political life, especially in his command of the army. The disgruntled officers gathered around the regent, Alexander. They were joined by those officers who, although they had originally sided with the Obrenović dynasty and were consequently opposed to the 1903 plot, nevertheless accommodated themselves to the new situation and hurried to please the new royal family. They were the ones who formed the third political power, the so-called White Hand group, which could be regarded as a kind of military *junta*.⁷ The political parties endeavoured to exploit these alignments of these officers for their own purposes. Nonetheless, it was not always clear who carried the gun and who made use of whom.

It was after the 1908 annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular that the conspirators strengthened their positions. Apis became their unambiguous leader. He at that time was already leader of the intelligence department of the Serbian general staff. The military career of Apis,⁸ who was born in 1876, started to soar in 1903, after he had become one of the leading figures of the officers' conspiracy to overthrow the Obrenović dynasty. His charismatic personality, militant nationalism and natural ability to conspire—as he was characterized by one of his contemporaries⁹—as good as destined him for leadership. His national commitment was unquestioned; he envisioned the earliest possible unification of Serbian territories and the Serbian nation. As early as in 1906 he joined a secret committee in Macedonia which aimed to defend these territories against Bulgarian claims. Afterwards, on 9 May 1911,

7 *Istorija Srpskog naroda*, 129.

8 His unusual physical strength earned him this name at school.

9 Jovanović, *Moji Savremenici*. Cited by Bataković, "The Salonica Trial 1917", 278.

he established one of the most infamous secret organizations in world history, the secret officers' group called 'Union or Death'—more commonly known as the Black Hand. Not only soldiers but also civilians could join this organization, which, as its name suggests, had as its goal the unification of the Serbian nation and the Serbian lands. What is more, it was not even necessary for someone to be of Serbian origin in order to join it: it was enough if they were concerned about the fate of those parts of their nation that lived under foreign rule and were ready to fight for them. This explains how there were Croatian members of the organization, who considered the programme of Serbian national unification compatible with the idea of southern Slavonic (Yugoslav) unity.¹⁰ Officially the head of the intelligence service, unofficially the leader of this secret organization, for his national objectives Apis established widespread connections with the southern Slavs living in the Monarchy.

In the beginning the regent, Alexander, also supported the Black Death: he consented to its establishment and put a large amount of money at its disposal.¹¹ The value of this *beau geste* is nevertheless decreased by the fact that he mainly did it out of compulsion, as he lacked the means necessary to act against them. Undoubtedly, however, the establishment of the organization involved promising possibilities from the point of view of the Serbian nation. Some members of the government estimated that the foundation of the organization would help work on national issues to become more efficient, as there were talented and determined individuals in the movement prepared for all kinds of sacrifice. Meanwhile, it was cause for concern that these officers very much intended to meddle with politics, wanted to have a say in governing the country, and were eager to exercise an impact on domestic affairs and the policy of the government.¹² The strong cause for concern is well demonstrated by the affair of the minister of foreign affairs, Milan Milovanović, involving Ljubomir S. Jovanović, the proprietor of the newspaper *Piedmont*, who was a co-founder of Black Hand and author of its founding document, and, next to Apis, the leading figure of this organization. It was to him or rather to his newspaper that Alexander transferred the significant sum of 20,000 dinars as mentioned

10 Bataković, "The Salonica Trial 1917", 277.

11 Pribičević, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, 244.

12 Ibid.

above. Jovanović visited the minister of foreign affairs in spring 1912, around the time of the formation of the Balkan alliance, in order to take him to task regarding the planned alliance with the Greeks and Bulgarians, one that also concerned Macedonian territories. Turning to the question of the arsenal and the money needed for it, he put a bomb on the table and warned the minister with the following words: “The organization has sent me to warn you to do what the interest of the nation demands, otherwise we will kill you and everybody who is in our way”.¹³

Behind the scenes, the struggle between the Black Hand, the White Hand, and the radicals—that is, to simplify rather, between Apis, Alexander and Pašić—was going on. The radicals were legitimate, as they had come to power by means of elections, according to the constitution. Similarly, Alexander could claim legitimacy, although he severely transgressed the rights bestowed on the regent by the constitution, whereas the Black Hand clearly acted outside of the framework of constitutionalism.¹⁴

SETTLING THE SCORE

The main reasons for the conflict between the group led by Apis and the government, which had become more and more acute by 1913, were the way the newly-acquired territories (Kosovo and Macedonia) were being governed, as well as the disagreement regarding the new *status quo*. The government wanted to introduce civil administration to the territories, whereas some

13 Meštrović, *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje*, 26. The famous sculptor of southern Slavonic (Croatian) origin recorded another case, as well; indeed, this was on the basis of the testimony of the elder brother of the regent, Prince George. According to this, the prince was an earwitness when Apis asked King Peter to give Pašić the order to push through a bill in parliament; the ruler refused to do so, citing his oath to the constitution whereby he was obliged to let the parliament and the government operate freely. In answer to this, Apis started to hit the table with his fist, shouting “you have to do what we want, you dog, for it was us who enthroned you”. On hearing this, George and his younger brother, Alexander, the would-be regent, ran in from the other room to liberate their father from the hands of Apis, who from the voices heard they thought had physically maltreated their father, the king. Ibid. 86.

14 *Istorija Srpskog naroda*, 130–31.

military circles, primarily those who had gathered around Apis, envisaged the solution as the establishment of military administration. In the course of these debates the Black Hand organization even considered a *coup d'état*. This was probably when the radicals and the heir to the throne hit on the idea of liquidating Apis.¹⁵ The strength of the Black Hand was significantly increased by the prestige it gained during the two Balkan wars. The members of the organization excelled in the war, not only as high-ranked officers but also as the commanders of irregular troops, and they appeared in the eyes of the public and the leaders of the army alike as committed patriots and brilliant soldiers. Thanks to all these factors, an organization that numbered just a few hundred people rose to an exceptional position within Serbian political life.¹⁶ Meanwhile, their radicalism on the national question, as well as in the timing of the unification, along with their intolerance, disregarding international circumstances, inevitably led to clashes with the governing radical party. The settling of the score was imminent, yet the outbreak of the war prolonged it long enough for the contrasts to come to light, with multiplied strength on the Saloniki front after the evacuation and the collapse.

Serbia, which had effectively resisted the Monarchy, collapsed in October 1915. Both the government and the troops were forced to leave the country; they reached the sea through the Albanian mountains, surrounded and attacked by less than friendly Albanian tribes, and decimated by typhus, starvation and frost. Thence they were transported on Allied ships to the island of Corfu. Here Serbian statehood, its parliament, government and most important institutions were re-established, while the army was redeployed in the Saloniki theatre of operations in late 1916.¹⁷

Understandably, in exile the conflicts that had existed prior to the war only intensified. The members of the Black Hand blamed the government and Pašić for the collapse. They maintained that a more vigorous policy in foreign affairs and a war against the Bulgarians could have prevented the collapse.¹⁸ Apis did not conceal his opinion that after the end of the war, when they returned to

15 Bataković, “The Salonica Trial 1917”, 280.

16 Ibid., 278.

17 *Istorija Srpskog naroda*, 126.

18 Pribičević, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, 244.

Serbia, the time would come to settle the score. He refused the crown prince's offer to form a military government led by *Vojvoda* Živojin Mišić, claiming he had not overthrown the system back in 1903 to plant a similar one in its stead.¹⁹ Political conflicts had deteriorated into ruthless trench combat and then a settling of scores. The loser in the rivalry among the three groups turned out to be the Black Hand, under the leadership of Dragutin Dimitrijević-Apis, who at that time was the deputy chief of general staff of the Third Army.

The settling of the score that had been maturing for years came to be realized outside Serbia, on neutral territory, in exile, where the positions of the government and the regent were more advantageous. The talks for a separate peace with the Monarchy which started around this time seemed to prove the necessity for retaliation. Provided the negotiations were successful, they could have returned to the country within a short period of time, and Apis would have had the opportunity to realize his threat, one he did not have while still abroad. After all, while in wartime he depended on the goodwill and financial aid of the Allies, he could hardly reckon with their support and their willingness to acknowledge this new state of affairs.²⁰

The settling of the score was carefully prepared. The first step was the dismissal of *Vojvoda* Radomir Putnik, who was known as the chief supporter of the organization, from the leadership of the general staff. Later, when the Serbian army was reorganized, the members of the Black Hand were distributed among the various troops. Some of them were sent directly to Russia to organize the southern Slav troops, which had deserted. One of their important leaders, *Vojvoda* Vuk, was killed in battle, and the ability of their members was continuously decreasing.²¹

The regent endeavoured to exploit the ensuing situation, which was favourable for him, by joining forces with Pašić, and finally to settle the score with the dangerous organization. They believed they could count on the backing of the Allies, especially the French, to whom the members of the Black Hand could be portrayed as defeatists and the retaliation against them could

19 Bataković, "The Salonica Trial 1917", 285. *Vojvoda* Mišić was known as a resolute opponent of Black Hand.

20 Pribičević, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, 248.

21 Ibid., 250.

be portrayed as the liquidation of destructive forces thanks to which common military efforts would be protected and the Saloniki front saved.²² Alexander and Pašić correctly assessed the expected French reaction: they succeeded in gaining the consent of the chief of the French general staff, Maurice Sarrail, to the arrest of Apis and his associates. The path to the elimination of the organization was thus clear.²³

THE TRIAL

The proceedings were officially started upon the initiative of the minister of the interior, Ljuba Jovanović, after the colonel had been arrested in December 1916 on the charge that back in spring 1916 he had planned a *coup d'état* and an attempt against prime minister Nikola Pašić. Later this was complemented with the charge of the September 1916 attempt against the regent. The latter became necessary, as in the first case they could merely be sentenced to 15 to 20 years in prison, whereas if found guilty on the second charge the death penalty was also a possibility.

The accusation, originally of a few officers only, soon turned into the liquidation of the Black Hand, of this secret, yet, as we have seen, not at all unknown organization. Along with the those arrested, a further 124 officers were placed under close examination. A number of voluntaries and civilians from the territories of the Monarchy populated by southern Slavs were also arrested. The accused officers were transported to detention camps in Greece and the French colonies in the Maghreb.²⁴

Nevertheless, it was difficult to find acceptable charges, and even more complicated to find proof to support these. Although, after the arrest, the statute of the Black Hand was found, it would have been rather difficult to base the charge on this. After all, it was a patriotic organization, the targets of which were commonly known, just as the ‘cultural revolutionary struggle’ was known as one of its methods. This did not offer much of a case, however, even

22 Pribičević, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, 260.

23 Bataković, “The Salonica Trial 1917”, 286.

24 *Istorija Srpskog naroda*, 128.

though the accusers tried to interpret this by claiming that, whereas the revolutionary war was a patriotic act beyond the borders of Serbia, it was a seditious one within Serbia. This, as we have seen, however, was only sufficient for a sentence of 15 to 20 years in prison. This is how the charge of the attempt against the heir to the throne came to the fore.

The content of the indictment can be summed up in three points:

- 1) The colonel and his organization planned a murder attempt against the heir to the throne. They had the intention to kill prime minister Nikola Pašić as well, so as to overthrow the government and the constitutional order headed by the Karađorđević dynasty. Instead of the constitutional monarchy, they wanted to promulgate a form of government in which 10–15 selected people would govern, and all those who might stand in their way would be removed by them. The culprits were all members of the secret organization Black Hand, which, although it presented itself as a patriotic organization, was in reality a conspiratorial one.
- 2) Rade Malobabić and Muhamed/Mehmed Bašić made an attempt to kill Alexander, the heir to the throne, on 11 September 1916.
- 3) Major Ljubomir Vulović had to answer charges of insubordinate behaviour, and of repudiating an order from his superior.

The arrested officers and the further 10 persons under arrest were detained in a building specifically designed for this purpose on the ominously-named Cassandra Street. They were accommodated in such a way that they could not meet or see one another and were unable to communicate with each other.²⁵ The choreography of the trial could have served as a model for those arranging

25 The trial took place in the same street, in one of the classrooms of the former Greek school. The series of trials began on 20 April 1917 and ended on 5 June of the same year. The sessions started at 8 in the morning. At 10 o'clock there was a break of a quarter of an hour and the morning session concluded at noon. The afternoon session began at 3 p.m. and the trial on the given day finished with a short, fifteen-minute break at 6 p.m. A total of 55 sessions took place, of which 18 were devoted to the hearing of witnesses and 5 to the reading of documents. Eventually, on the basis of a final plea, the defendants were also allowed to speak. Živanović, "Pukovnik Apis", 155.

the show trials of later eras; it may well be that it did. The defence lawyers were virtually excluded from the trial, their role restricted to mere decoration in preserving the appearance of the rule of law. They were not allowed to talk to their *protégés* either in private or in the presence of guards.²⁶ It can be evident that like this it was rather difficult to defend them effectively. To make matters worse, the accused were deprived of their right to choose their defence lawyers themselves.

According to regulations, a military defendant could only be represented by an active officer of the barracks where the trial was taking place, irrespective of the branch. That is, no professional lawyers could act as defence counsel at military courts. As the war was going on, however, reservist officers could act as lawyers for the defence, too, whereby the participation of persons versed in law became possible. This is what Apis and his associates tried to exploit, along with involving politics in the proceedings, not that this made any difference to the outcome. This is why their defence counsel was composed of lawyers who served in the war as reservist officers and who had good contacts with opposition parties.²⁷

These efforts, however, were easily circumvented by the prosecution and by the authorities, as the moment they nominated someone in this way, he would be transferred from Saloniki to somewhere else. In the end a list was presented to the defendants with the names of the defence lawyers they could choose. The Saloniki trial was also irregular in that no witnesses for the defence were heard. It was exclusively the prosecution and the court that ordered witnesses to be summoned. In fact, the prosecutors originally intended to summon only 29 witnesses. Eventually, in the course of the proceedings, however, a total of 108 witnesses were called to the stand.²⁸ The sessions were public, and the correspondents for the Serb press in exile were sitting in the room. Thus the room was practically filled by the witnesses, the defendants, the judges and the gendarmerie. Interested parties and ‘civilians’ were hardly present. Those

26 Živanović, “Pukovnik Apis”, 165.

27 Ibid.

28 Živanović, “Pukovnik Apis”, 169. There was a would-be inglorious political actor among them, Puniša Račić, the person who “beheaded” the Croatian Peasants’ Party. He shot and injured 5 leaders of the party in the Yugoslav Skupština in 1928.

who still wanted to follow the proceedings live could do so in the corridors or the courtyard of the building. Those who were present, however, claimed that the circle of interested parties was carefully selected. According to an evidently biased statement, only dubious underworld figures were to be found knocking together in the yard, spying with on whomever they could with cutting glances, so only a few of those who sympathized with the defendants actually risked being present in person.²⁹ Eventually, the court found the defendants guilty on all three charges and sentenced the chief defendants to death. All the defendants had the right to appeal the sentences, and they all did so within 48 hours. Possessing regal rights, regent Alexander could have granted them a pardon, but he did not do so.³⁰

In his last letter, in his last will and testament, Apis, considering himself a victim, accepted his fate: "Although both courts condemned me to death and the Crown did not grant me a pardon, I die an innocent man, in the persuasion that my death is important for the higher interests of Serbia. The tranquillity of my spirit is founded upon this conviction, with which I am confronting my approaching death in my last hours. May Serbia be happy and fortunate, and may our mission of unifying all Serbs and the southern Slavs come true, whereby I will be happy and fortunate after my death..."³¹

Many protested against the sentence: several ministers handed in their resignation, and George, Alexander's elder brother, also tried to intervene on behalf of Apis, but none of this bore any fruit whatsoever.³² The resolute regent did not yield even to pressure from the Great Powers and, with the aim of preventing further pressure, and respecting the wish of the French commander-

29 Živanović, "Pukovnik Apis", 158.

30 Actually, it was only in the case of Apis and two of his associates that he did not do so. In the case of the others, he mitigated death penalties to 20 years in prison. (In one case he raised the sentence from 15 years to 20 years.) Živanović, "Pukovnik Apis", 564.

31 Ibid., 545.

32 Đorđe Karađorđević, the elder brother of Alexander the regent, who thus had been the expected heir to the throne until he was forced to renounce his right in 1909, visited Alexander in Saloniki, despite their understandably strained relations, which had prevailed since childhood and intensified after his forced renunciation. He asked his younger brother to grant Apis and the other culprits a pardon, but Alexander did not want to hear of this. Karađorđević, *Istina o momeživotu*, 361.

in-chief to end the matter as soon as possible, he had the execution carried out on 26 June.³³

The trial was a typical instance of a show trial staged with a definite political purpose, and had it especially significant political consequences. As Serbian historian Dušan T. Bataković put it, in slightly emotive but apposite fashion, "amidst the domestic struggles and the delicate international situation, the death of colonel Apis and the elimination of the organization became an unexpected preliminary condition of the unification as a prophecy fulfilling itself".³⁴ By the end of the trial the organization of the Black Hand had been eliminated. Serbian domestic politics, which had previously had three factors, was now essentially reduced to two: Alexander, the regent, as the heir to the throne, and prime minister Nikola Pašić, the leader of the radicals.

REHABILITATION

After the Great War, and in the columns of various dailies and periodicals, the desire to have Apis and his companions rehabilitated, and to clarify in the course of new legal proceedings what had actually happened, emerged a number of times. During the reign of the Karađorđević dynasty, which ordered the liquidation, however, this could understandably not happen.³⁵

33 Bataković, "The Salonica Trial 1917", 289.

34 Ibid., 293.

35 Although Apis and his associates would later be acquitted and rehabilitated, the colonel and his circle were far from being innocent as lambs in general. This is testified to by the statement of the Chetnik leader Kosta Pećanac made before his death. He was the leader of the resistance that unfolded during World War I. In his earlier hearing he emphasized that he had volunteered to organize the resistance and the Chetnik movement in Serbia because he felt eligible for this task. In the testimony he made before his death in 1933, however, he admitted to having actually applied for this position because it allowed him to flee Saloniki to escape the revenge of the Black Hand. Apis and his comrades tried to rope him in, to overthrow Alexander, and to make a separate peace with the Germans, against whom the Entente powers had no chance—Apis' circle tried to persuade him, he said. (Let us not forget that this was the time of the collapse of Serbia, when the Serbian army retreated via Albania—Á. H.) They continued their intrigues in Saloniki, too, where they visited him again and asked him to join the plot. He refused to do so, and, although he vowed not to betray them, "nonetheless, I was certain that

In his book, written in emigration, on the dictatorship of King Alexander, Svetozar Pribičević predicted that, one day, when “circumstances will change in our country and there will be a government based on the free will of the people, the trial of Saloniki will have to be revised and the victims and the members of their families will have to receive full moral and satisfactory material compensation.”³⁶

This happy era came after the Second World War. In 1953, in order to expose the truth, and upon the order of the minister of interior, Alexander Ranković, of the secretariat of the ministry of interior of the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia, initiated a retrial at the office of the public prosecutor of the People’s Republic of Serbia. As could be expected, the result was an acquittal. Almost exactly 36 years after the execution of Apis and his associates, the court established that they had not been guilty of the charges that had been brought against them, that they had been sentenced and executed as innocent men, and the verdicts of the Saloniki court martial were overruled and repealed.³⁷ To this day, however, no moral restitution or financial compensation for the families of the victims has taken place.

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I was keeping my head in a bag. 3 or 4 days later I applied for the job in order to go to Serbia and thus get rid of the conspirators.” Mitrović, *Ustaničke borbe u Srbiji*, 160–61.

36 Pribičević, *Diktatura kralja Aleksandra*, 273.

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THE WAR IN PICTURES: PETER DARVINGOV'S FUND AS A SOURCE OF VISUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Ruja Simeonova and Chavdar Vetov

When the First World War broke out in 1914, Bulgaria declared neutrality. Over time the majority of the political and military élite realised that the kingdom could not stay away from the big clashes. Bulgarian involvement was predetermined by striving for national union and for the accession of the territories with ethnic Bulgarian population that had, under international treaties, remained within the boundaries of the neighbouring countries.

This led to the decision on the mobilisation of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia and Edirne, just like in the previous Balkan War of 1912, when the Macedonian–Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps was formed. In January 1915 the Corps' activists Todor Alexandrov and Alexander Protogerov asked the defence minister to assist in the formation of a military unit, consisting mainly of Bulgarians from Macedonia and Edirne.

The experienced officer Peter Darvingov¹ (*Figures 1 and 2*), Chief of Staff of the Macedonian–Adrianopolitan Volunteer Corps, was assigned by T. Alexandrov and A. Protogerov, who were familiar with his military and administrative skills,

1 Peter Georgiev Darvingov (1875–1958): Bulgarian army colonel, military historian and a corresponding member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1932); born in Kukush. He studied at the Military Schools in Sofia. He was very active in the Macedonian revolutionary movement. He fought in the Balkan Wars and the First World War.



FIGURE 1. PORTRAIT OF PETER DARVINGOV
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, FILE 73K, A.U. 2266,
F. 24)



FIGURE 2. PORTRAIT OF PETER DARVINGOV
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2266,
F. 11)

to organise the volunteer army.² The main objectives of this new detachment were going to be military operations and the administration of annexed territories. In April 1915 Major Darvingov was ready with the plan for the new military unit, consisting mainly of Bulgarians from Macedonia and Edirne. It amounted to 22,944 soldiers; approximately 4500 of them were Balkan War volunteers and more than 15,000 were refugees from Macedonia, Edirne and other territories. Over time, more servicemen joined the detachment, and by September 10–12, 1915 the number of personnel exceeded 33,000. The new military unit was named the 11th Macedonian infantry division. General K. Zlatarev³ was

2 Дървингов, *Действията*; Минчев, *Военнореволюционната дейност*.

3 Kr. Zlatarev (1864–1925): Bulgarian Major General; fought in the Serbian–Bulgarian War (1885), and the Balkan Wars. Bearer of medals for bravery. He died in the St. Nedelya Church bomb attack.

appointed commander and P. Darvingov became chief of staff. Alexander Protogerov, commander of the third infantry brigade, was confident that only Major Darvingov had the personal qualities required to "unite the Bulgarian volunteers from Macedonia and Thrace."⁴

The photographs, from the Peter Darvingov Fund and kept at the Scientific Archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,⁵ give a detailed account of the Bulgarian army during the First World War. More than 1000 photographs have been examined for the purposes of this research; with few exceptions, they capture the activities of the 11th Macedonian infantry division. They have no proven authorship and most of them have been identified as copies. What is interesting about them is that they show specific details of soldiers' lives within the army, which suggests that the photographer(s) did not take them by chance, but had spent a considerable amount of time among the soldiers. Most of the pictures lack artistic value and can be described as "snapshots," but they are invaluable visual records of soldiers' and officers' daily life and their households, of the situation on the front line, of their places of deployment, etc.

After the defeat of the Gallipoli (Dardanelles) campaign, the Entente deployed troops in the Thessaloniki region. They advanced to the north along the Vardar river with the purpose of making a liaison with the Serbian army. In the outskirts of the village of Krivolak⁶ the Allied forces went to battle with units from the Bulgarian second army: the 7th Rila, 5th Danube and 11th Macedonian infantry divisions. The latter fought the toughest battle, which became its baptism of fire. The military actions were carried out from October 17 until November 21, 1915. We can find information on these important events in the photographs of the Darvingov Fund. Among them there is a picture (*Figure 3*) of the officers who fought in Krivolak (October 28–November 21, 1915).

Later the 11th infantry division was deployed near Belasitsa mountain, where it remained until the end of the war. The most substantial part of the visual documents from the Darvingov Fund studied here dates back to that period. The photographs provide information on the everyday life of soldiers

4 Дървингов, *Избрани произведения*, 21.

5 Originally abbreviated as: НА–БАН, Ф (File).73 К.

6 Today in the Republic of North Macedonia.



FIGURE 3. THE OFFICERS WHO FOUGHT IN KRIVOLAK
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2805)

and officers: their daily army routines, their dining, activities, etc.; their work on the construction of military communications: roads, telegraph stations, post offices, watchtowers; the construction of camps, shelters, etc. Some of the pictures have journalistic value, since they were taken on the battlefield and have directly captured the hostilities, defeats and casualties of war. We can also see award ceremonies for officers and soldiers. Some of this material offers a close look at the personnel of the 11th Macedonian infantry division: numerous group and personal photographs of soldiers and officers, with or without weaponry, in different postures, in bigger or smaller groups. They are of relatively good quality and this makes the identification of people and places possible.

An interesting detail is that some of these photographs contain “metadata” in the form of text and instructions, which enables us to guess the affiliation of the persons photographed. For example: “7th company of the 64th regiment,” “Platoon of the 8th company of the 64th regiment,” etc. On some of the pictures we can recognise German officers. An intriguing fact about these



FIGURE 4. MILITARY MEN WITH GAS MASKS
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2813, F. 28)

photographs is that they were taken outdoors and depict a variety of field and mountain landscapes, as well as some distinctive and memorable places, such as bridges or the Belasitsa waterfall rocks.

The Internal Macedonian–Adrianopolitan Revolutionary Organization participated actively in the formation and arming of the division. With the help of the organisation, in November 1915 Germany sent truckloads of mountain artillery and machine guns, and large quantities of liaison materials, etc. There are photographs of soldiers and officers with military equipment (cannons and light and heavy machine guns) and some contain information about the military units to which they belonged.

The researched materials documented the everyday life in the artillery batteries. We see pictures of soldiers and officers near camouflaged hideouts and armoured cannons, we see the trenches. Some of the photographs show military men with gas masks (*Figure 4*). We see howitzer batteries entrenched in a rocky landscape, or cannons on mountain slopes. The pictures have captured



FIGURE 5. GUNFIRE AT HOSTILE AIRCRAFT
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2808, F. 2)

a shooting at Dova Tepe,⁷ as well as an inspection of the 4th battery of the 22th artillery regiment at mark 116 at Belasitsa Mountain by Colonel Bogdanov, director of ordnance services of the 2nd army. There is a series of photographs of cannon being fired at an enemy airplane by soldiers of the 22nd artillery regiment, with the officer watching from a watchtower several metres high.

Many of the photographic documents captured military training with armed soldiers—some of them in line, some with gas masks in the trenches. The anonymous photographers have also documented scenes from everyday army life: gymnastics on specially designed devices; grenade and bomb-throwing training; weapons maintenance and assembly, etc.

These pictures complement and enrich the facts we already know about the construction and maintenance of military communications on Belasitsa mountain. They show the work of the 4th Macedonian infantry regiment phone brigade in the Tumba Peak area: soldiers working with measuring instruments;

7 Dova Tepe is a saddle separating the mountains of Belasitsa and Krusha.

difficulties in the laying of telephone lines. This collection includes photographs of the building with various facilities and connections: the 10-metre antenna of the radiotelegraph; the construction of the telegraph and telephone networks; the rigging of a telephone pole; the mail delivery by cyclists at the front line,⁸ etc. Winter-time difficulties in the maintenance of communications were documented, too: for example, the clearance of the telephone cable at the Tumba Peak in February 1918.

In June 1916 hostilities the Bulgarian army stopped the enemy air attacks. The Darvingov Fund pictures captured a special moment: soldiers and officers watch the departing enemy planes. There is a photograph of gunfire at hostile aircraft (*Figure 5*). We see images of Bulgarian soldiers fighting enemy patrols near the village of Palmech;⁹ gun battles with English soldiers; shootings at the enemy positions; Bulgarian soldiers with a cannon in the Tumba Peak area, etc.

Engineering work, including the construction and maintenance of fortifications, is an essential part of warfare. Photographers made sure to preserve various moments of this important military activity: the reinforcement of



FIGURE 6. LOOKOUT IN THE TREES, WITH A GROUP OF OFFICERS
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVE, F. 73K, A.U. 2808, F. 9)

8 BAS Scientific Archive, File 73 K, a.u. 2805, f. 14.

9 Palmech (Palmich), village, today in Macedonia. Located between the mountains of Belasitsa and Krusha.



FIGURE 7. DIGGING TUNNELS IN SNOW SEVERAL METRES HIGH ON THE WAY TO BELASITSA
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2807, P. 9)

trenches and other fortifications; installing of cannons; building fences, etc. They expose soldiers hammering stakes and deploying wire-netting on Belasitsa, building anti-aircraft and other hideouts, etc. Some of the photographs illustrate these activities in great detail.

The collection dedicated to the observation posts is rich in photographic materials. The pictures show a watchtower opposite the Krusha Mountain; a lookout in the trees with a group of officers (*Figure 6*); a post at the Tumba Peak with officers from the 8th battery of the 22nd artillery regiment who use special measuring equipment. What was typical of these observation posts was that they were made in the

crowns of the trees, more than 10 metres high. They looked like small huts and were accessible via a system of wooden ladders.

Mountain peaks could also be considered observation points, since they provide a broad view of the surrounding areas. A photograph made from this type of position displays the Doyran Lake region; another one reveals a post overlooking Dova Tepe.

This collection also introduces the researcher to the difficult military field conditions in winter. There are photographs of soldiers in machine-gun emplacements in the trenches amidst the deep mountain snow. Others show soldiers' daily chores: shovelling snow, cutting wood, digging tunnels in snow several metres high on the way to Belasitsa (*Figure 7*), and building wire fences in



FIGURE 8. GROUP OF OFFICERS BY A DRINKING FOUNTAIN
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2805, F. 7)

heavy winter conditions. There is a scene of warm clothes being handed out, and another of the work of German topographers on the snow mountain ridges.

There are photographs that present moments from the division's awarding ceremonies. Most of them are uniform and show commanders in the presence of a chaplain as they decorate individual soldiers or whole companies. Some of them contain additional information about the particular occasion. This is the case with the series of pictures of the award ceremony for the soldiers who downed an enemy aircraft on June 18, 1917. Several of the photographs have inscriptions specifying the awarded battle units: 9th company of the 61st regiment; 3rd Macedonian [infantry] regiment; 22nd artillery regiment; 4th Macedonian infantry regiment; 1st brigade of the 11th Macedonian division. There is the occasional inscription, such as: "To the brave men of the 64th Regiment." The fallen were remembered as well. There is a picture of a group of officers by a drinking fountain with the dedication: "In memory of the fallen soldiers from the 12th Company of the 64th Regiment in 1915." (Figure 8)



FIGURE 9. GROUP OF IMPRISONED RUSSIAN SOLDIERS
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2817)

Photographs also documented activities and everyday life in the 1st Macedonian infantry regiment. Its main objective in 1916 was building roads on the slopes of Belasitsa Mountain. The construction and fortification activities required serious effort from soldiers and officers alike. Their duties comprised of digging the difficult mountainous terrain, building trenches and blindages, laying stone foundations of the fortifications, etc. Thanks to these photographs, we are now able to track the nature and stages of their work, as well as the interior of the facilities they created.

The 2nd Macedonian infantry regiment was tasked with the building of a road to Tumba Peak. The photographs of this military unit illustrate different work stages: breaking rocks, hauling them with ox carts, paving the way. Several panoramic pictures show the dugouts and shelters built along the mountain hills; others present the construction of stone winter housings on the Belasitsa Mountain ridge. We see the headquarters of the various battle units; the Tumba Peak camp of the 22nd artillery regiment; the winter housings of the machine gun company on the Belasitsa ridge. The inscriptions on some



FIGURE 10. EVERYDAY LIFE
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2805, F. 131)

of the pictures provide us with information about the various military subdivisions. Some of the photographed buildings are single-storey and made of rock; others were built entirely of straw and wooden beams.

It is obvious from these photographs that prisoners of war helped in the excavation and construction works on Belasitsa Mountain. A certain picture (*Figure 9*), taken in the village of Hadzi Beilik¹⁰ in the southern foothills of Belasitsa, shows a group of imprisoned Russian soldiers lying on the ground near the remains of a building. In his memoirs, Colonel Darvingov mentioned the role of Russian prisoners of war in the construction of mountain roads.¹¹ They must have been just a few of the Russian soldiers imprisoned during the Dobrudzha battles.

All seasons of everyday life for the Belasitsa soldiers are reflected in a collection of pictures, showing where and how their food was prepared, how they dined (*Figure 10*), how they worked in the makeshift farms, and how they rested with

10 Today in Greece.

11 Дървингов, *Моето време*, 110.

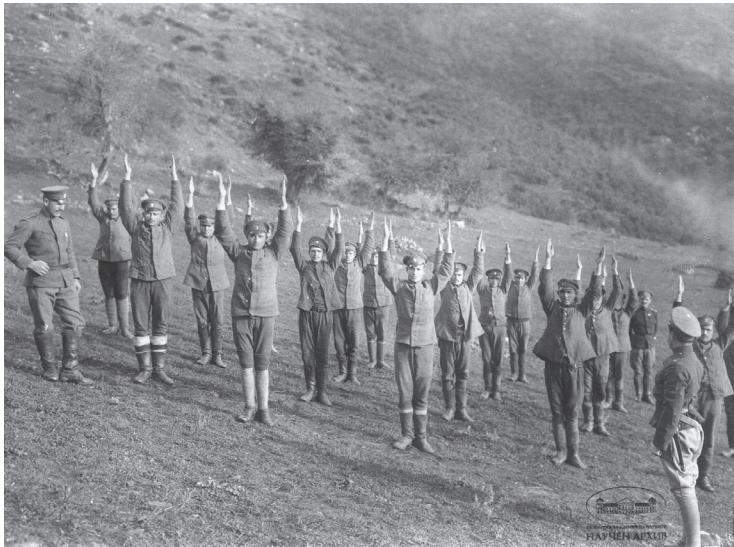


FIGURE 11. PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2805, 5)

physical activities. (*Figure 11*) These photographs portray the lives of the soldiers and officers of the 7th company of the 64th regiment and the 3rd Macedonian infantry regiment.

As a regimental commander, Col. Darvingov made great efforts to chase monotony out of the soldiers' lives. A theatre company was formed, and its performances below the Belasitsa summit gathered audiences of 2–3 thousand people. On Christmas Eve a group of amateur comedians “toured” the different stations. A collection of photographs reveals the performances in front of soldiers and local people, concerts of the army band, satirical skits mocking the enemy, *horo* dances, St. George's Day celebrations, wrestling matches (*Figure 12*) and much more.

The rich and diverse collection of photographs from the Peter Darvingov Fund illustrates unknown or lesser known aspects of the daily lives and activities of thousands of Bulgarian soldiers and officers in one of the most severe military conflicts—the First World War. The significant amount of close-ups makes possible the identification of a large number of 11th Macedonian infantry



FIGURE 12. WRESTLING MATCHES
(BAS SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES, F. 73K, A.U. 2805, F. 61)

division soldiers. Part of the visual data is consistent with the written and documentary sources of these events. But photography presents information in a different, direct and very powerful way—it upgrades and complements the known facts. It shows the various dimensions of war in an objective and authentic way. Furthermore, photographs contain information which cannot be found in the textual documents, build a different picture of the army life, and help us reconstruct the reality of the front lines more truthfully. So we can say that they retain the memory of the real face of war for future generations.

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F. [File] 73K.

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DAS KAISERLICHE UND KÖNIGLICHE 11. HUSARENREGIMENT „FERDINAND DER ERSTE, KÖNIG DER BULGAREN“ IM ERSTEN WELTKRIEG

Tibor Balla

Das kaiserliche und königliche 11. Husarenregiment¹ – eines von der 16 k.u.k. Husarenregimentern – der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie wurde in den Jahren vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg (seit dem Jahre 1898) aus der westungarischen Komitaten Vas und Zala ergänzt. Der Inhaber des Regiments war seit dem Jahre 1906 Ferdinand der Erste, König (Zar) der Bulgaren. Das Regiment trug seinen Namen, er hatte verschiedene Inhaberrechte, z. B. ihm gehörte das Recht die Uniform eines Obersten des Regiments zu tragen, sowie das Regiment zu inspizieren, ihm war es erlaubt, anlässlich besonderer Feierlichkeiten an der Spitze des Regiments zu stehen.

1 Das k.u.k. Husaren-Regiment „Ferdinand I. König der Bulgaren“ Nr. 11 war als Österreichisch-Habsburgischer Kavallerieverband im Jahre 1762 als siebenbürgisches Szekler Grenz-Husarenregiment zu acht Eskadronen aufgestellt worden. Die Einheit existierte danach in der k. k. Habsburgischen Armee seit 1798 als Husarenregiment Nr. 11., im Januar 1851 Anlässlich der Auflösung des Militär-Grenz-Institutes in Siebenbürgen wurde das Regiment unter Beibehaltung der Nr. 11 in ein Linienhusaren-Regiment umgewandelt. Seit dem Jahre 1867 bestand das Regiment in der k.u.k. Armee innerhalb der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Landstreitkräfte bis zur Auflösung im Jahre 1918. Es nahm an fast allen dynastischen Kriegen und Feldzügen der Habsburgermonarchie in der Zeitperiode 1762–1918 teil. Siehe ausführlicher: Ságvári and Somogyi, *Nagy huszárkönyv*, 85, 112.

FERDINAND DER ERSTE, KÖNIG (ZAR) DER BULGAREN

Ferdinand Prinz von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha ist am 26. Februar 1861 in Wien geboren. Sein Vater war August von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha (1818–1881), kaiserlich-königlicher österreichischer Generalmajor und königlich sächsischer Generalleutnant. Nach dem Entschluss vom bulgarischen Parlament wurde er am 7. Juli 1887 zum Fürst von Bulgarien (damals formell dem Osmanischen Reich unterstehenden Land) gewählt. Die politische Schwäche des Osmanischen Reiches zu Beginn der Bosnischen Annexionskrise ausnutzend, erklärte Ferdinand am 5. Oktober 1908 in Weliko Tarnowo die Unabhängigkeit seines Landes. Zugleich nahm er den Titel eines Königs von Bulgarien und Ostrumälien, Zaren von Bulgarien an. Während des Ersten Weltkrieges bekam er von dem Herrscher der Donaumonarchie, Franz Joseph I. am 15. Jänner 1916 den k.u.k. Feldmarschalltitel. Am 30. September 1918 – in der letzten Phase des Grossen Krieges – wurde Bulgarien als erster Verbündeter der Mittelmächte zur Kapitulation vor Entente gezwungen. Nach der Niederlage dankte Zar Ferdinand am 3. Oktober 1918 zugunsten seines Sohnes Boris (1894–1943) ab.²

Nach der Abdankung verliess er Bulgarien und fuhr er mit dem Zug nach Coburg in Deutschland, weil Österreich verweigerte ihm den Aufenthalt. Er wohnte seit dem Jahre 1918 bis zum seiner Tode im Schloss Coburg. Ferdinand ist am 10. September 1948 in Coburg gestorben und am 13. September wurde er dort in der Krypta von St. Augustin beigesetzt.³ Ferdinand war unter anderem – ausser des k.u.k. Husaren-Regiments „Ferdinand I. König der Bulgaren“ Nr. 11. –, Inhaber des 23. Königlich Bayerischen Infanterie-Regiments „König Ferdinand der Bulgaren“.

Zum Zeitpunkt seiner Wahl als bulgarischer König war Ferdinand ein österreichisch-ungarischer Offizier. Er diente seit 1. Mai 1881 als Leutnant und Zugskommandant – mit kleineren Unterbrechungen – im k.u.k. 11.

2 *Kriegsarchiv* (KA) Wien, Qualifikationsliste Ferdinand Prinz von Sachsen Coburg und Gotha, Herzog zu Sachsen, Karton 369.

3 Szijj, *Magyarország az első világháborúban*, 181. Eine relativ gute und benutzbare Zusammenfassung über den Lebenslauf von Ferdinand I. ist in den Zwischenkriegszeit erschienen. Siehe: Madol, *Ferdinand von Bulgarien*, 1931.

Husarenregiment der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie. Ferdinand wurde am 1. März 1882 beurlaubt, am 2. Juli 1884 wurde er in den beurlaubten Stand zum k.u.k. 26. Feldjägerbataillon transferiert. Seit Oktober 1884 leistete er Kompaniedienst im k.u.k. Feldjägerbataillon Nr. 26. in Linz. Am 19. November 1885 wurde er in den beurlaubten Stand der königlich ungarischen Landwehr Kavallerie übersetzt, obwohl er auf ungarisch nur zum Dienstgebrauch genügend sprechen konnte. (Ferdinand beherrschte die deutsche, die englische und die französische Sprache vollkommen.)⁴

Seine Verbindung zum k.u.k. Husarenregiment Nr. 11. ist übriggeblieben. Im September 1906 (nach der Ernennung zum Regimentsinhaber) Zar Ferdinand besuchte sein Regiment und er verbrachte zwei Tage in Szombathely (Steinamanger). Anlässlich seines Besuches dekorierte er alle Offiziere und Unteroffiziere des Regiments, sowie das Offizierkorps bekam als Andenken ein fast lebensgroßes Reiterbild von ihm.

Seine zwei Söhne bekamen auch im k.u.k. Husarenregiment Nr. 11. Offiziersränge: der Tronfolger Boris (Fürst von Tarnowo) führte einen Oberstleutnant, Kyrill (1895–1945, Fürst von Preslaw) führte einen Majorsrang.⁵

Zar Ferdinand I. stand auch während des Ersten Weltkrieges in Verbindung mit seinem Husarenregiment. Anlässlich seiner Aufenthalt im Feber und Dezember im Jahre 1916 in Wien, sowie seiner Anwesenheit im September 1916 an der Bukowiner Abschnitt der russischen Front in Rosulna, empfing er zusammen mit seinem Sohn Boris die Delegation des k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiments. Er erinnerte sich mit lobenden Worten an die traditionelle Tapferkeit der „Bulgaren Husaren“ und er dekorierte mit zahlreichen bulgarischen Auszeichnungen seine Offiziere und die Mannschaft des Regiments.⁶

4 KA Wien, Haupt-Grundbuchsblatt Ferdinand Prinz von Sachsen Coburg und Gotha, Herzog zu Sachsen, Abgang IV. 5/72.

5 *Gedenkbuch*, 19–20.

6 *Ibid.*, 20, 65.

DIE ROLLE DES K.U.K. 11. HUSARENREGIMENTS IM GROSSEN KRIEG, VOM AUGUST 1914 BIS MÄRZ 1917

Im Sommer 1914, beim Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges stationierte das Regiment in Galizien: der Regimentsstab und die erste Division in Lancut, die zweite Division in Sambor (beide Division zu je drei Eskadronen⁷). Der Ersatzkader (woher das Regiment die Ergänzung bekam) hatte seine Station in Szombathely (Steinamanger) in Ungarn. Der Kommandant des Regiments war in diesem Zeitpunkt Oberst Ritter Sándor (Alexander) Szívó de Bunya.⁸ Die Mannschaft des Regiments rekrutierte sich fast völlig (96 Prozent) von ungarischen und 4 Prozent von sonstigen Soldaten.⁹

Im Verband des k.u.k. IV. Armeekorps und der k.u.k. 6. Kavalleriedivision¹⁰ (zusammen mit der k.u.k. 6., 8. und 11. Dragonerregimenter) zog das Regiment

7 Die Kriegsstärke der Eskadron betrug rund 150 Reiter. An Waffen führte die Kavallerie den 8 mm M 1895 Repetierkarabiner System Mannlicher, den M 1904 Kavalleriesäbel und das M 7/12 Maschinengewehr System Schwarzlose in den Kavalleriemaschinengewehrabteilungen (mit 4 Gewehre). Diese Abteilungen standen im Krieg direkt unter dem Kommando der Kavallerietruppendivision. Die österreichisch-ungarische Kavallerie war überwiegend für den Kampf zu Pferd ausgebildet und erzogen. Siehe: Wagner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 26–27.

8 Sándor (Alexander) Ritter Szívó de Bunya (18.04.1868 Wien), nach der Absolvierung der Theresianischen Militärakademie in Wiener Neustadt wurde er am 18.08.1889 Leutnant im k.u.k. 13. Husarenregiment, 01.11.1893 Oberleutnant, zwischen 1893–95 absolvierte er die k.u.k. Kriegsschule in Wien, 01.11.1895 Generalstabsoffizier der k.u.k. 10. Kavalleriebrigade, 01.11.1897 Rittmeister 2. Klasse im k.u.k. 13. Husarenregiment, 01.11.1899 Rittmeister 1. Klasse in der Generalstabsabteilung des k.u.k. XII. Korps, 01.11.1901 Generalstabsoffizier bei der k.u.k. Kavallerie-Truppendivision in Stanislaw, 01.11.1903 Eskadronskommandant im k.u.k. 8. Husarenregiment, 01.05.1906 Major und Generalstabschef der k.u.k. Kavallerie Truppendivision in Jaroslau, später Generalstabschef der k.u.k. 14. Infanterietruppendivision, 01.05.1910 Oberstleutnant im k.u.k. 12. Husarenregiment, 29.02.1912 Kommandant des k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiments, 01.05.1913 Oberst, Juli 1915 Kavallerie-Brigadekommandant, 01.05.1917 Generalmajor, zwischen August und November 1918 interimis Kommandant der k.u.k. 7. Infanteriedivision. 01.01.1919 wurde er pensioniert, 01.08.1920 königlich ungarischer Feldmarschalleutnant. Siehe: Hadtörténelmi Levéltár Budapest, (Kriegsarchiv Budapest) AKVI (Qualifikationsliste) Nr. 3168/1890.; Steiner, *Schematismus der Generale und Obersten*, 38–39; *Gedenkbuch*, 295.

9 Ehnle, *Die österreichisch-ungarische Landmacht*, 45.

10 Die k.u.k. 6. Kavallerie-Division stand unter dem Kommando vom Kriegsbeginn bis Anfang September 1914 Feldmarschalleutnant Oskar von Wittmann, vom Anfang September

im Jahre 1914 in den Krieg. Das Regiment nahm an der zwischen Mitte und Ende August stattgefundenen, sogenannte operative Kavallerie-Fernaufklärung an der russischen Front, später an der siegreichen Schlacht am Ende August 1914 beim Komarów¹¹ an dem russischen Kriegsschauplatz teil. Zwischen 1. und 10. September 1914 kämpfte der Truppenkörper in der zweiten Schlacht von Lemberg – in der die österreichisch-ungarische 3. und 2. Armee von den russischen 3. und 8. Armee besiegt wurde – und danach zog sich von der russischen Übermacht in der Richtung West an den San Fluss und bis Ende September an den Dunajec Fluss zurück.¹²

Im Oktober 1914 kämpfte das k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiment entlang dem San Fluss, dann im zweiten Hälfte November nahm der Truppenkörper an der Schlacht bei Krakau, zwischen 1.-15. Dezember 1914 nahm er an der Schlacht bei Limanowa-Lapanów kämpfend teil. Nach diesem grossen Sieg der Mittelmächte kämpften die 11-er Husaren entlang dem Dunajec Fluss, und am Ende Dezember 1914 erfolgte der Rückzug der Einheit gegen den Hauptkamm der Karpathen.¹³

Tiefgreifend wirkten die Erlebnisse und Erfahrungen der ersten Kriegsmonate auf die Kavallerie der Österreich-Ungarischen Monarchie zurück. Die im Frieden genährten Vorstellungen über die Verwendung der Reiterei hatten sich als grosser Irrtum erwiesen. Weder die Ausrüstung, noch die Gefechtsführung hatten in den Schlachten standzuhalten vermocht. In den

1914 bis Ende August 1917 Generalmajor-Feldmarschalleutnant Otto Schwer Edler von Schwerteneck, von der Ende August bis Ende September 1917 Feldmarschalleutnant Herbert Graf Herberstein, vom Anfang Oktober 1917 bis Kriegsende Generalmajor -Feldmarschalleutnant Dom Miguel Herzog von Braganca. Siehe: Glaise-Horstenau, *Österreich-Ungarns Letzter Krieg 1914–1918*. (ÖULK), Registerband, 255.

11 Die österreichisch-ungarische 4. Armee (zusammen 9 Infanteriedivisionen und die 6. Kavalleriedivision) zwang – im Vormarsch aus dem Raum nördlich Przemyśl in Richtung Cholm – in der Schlacht bei Komarów die russische 5. Armee zum Rückzug nach Norden. In den wechsellvollen und harten Kämpfen, die vom 26. August bis zum 1. September 1914 dauerten, wäre es der k.u.k. 4. Armee unter dem Befehl des Generals der Infanterie Moritz Ritter von Auffenberg beinahe gelungen, die Masse der russischen 5. Armee einzukesseln.

12 Wagner, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 51–54.

13 *Gedenkbuch*, 43–51.

Schützengraben trat der Feuerkampf mit dem Karabiner an die Stelle der Attacke mit dem blanken Säbel.¹⁴

Vom Beginn Januar bis Mitte Februar 1915 hatte die k.u.k. 6. Kavalleriedivision und das 11-er Husarenregiment auch eine Ruhepause in der Reserve, während dieser Rast wurde die Ausrüstung der Husaren – nicht zuletzt nach der Erfahrungen der Schlacht von Limanowa-Lapanów im Dezember 1914 – ergänzt. Sie bekamen hechtgraue Uniform und Feldkappe,¹⁵ Bajonett für das Handgemenge, Spaten, um sich in den Boden eingraben zu können.¹⁶

Seit dem Beginn März 1915 kämpfte das k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiment (bis zum Februar 1917) im Verband der k.u.k. 7. Armee in der Bukowina, entlang dem Pruth und Dniester Fluss, am 13. Mai 1915 zog sich hinter den Pruth zurück. Der Truppenkörper erlitt im Juni 1915 bei Balamutowka am Dniester Fluss – während der Vorrückung gegen vierfache russische Übermacht – empfindliche Verlusten.¹⁷

Das Regiment stritt seit Juli 1915 mit den russischen Truppen entlang dem Dniester Fluss bei Grodek unter dem Kommando von Oberst Graf Artur Alberti d'Enno.¹⁸ Der Truppenkörper nahm an der Offensive in

14 ÖULK, Zweiter Band. Das Kriegsjahr 1915. Erster Teil, 18–19.

15 Die österreichisch-ungarische Armee zog im Jahre 1914 im grossen und ganzen in der allgemeinen hechtgrauen Felddienstadjustierung mit Ausnahme der Kavallerie in den Krieg. Die Kavallerieregimenter sahen am Ende des Jahres 1915 anders aus als zu Kriegsbeginn. Am Beginn des Weltbrandes 1914 hatten die k.u.k. 11-er Husaren aschgrauen Tschako mit einem aschgrauen Überzug versehen, dunkelblaue Attila mit weissen Knöpfe (sogenannte Oliven), sowie krapprote Reithose. Nachdem das Hechtgrau als Schutz- oder Tarnfarbe den Erfordernissen des modernen Krieges kaum entsprach, wurde im August 1915 die Einführung des Feldgrau an Stelle des Hechtgrau angeordnet. Die neue Standarduniformfarbe wurde gleichzeitig auch für die Kavallerie normiert, die damit endgültig und als letzte Waffengattung Abschied von ihrer traditionellen Uniformierung nehmen musste. Siehe: Rest, Ortner und Ilming, *Des Kaisers Rock im Ersten Weltkrieg*, 34, 288.

16 *Gedenkbuch*, 52.

17 *Ibid.*, 53–57.

18 Artur Graf Alberti d'Enno (1860. Magyarláros (Laposch) in Siebenbürgen), er absolvierte die k.u.k. Artillerie-Kadettenschule in Wien, am 01.05.1886. wurde er Leutnant im k.u.k. 5. Husarenregiment, 01.11.1889. Oberleutnant, seit 01.11.1891 diente er im k.u.k. 8. Husarenregiment, 01.05.1897 Rittmeister 2. Klasse, 01.05.1900 Rittmeister 1. Klasse, seit 01.12.1902 diente er beim k.u.k. 1. Husarenregiment, 01.05.1910 Major, 11.08.1911 Kommandant der II.

österreichischen Galizien am Ende August 1915, an der Schlacht am Sereth am Beginn September 1915, an dem Dniesterübergang bei Czerneliczka Mitte Oktober 1915 teil. Die Einheit kämpfte danach bis zum Juni 1916, in den Stellungen entlang dem Dniester Fluss bei Latacz und Uscieczko.¹⁹

Im Juni 1916 begann die sogenannte Brussilow-Offensive an dem russischen Kriegsschauplatz. Das Regiment musste von der „russischen Dampwalze“ in der Bukowina zurückziehen. Der Truppenkörper erlitt in den Kämpfen entlang dem Dniester, südlich von Korolowka am 28. Juli 1916 eine sehr hohe Verlust, bis zum 80 Prozent seines Kampfstandes. Infolge der Verlusten wurde das Regiment in die Reserve des k.u.k. 6. Kavalleriedivision versetzt, das Verlieren wurde ergänzt, im September 1916 wurde das Regiment in die Reserve des XI. Korps gesetzt. Die Einheit wurde im Oktober 1916 nach Dorna Watra in der Bukowina transportiert, wo die 11-er Husaren die Höhen von Rusului und Sarului besetzten.

Im Februar 1917 das Regiment schied aus dem Verband der österreichisch-ungarischen 7. Armee, des k.u.k. XI. Korps, und der k.u.k. 6. Kavalleriedivision aus, und seit dem März 1917 wurden die einzelne Eskadronen des Regiments gesondert, zum Verband der Infanterie (zu einzelnen Infanteriedivisionen) eingeteilt, und als Divisionskavallerie verwendet.²⁰

Division des k.u.k. 1. Husarenregiments, 01.11.1913 Oberstleutnant, seit 27.07.1915 Kommandant des k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiments, 01.09.1915 Oberst, seit Juli 1918 Kommandant der k.u.k. 8. Kavalleriebrigade. Er wurde am 01.01.1919 pensioniert, danach lebte er in Klagenfurt. Hadtörténelmi Levéltár Budapest (Kriegsarchiv Budapest), AKVI (Qualifikationsliste) Nr. 21.157; Steiner, *Schematismus*, 74.

19 *Gedenkbuch*, 57–62.

20 *Ibid.*, 64–67.

Das Schicksal der Kavallerie wurde in der zweiten Kriegshälfte entscheidend durch Futternot und Pferdemangel bestimmt. Der Ausbau der Artillerie erforderte immer mehr Pferde. Der Pferdebedarf war auch gross der Landwirtschaft in der Heimat, sowie im Armee- und Etappenbereiche und in den besetzten Gebieten. Im März 1917 wurden auf kaiserlichen Befehl sieben Kavalleriedivisionen, später auch alle übrigen sowie der grösste Teil der Divisionskavallerie zu Fuss formiert. In jedem Kavallerieregimente blieb nur ein Zug von 25 Reitern beritten. Siehe: ÖULK. *Siebenter Band. Das Kriegsjahr 1918*, 60–63.

Die Kavallerie kämpfte bis Kriegsende als Infanterie weiter, ihre Besonderheit beschränkte sich auf die Bezeichnung der Regimenter.

DIE TÄTIGKEIT DER EINZELNEN ESKADRONEN²¹ DES K.U.K. 11. HUSARENREGIMENTS ZWISCHEN MÄRZ 1917 UND NOVEMBER 1918

Die 1. Eskadron des k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiments kämpfte im Verbands der königlich ungarischen 39. Honved Infanteriedivision an der rumänischen Front, auf der Magyaros-Höhe. Seit Mai 1918 nahm es dem königlich ungarischen 38. Honved Infanteriedivision unterstellt an den k.u.k. Operationen am italienischen Kriegsschauplatz in der Südtiroler Abschnitt bei Pergine, sowie in der k.u.k. Offensive vom 15–24. Juni 1918 teil. Die Kompanie kämpfte seit August bis November 1918 wieder im Verband der königlich ungarischen 39. Honved Infanteriedivision in Südtirol. Die ungarische Husaren kehrten ohne Pferde und Waffen in die Heimat (nach Steinamanger) im November zurück.²²

Die 2. Eskadron des Regiments kämpfte seit Mitte März 1917 im Verbands der königlich ungarischen 39. Honved Infanteriedivision an der rumänischen Front, in der Grenzregion von Siebenbürgen, im Uz-Tal, seit Juni 1917 bis Ende des Krieges dem k.u.k. 57. Infanteriedivision unterstellt an der italienischen Front bei Lokve, Ternowa an dem Isonzo Frontabschnitt. Die Kompanie nahm seit 17. August bis 17. September 1917 an der 11. Isonzoschlacht teil, sie kämpfte auf den Hügel von Monte San Gabriele und Monte Santo im Zentrum des Kampfareignisse. Die Einheit rückte Ende Oktober 1917 in die 12. Isonzoschlacht vor, vom November 1917 stationierte sie bis März in Oderzo in Nord-Italien. Die Kompanie nahm an der k.u.k. Piaveoffensive am 15–24. Juni 1918 teil, dann bis November 1918 hielt sich in den Stellungen am Piaveufer auf. Im November 1918 kehrte sie in seine Heimat, nach Steinamanger zurück.²³

Die 3. Eskadron des Regiments kämpfte seit März 1917 im Verband der k.u.k. 27. Infanteriedivision an der russischen Front bei Ucziskow, seit Ende März 1918 auch im Verband der k.u.k. 27. Infanteriedivision am italienischen Kriegsschauplatz, bei Pergine in Südtirol. Die Kompanie nahm an der k.u.k.

21 Die Bezeichnung „Eskadron“ wurde im Juni 1917 durch „Schwadron“ ersetzt.

22 *Gedenkbuch*, 103–7.

23 *Ibid.*, 108–12.

Piaveoffensive am 15-24. Juni 1918 teil, seit Juli stationierte in der Umgebung von Mazetti, Nord-Italien bis Ende des Krieges, im November 1918 kehrte sie in die Heimat, nach Steinamanger zurück.²⁴

Die 4. Eskadron des Regiments nahm seit März 1917 im Verbands der k.u.k. 27. Infanteriedivision in den Kämpfen am russischen Kriegsschauplatz, seit Ende Mai 1917 im Verband der k.u.k. 62. Infanteriedivision in der 10. Isonzoschlacht an der italienischen Front teil. Seit Juli 1917 kämpfte sie an der rumänischen Front bei Odobesti und Focsani, sie nahm in der k.u.k. und deutsche Offensive im August 1917 entlang dem Sereth Fluss teil, und blieb beim Sereth bis Juni 1918. Die Husaren der Kompanie machten Getreide-Requisition ab Ende Juni 1918 in Siebenbürgen, und im November 1918 kehrten sie per Bahn nach Steinamanger zurück.²⁵

Die 5. Eskadron des Regiments kämpfte seit März 1917 im Verbands der k.u.k. 15. Infanteriedivision an der russischen Front, im Juli 1917 kämpfte bei Stanislaw in der Abwehr der sogenannten Kerenskij-Offensive. Die Kompanie stationierte seit August 1917 bis Mai 1918 in Siebenbürgen, seit Mitte Mai 1918 nahm sie an der österreichisch-ungarischen Besatzung von Ukraine teil. In der Umgebung von Pawlowgrad (Bezirk Jekaterinoslaw) ging sie auf Streifzug und machte Getreide-Requisition. Im November 1918 kehrte die Kompanie aus der Ukraine nach Ungarn, nach Steinamanger zurück.²⁶

Die 6. Eskadron des Regiments kämpfte vom März bis Mai 1917 im Verbands der k.u.k. 15. Infanteriedivision beim Kalusz an der russischen, dann vom Mai 1917 im Verbands der k.u.k. 53. Infanteriedivision auch an der russischen Front. Vom Mai bis September 1917 befanden sich die Husaren in den Stellungen beim Stochod Fluss, vom September machten sie in der Umgebung von Krasnik landwirtschaftliche Arbeiten. Die Kompanie fungierte im Monate März 1918 als Militärassistentz in Lublin. Seit Ende März 1918 kämpfte sie im Verbands der k.u.k. 64. Infanteriedivision an der italienischen Front. Die Kompanie nahm an der k.u.k. Piave-Übergang am 15-24. Juni 1918 teil, danach stationierte sie bei Fratta am Piave. Die Kompanie ging Ende Oktober 1918 infolge der italienischen, englischen und französischen

24 Ibid., 113–16.

25 Ibid., 117–19.

26 Ibid., 120.

Vorrückung am Piave zurück, nach dem militärischen Zusammenbruch kehrte sie im November 1918 zusammen mit seinen Pferden in die Heimat, nach Steinamanger zurück.²⁷

Die Maschinengewehr-Eskadron des Regiments (zu vier Gewehren) kämpfte vom März 1917 im Verbands der k.u.k. 15. Infanteriedivision an der russischen Front, und nahm im Juli 1917 in der Abwehr der sogenannten Kerenskij-Offensive bei Kalusz teil. Ende Juli 1917 wurde die Einheit mit der 15. Infanteriedivision an die rumänische Front transportiert, wo sie in der Grenzregion von Siebenbürgen, in dem Tölgyes-Pass kämpfte. Die Kompanie nahm seit Mitte Mai 1918 an der Besatzung von Ukraine teil: in der Umgebung von Pawlowgrad (Bezirk Jekaterinoslaw) machte Getreide-Requisition, wirkte mit der Aufrechterhaltung der Ordnung mit, entwaffnete verschiedene bewaffnete Gruppen. Am Ende November 1918 kehrten die Teile der Kompanie nach Steinamanger zurück.²⁸

Die Schützenkompanie des Regiments wurde von den aus irgendwelcher Gründe ohne Pferde gebliebenen Husaren im Oktober 1914 errichtet. Die Kompanie kämpfte ununterbrochen von der Aufstellung bis zum Jahre 1918 zu Fuss am russischen Kriegsschauplatz. Die Schützen (eigentlich Infanteriesoldaten) bekamen Infanterieausbildung, sie wurden mit dem Infanteriegewehr, mit dem Bajonett und mit dem Infanteriespaten ausgerüstet, sowie mit hechtgrauer Uniform bekleidet. Die Kompanie kämpfte im Jahre 1914 bei Rzeszow, dann am San und am Dunajec Fluss, später in den Karpathen. Seit Beginn des Jahres 1915 kämpften „die Schützenhusaren“ wieder entlang dem Dunajec Fluss, seit Februar 1915 in der Bukowina zwischen Toporoutz und Rarancze, im Mai 1915 entlang dem Pruth Fluss, im September 1915 entlang dem Dniester Fluss. Im Juli 1916²⁹ nahmen sie in der Abwehr der russischen Brussilow-Offensive teil. Seit Oktober 1916 war die

27 Ibid., 125–28.

28 Ibid., 129–32.

29 Im Frühjahr 1916 wurde die Kavallerieregimenter auf vier Schwadronen zu je 110 Reitern vermindert. Im September 1916 mussten die Kavallerieregimenter ihre Reiterabteilungen auf eine Division beschränken und ihre Fussabteilungen auf eine volle Schützendivision erweitern. Siehe: ÖULK. Sechster Band. Das Kriegsjahr 1917. Wien: Verlag der Militärwissenschaftlichen Mitteilungen, 1936. 56.

Kompanie in den Kämpfen bei Dorna Watra in der Bukowina beteiligt. Im Frühling 1917 wurde ein Teil der Schützenkompanie in das k.u.k. 15. Husarenregiment eingeteilt, ein Teil der Kompanie wurde wieder auf dem Pferd gesetzt.³⁰

Wenn wir die Tätigkeit und Aufgabenkreis des Regiments während des Grossen Krieges kurz zusammenfassen wollen, dann können wir folgendes feststellen: ausser der konkreten Kampfhandlungen, in denen die k.u.k. 11-er Husaren reitend zu Pferde oder in den Schützengraben an den verschiedenen Fronten des Weltkrieges teilgenommen sind, mussten sie noch oftmals Aufklärung machen, den Sicherungs-, den Verbindungs-, den Melde- und den Assistenzdienst versehen, von der Bewohnerschaft Getreide requirieren, in den landwirtschaftlichen Arbeiten teilnehmen, in der Ukraine gegen die feindliche Banden auf einen Streifzug gehen, sowie die verschiedene bewaffnete Gruppen entwaffnen.

LÁSZLÓ (LADISLAUS) ALMÁSY VON ZSADÁNY UND TÖRÖKSZENTMIKLÓS IM REGIMENT

Der später berühmt gewordene ungarische Sahara-Forscher, László (Ladislau) Almásy von Zsadány und Törökszentmiklós diente auch im k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiment während des Grossen Krieges. Als Reservefähnrich nahm er in den Kämpfen des Regiments zwischen 1914 und 1916 an der russischen Front teil. Almásy kämpfte besonders tapfer am Dniester Fluss in den Jahren 1915–1916, er spielte eine wichtige Rolle in mehreren Rekognisierungsaktionen. Er wurde mit der silbernen Tapferkeitsmedaille I. und II. Klasse, sowie mit der bronzenen Tapferkeitsmedaille dekoriert.³¹

Seit November 1916 nahm Almásy als Reserve Lieutenant im Verbands der 17. und 18.³² Fliegerkompagnie, zuerst als Beobachter-Offizier, später als

30 *Gedenkbuch*, 49., 137–43.

31 Kubassek, *A Szahara búvöletében*.

32 Die 17. Fliegerkompanie wirkte vom Juni 1915 bis November 1918 an der italienischen Front, die 18. Fliegerkompanie kämpfte vom Dezember 1915 bis 1918 am russischen Kriegsschauplatz. Siehe: Gondos (Hg.) *Repülőászok*, 245–46.

Feldpilot in den Kämpfen an der italienischen und an der russischen Front teil. Ihm wurde das Luftfahrtabzeichen sowie das Karl Truppenkreuz verliehen.³³

DIE VERLUSTE DES REGIMENTS IM ERSTEN WELTKRIEG UND DIE DEMOBILISIERUNG DER TRUPPENKÖRPER IM HERBST VOM JAHRE 1918

Das k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiment erlitt hohe Verlusten an Menschenmaterial während des Grossen Krieges. Es blieb zusammen 15 Offiziere und 275 Husaren auf dem Felde der Ehre, oder starb im Spital infolge schwerer Verletzungen. Man konnte die genaue Zahl der Vermissten, der Kriegsgefangenen, der Verwundeten und der Kranken einfach nicht festsetzen.³⁴

Die Tapferkeit der Soldaten des Regiments wurde von der Seite der Heerführungen der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie, des Deutschen Reiches, sowie von Bulgarien anerkannt. Der Personalstand des k.u.k. 11-er Husaren bekam während des Weltbrandes insgesamt annähernd 2000 österreichisch-ungarische (200 für die Offiziere und 1800 für die Mannschaft), ausserdem noch 40 ausländische (bulgarische und deutsche) Auszeichnungen.³⁵

Aus dem Bestand des k.u.k. 11. Husarenregiments wurde – teils nach dem Rückkehr von den verschiedenen Fronten – im Herbst 1918 ungefähr 5000 Mann beim Ersatzkompanie in Steinamanger demobilisiert, die wurden von den ungarischen militärischen Behörden einfach nach Hause geschickt.³⁶

Die Weltkriegs-Erinnerungsstücke und Fahnen des Regiments wurden dem Museum in Steinamanger übergeben.

33 Kubassek, *A Szahara búvöletében*, 66.

34 *Gedenkbuch*, 173, 177–83.

35 *Ibid.*, 197–208.

36 *Ibid.*, 152.

DIE WOHLTÄTIGKEITSAKTIONEN DES REGIMENTS

Auf eigene Initiative errichtete der Regimentskommandant Oberst Graf Artur Alberti d'Enno im August 1915 einen Witwen-, Waisen- und Invalidenfonds für das Regiment. Dieser Kriegsfürsorgefonds wurde hauptsächlich aus der Spenden der Offiziere, der Unteroffiziere und der Mannschaft, sowie aus der Einnahme der verschiedenen Fürsorge-Veranstaltungen zugenommen.

Im März 1918 schenkte der Reserve-Oberleutnant Tivadar Pál Frank 100. 000 Stück künstlerische Briefmarken seinem Regiment, die wurde für 10 Heller pro Stück zugunsten dem Kriegsfürsorgefonds verkauft.³⁷

Im Juni 1918 ein Husar des k.u.k. 11-er Regiments, der im Zivilleben als Tischler wirkte, herstellte eine zwei Meter hohe Kopie aus Holz des Regiment-Kappenabzeichens, in der jedermann einen Nagel treiben konnte, auch damit den Kriegsfürsorgefonds zu unterstützen. Das Vermögen des Kriegsfürsorgefonds des Regiments betrug am Ende des Weltkrieges ungefähr 50. 000 Kronen.³⁸

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³⁷ Ibid., 325.

³⁸ Ibid., 325–26.

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THE MILITARY BRILLIANCE OF THE BULGARIAN CAVALRY IN DOBRUDZHA IN 1916: THE RESURRECTION OF THE MILITANT NATIONAL SPIRIT

Angel Dinev

The operations of the Bulgarian third army to achieve the liberation of Dobrudzha in 1916 shine among the treasures of Bulgarian military history with outstanding examples of the best offensive actions. They achieved critical operational results, thanks to which, for only about four months, the enemy Entente forces was evicted from Dobrudzha and Romania was removed from the war. Especially productive were the actions of the Bulgarian cavalry, which marked a kind of a “renaissance” of this type of armed force, a symbolic return to the glory of the Bulgarian army from the Middle Ages. The comparison between the contribution of the Bulgarian cavalry towards the defeat of the Ottoman forces in Eastern Thrace during the Balkan War and of the 1st cavalry division in the First World War shows a remarkable development in its military prowess. In 1912–1913 the actions of the cavalry were slow and indecisive, with little reconnaissance, and poorly organized interaction with other armed forces. During the First World War, and in particular in the theatre of war in Dobrudzha in 1916, the Bulgarian cavalry found one of its brightest leaders in the form of its commander, Lieutenant-General Ivan Kolev. As to his qualities as a commander, it is enough to quote the reviews about him by two prominent foreign military leaders. On September 30, 1916, Lt.-Gen. Kolev was personally awarded the German Iron Cross “for bravery” by German Field-Marshal August von Mackensen, commander-in-chief of the troops of

the Central Powers in the Balkans. At the ceremony, he said: "As I myself am an old trooper, I followed with great interest the actions of the Bulgarian cavalry division and I was always impressed by its bold and purely cavalry actions. I can assure you of one thing, that until now there has been the conviction that a cavalry attack against infantry is impossible. You, with a few shining examples, have refuted it. Many senior cavalry commanders envy you, and I cannot convince them in letters that what you did really happened!"¹ And Colonel-General Guderian (1888–1954), a participant in both World Wars and theorist of the tank war in Germany, wrote: "When developing the principles of the tank war, I studied the tactics of the actions of the cavalry of Lt.-Gen. Kolev in Dobrudzha."

Lieutenant-General Ivan Kolev took office as commander of the 1st cavalry division on May 8, 1916, and immediately undertook the appropriate organizational measures to create favourable conditions for enhancing the cavalry's combat capabilities. First, emergency personnel changes were made, replacing some 10% of the officers. Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Kisiov was appointed chief of staff, and Major Konstantin Solarov as senior adjutant. Both shared the views of their commander on the military potential of the cavalry, and applied modern methods in the management of their units, thus significantly contributing to the future victories of Bulgaria's cavalry in Dobrudzha and its achievements in the art of warfare. Efforts were made to replenish the shortage of the stock of horses and for the better nutrition and care of the horses available. To enhance the firepower of the cavalry regiments, and thus of the entire division, Lt.-Gen. Kolev ordered one infantry machine-gun squadron to be formed in each cavalry regiment, and this was completed by July 25, 1916. The two cavalry batteries in the division's order of battle formed an additional, third platoon, so the batteries came with six cannons, which also increased the division's firepower.²

With thirty years of military service behind him, Lt.-Gen. Kolev had a thorough knowledge of the current state of the cavalry's military technique in

1 ДВИА—Велико Търново, Ф. 466, II., а.и. 33, ф. 21.

2 Кисьов, *Генерал Колев*, 10.

advanced armies. Most of their military experts ruled out the possibility of cavalry forces acting independently in the conditions of modern warfare.

After the appearance of smokeless gunpowder, it was believed that the development of firepower acquired colossal dimensions, the accuracy of weaponry reached perfection, the amount of munitions used on the battlefield increased radically, the infantry was forced to advance by crawling, and, therefore, it was absolutely impossible for large numbers of horses to advance openly.³

Lt.-Gen. Kolev did not share the view that the cavalry was no longer capable of conducting manoeuvres on a large scale, a view based on the perception that the cavalry was intended primarily for the implementation of intelligence and supply tasks. He continued to believe in the strategic and tactical role of the cavalry as an independent kind of armed force capable of decisive action. Assessing the numerical superiority of its future opponents on the Dobrudzha steppes (the Russian and Romanian cavalry), he was looking for ways and means of enhancing the quality and combat capabilities of his 1st cavalry division. In order to give it superiority of firepower on the battlefield, in addition to the aforementioned measures, Lt.-Gen. Kolev formed cycling companies.

Among the achievements of the military methods of the Bulgarian cavalry in Dobrudzha in 1916 was the improved organization of its logistics. The question of the rear echelons remained the weakest part of the organization of the 1st cavalry division. Based on the outdated assumption that the cavalry exists during a war by means of the theatre in which it operates or from the stocks of the neighbouring infantry unit, absolutely nothing was planned in the statutes, ordinances, instructions and conditions for how it would be fed.⁴ This again demonstrates the foresight of Lt.-Gen. Kolev. He was well aware of the fact that it was the rear and the trains that were the weakest part not only of 1st cavalry division but of the entire Bulgarian army. At this time logistics services were not even provided within the order of battle of the cavalry. Due to the short time remaining until the offensive in Romania, special organization

3 Пеев, *Генерал-лейтенант Иван Колев*, 54.

4 ДВИА—Велико Търново, Ф. 466, II., а.ч. 29, ф. 11.

was not achieved, but still, albeit with improvised means, the division was equipped with logistical trains with ox power.

In August 1916 the commander of the 1st cavalry division used the redeployment to north-east Bulgaria to conduct tactical exercises. The aim of these exercises was to train the senior commanders in the division to command and coordinate the actions of the individual units (brigades, regiments and squadrons) to achieve the division's overall objective, and to adjust personnel to warfare in the steppe conditions of Dobrudzha. New developments in the art of war appeared during the exercises step by step. The mobility of the units increased; commanders showed greater initiative in decision-making and flexibility in performing decisions. Reconnaissance was improved by imposing the idea of forming special recon units. The emphasis was on concerted action and mutual support between infantry, machine-gun and artillery units. An unshakable principle in the art of war for cavalry units was the need for a concealed approach to the enemy, with the purpose of allowing surprise, an essential prerequisite for the cavalry's success.⁵

In the course of these exercises within the 1st cavalry division, important cohesion was achieved between the different units, both among themselves and with the headquarters of the division. For the first time since the formation of the 1st cavalry division, its squadrons and regiments were gathered into a single military unit on the training ground. These joint actions gave rise to the vital spiritual closeness between soldiers from individual units. This skilfully planted common cavalry spirit made cohesion among individual horsemen unbreakable. The coherence in the actions of the commanders was also improved, and Lt.-Gen. Kolev stood out among them, not only as an indisputable authority, but also as a talented organizer and uncompromising and demanding commander, not only to his subordinates, but also to himself. He had the rare talent of motivating and inspiring the Bulgarian cavalry and generating that violent aggressive spirit, and as such he not only raised the level of its art of warfare, but also recorded immortal pages in the history of the Bulgarian army, as well as in that of world military history.⁶

5 Кисъов, *Генерал Колев*, 11.

6 Пеев, *Генерал-лейтенант Иван Колев*, 58.

By September 1, 1916, the 1st cavalry division had been concentrated on the Bulgarian–Romanian border, in the middle of the Bulgarian front, between the forces of the 4th infantry Preslav division and a brigade of the 1st Sofia infantry division directed against Tutrakan and the other force, including two brigades from the 1st Sofia division against Silistra, near the villages of Kara Hussein–Kozludzha–Kurt dere–Nikolaevka. The cavalry's total numbers was not impressive: 116 officers, 8 doctors and pharmacists, 10 military clerks and 5048 non-commissioned officers and soldiers, armed and equipped with 3,020 rifles, 36 machine guns, 6 guns, 2,762 swords, 4,471 horses, 18 oxen, 308 carts and 442 loads.⁷

In operational order № 16 dated September 1, 1916 of the commander of the 3rd army, Lieutenant-General Stefan Toshev, the 1st cavalry division was entrusted to advance and take control of the town of Kurtbunar and to interrupt enemy communications between Dobrich and Silistra.⁸ Lt.-Gen. Kolev's style was clearly reflected in the execution of that order. Around noon on September 2, he personally carried out reconnaissance of the Romanian positions around Kurtbunar, deciding to engage the enemy from the front with the advance guard, the horse battery and the cavalry regiments, divided into middle, left and right columns, to surround and capture all Romanian troops in the south of Kurtbunar. The enemy retreated long before the main forces of the 1st cavalry division entered into combat, but the task of the Bulgarian cavalry was brilliantly executed. 165 soldiers and 2 officers were captured and about 100 Romanians were slain and killed.⁹ The first serious success was gained thanks to boldly massing the forces of the 1st cavalry division and directing it to the flank and the rear of the enemy, without fear of the dense machine-gun and rifle fire of the enemy infantry.

The indisputable peak in the art of war of the 1st cavalry division in the offensive aspect was reached in the fighting on September 3 in the villages of Konak–Koyudzhik and Kochmar Karapelit.

For the actions of this day the orders of the commander of the 3rd army required the cavalry to establish itself at the captured position in Kurtbunar

7 *Българската армия*, vol. 8, 792–93.

8 КИСЬОВ, Генерал Колев, 16.

9 *Българската армия*, vol. 8, 387.

and to conduct active reconnaissance and surveillance of the enemy, i.e. something typical of the then prevailing conceptions of the role of the cavalry as auxiliaries to the infantry and artillery troops. Lt.-Gen. Kolev showed creativity and courage by deciding not to limit himself to the blind execution of these orders. He judged that it was more advantageous for the army if the division protected the flank of Bulgarian troops directed towards Dobrich, with the 1st cavalry division destroying the enemy with bold offensive actions in conditions that were less favourable for them.¹⁰

At half past twelve, i.e. half an hour later, Lt.-Gen. Kolev ordered the cavalry brigades to be ready to attack, leaving the baggage trains in Kurtbunar. His idea was to engage and destroy the isolated Romanian detachment, as far away as possible from Kurtbunar. Around 2 p.m., after receiving fresh intelligence on the location of the enemy, Lt.-Gen. Kolev decided to attack them while he was in the village of Kochmar, in order to use the open ground around the village, which favoured a direct cavalry assault.¹¹

The Romanians had significant forces: they held positions deployed in the formation of one infantry battalion to the north and west of Kochmar village and in Bekir Mahle village; in Kochmar village and its eastern suburbs there was another infantry battalion; to the east, on the ridge west of Konak-Koyudzhik, two infantry companies and more infantry units were deployed in columns, consisting of about two battalions reinforced with artillery and cavalry. The enemy was met with artillery fire by the 1st horse battery of the brave Captain George Vekilski and with strong sudden machine-gun fire from 24 machine guns of the division. This broke the offensive momentum of the Romanians and they retreated. Then Lt.-Gen. Kolev formed his plan that was and still is a real example of a masterpiece in the art of cavalry warfare. The 1st horse brigade was to attack and destroy the vanguard battalions of the enemy; the 4th horse brigade—in order not to allow the main Romanian forces to support the vanguard, and the infantry and cycling companies—was to continue its advance in order to engage the enemy to the front.¹²

10 Пеев, *Генерал-лейтенант Иван Колев*, 63.

11 *Българската армия*, vol. 8, 432.

12 Кисьов, *Генерал Колев*, 22.

The cavalry attack of the 1st horse brigade against the Romanian vanguard achieved a tactical surprise, and the morale of the enemy was severely weakened. For about two hours the brigade managed to block the path of the two Romanian battalions from the advance guard and to destroy them, without allowing a single unit to retreat or join the main forces. The attack of the 4th horse brigade against the main forces at the villages of Karapelit and Konak–Koyudzhik was also well conceived, but because of the enemy's superiority in numbers and firepower (400 horsemen of the 6th cavalry regiment advanced against 4,000 Romanian infantry and artillery¹³) and the actions of their cavalry, they were not defeated, but only disrupted, retreating in panic to the northeast.

After fighting a heavy six-hour battle against enemy troops, consisting of four infantry battalions, reinforced with cavalry and artillery, the 1st cavalry division managed not only to stop their advance to Kurtbunar, but also to shatter them and force them into retreat.¹⁴ The Romanian 6th mixed brigade suffered heavy human and material losses in the fighting of September 3. Four officers, 650 NCOs and soldiers were killed and wounded, and another 13 officers and 1,022 NCOs and soldiers were captured; the enemy abandoned many heavy and light weapons, gear, ammunition and other military equipment. The moral and psychological effects were also very important: the news of the overwhelming victory of the 1st cavalry division spread throughout the troops of the 3rd army, and strengthened spirits and faith in the victory of the Bulgarian army. The skilful manoeuvring to encircle the Romanian vanguard at the village of Kochmar and the bold attack in open cavalry formation not only enriched the Bulgarian art of war, but also had a negative impact on the morale of all Romanian troops in Dobrudzha and decreased the will of these troops to resist.¹⁵ The most objective proof of the remarkable military techniques used by the 1st cavalry division were its much smaller human losses: 1 officer and 53 soldiers killed, 6 officers and 97 soldiers wounded, or the loss ratio was 1:11 compared to the enemy.¹⁶

13 Пеев, *Генерал-лейтенант Иван Колев*, 68.

14 ДВИА—Велико Търново, F. 740, V., а.и. 73, f. 26.

15 *Българската армия*, vol. 8, 451.

16 Кисъов, *Генерал Колев*, 24.

The outcome of the battle at Kochmar–Karapelit was the greatest of all the battles of the 1st cavalry division in 1916, mainly because the enemy suffered the complete demoralization of its advancing column. Demoralization, which—according to the testimony of later captured Romanian officers—was carried to the units in the rear, reaching all the way to the troops at Dobrich. This battle was a testing ground for the merits of the Bulgarian cavalry, which up to that time had remained hidden and unknown to foreign military specialists. The battle at Kochmar–Karapelit showed what the capabilities of the Bulgarian cavalry officer and soldier were; as a separate type of armed force, the Bulgarian cavalry proved that it was not an unnecessary luxury for maintenance from the military budget, as it was thought to have been.¹⁷

On the battlefield in Dobrudzha in 1916, the Bulgarian army encountered its most difficult opponent: the troops from Russia that had defeated the Ottoman Empire in the 1877–1878 war and that gave way to the creation of the Third Bulgarian State. The upcoming clash with the Russian cavalry, strong in numbers and with its rich military traditions and virtues, including the Cossacks, renowned for their belligerence, further motivated the officers and the troops of 1st cavalry division to improve their combat skills and excellence in the art of war. The intelligence information showed that the opposing Russian cavalry division had 30 squadrons of cavalry—double that of the Bulgarian cavalry.¹⁸

Lt.-Gen. Kolev and the officers from the 1st cavalry division had to take this factor into account. Even more difficult for them was to overcome their fears of how the troops would manage to take up arms against the heirs of their liberators. The first encounters of the Bulgarian cavalry with the numerous Russian cavalry screens (20–30 riders, while the Bulgarian ones comprised only a few horsemen) were testament to the martial and moral superiority of the Bulgarian soldiers. With accurate shots from their carbines, Bulgarian troopers felled several Russians, and the rest were impressed and withdrew in rapid fashion. In the 1st cavalry division the rumour rapidly spread of these

17 ДВИА—Велико Търново, Ф. 466, II., а.и. 29, ф. 67–68.

18 Пеев, *Генерал-лейтенант Иван Колев*, 76.

“escapes” made by the Russian cavalry, thus increasing the confidence of the Bulgarians.¹⁹

By participating in the battle at Dobrich on September 7, the 1st cavalry division recorded a glorious new page in the history of the Bulgarian art of war. Early in the morning, in the division’s position, the sound of the battle of Dobrich was heard. After he was himself informed of the plight of the Bulgarian units, of the great numerical and material superiority of the enemy and of their own high losses, Lt.-Gen. Kolev showed unique flair and insight into the turn of events. First, however, he demonstrated rare initiative for a Bulgarian cavalry commander. He decided to come to the aid of the 6th Bdin division at Dobrich, although no orders were received from the third army command to change the direction of movement.

His decision was a bold move for two reasons: in order to deploy the 1st cavalry division at the rear of the enemy at Dobrich, it had to perform a lightning flank march close to the entire Russian cavalry, while leaving open its own rear, covered only slightly by several cavalry screens. At 9:30 a.m., Lt.-Gen. Kolev started the march and informed General Stefan Toshev about the change of movement from north-west to east, in the direction of the site of the battle at Dobrich. After a very fast march around 3:30 p.m., he received dispatches from the advance guard concerning contact with the enemy. Lt.-Gen. Kolev properly assessed the situation—the tactical surprise achieved with the appearance of the 1st cavalry division to the flank and rear of the enemy at the village of Great Chamurliy—and immediately decided to advance with the attached infantry units from the 16th Lovech infantry regiment against the right flank of the enemy to the village of Fake Osman and for the cavalry regiments to redeploy northwards to capture the villages of Nasreddin, Sadie and Sinan Kara, and to flank his rear.²⁰ This unexpected appearance of the Bulgarian cavalry on the enemy flank facilitated the start of the counterattack of the Bulgarian 35th and 36th infantry regiments.²¹

The Entente units attacked were from the mixed Serbian division. Unfortunately, due to the impending threat of intervention in the battle of the

19 Ibid., 73.

20 *Българската армия*, vol. 8, 723.

21 ДВИА—Велико Търново, F. 740, V., а.и. 73, f. 46.

Russian cavalry from the 1st cavalry division, only the 2nd horse regiment was actively involved in the battle: it impetuously attacked the enemy at the village of Kara Sinan and pursued it in the direction of the village of Nasreddin. Disruption occurred among the Serb infantry, and late in the afternoon on September 7 it began a retreat; it was gradually followed by the adjacent units around the front to the east. Only the cover of night prevented complete panic in the enemy units and helped the defeated Serbs to avoid the decisive blow which was struck by the cavalry core of the division. The battle at Dobrich was won literally at the last minute; the intervention of the 1st cavalry division proved to be the decisive factor.

The commander of the 6th Bdin division, Major General Stefan Popov, admitted that it was the news of the Bulgarian cavalry's arrival at the battlefield that raised the morale of his units, and, in conjunction with the advance of the troops of the Dobrich garrison, contributed to the positive turn in the course of battle.²²

However, the highest appraisal of the military techniques of the 1st cavalry division in the battle of Dobrich was given by the commander of the 3rd army, General Stefan Toshev: "It must be acknowledged that the success in this crucial battle is mainly due to the courage and strong resistance shown by the troops of the 6th Bdin division, and especially the timely quick march-manoevre of the reinforced cavalry division to appear in the flank and at the rear of the enemy's right wing."²³

If in the first week of the military operations of the Bulgarian army in Dobrudzha the military skill of the 1st cavalry division developed fully in its offensive aspect, then very soon Bulgarian troopers showed the mastery of its defensive component. In mid-September 1916 the units of the 3rd Army were deployed in front of the Kubadin line. The 1st cavalry division, with its attached infantry and artillery units, held the defence of the right flank.

After several days of unsuccessful attempts to break into the fortified enemy lines, on September 20 Lt.-Gen. Kolev received orders to withdraw his subordinate troops to the line of Mustafa Aci village–Azaplar village.²⁴

22 Кисьов, *Генерал Колев*, 41.

23 Тошев, *Действията на III армия*, 75.

24 Кисьов, *Генерал Колев*, 75.

On September 21, Entente forces began a large scale offensive against the 1st cavalry division. Lt.-Gen. Kolev ordered the core cavalry to concentrate on the two villages, the two infantry, the two cycling companies and the cavalry machine-gun squadrons to strengthen the position from both sides of the Mustafa Aci-Amuzacha road, and the baggage trains and rear units to concentrate on the southern outskirts of Mustafa Aci. As of 3 p.m., the commander of the 1st cavalry division decided to continue active defence with the infantry units and machine guns on the positions at Mustafa Aci and the advance guard at Azaplar, and with the core cavalry to attack in the flank and rear of the enemy up to the village of Engez.²⁵

As it often happens in war, the situation changed dramatically. The enemy regrouped and began a vigorous offensive along the front of the division with superior infantry and artillery units. The Bulgarian vanguard was forced to withdraw from the village of Karakoy and began to retreat towards the village of Azaplar. Lt.-Gen. Kolev did not waver, not even faced with the real danger of the capture of the guns of the cavalry battery, and willingly waited for his troops to disrupt the attacking Entente troops with their firepower. By 6:15 p.m. the enemy was about 300 steps from the front of the bicycle company. After running out of bullets, individual men from the line began to retreat, and the cavalry battery was in danger of capture by the enemy. Then Lt.-Gen. Kolev gave the order to attack the core cavalry hidden in the hollow behind Mustafa Aci, after the enemy had already stripped his flank and rear.²⁶ The life guards cavalry regiment and the 3rd cavalry regiment attacked in the first line, and the 4th cavalry regiment in the second. The attack, ingeniously conceived by Lt.-Gen. Kolev, was conducted brilliantly by the Bulgarian cavalry. The enemy tried with artillery, machine-gun and rifle fire to form a barrier to its whirlwind offensive to the north, but without success. The attack of the 1st cavalry division was impetuous, and its pressure irrepressible. The units of the Entente were forced into full flight: discarding weapons and equipment, pursued, overtaken and sabred by the Bulgarian squadrons, they retreated northwards to the

25 *Българската армия*, vol. 9, 404.

26 ДВИА—Велико Търново, F. 466, II., а.и. 19, f. 11.

village of Toprahisar, and the night once again saved them from a more serious defeat.²⁷

The losses of the 1st cavalry division with the attached to her battalion from the 16th Lovech Infantry Regiment in this battle were: 1 killed and 3 wounded officers; 33 killed, 1 missing and 136 wounded soldiers. The enemy losses were much larger—about 250 killed and several hundred wounded officers and soldiers.²⁸

A few days later, the commander in chief of the troops of the Central Powers in Romania, General-Field Marshal August von Mackensen, arrived at the headquarters of the 1st cavalry division. His attention to the Bulgarian cavalry, the assessment of its actions and admiration of the qualities of its commander were fully deserved; according to the words of the experienced German general, as previously quoted in the text, this all amounted to eloquent proof of the military mastery of the Bulgarian cavalry.

In 1916 autumn in North Dobrudzha came early, with cold wet winds and torrential rain. This further increased the pressure on the personnel of the 1st cavalry division. In late September the division managed to defend the line of h. 90–Perveli village. Despite its relatively weak strength, it was given the important task of guarding the far-right flank of the 3rd army. On October 1, 1916 the enemy attacked all around the front of the 1st cavalry division. A Romanian infantry division attacked frontally and on the flank, from the side of the Black Sea, while the Russian cavalry was reinforced by a Romanian cavalry brigade.²⁹

Fierce defensive battles continued until October 8, 1916. Despite the numerical and material superiority of the Allies, they did not achieve any territorial gains. After eight days of heavy efforts and great losses, the stubborn Russian and Romanian troops were exhausted and were forced to abandon their hopes and ambitious plans, which had foreseen the destruction of the 1st cavalry division, breaking the right flank of the 3rd army, and the endangerment of its rear in order to force it into retreat.

27 Кисъов, *Генерал Колев*, 80–81.

28 *Българската армия*, vol. 9, 411.

29 Пеев, *Генерал-лейтенант Иван Колев*, 91.

At the defence of the h. 90–Perveli village line the Bulgarian cavalry also showed its skill in successfully putting up a defence, despite the shortage of troops, armaments, munitions and equipment. Lt.-Gen. Kolev dismounted most cavalry units and they fought the battles in a typical infantry position. The horsemen were always ready to meet the enemy in close combat with sabres. Due to a lack of modern tools, they were digging with their bare hands or the scabbards of their sabres. The division received only limited reinforcements in manpower and material resources, and from various units and armed forces, slowing their cohesion into the old units and leading to difficulties in the management of battle.

The lack of ammunition was particularly acute in the 1st cavalry division because of the aforementioned shortage of train and rear units, and particularly the limited amount of vehicles. All these problems were solved with operational speed only by the military skill manifested in the fighting, and in the desire of the division commander and the commanders at all levels to carry out their orders, spurred by a consciousness of patriotism and a willingness to remain faithful to the military oath.³⁰

After the breakthrough of the fortified line at Kubadin, the 1st cavalry division began actively pursuing the enemy to the north. There is a shining example of offensive military technique during the battle at Karamurad village on October 23, 1916. In order to surprise the enemy, Lt.-Gen. Kolev decided to start pursuing before dawn, with a battle formation for movement on the road to Karamurad village, as follows: front guard—the 5th horse brigade; the main forces—the life guards cavalry regiment, and the 1st, 3rd and 4th cavalry regiments and the two cavalry batteries moving in front of the rear guard. At 7 p.m. on October 23, the division commander saw numerous enemy units scattered in the space between Karamurad village and the road to Chikrachi village. Lt.-Gen. Kolev immediately ordered the advance guard forward to pursue, open fire and attack the enemy, and the main forces to follow at a close distance in the direction of the road to Karamurad village. The whirlwind attacks by the squadrons from the 5th cavalry brigade lasted about two hours, and were directed against the 20th brigade from the 9th Romanian infantry division, whose commander Colonel Frimo was captured, as well as parts of

30 Кисъов, *Генерал Колев*, 120–21.

the 7th and 35th Romanian infantry regiments, the 19th brigade of the 9th Romanian infantry division, the 23rd and 63rd Romanian infantry regiments, the 5th Calarasi brigade and a Russian cavalry brigade with one battery.³¹

The triumph of the 1st cavalry division and the Bulgarian military skill in this battle was complete. The retreating Entente troops were caught on the line of h. 91–Kanara village–Karamurad village, and were broken and scattered one by one, and solely by the forces at the vanguard of the division. After the rapid defeat of his weak resistance, the enemy was pursued until h. 18–Verim Tepe.³² Lieutenant-Colonel Popovski, commander of the Russian volunteer Orenburg 265th battalion, was captured together with the flag of his battalion.³³ Severe human and material losses were inflicted on the enemy. Some 1,500 prisoners, including 520 Russians and 12 officers, were captured. The whole area of the battle and the road continuing to the north were littered with discarded weapons, gear and ammunition.³⁴ During the whirlwind cavalry attack, the units of Lt.-Gen. Kolev suffered only relatively minor losses: 2 officers and 17 soldiers killed, 2 officers and 17 soldiers wounded,³⁵ and 32 horses killed and 27 wounded.³⁶

The battle at the Karamurad village was a classic cavalry charge of the 1st cavalry division carried out with cold steel weapons—sabres against numerous retreating enemy. The attack was supported by timely artillery, machine gun and rifle fire, which is proof for the skilled interaction between the various branches of the army, united in the order of battle of the division, for the skilful use and combination of speed, momentum and power of the cavalry with the power of modern rapid-firing light and heavy weapons during pursuit of the enemy in open clear ground.

The commander of the division, Lt.-Gen. Kolev, was once again laden with praise and congratulations. The commander of the 2nd army, General Georgi Todorov, wired him these words: “I am delighted by the actions of our cavalry.

31 *Българската армия*, vol. 9, 808.

32 ДВИА—Велико Търново, Ф. 466, П., а.и. 19, ф. 31.

33 Кисьов, *Генерал Колев*, 154–56.

34 Тошев, *Действията на III армия*, 225.

35 Кисьов, *Генерал Колев*, 158.

36 *Българската армия в Световната война 1915–1918 г.*, Т. 9, 809.

My soul is full of joy that our cavalry, with its bold and excellent action, set foot on that stage of glory it was aiming for, but for which was no worthy leader until now. In your face it received this leader and justified your faith and love."³⁷

The military prowess of the cavalry division led by Lt.-Gen. Kolev was distinguished primarily by its imagination and total refusal to adhere to the scientific statutes, ordinances and principles on the role of cavalry in warfare. On the eve of the First World War, foreign and Bulgarian military theory assigned the cavalry mainly reconnaissance, logistical and auxiliary functions. It was believed that the time of the massive use of the cavalry in battle as a decisive military tool was irretrievably gone, for objective reasons: increase in the number, calibre and range of the artillery, introduction of mortars, and improvements to machine guns and small arms. The contributions to the cavalry's military skill, brilliant victories won and independent assignments successfully completed all fully justified the great confidence extended to division commander Lt.-Gen. Kolev by the commander of the 3rd army, by putting at his command a large number of battalions and batteries, which contributed to its success.³⁸

At first glance, the era of the cavalry as a separate branch of the armed forces seemed to be ending. But the Bulgarian soldiers led by Lieutenant-General Ivan Kolev showed that its capabilities were far from exhausted. The success achieved and the military excellence on display not only contributed significantly to the rapid liberation of Dobrudzha, but also provided opportunities for the interpretation of the military traditions and virtues displayed as the spiritual resurrection of the eternal warlike spirit of the Bulgarian nation from the Middle Ages. Under the skilful leadership of Lt.-Gen. Kolev, who possessed valuable qualities as a major cavalry commander, the cavalry division raised its military proficiency to such a high level that it amazed Bulgaria's allies in the Central Powers and served as an example to Bulgaria's enemies among the Entente.

37 Пеев, *Генерал-лейтенант Иван Колев*, 105.

38 ДВИА—Велико Търново, F. 466, II., а.и. 29, f. 849.

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