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'The whole of the Balkans is not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier'

– Otto von Bismarck

'The Balkans produce more history than they can consume'

– Winston Churchill

'One day the great European War will come out of some damned foolish thing in the Balkans'

– Otto von Bismarck

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Acknowledgements

This volume was born of a conference which we, the three editors, organized for the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Great War, at St Antony's College, University of Oxford. 2014 was a year of centenary commemorations around the world and particularly in the United Kingdom: a number at Oxford University alone. At South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX), we decided to arrange a symposium putting the spotlight on South East Europe, the region in which the initial spark of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand ignited the Great War. Our focus, however, was not on the assassination per se, but on the dramatic regional transformation brought about by the disintegration of two major empires – the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman. This concatenation of events irrevocably altered South East Europe and shaped the rest of its 20th-century history.

What prompted us to concentrate on the legacies of the Great War, as opposed to commemorating it as a historical event, was the realization that 100 years after its beginning, South East European states still cannot agree on the framing of that historical event. The very memory of the Great War remains contentious in the region, while the ramifications of that past continue to colour the present: in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey, it remains highly sensitive; in Bulgaria and Greece, it is ignored and unspoken, consciously removed from national narratives. The centenary of the Great War elicited passionate reactions not just from historians, but also, possibly even more significantly, from national governments, reflecting deep

differences over the ways in which these historical events *are* and *ought to be* remembered.

The success of the conference, which took place on 29 May 2014, was palpable, and the feedback from attendees was very positive, largely due to the high-quality assembly of speakers with deep knowledge of the subject, and illuminating variations in views. We are grateful for their presentations and contributions to this volume. Historical legacies are processes in which past events are handed down and interpreted (or reinterpreted); they may be temporally, nationally and regionally distinct and discordant; and they can mutate. We thus deliberately chose to bring historians, each with a distinct specialized background, to present their individual views on how such dramatic events are remembered or repressed today – and why. We would like to thank them profusely for finding the time in their demanding schedules to finalize their chapters: Margaret MacMillan, Ivor Roberts, Ivo Banac, Richard Crampton, Eugene Rogan and Basil C. Gounaris (in order of appearance in this volume). The depth and quality of the debate was such that it was natural for us to proceed with the publication of this book. For this we are grateful to the publishers, particularly Emily Russell, as well as to the anonymous reviewer who strongly endorsed this project.

In our task, which lasted for a year and a half from the organization of the symposium to the delivery of the manuscript, we were assisted by Julie Adams, the administrator of SEESOX who skilfully coordinated the organization of the conference; Jessie Hronesova, our excellent doctoral candidate in Balkan studies who transcribed the presentations; and Patrycja Stys who completed the final editing in her usual meticulous and professional manner. We are also very grateful to the Tsakopoulos Foundation, which supported the symposium financially and, especially, Professor of History Katerina Lagos from Sacramento State University (DPhil graduate of St Antony's), who endorsed and supported this initiative. Finally, many thanks go to St Antony's College for its administrative and financial assistance for the conference. It was a very appropriate decision to place this volume in the St Antony's series of Palgrave Macmillan, as evidence of the quality of the debate that takes place in this College, between its fellows, students and external scholars. We hope that this short edited volume, a conversation among prominent academics on the legacy of the Great War, can claim its own modest legacy in the scholarly literature, enhancing the debate on how the Great War is remembered and why it still evokes such strong emotions and reactions more than a century after its beginning.

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Contributors

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Ivor Roberts joined the British Diplomatic Service in 1968; for the next 38 years, he was posted in Lebanon, France, Luxembourg, Australia, Vanuatu, Spain, Yugoslavia, Ireland and Italy. In 2006, he returned to Oxford, where he had received his undergraduate degree in Modern Languages, as President of Trinity College. He was Chairman of the British School of Archaeology and Fine Arts at Rome (2007–12). He is the editor of, and major contributor to, the leading handbook on diplomacy, *Satow's Diplomatic Practice* (6th edition, 2009), and his *Conversations with Milošević* was published in Serbian in 2012. The English language version will appear later this year.

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1

Introduction: The Past is Never Dead ...

Othon Anastasakis, David Madden and Elizabeth Roberts

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Historians are fond of remarking that the long 19th century ended with the First World War. Or as A. J. P. Taylor put it more sweepingly, 'In 1917 European history, in the old sense, came to an end. World history began.'[1]

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 triggered the biggest military and political cataclysm the world had then seen. What happened in Sarajevo ultimately sparked a chain of events leading to the deaths of 15 million people; the collapse of the great autocratic empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Ottoman Turkey; the destruction of the Ottoman Sultanate and three major European dynasties (the Romanovs, the Habsburgs, and the Hohenzollerns); not to mention the triumph of the world's first socialist regime as a result of the Russian Revolution. The war changed the map of Europe (and the Middle East) more than any previous war in history. New states, claiming as their founding principle the right to self-determination, emerged from the ruins of the old empires. What led to this cataclysm? While its causes, still hotly disputed, extended widely beyond the Balkans, its deepest origins lay in the elusive answer to the so-called 'Eastern Question,' fundamentally a search for ways to address the crumbling Ottoman Empire. The constellation of issues surrounding Ottoman decline – including the stirrings of local revolt and the irreconcilability of Austrian and Russian goals over predominance in the Balkans, with roots stretching back into the 18th century – drew in all the major European Powers since each was determined to see that any adjustment of Ottoman frontiers should not alter the balance of power in any way that was detrimental to its own individual interests. Not only was the balance of power in the region, and hence in Europe, at stake; control of this strategic region also carried implications for European rivalries in Asia.

This collision of views, naturally, did not render war inevitable. Indeed, in the years leading up to 1914, the world had held its collective breath on a number of similarly combustible occasions in other possible theatres – the Moroccan crisis of 1898, or again in 1905 when Russian and British interests clashed over Russia's war with Japan. Yet the Balkans, as Margaret MacMillan points out in this volume, were especially neuralgic – 'a crossroads where great power rivalry intersected in a particularly dangerous way with local conflicts.' Furthermore, 'what made the situation more volatile was that the Balkan nations themselves were now trying to influence affairs.' No doubt local Balkan rivalries

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could have been more contained had relations between the Great Powers been better; instead, they were exacerbated.

The 1856 Treaty of Paris had settled the Crimean War between Russia and the Ottoman Empire into which all the other main European powers had been drawn on the Ottoman side owing to fears of Russian expansion. This settlement, guaranteeing the neutrality of the Black Sea, appeared to promise a lasting peace. In reality, however, some of its provisions – particularly those where the signatory powers took upon themselves the role of protecting the rights of the Ottoman Empire's Christian subjects – were simply storing up trouble for the future. Thus, when rebellions broke out in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria in 1875–76 and were met with fierce Ottoman suppression (Gladstone's notorious Bulgarian massacres), the powers were again drawn in as the small Balkan states of Montenegro and Serbia, joined by Russian pan-Slavists, took up arms in support of their Christian brothers in Ottoman territory. These events led to another Russo-Turkish war in 1877. When a series of Russian successes opened the way to Constantinople, the Ottomans sued for peace, allowing the Russians to impose a settlement under the Treaty of San Stefano that threatened to upset the European equilibrium by bolstering Russian interests in the Balkans at Austria-Hungary's expense.

As tensions escalated, Russia backed down, accepting the need for another peace conference under the chairmanship of the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. The Congress of Berlin duly opened in 1878, but while all the Great Powers (Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Britain, France, and Italy) took part, the small Balkan nations were excluded, giving rise to a lasting sense of grievance. These nations believed, not without some justification, that the Congress was designed to address the interests of the powers while leaving them as no more than passive witnesses to their own fate.

Serbia and Montenegro nevertheless succeeded in being recognized as sovereign, independent states. By contrast, the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were to be administered by Austria-Hungary while formal sovereignty was still vested in the Ottoman Empire. This arrangement was a recipe for disaster, realized when the Habsburgs, prompted in part by apprehensions about the rival attraction exerted by the rise to power of the modernizing Young Turks, annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908. As Ivor Roberts reminds us in Chapter 3, the annexation provoked particularly furious reactions in Russia and Serbia. The Austrians were

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shocked because Russian Foreign Minister Izvolsky had agreed in July 1908 that, in exchange for Russian acquiescence in the annexation of Bosnia, Austria-Hungary would support the Russian bid for control of the Dardanelles (Russia's long-cherished strategic aim). The virulence of the reactions, however, led to Izvolsky quietly dropping his support for the annexation. But, with Britain and France disinclined to confront Austria-Hungary, Russia and its client Serbia were forced to accept the annexation in 1909. As Ivor Roberts writes, 'It was a humiliation that neither Russia nor Serbia would forget, and which came back to haunt everyone in July 1914.'

Yet while Serbian, Montenegrin (and Romanian) aspirations for independence were realized by the Berlin Treaty, the same was not true for Albanians or Macedonians. Bulgaria, which had seen its territory dramatically reduced and its status as an autonomous principality compromised, was left markedly aggrieved. In response to the territorial adjustments put in place by the Treaty of San Stefano and modified by the Congress of Berlin, a group of Albanian notables established the Prizren League of 1878 with a limited autonomist agenda and a determination to preserve the territorial integrity of Albanian-inhabited lands. The first genuinely anti-Ottoman stirrings of revolt, however, only broke out some ten years later when Albanians led by northern Catholics began nationalist uprisings – again in response to the centralizing tendencies of the Young Turks. In turn, emergent Albanian nationalism challenged Serbian and Montenegrin aspirations for territorial expansion to the south; they suspected that Austria-Hungary was, if not complicit, at least not averse to this. The Berlin Treaty also saw Macedonia, nearly entirely allocated to an enlarged Bulgaria under the Treaty of San Stefano, returned to Ottoman rule with predictably troublesome consequences since Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbs all entertained irredentist claims to this strategically quintessential territory at the centre of the region.

In the years between 1878 and 1914, the affairs of South East Europe continued to be swayed by the conflicting fortunes of the two empires which had dominated the region for centuries. The Austro-Hungarian Empire remained determined to hold its ground in South East Europe, as demonstrated by the annexation. Its highhanded treatment of Turkey over the annexation changed the dynamic in the Balkans as Italy was emboldened to challenge the Porte. In 1911, eager to ensure its own colonial expansion, Italy declared war on the Ottoman Empire and invaded the Ottoman province of Tripolitania (modern Libya), occupying Tripoli,

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Benghazi, and Misrata. The Sultan was then forced to sign a peace treaty ceding Tripolitania to Italy in 1912. For the Balkan states, Italy's attack on the Ottoman Empire was a call to action. What one of the powers could do in undermining the Berlin settlement with impunity could surely be imitated by the small Balkan states. Covert negotiations led swiftly to the formation of the Balkan League, comprising Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro. Initially, Serbia and Montenegro achieved such remarkable and rapid success in Ottoman-ruled Macedonia and the Sandžak during the First Balkan War that within a few short weeks between October and December 1912 Serbia and Montenegro had a common border and Serbia, seemingly on the point of realizing its foremost strategic goal, had reached the Adriatic Sea. These developments were immediately destabilizing. Serbian access to the sea threatened Austria-Hungary's domination of the Adriatic, potentially leading to a Russian presence there. The tension escalated when Montenegro's determination to wrest the Albanian-inhabited city of Scutari (modern Shkodra) from Ottoman control seemed likely to be supported by Russia in the teeth of Austro-Hungarian opposition. At one stage this situation led British Foreign Secretary Edward Grey to declare that 'it [Scutari] was a bomb which might set the whole of Europe on fire.'[2] As Grey saw it, 'If Austria marched against Montenegro, Russia would march against Austria; Germany would then march against Russia, and France would march against Germany: all this on account of Scutari. It would be intolerable.'[3] In the event Montenegro was eventually forced to back down only days after the city surrendered to the Montenegrins. The powers had sent a fleet to blockade Montenegro, and the Austrians prepared to take action (unilateral, if necessary) against Montenegro. King Nikola, faced with such overwhelming odds, decided to settle and agreed to withdraw from Scutari in exchange for a very significant foreign loan. Another dramatic confrontation was thus resolved at the last minute. As the Russian Foreign Minister was reported to have said, 'King Nikola was going to set the world on fire to cook his own little omelette.'[4]

While Austria-Hungary emerged with its prestige enhanced from this showdown with a small Balkan state, several severely negative consequences would play into the crisis of summer 1914. First, Grey was impressed by Berlin's willingness to curb Vienna's aggressive inclinations, leading him to the fatal assumption that the Wilhelmstrasse would exert similar restraining influence in July 1914. Second, Count Berchtold,

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the Austrian Foreign Minister, clearly felt that issuing ultimata to Montenegro or Serbia, backed with the threat of force, paid dividends. Last, Grey, encouraged by the success of the London Conference under his leadership, was overly confident that another conference could always be convened to stave off another crisis, even at the eleventh hour.

In May 1913, the Treaty of London put an end to the small Balkan states' hostilities against the Ottoman Empire, but it proved to be no more than an interregnum between two periods of war. Barely a month later, the Balkan states were battling one another over the distribution of spoils. Steered by Austria and Italy, the Great Powers' plans to create an Albanian state jeopardized Greece and Serbia's anticipated territorial gains to the south. They consequently sought compensation in Macedonia, threatening Bulgaria's long-standing claims to the same territory. To pre-empt an attack by Serbia and Greece, the Bulgarians initiated the six-week Second Balkan War – only to find themselves attacked from all sides, not only by Greece and Serbia but also by Romania and Montenegro (and even some Ottoman troops). The result was a catastrophic defeat. By the Treaty of Bucharest signed in August 1913, Serbia and Greece divided the greater part of Macedonia between them and a new state of Albania was brought into being. The Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria were the greatest losers. In reality, however, the settlement left all the Balkan nations dissatisfied, even Greece and Serbia which had made the most substantial gains. As Sir Edward Grey wrote, 'The settlement after the Second Balkan War was not one of justice, but of force. It stored up inevitable trouble for the time to come.'[5]

The two Balkans Wars were a dress rehearsal for the Great War to come in many respects: the use of rapid-firing artillery; the advent of trench warfare; the extensive impact of the war on civilian populations, in part due to disease; and the conscription of soldiers inspired by nationalist ideologies.[6] The end of the Balkan Wars saw the effective expulsion of the Ottoman Empire from Europe, barring Constantinople and a corner of Thrace. Russia, having opted to support Serbia rather than Bulgaria in the Second Balkan War, had forfeited the possibility of gaining indirect control of the Turkish Straits via Bulgaria. Its influence in the peninsula would henceforth need to be exerted primarily through its ties to Serbia.

In Serbia and annexed Bosnia, nationalist anti-Ottoman sentiment was meanwhile slowly redirected against Austria-Hungary. Its hostility towards Serbia and Montenegro had been significantly increased by

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these two nations' campaigns against the Albanians in the Balkan Wars and their opposition to the creation of an Albanian state. Serbia's victory in these wars had sharpened its desire to be the Piedmont of the Balkans, and the only other direction for pan-Slavists to expand was to the north and west. In this volume, Ivor Roberts describes the emergence of the Black Hand, a shadowy secret organization, as initially a threat to not only the Serb monarchy and its government but also to the Habsburg Empire. Bosnian Serb emigrants (including most fatefully Gavrilo Princip) in Belgrade spent their time discussing irredentist plots against Austria-Hungary, aided and abetted by Black Hand operatives. Their interaction led directly to the assassination of the Archduke.

At the outbreak of the Great War, the European Powers were divided into two essentially defensive alliance systems: the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, and Italy) and the Triple Entente (Britain, France, and Russia). Austria-Hungary's declaration of war on Serbia on 28 July was backed by the knowledge that should Russia enter the war on the Serbian side, Germany would intervene in support of Austria. Spurred on by pan-Slav nationalists, the Russian Tsar reluctantly gave the order for general mobilization on 30 July and, in the ensuing chain reaction, Germany declared war on both Russia and France while Britain entered the war in their support on 4 August. With the majority of the Great Powers now at war, the countries and political elites of the region were divided in siding either with the Central Powers (Germany and Austria) or with former members of the Triple Entente (Britain, France, and Russia), now known as the Allies. The Ottoman Empire, devastated, defeated, and expelled from European territory, sided with Germany in the expectation 'that if the war went particularly well for the Central Powers, the Ottomans might actually recover some of the territory they surrendered in the Balkan Wars in 1912–13. Secondly, should Greece enter the war on the side of the Entente Powers, and be defeated, Germany would assure the return of the three Aegean Islands of Chios, Mytilene (Lesbos), and Limnos to Turkish sovereignty,' as Eugene Rogan puts it in this volume. In April 1915, Italy was persuaded to abandon its former partners in the Triple Alliance and enter the war on the side of the Allies after Britain and France, in the secret Treaty of London, had promised to reward her at the end of the war with territories inhabited by Slovenes and Croats. Five months later, the Central Powers secured the support of Bulgaria by exploiting a combination of territorial bribes and old resentments focused principally on the loss of Macedonia,

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a decision which was to cost the Bulgarians dearly in human, territorial, political, and financial terms. As Richard Crampton argues in this volume, for Bulgaria, the Second Balkan War and the First World War were two national catastrophes whose names no one dared to utter for a long time.

In turn, Bulgaria's decision – important as it was for control of the Straits – was also fateful for Serbia which, pinioned between the Austrians to the north and the Bulgarians to the south, had little chance of holding out in the longer term. Their initial successes gave way to defeats and a retreat through Kosovo and Albania to the Adriatic and ultimately to Corfu, where a government-in-exile was established. For the Allies, the Serbian defeat made the question of Greece and Romania's allegiance acute.

Opinion in Greece was bitterly polarized over which side to take, a division that split the country into two political camps (Royalists versus Venizelists) and geographic territories (old lands around Athens against new lands around Thessaloniki). The Royalists sided with the Central Powers, while the Venizelists joined the Entente. Romania too had prevaricated, uncertain as to which alliance would better facilitate the realization of its Greater Romanian dreams. With the Allies offering territorial concessions including Hungarian-ruled Transylvania and part of neighbouring Bukovina, Romania declared war on the Habsburg Empire. This was a pyrrhic victory for the Allies as Bucharest fell to the Central Powers within a few months.

The War left South East Europe completely transformed. The two regional empires, and their Russian counterpart, had effectively imploded. The Austro-Hungarian Empire turned into two small Central European states which retained very little of their previous glory and regional domination. Russia, following the bloody and revolutionary overthrow of its Tsarist government and heritage, turned Communist and led the way for an alternative political and economic model which would dominate half of the world following the Second World War. The Ottoman Empire, already suffering from a slow and tormented process of disintegration for almost a century, received a final blow that led to the birth of the modern Turkish Republic around the land of Anatolia in Asia. The Treaty of Sèvres was effectively its death warrant. The new state of Turkey turned its back on the Ottoman past and focused on a Western future based on a new, powerful, republican, and secular Kemalist dogma. In the Western part of the Balkans, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and

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Slovenes that morphed into Yugoslavia, created in 1918, would last in one shape or another for the next 70 years. Its early days of hope, however, gave way to a realization for Croats and Slovenes that Habsburg control was being replaced by a prepotent Serbian monarchy.

As for Greece, although she had sided with the victors, the legacy of the World War proved very bitter. The national schism and the deep division of the country turned, in the words of Basil C. Gounaris, into a 'major political trauma' that would last for decades, polarizing the political forces of the country from the 1920s. Until the end of the military dictatorship in 1974, the abolition of the monarchy in 1975, and the subsequent restoration of a more consolidated democracy, Greece went through a long period of turbulent politics marked by military interventions, the division between Venizelists and Royalists, and a bloody civil war in the 1940s, followed by a bitter division between right and left which led to the seven-year military dictatorship. The end of the Great War also entailed military and societal trauma. It led to the collapse of Greece's Great Idea following a bitter war with Turkey and a momentous defeat in Anatolia. One and a half million Orthodox Christians were expelled from Asia Minor and arrived as refugees in the Greek state. As Gounaris indicates, the Catastrophe, as a memory, overshadowed First World War achievements, even the importance of territorial acquisitions.

What was seen as a catastrophe in Asia Minor by the Greeks was perceived as a victory and celebration for the new Turkish Republic. The incidents of 1922–23 would haunt Greek-Turkish relations for the rest of the century. The two countries went through moments of intense antagonism and near conflict in the context of the Cold and post-Cold War environment and a growing competition over territories and armaments.

For Turkey, likewise, the end of the First World War and the Treaty of Sèvres – linked with the final carving up of the remaining Ottoman territories – led to a syndrome of scepticism and mistrust towards Western European governments. These sentiments remain relevant today, preventing Turks from fully trusting the West.

The post-war settlement contained significant bones of contention, which manifested themselves almost immediately. On the one hand, there was Yugoslavia, created to reflect the wish of South Slavs for political unification, despite their diverse religious and cultural heritages. It lay across one of the great lasting fault lines of history, bedevilled by the contrasting legacies and aspirations of its different parts, especially

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the competition between Serbs and Croats and Serbia's aspirations to domination. In addition, despite the creation of Albania in 1913, more Albanians lived outside than inside the country, half a million of them in Yugoslavia, mainly in Kosovo. Relations between Yugoslavia and Albania would become polemical with the latter fearing the territorial or other regional ambitions of the former, and the former poorly managing the integration of its Albanian population under the so-called 'Yugoslav identity.'

Many of these problems still plague us today. As Ivo Banac points out in his chapter, the South Slav questions which preoccupied the post-war years continue to affect current developments: we continue to face the Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian, Albanian, Bosniak, and even Yugoslav questions. The violent break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s brought new and bitter wars, exposed unresolved predicaments from the past, and generated new tensions. That past was selectively manipulated to exploit narratives of victimhood and justify present persecutions.

This volume is about legacies of the Great War in South East Europe. For all countries in the region, the winners as well as the losers, the War created new developments and new beginnings, as well as lasting traumas. Borders, domestic politics, and societies were affected for years to come. We asked two questions at the beginning of this project: (1) How is the Great War remembered in the region? Why did some states in their official discourses and history textbooks take the conscious decision to forget and pass the War into oblivion, irrespective of whether they were on the winning or the losing side? and (2) What are the long-standing legacies of the War in South East Europe following the collapse of two major European empires, and how did the War and its aftermath shape 20th- and 21-century developments? Our contributors were asked to present their views on the meaning and significance of the Great War in today's local, national, and regional collective memories.

The answers to our questions are far from uniform. One of the distinguishing features of this volume is not its uniformity but its diversity – each author brings his or her individual perspective, offering a variety of opinions and styles. This is deliberate. As we note in the conclusion, one of the on-going issues in the region is the failure to recognize the legitimate, indeed necessary, understanding that there is not a single true and exclusive view of history but a plurality of views that can inform and learn from one another.

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Some indicative themes of the continuing story addressed in the current volume include: (1) the creation of Yugoslavia; (2) the birth of modern Turkey which arose, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire; (3) the political vicissitudes of Greece and the legacy of the end of the Great Idea; and (4) Bulgaria's collective amnesia concerning one of the most dramatic moments in its national history.

In her contribution, Margaret MacMillan discusses the roots of the problem, the complexities and misunderstanding preceding the Great War, often posing the implicit question as to whether this Great War could have been avoided. Her chapter examines the Great Powers' considerations and calculations and how these engaged with local ambitions and regional animosities at the time.

Ivor Roberts' chapter on the Sarajevo assassination brings Serbia and Princip himself centre-stage. Roberts clarifies the role of the shadowy Black Hand movement and explores the blurred lines between Yugoslav sentiments and Serbian nationalism. The latter, of course, came to play a toxic role in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Their legacy is still with us in both Bosnia and Kosovo.

Ivo Banac, in his chapter on Yugoslavia, discusses the Great War through the lens of internal South Slav politics, the choices available at the time to the political elites, and their subsequent decisions. One of the most dramatic realizations in this chapter is that most of the South Slav national questions are still haunting the Western Balkan region in one way or another.

In his contribution, Richard Crampton speaks about Bulgaria, a central Balkan player during the Great War and explains why this country chose to consign the World War to oblivion, not simply as a result of defeat and military humiliation, but because of subsequent political choices that led to radical changes in the country's foreign policy prioritization.

Expounding on related stories of the rise of Turkey, and the travails of Greece, Eugene Rogan focuses on the late Ottoman period and Basil C. Gounaris on Greece's post–WWI history. The former discusses the dying of the Ottoman Empire from a Greek-Turkish perspective, while the latter brings out Greece's national mood following the end of the Great War and its effects on Greece's subsequent trajectory.

The legacy of the Great War in the Balkans is peculiarly virulent. Memories are keen and often conflicting, marked by a polyphony – or cacophony – of views. No war has been more pored over and more

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subject to differing interpretations. This volume attempts to reflect the competing narratives of those days so distant and yet so perennially close at hand. It is inspired by a symposium which took place at St Antony's College, in Oxford, on 29 May 2014 – the exact day when, in 1453, another great and long-lasting imperium, the Byzantine Empire, effectively perished.

Notes

1 A. J. P. Taylor (1966) *The First World War: An Illustrated History* (New York: Penguin Books), p. 165.
2 Quoted (Giesl to Berchtold [30 April 1913] *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik,* VI, No. 6834) in John Treadway (1998) *The Falcon and the Eagle: Montenegro and Austria-Hungary 1908-1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press), p. 132.
3 Ibid., p. 132.
4 Edward Radzinsky (2000) *Rasputin*: *The Last Word* (trans. from Russian by Judson Rosengrant) (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson), p. 189.
5 Viscount of Fallodon Grey (1925) *Twenty-five Years of Balkan Tangle, 1892–1916* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), p. 263.
6 See Richard Hall (2000) *The Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, Prelude to the First World War* (London/New York: Routledge), pp. 132–35.

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2

Too Much History and Too Many Neighbours: Europe and the Balkans before 1914

Margaret MacMillan

Abstract: *The Balkans before 1914 must be considered both in terms of their own internal tensions and developments and in the wider European context which include growing nationalisms, revolutionary ideologies, and imperial rivalries. Three developments combined to make the region unstable and a threat to international stability: the emergence of national states in the Balkans, the weakness and then the apparent revival of the Ottoman Empire, and great power interests and ambitions.*

Keywords: Balkan wars; Concert of Europe; great power rivalry; imperialism; nationalism

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In the summer of 1914, shortly before the First World War broke out, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace reported on the recent Balkan Wars, the wars of 1912–13. It deplored the tendency of warring peoples to portray their enemies as sub-human and the all-too-frequent atrocities committed against both enemy soldiers and civilians. It went on to say, 'in the older civilizations there is a synthesis of moral and social forces, embodied in laws and institutions giving stability of character, forming public sentiment and making for security.'[1] Europeans were shortly to learn that being part of an older civilization, as they defined it, made absolutely no difference at all to what peoples were capable of doing to each to other. This fact points to one of the questions that we need to consider when we look at the Balkans. How much were the Balkans unique in European civilization and in European history and how much are they part of it? I would argue that it is very important to treat the Balkans as part of a wider world and not to see them as an aberration in terms of European history; not to see them as a small part of Europe, which somehow does not share the values, standards, and norms of European society.

It is equally very important to remember that if we look at the outbreak of the First World War, it could have broken out over a number of other issues. In Europe, the period before 1914 was a time of intensified nationalisms, national rivalry, competition on any number of levels – from arms races and colonies to trade. It was a period in which European Powers were wary of one other and in which Europe was sadly becoming more and more used to the idea of a general war. Such a war could have begun on a number of occasions before it finally broke out in 1914. It could have happened in 1898, when Britain and France confronted each other in Africa. There could have been a major war in 1905 when Britain and Russia found themselves at odds, particularly because Britain was an ally of Japan with which Russia was fighting a war. There could have been a general war in 1908 over the Bosnian crisis. There could have been wars over the two Moroccan crises. And there could have been general wars in 1911, 1912, and 1913. Nonetheless, this does not mean that war was bound to break out. One of the dangers of looking at the First World War is that, given the so many possible causes, we assume that it had to happen. Yet war had been avoided on previous occasions and could have been avoided in 1914. The Balkans, however, were a crossroads where great power rivalry intersected in a particularly dangerous way with local conflicts. What happened in 1914 was, in my view, an incident, which could have been contained but which was seized upon for various

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reasons by outside powers and this in turn produced the sequence of events that led to a general war. So we have to look at the Balkans because that is after all where it started.

I would argue that much of what was happening in the Balkans in the 19th century – the development of the Balkan national states and the tensions and rivalries between these states – was a reflection of what was happening elsewhere in Europe. People in the Balkans were picking up ideas that were current elsewhere in Europe, for example, the ideas of Mazzini concerning the rights of nations to have their independence as states. Increasingly, young men from the Balkans were travelling abroad, becoming educated, picking up ideas and bringing them back. Given modern communications, even if they stayed at home they could come in contact with many of the same ideas. Nikola Pašić went off to Zurich for his education, graduating in 1872, while Gavrilo Princip and his co-conspirators were affected by ideas coming in from outside – every sort of idea from those of Russian nihilists to the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche was always very convenient because so few really understood what he meant anyway, so you could find almost anything you wanted in him. Everyone from Hitler to vegetarians has found inspiration in Nietzsche.

Nationalism itself, which plays such a prominent part in what was happening in the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th centuries, was very much a European phenomenon. The whole notion that nations, however defined, have the right to independence and that independence was coterminous with national territory – the idea that a nation could only be complete when it established itself on a clearly defined piece of territory – was something that the whole of Europe was grappling with in the course of the 19th century. What you also saw in the Balkans were the sorts of developments you would see elsewhere in Europe. People like all of us here – historians, political theorists, ethnographers – were playing a part in creating national myths in the form of national stories, with tales of triumph or humiliation, all of which fed into nationalist narratives and helped to create national movements. An English traveller, who was travelling through Macedonia when it was still Ottoman territory, met a schoolmaster from Serbia who was acting as a sort of missionary. He believed that his purpose in life was to help to win over Macedonia for the Serbians. 'We got the children,' the schoolmaster said to the English traveller, 'we made them realize they were Serbs. We taught them their history.'[2] This is just one example of something that was happening everywhere in Europe. However, while we need to situate the Balkans

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in a wider European story, we also need to look at the particular factors that made the Balkans unstable.

I would argue that there are three factors that destabilized the Balkans. One is, of course, what was happening to the Ottoman Empire, which had controlled so much of the Balkans. As the Ottoman Empire grew weaker, it became more and more of a temptation not only for the peoples within its borders to think in terms of national independence, but also for those from the outside to meddle and try to play off one party against another to advance their own interests. The further danger, which is how many perceived it, was that before 1914 it suddenly looked as if the Ottomans were going to pull themselves together. For a number of reasons this was not something that people in the Balkans or many in the wider European community thought was desirable. Second, there was the development of strongly felt local nationalisms in the Balkans, which were often in conflict with one another. For example, there was the competition between Serbian and Bulgarian nationalisms, and between Serbian and Montenegrin. Such conflicts were sometimes fed by dynastic rivalries as well. What increasingly characterized the Balkans was that as these states became independent, they developed strongly held nationalist myths, which unsurprisingly looked back to the greatest moments of their past. You did not see Balkan states – as you did not see states in the rest of Europe – pursuing a nice compact country the size of Switzerland. Of course, nationalists everywhere looked back to the times when their nation had its largest territorial extent. Serbia remembered the 14th century, while Bulgarians looked back to the 10th. Consequently, they were often claiming the same pieces of land, which was going to lead to endless strife.

It was not just the internal rivalries in the Balkans and the pressures to free remaining Balkan land from the Ottoman Empire that made the Balkans particularly troubled. The third factor was geography. The Balkans have always been of much interest to outside powers. It was very evident in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Up until the second part of the 19th century, the outside powers had tended to act as a concert of Europe, not always very perfectly, but they tended to promote stability. The Concert was a conservative arrangement. The Great Powers did not want revolution, and when they were obliged to accept change, they tended to do so acting together. The Concert of Europe recognized the emergence of Greece after a certain delay and gradually recognized the emergence of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania as independent nations. They did so on the whole with reluctance.

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But towards the end of the 19th century the Concert of Europe began to break down. The Great Powers – not only those which were particularly close to the Balkans, but also those further off such as Britain, France, and Germany – were increasingly at odds with each other. This resulted in a toxic mix of local rivalries, as well as hostility directed towards the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire itself was trying desperately to maintain its position in the Balkans, while the outside powers played their own increasingly separate games. When the reformist young Turks took over in 1908, not all the Great Powers welcomed the prospect of a revitalized Ottoman Empire, which might begin to take back some of what it had lost. Austria-Hungary in particular feared that it might lose Bosnia, which it had been administering. Russia, for its part, was concerned about control over the Straits that led from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean, and the fate of Constantinople itself. Other powers such as Britain, France, Italy, or Germany eyed Ottoman islands in the Eastern Mediterranean, the remaining territories in North Africa, and the lands stretching through the Middle East. These were all temptations in an age of heightened imperialism.

Increasingly, it was becoming apparent by the end of the 19th century that the Great Powers had less interest in working in concert and were more concerned with promoting their own often-conflicting interests. By the end of the 19th century, Germany, a very new nation on the map of Europe, was feeling that its economic and military power was not matched by any sort of imperial power. Many Germans were looking for an empire. Much of Asia and Africa had already been divided up. Germany managed to get some territory in Africa as well as bits in the South Pacific and established a foothold in China. The Ottoman Empire, close at hand with vast territories, was inevitably tempting. In addition, the German ruler Kaiser Wilhelm II was intoxicated by the potential of a German empire in the Middle East. He proclaimed himself the protector of the Muslims and, on a visit to Constantinople, spoke in grandiose terms about how he and the Ottomans were the best of friends. More worryingly, from the point of view of those who had their own interests in the Ottoman Empire, the Germans began the construction of a railway – the Berlin-Baghdad railway (which was never finished). In the days when railways were ways of spreading power and influence, the prospect of such a railway caused alarm among those who also had designs on the Ottoman Empire.

The French, for example, had a strong interest in what was happening to the Ottoman Empire. They already had extensive possessions in North

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Africa and hoped for more, perhaps in the Levant. Italians also had dreams of building an empire, on the south shore of the Mediterranean. The British, as the world's biggest imperial power, were more interested in the status quo, but they had concerns about the fate of the Ottoman Empire, especially as it affected the security of the Suez Canal, which was their link to the Far East and British possessions there. The British were worried that the Ottoman Empire, which they had propped up for much of the 19th century, was going to collapse and they were also worried about the naval race that was developing in the eastern Mediterranean. Austria-Hungary and Italy had ordered dreadnoughts that were already in service before 1914. In 1911, the Ottomans ordered one from the British and in 1913 bought one from Brazil, which was temporarily bankrupt. There was fear in Britain of an unfavourable strategic balance in the Eastern Mediterranean that would threaten both the Suez Canal and communications with Russia through the Black Sea.

Austria-Hungary, which because of geography was more closely involved in what was going on in the Balkans, could not but be concerned at the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the opening it provided other powers to move in. More than that, the growing power of Serbia, which after 1903 moved to a position of hostility towards Austria-Hungary, threatened to stir up nationalist sentiment among Austria-Hungary's own South Slavs. If the Serbian nationalists could achieve their dream, one which they made no secret of, to bring all South Slavs into some form of union with Serbia, then it would mean the disintegration of the southern part of Austria-Hungary. And if Austria-Hungary's South Slavs had left, then that would mean the end of the empire. The Poles were already restive, the Ruthenians were becoming so, and the Czechs too were beginning to think in terms of greater autonomy within Austria-Hungary. Serbia was not just an irritant for the empire but by 1914 it was a threat to its very existence.

As far as its relations with the other powers were concerned, I think what Austria-Hungary would have preferred was some sort of a standstill agreement in the Balkans. In fact, it had such an agreement with Russia up until 1908. In 1897, Russia and Austria-Hungary had agreed that they would respect the territorial status quo in the Balkans: neither would interfere in the internal affairs of the existing Balkan states, and they would not make sudden moves without consulting one another. In 1903, they made a further agreement to work together to put pressure on the Ottoman Empire to bring about reforms in Macedonia, where Christians

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were feeling increasingly unhappy. In 1904, Austria-Hungary made a neutrality agreement with Russia that allowed Russia to send more troops to the Far East in its war with Japan. So until this period, relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia were in fact amicable, certainly as far as the Balkans were concerned.

What began to change was first of all the Russian defeat in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 and then Russia's attempt to reassert itself as a power. The Russian government, which had been very badly shaken by both the war itself and the subsequent near-revolution, began to rethink its international relations. After a considerable debate in ruling circles in St Petersburg, it was decided that Russia would switch its attention more to the west than the east. It would give up on the attempt to build an empire in the Far East in opposition to Japan, and it would begin to concentrate more on Europe. The Balkans thus became much more important in Russian thinking. This was further fuelled by two developments. First was the growing importance of the Black Sea and the Straits for Russian trade. By 1914, approximately 40% of all Russian exports were going out through the Black Sea and the Straits into the Mediterranean, and growing amounts of imports were coming in. Russians exported mainly foodstuffs and imported machinery, both of which were absolutely crucial for Russia's very rapid economic development. In 1911 and 1912, the Straits were temporarily closed during the Italian-Turkish war and then again in the First Balkan War. Resultant economic repercussions were particularly serious in Russia, reaffirming the state's concerns over who controlled the Balkans. Simultaneously, public opinion was becoming increasingly important in Russia. Governments found that they had to take notice of what the Russian people, especially the large and growing middle and working classes, wanted. In the case of Russian policy towards the Balkans, Pan-Slavism – the idea that Russia was the natural leader of all Slavic peoples – now began to play a part.

The result was that while Russia and Austria-Hungary both had good reason to want to avoid conflict over the Balkans, their relations were growing strained and reached a crisis point in 1908 when Austria-Hungary, without – so Russia felt – proper warning, annexed Bosnia. This marked the end to a standoff agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. From that point on, they were rivals. Both began to look into the Balkans for possible allies. The Russians courted Romania and toyed with the idea of making an alliance with Bulgaria, which proved to be difficult for various reasons. Russia,

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however, increasingly fixed on Serbia as the most likely ally to give them influence in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary reciprocated by trying to make friends with both Romania and Bulgaria. What made the situation more volatile was that the Balkan nations themselves were now trying to influence affairs. In 1912, a French diplomat in St Petersburg noted, 'for the first time in the history of the Eastern Question, the small states had acquired a position of such independence of the Great Powers that they feel able to act completely without them and even take them in tow.'[3]

Growing tensions in the Balkans were not only fed by outside influences (and a willingness and a propensity on their part to take matters into their own hands) but also by the growth of revolutionary movements among the young. The younger generation of political activists, many of them influenced by terrorist ideas, saw themselves as struggling against Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire as well as against their own establishments. They saw the older generation as not moving fast enough to fulfil the nationalist dreams or to change society.

The final story of how the Balkans and then Europe moved towards war is well known. In 1911 the Italians made the whole situation much more dangerous by moving against the Ottoman Empire. The Italians had long had their eyes on the two provinces of North Africa, which they were going to put together as Libya, and on a number of islands belonging to the Ottomans in the Eastern Mediterranean. In a thoroughly cynical move, Italy claimed that Italian citizens had been beaten up in Benghazi and Tripoli and sent an ultimatum with a two-day notice with impossible demands (this was a precedent for a similar ultimatum which was going to be sent three years later). Italy's critics across Europe called this 'The Policy of the Stiletto.' The Italians, who had already loaded their troops onto troopships when they sent the ultimatum, duly declared war on the Ottoman Empire and seized the territories that they wanted. Their actions showed everyone in the Balkans that it was now possible to ignore the Concert of Europe and attack the Ottoman Empire – and get away with it. Leon Trotsky, who was a war correspondent in the Balkans during this period, talked to a leading politician in Serbia as the Italians were attacking the Ottoman Empire. The Serb said to Trotsky, 'Europe is for the status quo. But the status quo here means chaos [....] Why didn't the Powers defend the status quo when Italy seized Tripoli? Clearly, the status quo does not exist so far as the Powers re concerned. [...] They treat us as though we were Moroccans.'[4] With the Italian war on the Ottoman Empire, a very important threshold had been crossed and

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the Balkan nations who had their own ambitions for Ottoman territory took note.

In 1912, a Balkan League was formed under the patronage of the Russians, who seemed to have thought that they could control it. This assumption proved to be very wrong indeed. The Balkan League was initially set up by Bulgaria and Serbia, which signed a treaty to divide Macedonian lands. Later Greece came in, followed by Montenegro. Finally, Serbia and Montenegro made a deal. The Balkan League was complete by September 1912. It claimed it was purely defensive but, of course, it was directed against the Ottoman Empire. The First Balkan War broke out in late October 1912, and the Ottomans were rapidly defeated. The Great Powers still managed to keep some semblance of the Concert of Europe, a conference of ambassadors met in London (as did the warring nations) and a peace of sorts emerged. Yet what was dangerous was that even among the Great Powers there was talk about a general war breaking out. In an alarming way, the First Balkan War also foreshadowed what was going to happen in 1914. France apparently gave guarantees to Russia that if it came to a general war France would support Russia. Germany did not give a firm guarantee to Austria-Hungary, as it was to do in 1914, but Berlin did give an assurance to Vienna that it would probably stand by Austria-Hungary in the event of a general war.

The Second Balkan War broke out when the Balkan allies fell out over the spoils in 1913. Bulgaria had emerged with the lion's share of conquered Ottoman territory; now Serbia, Greece, and Rumania (with the Ottoman Empire joining in as well) attacked Bulgaria. It is a complicated and not particularly edifying story. When peace came, it left resentments and a determination to behave differently in future. Austria-Hungary was increasingly obsessed with Serbia. In the memoirs he wrote later on, Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary Leopold Berchtold said in a revealing passage that Austria-Hungary was 'emasculated' in the Balkan wars when it stood by and allowed Serbia to come out greatly increased in size. For the Serbs themselves, however, although they had gained much new territory, their national project was still not complete. In Russia, they were saying to themselves that they would not let Austria-Hungary push Serbia around in the future.

What thus happened in the Balkans? European rivalries were playing themselves out, but they were also caught up in – and feeding on – local Balkan rivalries. When yet another Balkan crisis came in 1914, in addition to the memories and resentments left by the previous ones, there was also

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dangerous complacency on the part of many Europeans and their leaders: Europe would get through this crisis just as it had the others even though, as before, there would be threats and counter-threats and talk of a general war. Unfortunately, this time there were those, the hawks in Vienna and their supporters in Berlin, as well as key officials in St Petersburg, who were prepared to go further than threats and risk war itself. However, this does not mean that what happened in the summer of 1914 was inevitable. It was the decisions made by those who should have known better that took Europe over the brink. Berchtold, Bethmann-Hollweg, Sasonov, to name only three, all knew that they were risking war.

We will never agree on how the war started because the story is so complex with so many possible factors. The commemorations that started in 2014 and which will continue until 2018 have given new life to the old arguments and, yet again, different national viewpoints are emerging. How we remember the war tends to get tied up with current politics. The reason that so many Serbian nationalists are very sensitive about the memories of the war has as much to do with Serbia's position in Europe today as it does with actual remembering of something that happened a hundred years ago. The same applies to Britain, as we have this debate whether the war should be remembered as a great moment of British triumph or as a catastrophe. This has something to do with Britain's relations with Europe today as well as its domestic politics. Therefore, curious so it seems, the events of a hundred years ago are going to go on haunting us.

Notes

1 International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars (1992) *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Intercourse and Education), p. 271.
2 M. E. Durham (1920) *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (London: George Allen & Unwin), p. 95.
3 Mark Mazower (2000) *The Balkans* (London: Random House), p. 98.
4 Leon Trotsky (1991) *The Balkan Wars, 1912–13*: *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky*, ed., G. Weissman and D. Williams (New York: Pathfinder), p. 80.

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3

The Black Hand and the Sarajevo Conspiracy

Ivor Roberts

Abstract: *The chapter sets the international context for the conspiracy to assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, sketching the increased tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia from 1908. It describes the domestic situation inside Serbia from the regicide of the King and Queen in 1903 to the creation of the Black Hand in 1911, led by the most powerful of the regicides Dragutin Dimitrijević (aka Apis). It follows the early career of Gavrilo Princip, his co-conspirators, their interaction with key operatives of the Black Hand and the assassination itself. Finally, the chapter discusses the vexed question of the Serbian government's awareness of the plot, the pretext for Austria-Hungary's declaration of war, and the legacy of the assassination today which still leaves the Princip question unanswered. Terrorist or freedom-fighter?*

Keywords: Apis; assassination; Black Hand; conspiracy; Princip; Sarajevo; Serbia

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By the end of 2014, very few people were unaware of the identity of Gavrilo Princip. With two bullets, he triggered the concatenation of events leading to the Great War, 'the calamity from which all other calamities [of the 20th century] sprang,' in the lapidary words of historian Fritz Stern. The aim of this chapter is not to go over the exhaustively covered ground of the causes and origins of the First World War, but to focus much more narrowly on the secret society *Ujedinjenje ili Smrt* (Union or Death), more colloquially known by its nickname, the Black Hand. The discussion centres on this society's role in the Sarajevo conspiracy culminating in the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his morganatic wife Sophie. We need however to set some historical context to understand how and why the Black Hand came into being and to appreciate – but, not of course, sympathize with – the fanaticism that led the group of assassins to Sarajevo, prepared and willing to sacrifice their lives to their cause.

The 19th century saw a continuous decline in the fortunes of the Ottoman Empire. In a succession of revolts against Ottoman rule in the Balkans, Serbia and Montenegro had succeeded in detaching themselves from direct Ottoman rule and achieved full independence at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. As the Ottoman Empire shrank, the Habsburg Empire expanded. At the Congress, the latter secured authority to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, partly to protect the Sultan's Christian subjects and partly to restore some sense of proper administration. Far from being rapturously welcomed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Austrian arrival was strongly resisted, particularly by the orthodox Christian Serbs but also by Muslims implacably opposed to occupation by an infidel foreign power. Both religions were hoping for some advanced form of self-rule rather than exchanging one colonial master for another. The Austrians eventually put down the rebellion against their occupation, but to do so had to field some 270,000 troops (approximately a third of Austria's total combat capability). Harsh reprisals followed, including the execution of the main leaders and the imposition of martial law. In 1881, three years after the Congress of Berlin, the Habsburg Empire procured German and Russian consent to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at a time of their choosing. The Treaty of the Three Emperors (the *Dreikaiserbund*) formally ratified the arrangement. Shortly after Czar Nicholas II came to the throne, however, the Russians went back on the *Dreikaiserbund* agreement in 1897, insisting that the question of annexation needed to be properly reconsidered in the future.

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Two events brought matters to a head. One, to which we shall return later, was the regicide of the Serbian king and queen in 1903, bringing a fiercely anti-Austrian monarchy to the throne. The second was the revolt in Istanbul in 1908 by the Young Turks who insisted on a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary institutions, raising the spectre for Vienna of an Ottoman determination to reassert not only its sovereignty but also its right of occupation and a new enlightened administration over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In July 1908, Russian Foreign Minister Izvolsky agreed with his Austrian counterpart that, in exchange for Russian acquiescence in the annexation of Bosnia, Austria-Hungary would support the Russian bid for control of the Dardanelles, allowing their fleet access to the Mediterranean, Russia's long-cherished strategic aim. With what they thought was solid Russian support, Austria-Hungary proceeded in October 1908 formally to annex Bosnia-Herzegovina. The furious reaction prompted Izvolsky to abandon quietly his support for the annexation in the light of the violently anti-Austrian reaction by Slavs, and particularly Serbs, to the Austrian move. Izvolsky also dropped the Dardanelles Straits question in the interests of securing an international conference on the annexation of Bosnia. The combination of the conference never materializing and Britain and France's disinclination to confront Austria-Hungary forced Russia and its client Serbia to accept the annexation in 1909. It was a humiliation that neither Russia nor Serbia would forget and which came back to haunt everyone in July 1914.

But let us now turn to the internal situation in Serbia in the years running up to the events of the summer of 1914. At that time, assassinations of royals, presidents, and prime ministers were an occupational hazard (there were 38 major political murders[1] of presidents, monarchs, ministers, and princes in the first dozen or so years of the 20th century). But one assassination, a regicide, particularly shocked and horrified European public opinion – and, of course, its crowned heads.

In 1903, the Serbian King Alexander Obrenović and his spectacularly unpopular wife Draga were murdered, their bodies mutilated in the most gruesome manner and defenestrated by a group of 28 Serbian army soldiers. The King, through his autocratic methods, his low opinion of the army, his rumoured intention to appoint Queen Draga's brother as his anointed successor (they had failed to produce an heir themselves), and his Austrophile foreign policy, created a highly volatile situation. These combined factors alienated key elements in the army who comprised, in

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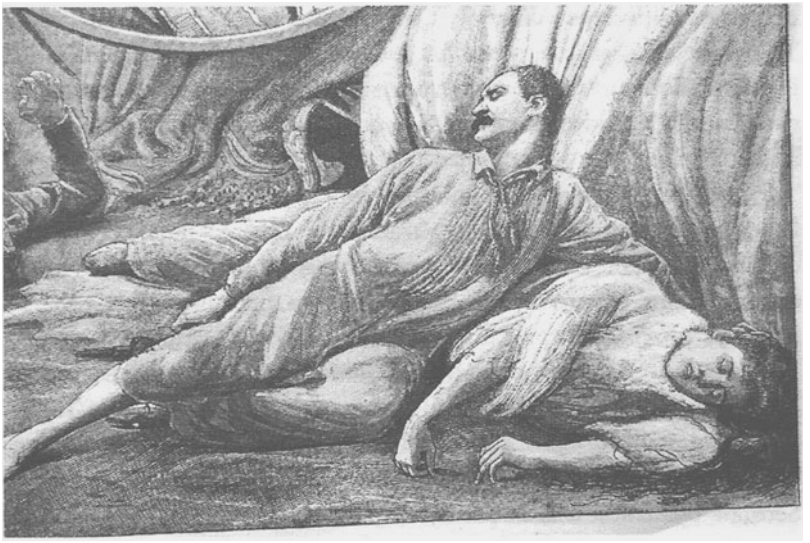

FIGURE 3.1 *Assassination of King Alexander Obrenović and Queen Draga*

a largely agrarian society, the most significant and powerful institution. Queen Draga had been the King's mistress and had a highly unsavoury reputation. When a member of the cabinet tried to dissuade the King from marrying her with the memorable line 'she has been everyone's mistress, Sir, including mine',[2] he (unsurprisingly), got a slap across the face for his troubles.

Within hours of the assassination, the group of army officers had effectively appointed the leader of the rival Serbian dynasty, Petar Karadjordjević, still in exile in Switzerland, as the new monarch. The new King, his family, and indeed the government, were, if not entirely beholden to the regicides, very conscious of the need not to alienate them. The main figure among the regicides, and someone we shall return to frequently was Dragutin Dimitrijević, known as Apis after the Egyptian bull-god of similarly massive build. Apis was a born conspirator: secretive, ruthless, and entirely dedicated to his pan-Slav mission. His last reported words before he was executed by firing squad in 1917 on the orders of the Prince Regent were 'long live Yugoslavia.'[3] It says something incidentally for his bull-like frame that it took three salvoes of the firing squad to kill him. When the new King Petar came to the

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throne in 1903, he made it clear that he wanted to be a constitutional monarch, unlike his ill-fated predecessor. He also set about improving the army's conditions of service and ruled out any prosecution of the regicides.

The latter would meet regularly, particularly on the anniversaries of the murders, to celebrate and boast of their exploits. At this time, the government was led by Nikola Pašić, a politician who had to face some of the most demanding existential questions of any government leader. He was the prime minister virtually without a break from 1904 to 1928. Cautious and slow of diction but an excellent communicator, he increasingly became a patriarchal figure to the Serbian people. He balanced the need not to alienate the regicides by the equally vital requirement to clip their wings. So, while he acknowledged the legitimacy of the *coup d'état*, a matter of some importance to the regicides, he succeeded in having many of the senior officers pensioned off. These actions bore a couple of negative repercussions. Some of the younger officers proved to be just as, if not more, nationalistic than the original conspirators. Moreover, and most importantly, the one person who was fireproof, immune from dismissal, was the most irredentist of all: the notorious Apis who lorded it at meetings of the conspirators and their admirers and supporters.

The idea of the unification of all the Southern Slavs was one that went back into the early 19th century. Serbia would be the leading light of the move to unity, the Piedmont (as they liked to call themselves) of South Slav unification, evoking Piedmont's pivotal role in the unification of Italy. We shall return to this reference later. At this time, Serbia was a long way from achieving its goals. Admittedly, Serbia and Montenegro had been independent kingdoms since the Congress of Berlin in 1878, but Bosnia and Slovenia were under Habsburg administration and much of the rest was still under Ottoman. Yet this stasis was initially shaken by an event that appeared to be a major setback for Serbian irredentism, the formal annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in 1908. The public reaction in Serbia was one of fury, despite the fact that in practice nothing was changing; Bosnia-Herzegovina had been under Habsburg administration for 30 years.

This reality did nothing to assuage the very real anger felt in Serbia. A country where 43% of the population were Orthodox Serbs and most of the rest (Catholic Croats and Muslims) were, in many Serbian eyes, renegade or disaffected Serbs under another name, passed not from Ottoman sovereignty to independence or, better still, to enosis with Serbia, but to

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another colonial oppressor. Thousands took to the streets to protest; the Crown Prince Djordje told a crowd that he would be proud to lead them in a life and death struggle to regain the annexed provinces. Pašić, who was out of office at the time, spoke of a war of liberation.

These perceptions sprang from the view that where there were Serbs, whether in Macedonia, Hungary, or Bosnia, there was Greater Serbia. While the focus of all nationalist, irredentist groups had previously been on Macedonia, pawed over by Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, the emphasis shifted dramatically to the 'lost' provinces of Bosnia-Herzegovina after the annexation. This event also prompted the creation of an organization called *Narodna Odbrana* (National Defence), which the Austrians would later erroneously claim was behind the Sarajevo assassination. This nationalist body spread not only throughout Serbia (more than 200 branches) but also into Bosnia-Herzegovina. Its policies at the time were certainly aggressive: raising guerrilla bands, setting up surveillance networks along the frontier between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, and generally agitating for a strongly nationalist agenda politically. The government was placed in an extremely awkward position, squeezed between nationalist demands at home and the realization that there would be no Great Power support for an act of Serbian aggression against Austria-Hungary, not even from Russia, weakened as it was after its disastrous 1904–05 war with Japan.

Faced with these circumstances, Serbia had no choice but to climb down publicly. They did so in March 1909, agreeing to disarm and downgrade *Narodna Odbrana* to little more than a pan-Serb cultural association – at least on the surface. Even though the government had backed down, pan-Serb nationalist sentiments were significantly boosted. Far from going along with the government's forced about-turn, some of the 1903 regicides and others who had been campaigning in Macedonia, outraged by the Pašić government's refusal to countenance agitation on Ottoman soil, decided to set up a secret society. *Ujedinjenje ili Smrt*, 'Union or Death,' better known as the Black Hand, was formed in the spring of 1911 with Apis, four other regicides, and two civilians as the founders. The aim was to unite all Serbdom and to make Serbia the leader of a pan-Southern Slav or Yugoslav movement. Put differently, Serbia would become the Piedmont of the Balkans. No surprise then that the Black Hand's proselytizing newspaper was called simply 'Pijemont'. Induction into the society was through a ritual which seemed to borrow some elements from freemasonry, with a hooded figure presiding over

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the ceremonial swearing of the oath by new recruits at a table on which lay a black cloth and on top a cross, a dagger, and a revolver:

> I [name] in joining the organisation Union or Death swear by the sun that warms me, by the earth that nourishes me, before God, by the blood of my ancestors, on my honour and on my life that I will from this moment until my death be faithful to the laws of this organisation and that I will always be ready to make any sacrifice for it…. I swear before God, on my honour and my life, that I will take all the secrets of this organisation into my grave with me. May God and my comrades in the organisation be my judges if … I should ever violate this oath.[4]

In case there was still any doubt as to what sort of organization it was, its logo included a skull and crossbones, poison, a knife, and a bomb. 'Asked later why he and his colleagues had adopted these symbols, Apis replied that, for him, "those emblems [did] not have such a frightening or negative look." '[5] Estimate of numbers vary but overall membership is unlikely to have exceeded 2,500. Candidates had to be of tested loyalty and capable of providing practical service. The secret society soon became the worst kept secret. The Crown Prince even supported its journal *Pijemont* financially. It spread beyond the capital to the border regions with Bosnia and into Bosnia itself through the residual elements of *Narodna Odbrana*, some of whom, despite the agreement with Austria to convert into a peaceful organization, maintained military capacity.

In Serbia itself, the Pašić government viewed the secret society with utmost suspicion, not just for its potentially damaging effects on foreign policy, but because it deemed that the Black Hand's real aim was the subversive overthrow of the constitutional monarchy and democratic government. It was as though the work of the 1903 regicides was only half done. Even Austrian diplomats bought into this narrative of a secret society whose primary aim was internal subversion rather than pan-Serb nationalism. (It is perhaps for this reason that so little attention was paid to the Black Hand in the immediate aftermath of the assassination and that all the blame was laid at the door of *Narodna Odbrana* which, unlike the Black Hand, could be closely linked to the Serbian government and its military.)

A few months after the foundation of the Black Hand, the Italian invasion of the Ottoman province of Libya set in motion a chain reaction that led to the final dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. The First Balkan War witnessed an alliance of Southern Slav States and Greece defeat the Ottoman armies comprehensively, while the Second Balkan War

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involved the victors fighting over the spoils. Serbia fared best of all in the aftermath of these wars, recovering its former heartland, Kosovo, which had been Ottoman territory since 1389. The patriotic fervour aroused by the Balkan Wars diluted the antagonism between the Pašić government and the Black Hand for a while. The latter played a useful role in Macedonia and what was to become Albania. Apis was promoted and made head of the intelligence division of the General Staff, giving him unparalleled control over *Narodna Odbrana* agents throughout Habsburg territories.

The warm glow of national unity soon gave way to extreme tension, however, as the Pašić government wanted to install civilian administration into the newly acquired or, as the Serbs claimed, 'liberated' Serbian territories. The military and the Black Hand, by contrast, were united in their mutual yearning for continuation of military rule. In April 1914, when the government issued a decree formally subordinating the military to civilian authority, the simmering crisis boiled over. It seemed that the government must either fall or be replaced in a *coup d'état*. Only the intervention of the Great Powers, notably Russia and France, saved the government; Pašić looked to the elections of June 1914 to enhance his position. This was the political backdrop at the time of the inchoate Sarajevo conspiracy.

In Bosnia, as elsewhere in Europe, attempted assassinations were not rare. The one that influenced many young idealists of pan-Yugoslav persuasions was the attempt made by Bogdan Žerajić to assassinate the Habsburg Governor of Bosnia, General Varešanin in June 1910. Having failed in his attempt, Žerajić committed suicide. His grave became a shrine for those who broadly described themselves as supporters of *Mlada Bosna* (Young Bosnia), which followed in the well-worn path laid out by Mazzini and the *carbonari* in Italy and other revolutionary movements in the latter half of the 19th century. They drew their inspiration from writers such as Schiller and other apostles of the Romantic Movement to the works of Bakunin, Marx, and Dostoyevsky. Leon Trotsky, then in Vienna, took a keen interest in *Mlada Bosna* and met a number of its senior figures, no doubt influencing them in an even more radical direction.

It would be misleading, however, to think of *Mlada Bosna* as having any formal structure. It was more a loose collection of youth movements and revolutionary cells which were uncoordinated and remained only imperfectly linked, usually by intermediaries. Its Sarajevo cell contained

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a young schoolmaster, Danilo Ilić, who would later be involved in the Archduke's assassination. It was probable that the first thoughts of a violent attack on a Habsburg high official were adumbrated among the *Mlada Bosna* cells against a backdrop of increasing anti-Austrian sentiments – not only in Bosnia but also in Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slovenia. Interestingly, only a few weeks before the Sarajevo assassination, the Serb and Croat student organizations in Vienna, Prague, and Zagreb voted to amalgamate.

But it was principally in Bosnia that the violent revolutionary fervour against Habsburg rule was strongest. One person who was particularly alive to the dangers to the empire from the Southern Slavs was the Crown Prince, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. His solution was the radical Serbs' nightmare: trialism, which he envisaged as a rejuvenated Habsburg dynasty with himself, on Franz Josef's death, ruling an empire of three parts, Austria, Hungary, and Southern Slavs. Though he personally seems to have been strongly against incorporating Serbia coercively into such a state, he told his relations in early 1913 that 'a war and conquest of Serbia was all nonsense,' adding 'what should we gain from it? Only another pack of thieves and murderers and scoundrels and a few plum trees!'[6] In February of that year, he told the head of the armed forces, Conrad von Hötzendorf, that while an attack on Serbia was possible, it would be 'merely to chastise her and on no conditions to annex even a square yard from her.'[7]

Yet some at the Habsburg Court, like Conrad von Hötzendorf, believed that trialism could only be brought about effectively by annexing or absorbing Serbia into this tripos: the final solution, as he saw it, to dealing with this 'nest of vipers.'[8] Conrad does not seem to have considered that absorbing this nest into the empire might be at least as venomous as having them over the border. Indeed he had called for a war with Serbia 25 times in 1913. Either way, Franz Ferdinand's trialist thinking, even without Conrad's aggravating variant, would be the death knell to Serb ideas of creating a South Slav (i.e. Yugoslav) state with Serbia at its heart and head at the expense of a hollowed out Habsburg Empire shorn of its Slav elements.

Thus, in a report of 14 July 1914, the British Consul-General in Budapest[9] was completely mistaken in his assertion that it was an irony of fate that the future ruler, who was commonly regarded as a champion of Southern Slav rights, should have fallen victim to Pan-Serbian agitation. It was precisely because Franz Ferdinand wanted to strengthen

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the position of South Slavs *within* the empire that his aims were in such violent conflict with those who sought to unite all the Southern Slavs *without* the empire. Gavrilo Princip made this point fairly explicitly at his trial when he said that the Archduke would have harmed Serbs by advancing certain reforms that would have prevented *our* (i.e. pan-Slav) Union. Čabrinović, another of the assassins, picked up the Conrad point by saying that the Archduke meant to create a federal Austria which would have included Serbia as well.

We have mentioned Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević (aka Apis), already. But given his central role in the conspiracy, we should look at him more closely. To his admirers, he was regarded as a cultured, honourable man, extraordinarily resolute and born to plan, organize, and command while others carried out his orders unquestioningly. He was, said one Black Hand central committee member in Dalmatia, Oskar Tartaglia, 'Mazzini and Garibaldi rolled into one.'[10] Others spoke of his possessing a magnetic power and ability to inspire unconditional devotion. Whether he realized that the result of the assassination would be a European war, we shall never know. He was executed at Salonika in 1917, accused on trumped-up charges of attempting to assassinate the Crown Prince. Essentially, he was executed because Pašić had concluded that he needed to be removed because he was becoming too powerful. The 1903 regicide cast a long shadow again, not just for Apis, but also for those like the Prince Regent and Pašić who feared that Apis could repeat his 1903 atrocity.

We have now looked at the reasoning behind the assassination. What about the mechanics? We know that the assassins did all they could at their trial to cover their tracks and avoid implicating the Serbian authorities. Their course of action was in line with the instructions they had been given by Black Hand operatives to shoot themselves or to commit suicide by cyanide as soon as the attempt was over. But the reconstruction that has taken place over the century since the assassination suggests one of two likely scenarios.

Gavrilo Princip, whose family were Bosnian peasants, had come to Belgrade as a 17 year old in 1912. He tried to enlist in the *Comitaji*, armed bands of Balkan Slav partisans or irregulars, originally formed in Macedonia, whose aim was to cause mayhem and disorder in Ottoman lands in the Balkans and hasten the end of the Ottoman presence there. He was, however, humiliatingly rejected as being too much of a weakling by a particularly ruthless *Comitaji* leader and Black Hand member, Voja Tankosić. He lived on in Belgrade where, in the louche downtown

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bars and cafés, he interacted with other young Bosnians – Croats and Muslims as well as Serbs – who shared his desire to rid the South Slavs of foreign domination, whether it be Ottoman or Austrian. Furthermore, the Belgrade circle in which Princip moved was extremely open to the use of violence to achieve emancipation: they took as their role model Bogdan Žerajić, mentioned earlier in connection with the attempted assassination of the then Governor of Bosnia in 1910.

According to the conspirators' evidence, Princip and his close friends decided on their target, the new governor of Bosnia, General Potiorek, in 1913. But then in the spring of 1914, a much more appropriate target came into view. Nedelko Čabrinović, one of Princip's friends and one of the future group of assassins, showed Princip a newspaper clipping announcing that Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the hated apostle of trialism, would visit Bosnia in the early summer to watch military manoeuvres in his capacity as Inspector-General of the Habsburg armed forces. Princip saw this as his great opportunity to strike a blow at the occupier. His co-plotters were Čabrinović, who had shown him the clipping, and an old school friend, Trifko Grabež, though it is clear that Princip was the ringleader.

The alternative reconstruction[11] postulates that the plot was hatched by Apis, prompted by his associate Rade Malobabić, an intensely active intelligence agent in Austria, who was well briefed on Austrian military manoeuvres and who was likely to attend them. It was thus in this reading that the Black Hand were the hatchers of the plot who then set about recruiting willing candidates for this potential suicide mission. Certainly this was Apis' claim much later when he was facing execution.

But was he a trustworthy witness? Is it really likely that so experienced and professional a plotter as Apis would have actively entrusted this mission to the callow Princip and his equally juvenile colleagues who between them had only days of practice at learning to shoot a pistol? Was it not more probable that the young conspirators, having initially planned an attack on General Potiorek, were either persuaded by the Black Hand, simply reacting opportunistically when Princip came knocking, to change their target to the Archduke? Or did the conspirators take the initiative to shift their target themselves and then came to the Black Hand seeking assistance? Wherever the plot had its origins, once it had taken a vague shape, the young conspirators needed material and logistical support. Either they turned to a man called Milan Ciganović, a prominent *Comitaji* and veteran of the Balkan wars with

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renown connections to military circles or, assuming the alternative view, he turned to recruit them. More significantly, he had served under Major Tankosić, Apis' right hand, fellow founder of the Black Hand, the man who had earlier rejected Princip, as discussed earlier. 'Thus,' says the Italian historian Luigi Albertini, 'in applying to Ciganović, who was under the orders of Tankosić, who in turn took his orders from Dimitrievič, ie Apis, Princip was knocking at the door of the Black Hand.'[12] Whether Princip was an actual member of the Black Hand is another moot point. The Secretary of its Central Committee, Čedomilj Popović, has maintained that he was.[13] Others claim that at 19 years he was too young to be a member. What is clear is that Princip knew that the Black Hand was the place to procure arms and bombs and assistance in making a clandestine entry into Bosnia. Ciganović provided the boys with four Browning pistols and ammunition, six grenades from the Serbian arsenal at Kragujevac, money, and cyanide flasks to take after the event to prevent being captured alive. (Ciganović provided the pistols at Princip's insistence, as he originally only wanted to provide the young assassins with grenades.) The three assassins entered Bosnia on 30 and 31 May, Čabrinović at Mali Zvornik and the other two at Ljesnica. They were helped in avoiding detection by the Austrian authorities through Black Hand operatives whom Apis infiltrated into the Serbian border and customs service. Aided by the underground network of the Black Hand, they joined up in the Bosnian town of Tuzla, leaving their weapons behind as they were too dangerous to carry further. They then entrained to Sarajevo where another four-man assassination squad had been recruited by Bosnian Serb Black Hand member Danilo Ilić who had won Apis' confidence during a stay in Belgrade in 1913. Ilić's team included a Bosnian Muslim revolutionary, Muhamed Mehmedbasić, and two schoolboys, 18-year-old Cvijetko Popović and 17-year-old Vašo Čubrilović. The two students were local Sarajevo boys who did not meet the Belgrade assassins until after the event. Part of Ilić's thinking in recruiting these youngsters was almost certainly to muddy the waters as much as possible to prevent the trail leading back to Belgrade. It was Ilić who collected the weapons from Tuzla and, while himself unarmed, distributed the guns and grenades to the six putative assassins.

The day of the Archduke's visit was as inauspicious as possible. The 28th of June, St Vitus' day, was sacred in the Serbian calendar, being the anniversary of the battle of Kosovo when the medieval Serbian kingdom was destroyed by the Ottoman Turks. In any Serbian nationalist's eyes,

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a visit by the Archduke to Sarajevo, with its majority Serb population, would seem a provocation.

On that morning, the royal party drove along the Miljacka River, down the Appel Quay, towards the town hall. The six conspirators, 'a regular avenue of assassins' as the Archbishop of Sarajevo later called them, were among those lining the route. The first to be passed by the Archduke's car, Mehmedbasić, did nothing, claiming that there was a policeman too close by, but the next, Čabrinović, hurled his grenade at the royal couple. It hit the folded canopy at the back of the car but then bounced off and only exploded under the following car, injuring some of its occupants. Čabrinović was quickly captured, in agony from swallowing cyanide, as he tried to escape via the river while the wounded were being tended. The blast from the grenade was very audible; in the ensuing confusion, the Archduke and his party drove on safely to the town hall where the

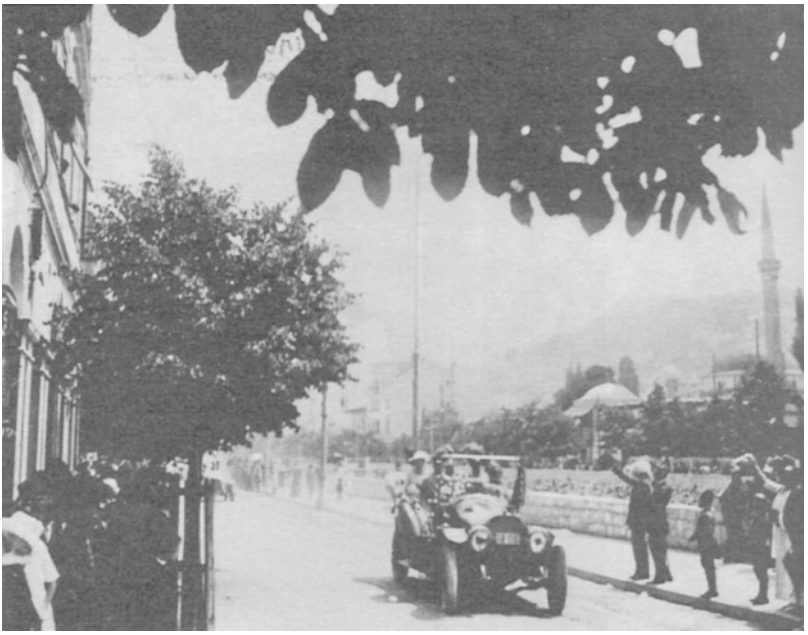

FIGURE 3.2 *The Archduke's car begins its fateful – and fatal – turn off the Appel Quay into the path of Princip, standing outside the Moritz Schiller corner café*

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Mayor received them. After a stilted exchange of welcoming speeches (the Archduke had interrupted the Mayor, asking how he could be welcome when someone had just thrown a bomb at him), the party displayed, by our standards, amazing *sang froid* and managed through much of the official programme with. The royal couple had originally planned to drive back along the Appel Quay and then turn right into Franz Josef Strasse to make a tour of the old city. Following the assassination attempt, plans were altered to drive straight on to the main hospital to visit those who had been injured. Fatefully and fatally, however, nobody told the drivers. Even more fatefully, alone among the remaining armed conspirators, Princip still saw the possibility of carrying out his mission and took up a new position on the corner of the Quay and Franz Josef Strasse by a well-known café, the Moritz Schiller.

The driver, unadvised of the changes in plan and route, started to turn into Franz Josef Strasse. General Potiorek, who was riding in the front of the car and who had, as mentioned above, been the plotters' original target, realized what was happening and shouted at the driver to stop, push back the car (it had no reverse) and continue along the Quay. As the car slowed to a halt, Princip, who was only a few feet away and hardly able to believe his luck, stepped forward with his Browning revolver and shot at the Archduke. He then turned to aim at General Potiorek. In the commotion, his arm was jostled, and he

FIGURE 3.3 *Artist's impression of the assassination of the Archduke and his wife*

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shot Sophie. Within the hour, they were both dead. The World War was now only 37 days away.

The Austrians' immediate reaction was to blame the Serbian government and its nationalist, but largely cultural and propagandist arm, *Narodna Odbrana*. Partly thanks to the conspirators' success under interrogation, throwing the Austrian investigators off the scent, the Black Hand received hardly a mention. This wasn't because the Austrians were unaware of the secret society, but because they saw it as an internally subversive organization aiming to overthrow the Serbian state and the Pašić government in particular. If the Austrians had focused on the right target, Pašić would have been able to claim that the Black Hand and his government were in violent conflict, though he would have to admit that the Serbian state was largely powerless to restrain them. The crucial point is that, if the culpability rested on an organization effectively at war with the Serbian government, it was nonsensical to declare war on Serbia and its government. If Austria-Hungary unreasonably declared war on Serbia and set in motion the concatenation of events with which we are all now quite familiar, then the culpability lays largely with the Austrians and their German allies.

Did the Pašić government know anything of the plot in advance? It is clear that they had heard from informers something about it and even knew that a group of conspirators were planning to travel into Bosnia to kill Franz Ferdinand. The Pašić government, when informed of the plot in early June, agreed at once to send instructions to the border authorities to prevent any such crossing. It was too late. The assassins were already in Bosnia. Should the Pašić government have informed the Austrians? It appears that they did, but only in the most oblique terms. The senior Serb diplomat in Vienna, Minister of the Legation Jovan Jovanović, called on the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Finance, Count Bilinski, on 21 June on instructions to suggest that a visit by the Archduke on the anniversary of the battle of Kosovo would be regarded as a provocation and that some young Serb might 'put a ball-cartridge in his rifle or revolver.'[14] The Austrian Minister was so unimpressed that he didn't feel it even necessary to mention this warning to the Austrian Foreign Minister.

However much one could wish that the Serbian government had warned the Austrians more explicitly, Pašić was faced with a difficult balancing act. To have been more specific, assuming the government did know more, would have invited the Austrian accusation that since

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the government knew about the plot in detail, they were either behind it or should have been able to prevent it. It would, of course, have given Austria-Hungary a more reasonable pretext for attacking Serbia.[15] We shall probably never know how much Pašić knew (another unknown known perhaps?). What was certain was that he would not have welcomed war with the Habsburg Empire at all at a time when Serbia was so weak, having fought two major wars in 1912 and 1913. And while he may have caught wind of the plot from informers, the spider at the centre of the web, Apis, would have been determined to keep the details secret, particularly given the bitter enmity between him and Pašić. As for Princip, he was sentenced to death by the Austrians but, as he was less than 20 years of age, the sentence was commuted to 20 years imprisonment in the harshest of conditions in the fortress of Theresienstadt.

The whole question of Princip's role – was he a terrorist or a freedom fighter? – has of course been hotly debated in the run-up to the commemoration of the assassination. Defining terrorism is a notoriously difficult task. The United Nations has struggled to do so for years. One definition of territorial terrorism to which I subscribe is 'an act of politically motivated violence committed when *peaceful* [my own emphasis] means to achieve self-determination are available.' This definition, if one endorses it, poses some difficulty in denouncing Princip as a terrorist. Austria-Hungary not only had no intention of letting its South Slav subjects in Bosnia-Herzegovina go, but in some quarters at least (e.g. Conrad) it actively considered doing a Crimea by annexing Serbia to form the new third leg of its heretofore dual monarchy. As Franz Ferdinand was not only an Archduke of the Habsburg Empire but also an arch-trialist, he became the conspirators' prime target. This doesn't excuse Princip of murder – nothing could – but it does absolve him from the greater charge of terrorism, I suggest. His aim was to target the person who was in prime position to thwart his political aim of Yugoslavism, of uniting South Slavs in one country. As one biographer put it, he was 'a dreamer … exposed to the same political streams that inspired so many others fighting for freedom from unelected, reactionary structures.'[16] Princip certainly cannot be compared with the sort of indiscriminate terrorists who kill hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent people. Indeed, at his trial in Sarajevo, Princip repeatedly expressed remorse at the accidental killing of Duchess Sophie. It was General Potiorek who was his secondary target, not Sophie. As Vladimir Dedijer puts it, 'as individuals the men of Sarajevo – for patriotism, courage and

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selflessness – belong securely among that lofty group of primitive rebels which include Sand and Orsini, Zasulich and Perovskaya, Connolly and Pearse.'[17]

Princip died in prison of virulent tuberculosis (which had infected his bones and necessitated the amputation of his arm) in April 1918, seven months before the end of the war. On the wall of his cell two lines of verse were found:

> Our ghosts will walk through Vienna
> And roam through the Palace, frightening the lords.[18]

The Princip legacy is very far from spent. The ghosts of the events in Sarajevo so many years ago continue to roam the Balkans. The Great War was often referred to as the Third Balkan War at the local level, seen as unfinished business left over from the wars of 1912 and 1913. Yet the wars of the 1990s in former Yugoslavia have a stronger claim on the title. Although they, too, dragged in outsiders in the shape of NATO and influxes of Muslims from the Middle East joining their co-religionists in Bosnia, the fighting was contained within the territory of former Yugoslavia and limited mainly to its citizens.

Serb aspirations to a Greater Serbia, so virulently evidenced in the 1990s, had their roots in the *Načertanije*, a statement on the Serbian nation and its vital interests, written in 1844 by the future Serbian Prime Minister Garašanin. His apostles in the immediate pre-1914 period, both within the conventional body politic and without it (such as *Narodna Odbrana* and of course the Black Hand), sowed the seed of the Sarajevo conspiracy. It was their vision, shared by many Serbs of the Princip generation, of the Serbian nation as the Piedmont of the South Slavs, leading other Slavs (many of whom were regarded as dishonourable or renegade Serbs who had lost the true religious and cultural path) out of the bondage of the Ottoman and Habsburg Empire. Serbs expected a continuing leadership role in recognition of their efforts. It was this prepotent theme in Serbian political life that brought the first and last Yugoslavia to its knees, death throes, and dissolution.

But Princip was a Yugoslav, South Slav, not a Serb nationalist. He would be horrified today at the way his pan-Slav vision had been betrayed and the Yugoslavia he ultimately gave his life for had so disastrously failed. At his trial, he made his and his fellow conspirators' position clear on the kind of nationalism he espoused. 'I am a Yugoslav nationalist, aiming for the unification of all Yugoslavs, and I do not care what form of state, but

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it must be free from Austria.'[19] Although he attempted to cover up any footsteps leading back to official Belgrade, he made it clear that he shot the Archduke because the conspirators saw him as a major obstacle to the creation of a South Slav, Yugoslav, state. 'I considered him, in regard to his activity, as very dangerous for Yugoslavia.'[20] In Sarajevo, during the Bosnian War, the marks of his footsteps, which had been embedded in the pavement stones on the corner outside the Moritz Schiller café, were dug up in inevitable reaction to the Bosnian Serb siege of the city.

The anniversary of the Archduke's assassination was marked very differently in Bosnia and even in Sarajevo itself: there, various pro-Habsburg events were staged in the Muslim-Croat area and an Austrian orchestra performed a commemorative concert, while in Serb East Sarajevo a monument to Princip was erected. In the predominantly Serb (post-ethnic cleansing) town of Višegrad, a re-enactment of the assassination was mounted by the award winning film director Emir Kusturica who also unveiled a mosaic of Princip and his colleagues from the *Mlada Bosna* (Young Bosnia) movement. The mosaic shows Princip with a soft, dreamy expression. Many other memorials and monuments to Princip have been erected or planned not just in Serbian Bosnia but also in Serbia itself. In Belgrade, since the end of the Second World War, there has been a Gavrilo Princip street, reflecting the fact that Tito and the Communists regarded Princip and his co-conspirators as freedom fighters, instrumental in the creation of Yugoslavia. Also in Belgrade, an identical monument to the one in East Sarajevo was reportedly planned in the park of the historic Ottoman fortress, Kalemegdan, though no sign of a permanent monument has yet appeared (in contrast to panel displays of Princip and the *Mlada Bosna* movement). While the mood in Serbia has generally been to celebrate the actions of a great patriot who could claim to have triggered the fall of the despised Habsburg Empire, there are those who question whether it is right to lionize or hero-worship someone who triggered a war which led to the death of 16–20% of the Serbian population.

Terrorist or freedom fighter, assassin or hero, the question recurs. The inability to reach a common conclusion inherently reflects the persistent failure in the Balkans to agree on a common narrative. This state of affairs was most recently exemplified by the respective lawsuits Croatia and Serbia filed against one another, both citing genocide. (In February 2015, the International Court of Justice found neither suit substantiated although both sides were found guilty of war crimes.)

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In Bosnia itself, even today, 20 years after the war there ended, communities are far apart. The Bosnian Serb entity (*Republika Srpska*), just under half the territory of Bosnia, still dreams of enosis with Serbia and has an effective veto over much of the Bosnian state's activities and policies. The country is still trapped in – and by – its past. Outside Sarajevo is a mausoleum on a hillside where the bones of Gavrilo Princip and his co-conspirators are laid. The inscription, a quote from the Montenegrin Prince-Bishop Njegoš, reads 'Blessed is the one who lives forever, he was not born to die in vain.'

Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Nowhere has this greater resonance than in the Balkans.

Notes

1 Listed in Vladimir Dedijer (1996) *The Road to Sarajevo* (New York: Simon and Schuster), pp. 450–51.
2 David Mackenzie (1989) *Apis: The Congenial Conspirator, The Life of Colonel Dragutin T. Dimitrijevic* (Boulder: East European Monographs), p. 29.
3 Milan Živanović (1955) *Putovnik Apis* (Belgrade: Kultura), p. 592.
4 Dedijer *The Road to Sarajevo*, p. 375.
5 Quoted in Christopher Clark (2012) *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Penguin Books), p. 40.
6 Die Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette (1871–1914) *Sammlung der diplomatischen Akten des Auswärtigen Amtes,* Vol. XXXIV (Berlin), p. 12788.
7 Conrad von Hötzendorf, Franz Graf, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906–18*, Vol. III (Vienna/Berlin/Leipzig/Munich: Rikola Verlag), p. 156.
8 Quoted in Laurence Lafore (1997) *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I*, Second Edition (Long Grove: Waveland Press), p. 152.
9 *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898–1914* (Budapest, 14 July 1914) Vol. XI: The Outbreak of War: Foreign Office Documents June 28th–August 4th, 1914, Eds. G.P. Gooch and Harold Temperley (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1926, [33049] No. 70. Mr. Max Müller to Sir Edward Grey), Received 21 July.
10 Oskar Tartaglia (26 July 1927) 'Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis', *Nova Evropa*, pp. 67–74.
11 See Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, p. 48.
12 Luigi Albertini (1952) *The Origins of the War of 1914*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 55.
13 Ibid., p. 42.
14 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, No. 177, 28 June 1924.

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15 Albertini, *Origins of the War,* p. 107.
16 Tim Butcher (2014) *The Trigger: Hunting the Assassin Who Brought the World to War* (London: Random House), p. 296.
17 Dedijer, *Road to Sarajevo,* p. 47.
18 Nikola Trišić (1960) *Sarajevski atentat u Svjetlu Bibliografskih Podataka* (Belgrade: Veselin Masleša), p. 89.
19 Vojislav Bogićević (1954) *Sarajevski atentat* (Sarajevo: Državni Arhiv, NR BiH), p. 62.
20 Nachlass Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand (NEFF) *Prozess in Sarajevo* (Vienna: Haus-Hof-Staatsarchiv).

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4

The Contrasting Legacies of the South Slav Question

Ivo Banac

Abstract: *The Croat question could not be resolved within the immutable system of Habsburg dualism, leading to a search for solutions that would unite the Habsburg South Slavs in a common front with Serbia and Russia. This New Course, which commenced in 1905, effected an realignment in South Slav politics, a temporary suspension of Croat-Serb conflict, and the emergence of the Croato-Serb Coalition, but did not contribute to any tangible changes within the Monarchy itself. That happened only as a result of the war in which the veterans of the New Course, by then émigrés in the Allied countries (the Yugoslav Committee), promoted their own vision of South Slavic unification against Serbia's imperial aims.*

Keywords: dualism; New Course; Serbia; South Slavic question; Yugoslav Committee; Yugoslavia

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The crisis of dualism in Austria-Hungary entered an acute phase after 1903 as a result of three developments: (1) The demands of the Hungarian opposition for parity in language and insignia within the imperial and royal military escalated into National Resistance against Austria and contributed to the electoral victory of the oppositional coalition in 1905, but simultaneously provoked national demands among the minority nationalities in Hungary; (2) The national movement in Croatia exploded into a wave of anti-Hungarian riots and seriously destabilized the regime of Ban Károly Khuen-Héderváry and his pro-unionist and Serb *protégés*; and (3) The dynastic revolution in Serbia removed the pro-Austrian Obrenović dynasty in favour of an expansionist and pro-Russian Karadjordjevič dynasty. The Obrenović foreign policy, which thanks to the Secret Convention with Austria-Hungary of 1881 pursued southward enlargement, was being increasingly revised in support of expansion into Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, the South Slavic question became the most dangerous threat to the security of the Dual Monarchy.[1]

In response to the South Slavic question, really the role of the predominantly South Slavic provinces (Croatia-Slavonia, Fiume, and parts of Bácska and the Banat of Temesvár in Hungary; Dalmatia, Istria, Carniola, and much of Styria and Carinthia in Austria; and the jointly administered Bosnia and Herzegovina) within the dualist system, the Austro-Hungarian elites reacted variously: (1) the dualist circle of Emperor-King Franz Joseph II developed no policy; (2) the Great Austrian circle of Archduke Franz Ferdinand extended a trialist bait to the South Slavs, with the unlikely prospect that the circle's objections to the thoroughgoing dualism in the Monarchy would be addressed by an even more decentralizing trialist system where the South Slavs would gain the third unit (besides Austria and Hungary); and (3) the Hungarian political elite was secretly gleeful over Austria's troubles in the Balkans, but maintained a myopic view that the South Slav grievances were nothing but an expression of Viennese schemes at the expense of Budapest. These circumstances prompted a new political initiative by the Croat political leaders in opposition to the old, sterile policy of relying on Vienna against Budapest and maintaining a vigorous front against the pro-Hungarian Serb parties in Croatia-Slavonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and the pro-Italian Serb party in Dalmatia.[2]

This new political initiative, the 'New Course' as it has been traditionally dubbed, commenced in 1905 under the leadership of two agile Croat notables, both from Dalmatia: journalist Frano Supilo of Dubrovnik,

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the editor of the Fiume newspaper *Novi list*, and Ante Trumbić of Split, lawyer and politician, later the mayor of Split. Although both belonged to the Dalmatian branch of the nationalist Party of Right, their Dalmatian background militated against the anti-Magyar odium of Croat nationalists in the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy. They promulgated the platform of the New Course, which included some traditional Croat demands (the revision of the unfavourable Croato-Hungarian Agreement [*Nagodba*]) of 1868 and the acceptance of Croatian financial independence or, failing this, at least the literal interpretation of the *Nagodba*, but also some radical new demands (first of all a crypto-trialistic proposal for the unification of Croatia-Slavonia with Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina based on the Croato-Serb 'national oneness' [*narodno jedinstvo*] and the Croat state right [*jura municipalia*]), with an extended hand to the Slovenes. These new demands also included the notion of a common front with all the anti-German forces in Austria-Hungary (including the Hungarians and the Italians) under the slogan 'From the Alps to the Maritsa on the defence against Germandom!' In addition, reliance on Karadjordjevič Serbia (and ultimately Russia) was among the unarticulated and secret strategic concepts of the New Course, with the ultimate and subversive goal of the creation of a South Slav state (Yugoslavia) with Serbia and Montenegro – needless to say, outside Austria-Hungary.[3]

Supilo and Trumbić scored initial successes in their designs. By the autumn of 1905, the rifts among most of the Croat oppositional parties in Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia were healed, as were those between the Croat and Serb oppositional parties. By December 1905, the Croato-Serb Coalition developed as a junior partner to the oppositional Hungarian Coalition and then, on the wings of the Hungarian Coalition's 1905 electoral victory, scored its own electoral victory the following year, balloting for the Croatian Sabor (*diet*). Still, just as Sándor Wekerle clipped the wings of the Hungarian Coalition once it came to power, he succeeded in curbing the victorious Croato-Serb Coalition by engrossing it in permanent displays of loyalty against the spectre of pan-Serbian grand treason. After the Young Turk revolution, when Foreign Minister Alois von Aehrenthal precipitated an international crisis by pressing for a unilateral annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and after the triumphs of the Balkan states in the wars of 1912–13, *real* pan-Serbian grand treason was no longer perceptible because the intervening years were dominated by crying wolf.

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By the time Gavrilo Princip fired his shots in Sarajevo, Supilo and Trumbić were spent politicians, sufficiently alert to the impending dangers as they made a hasty retreat to Italy and from there to France and Britain. Under the new wartime circumstances, they placed themselves at the head of the South Slavic *émigrés* from Austria-Hungary and created a self-appointed Yugoslav Committee that resurrected the secret program of the New Course. No longer constrained by loyalties to Austria-Hungary, they opted for a union with Serbia and Montenegro, which they secured in a most unwelcome – Great Serbian – form, already during the course of the war.[4]

Even before Serbia's military collapse in 1915, the Serbian government declared in December 1914 that the 'unification and liberation of all of our unfree brethren – the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes' of Austria-Hungary was one of its war aims.[5] This did not prevent Serbia from adjusting to the far more reduced Entente offers, which in the event of the Allied victory, after the signing of the secret Treaty of London with Italy (April 1915), would have secured for Serbia the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina and most of southern Bácska, Slavonia, and Dalmatia. Nor did it prevent Serbia from seeking a separate peace with Austria-Hungary after the February revolution in Russia. Still, sensing its weakness in July 1917, the Serbian government signed an agreement with the Yugoslav Committee (the Corfu Declaration), by which it bound itself to establishing a united and independent Serb-Croat-Slovene state that would be a 'constitutional, democratic, and parliamentary monarchy headed by the Karadjordjevič dynasty'. Trumbić signed the Declaration on behalf of the Yugoslav Committee. Supilo, disenchanted by the policies of the Serbian government and convinced that Croatia was about to be partitioned between Italy and Serbia, departed from the Yugoslav Committee and created his own Croat Committee, which would promote the independence of Croatia to the Allies. Ignored and isolated, he died in London in 1917.[6]

Serbia's choice between the 'small solution', a supposedly Allied-sponsored safe expansion into the 'predominantly Serb' territories of Austria-Hungary, which Serbia's Prime Minister Nikola Pašić and Regent Aleksandar supposedly rejected in favour of an unsafe 'great solution' of a union with Croats and Slovenes, of Yugoslavia, is still used as an argument against those who would begrudge Serbia the supposedly allowable missteps in the process of Yugoslav unification – as if the choice was real, as if nobody else had a choice in the matter, and as if states and governments can pick and choose between alternative futures.

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In fact, the war results turned out a lot better for Serbia than its political leadership anticipated. The Yugoslav Committee and the political leadership of the South Slavs in the Monarchy were ignored by the victorious Allies, which failed to recognize the State of the Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs that emerged out of the rubble of the Monarchy in October 1918. Unable to protect themselves against Italian territorial claims, domestic turmoil, and the encroaching Serbian army, the Monarchy's South Slav politicians, led by the liberal Croat political elite, caved in to Serbia and concluded an arrangement that brought forth a new state – the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, with all the features of a perversely read program of the 'New Course'. Croats and Slovenes were indeed rid of Austrian and Hungarian tutelage and retained most of their ethnic territories, but the continuity of the Serbian state and institutional centralism, which was enshrined in the Vidovdan Constitution of 1921, without any provisions for federalist safeguards or recognition of historical and ethnic particularisms, promoted a new tutelage, admittedly under masters less formidable than those in Austria-Hungary, but certainly less committed to the rule of law and parliamentary procedure.[7] Still, the wealth and security of the South Slavs could have been enhanced in time through evolutionary adjustments had not the results of the First World War created the conditions for the growth of communist and fascist totalitarianisms. The real tragedy of Yugoslavia was not what transpired under the various corrupt and arbitrary Belgrade regimes of the 1920s and early 1930s, although these regimes undoubtedly radicalized political relations in the country. The real tragedy was that the occupation in 1941 put an end to initial federalist measures (the Cvetković-Maček agreement of 1939), that the demons unleashed in 1941 made a post-war democratic state impossible, and that Titoist federalism and non-alignment were as fake as they were welcome by the West under Cold War conditions. It was a tragedy of perversity and omission, just as banal as what transpired in Austria-Hungary.

If we are to engage in counterfactual speculation, however, we must also consider what the South Slavic area would have looked like in the 1960s in the absence of the First World War (and presumably the Second, as well) and of Yugoslavia. Pavle D. Ostović, a Croat from the Lika-Krbava County (Croatia proper) and a secretary of the Yugoslav Committee in London, wrote the following in 1971:

> Opatija near Rijeka was in 1918 purely Croat. Then came the Italians, the Italian schools, etc. In the summer of 1945 I went to Opatija to see what trace the Italians left behind. I walked the city streets and addressed the

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> children – elderly people did not interest me – always exclusively in Croatian. They all answered my questions – they understood them – but not a single child answered in Croatian. They responded in Italian. *That was their language* and what would have been the language of the country once they were of age. It follows from this that well-conceived schools can change the character of a population within two generations.

We like to brag that we withstood the threat of Germanization, Italianization, etc. That is not true. We were protected by our backwardness, primitivism, illiteracy, and the fact that previously the means of rapid denationalization were neither available, nor was anybody then particularly interested in such things. Nowadays it is otherwise. Had the Italians kept Dalmatia only 50 years, there would be no more Croats there.

In Vojvodina the situation was similar. The elite, the educated folk, who went to Hungarian schools, spoke Hungarian. Dr. Milan Ćurčin (he was a Serb from Pančevo) told me that had the liberation been deferred by 50 years, there would have been no Serbs in Vojvodina.[8]

For the purpose of identification, I should add that Ostović was a lifelong friend of Ivan Meštrović and the New Europe Group – R. W. Seton-Watson, Wickham Steed, and the rest. For these men, the fulfilment of the 'New Course', fully or partially successful, came not a moment too soon.

Now, a century after the Great War, whose outcome allowed for a Yugoslav solution to the South Slav question, moreover from a post-Yugoslav perspective, it might be concluded that the contrasting legacies of this process were connected with the pluralization of what were always South Slav questions. (There were and still are several!) This does not mean that their 20th-century Yugoslav interphase was in some sense wrongheaded or avoidable. (Errors are not plausible in the kinetic process of history.) This interphase cannot be discussed in isolation from the overarching European and international issues of the 20th century. There still remain a number of South Slav and Balkan questions (the Serb question, involving the relations between Serbia and the Serb communities in Croatia, Bosnia, and Montenegro; the Bosniak question, involving the status of South Slavic Muslims in Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo; the Croat question, involving mainly the relations between Croatia and the Croat community not only in Bosnia, but also in Serbia and Montenegro; the Montenegrin question, involving the rejection of Montenegrin nationhood by many Serbs, and also many Montenegrins;

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the Macedonian question, involving the old Bulgarian-Macedonian binary identification; the Albanian question, involving the unification of all Albanians within a single national state; and the Yugoslav question, involving the unification of the South Slavs within a new political union.) For as long as the South Slav area is unstable and prone to various destabilizing influences – domestic and external – they shall remain open and potentially 'solvable' for good and for ill.

Notes

1 Jaroslav Šidak, Mirjana Gross, Igor Karaman, and Dragovan Šepić (1968) *Povijest hrvatskog naroda g. 1860–1914* (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga), pp. 211–16.
2 Ibid., pp. 227–30.
3 Rene Lovrenčić (1972) *Geneza politike "novog kursa"* (Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Institut za hrvatska povijest).
4 For a history of the Yugoslav Committee, see Milada Paulová (1925) *Jugoslavenski odbor* (Zagreb: Prosvjetna Nakladna Zadruga).
5 Dragoslav Janković (1973) *Srbija i jugoslovensko pitanje 1914–1915 godine* (Belgrade: Institut za Savremenu Istoriju), pp. 470–75.
6 Dragovan Šepić (1970) *Italija, Saveznici i jugoslavensko pitanje, 1914–1918* (Zagreb: Školska Knjiga), pp. 14–214.
7 Ivo Banac (1984) *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 406–16.
8 Dominik Mandić Papers, Franciscan Monastery, Široki brijeg, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Box 9, map 2: Letters 1971, Pavle D. Ostović to Dominik Mandić (Montréal, P.Q., Dec. 15, 1971).

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5

Was the First World War the Turning Point at Which Bulgarian History Failed to Turn?

Richard Crampton

Abstract: *For Bulgaria the First World War was a continuation of the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. Those conflicts ended in defeat as a result of which Bulgaria lost most of the Macedonian territory it had just gained. Great bitterness was felt in Bulgaria, and it was not until the end of the 1990s that a settlement of the Macedonian question in Bulgarian politics seemed to have been found. The War also meant for Bulgaria the loss of its access to the Mediterranean, despite the peace treaty's promise of economic access to the Aegean. In domestic politics, the War produced radicalization that led to the formation of a reforming Agrarian government – deposed in a violent coup in 1923.*

Keywords: Aegean Coast; Alexandur Stamboliiski; Balkan Wars; First World War; Macedonia; Reparations; Treaty of Neuilly

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Bulgaria was defeated in the First World War; no nation wants to dwell on its defeats. At least until the last ten years, the First World War has not played a large part in Bulgaria's national consciousness. Also, it is very important to point out that for Bulgaria, as for the other Balkan states, the First World War is inseparable from, and is basically a continuation of, the Balkan Wars of 1912–13. After 1913, Bulgarians spoke of the Second Balkan War, in which they lost most of the conquests they had made in the First, as the 'national catastrophe'. They refer to the First World War as the 'second national catastrophe'.

There are many legacies left by the Great War. If you went to Bulgaria today you would immediately be affected by one consequence of the First World War that you may not even realize. If you look at your watch, or your calendar, you would see the date in the Western (Gregorian) calendar. It was during (and as part of) the First World War that Bulgaria switched from the Julian calendar – favoured by the Orthodox Church – to the Gregorian calendar – favoured by its German and Austrian Allies. It would have probably happened anyhow. It had been tried before in the 1890s by the modernizing Bulgarian government of Konstantin Stoilov, but the attempt to change the calendar had been defeated by the power and influence of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. In 1916, the Church was in no position to mount such resistance. Also, the Germans pressed for it. Conveniently enough, in 1916, Catholic and Orthodox Easter coincided and Ascension Day was also on the same day in the Western and Eastern calendar, which made it quite easy to switch. This is one permanent legacy of the First World War.

There was another immediate legacy, which if not so long lasting, was nevertheless important. After the First World War, Bulgaria was occupied by various Allied troops. The largest in number were Italians. One thing they brought to Bulgaria was Masonic lodges, which already existed there but were expanded enormously under Italian influence in the years immediately after the Great War. They became important political vehicles through which opposition politicians, i.e. those opposing the Agrarian government, could meet, organize, and essentially conspire. It was a useful way to hide from the Agrarian eye. After the Allied occupation and after the advent of Communism following the Second World War, Masonic lodges came under pressure and were basically dissolved. In what was one of the early signs of the relaxation of the regime in Bulgaria in 1986, a Bulgarian historian, Velichko Georgiev, published a book on Masonry in Bulgaria. It was an absolutely sensational book and

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it sold out within hours. The whole phenomenon of Masonic lodges in Bulgaria was very much a consequence of the First World War.

I now turn to the more obvious and important effects and consequences of the Balkan Wars and the First World War. The First World War, as far as Bulgaria is concerned, was concluded by the Treaty of Neuilly on 27 November 1919. Let me first address the implications of the Treaty in foreign affairs and then its effect on domestic politics.

Once, in a BBC-Bulgarian service broadcast on the First World War and its consequences, I said that the Treaty of Neuilly was not particularly harsh in territorial terms. At a book launch later in Sofia, I found myself in deep trouble because the Bulgarians begged to disagree. But it is true. Compared with the territories lost by Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Germany, what Bulgaria lost may have been important, but it was not extensive. There were four areas in which the Treaty made territorial stipulations. The first was that three small enclaves on Bulgaria's western frontier – the border with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes – were ceded to the new Yugoslav state. They were predominantly Bulgarian in population and probably still are. It is not a serious issue in Bulgaria, but Bulgarian nationalists did not forget about these areas on their Western border, which are essentially Bulgarian yet remain outside the state.

The second area that Bulgaria lost was the Southern Dobrudja, which had been occupied in the First Balkan War and again in the First World War. The Dobrudja is a very mixed area in terms of ethnic composition, but its greatest importance was that it was the most fertile area of the whole country, producing large quantities of grain.

The third area Bulgaria lost was Bulgarian Thrace – between the Rodopi Mountains and the Aegean Sea. Similar to the Dobrudja, the area was occupied in the First Balkan War and again in the First World War. By most counts, it contained 90,000 ethnic Bulgarians. Despite its defeat in the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria retained a strip of Thrace from Bulgaria proper down to the Aegean coast at Dedeagach, or Alexandroupolis as it is now. Dedeagach was not much use to the Bulgarians as a port because the railway to it wound in and out of Ottoman territory. The Bulgarians spent a great deal of money and effort starting to build a new port at Porto Lagos. It enabled the Bulgarians to export their goods through the southern port directly into the Mediterranean, thus clipping three or four days off sailing from the ports of Varna and Burgas on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast.

After the defeat in the First World War, the Allies recognized the importance of this port. Article 48 of the Treaty of Neuilly is probably the

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most important article in the whole Treaty as far as most Bulgarians are concerned. Still today they stress its importance. It stated that Bulgaria would be allowed economic access to the Aegean Sea. It did not specify how that was to be achieved (and it never was achieved). But it was a very important concession to the Bulgarians and one that they constantly raised. Bulgarians became resentful of the fact that the Western, victorious, Allies never fulfilled their promise made in Article 48, but it also had other effects. It was useful diplomatically for the Bulgarians because it enabled them to argue for change without arguing for revision of the Peace Treaties. In effect, it enabled them to make territorial demands without being labelled revisionists. It also enabled them to establish ties with revisionist states. In the 1920s, the chief diplomatic thrust of Bulgarian foreign policy was to seek cooperation with Italy, another revisionist – though victorious – state.

The fourth and final territorial settlement concerned Macedonia. This, of course, is one of the leitmotivs of Bulgarian history – the fact that Bulgaria and Macedonia were not joined. It is not that important in terms of diplomacy and the territorial settlement, but it is extremely significant in the dynamics of nationalism in the Balkans. Margaret MacMillan referred to a Serbian teacher in Macedonia (Chapter 2). It is almost certain that this Serbian teacher was working alongside or for the Serbian Orthodox Church. The main thrust for national recruitment in Ottoman Macedonia by the Christians was to persuade the local Christians to enrol in their particular branch of the Orthodox Church – be it Greek, Bulgarian, or Serbian. The Churches made enormous efforts to popularize themselves and gather supporters. There was one Bulgarian church in the far southwest of Macedonia, in Resen, which had vast support because the cantor had the most stupendous voice and people flocked to hear it. (Many more people in many lands later flocked to hear his son, who was the great opera singer Boris Christov.) Christian populations were operating in this fashion in an attempt to recruit support through their Churches. It was only possible because the Ottoman Empire had an indulgent attitude towards religion. As long as the Churches did not revolt, they were free to conduct their own religious affairs. The Serbs, the Greeks, and the Bulgarians were free to try and attempt to attract support to their own particular Church, which they did. Most interestingly, contrary to the usual Orthodox Church practice, the head of the Bulgarian Church was not in the Bulgarian state but in Constantinople. The location was strategic: from Constantinople he could operate in

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favour of the Bulgarian exarchate churches in Macedonia as well as dealing with those in Bulgaria.

After 1913, the Bulgarians lost most of Macedonia, but the Macedonian territories they coveted were now included in Greece and Serbia, where the attitude towards the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was entirely different. The Bulgarian population in Macedonia was now ruled by assertive, centralized, nationalist, and modernizing states, not by an indulgent Ottoman Empire based on the nation of the millet. It was a cruel blow to Bulgarian national aspirations in Macedonia. After the Second Balkan War, the head of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church eventually moved his headquarters to Sofia, giving up on the struggle for Macedonia. In the First World War, of course, the Bulgarians occupied Macedonia again, so the Bulgarian Orthodox Church moved in with its priests. After the First World War, the loss of the territory once again meant the loss not just of the territory but the loss of the means by which that territory could become more Bulgarianized. *This* was the critical factor.

As for the title of my chapter, 1919 was indeed a turning point for Bulgaria when Bulgaria failed to turn; but in most respects, it turned back again in 1923. After the First World War, there was a contest between the urban left (the Socialists/Communists) and the Agrarians. The contest was won by the Agrarians, who dominated Bulgarian politics from 1919 until a violent *coup d'ětat* in June 1923. The Agrarian leader, Alexander Stamboliiski, did not take Macedonia very seriously. He thought that the settlement was terrible but liked to compare it with the settlement in 1878 with Eastern Rumelia; that, too, had been absurd, so absurd indeed, that it was scrapped seven years later, and Stamboliiski assumed the same would happen sometime with Macedonia. In the meantime, his approach was to cultivate good relations with the new Yugoslav state. He believed that, in all probability, the present would evolve into a future in which the whole of the Balkans would be dominated by Agrarian-style governments, in which case national boundaries would be of little significance. Macedonia would thus cease to be an important question. And at the moment, he did not want this question to complicate his relations with Belgrade. He signed a convention with the Yugoslav government in Niš, on the borders of Bulgaria and Serbia, agreeing that Bulgaria had no claim on Macedonia and that he and his government would do what they could to suppress the Macedonian activists who were operating out of Bulgaria. Subsequently, Stamboliiski moved thousands of Macedonians from the Yugoslav and Greek borders to the east of Bulgaria.

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After Stamboliiski fell, the Macedonians reasserted themselves, particularly in the extreme southwestern corner of Bulgaria, in the Pirin Mountains. They formed a de facto state within the state and became a matter of great concern to the Bulgarian government. Their internal feuds as well as their attacks upon Greek and Serbian institutions in Macedonia embarrassed the Bulgarian government. They so angered Greece that in October 1925 a division of the Greek Army occupied parts of southern Bulgaria for a number of days. In 1933, these activities became dangerous to the Bulgarian government with the signature of a convention on terrorism in London. The convention codified that any state which did not suppress terrorists in its own territory who were operating in another state was in breach of international law. Immediately, the Bulgarian government realized the danger of Greece and Yugoslavia aligning to recreate the disastrous Serbian-Greek axis of 1913, which had destroyed Bulgarian aspirations in Macedonia.

The Second World War again witnessed Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia; the Bulgarian Church flowed in, and the first university was established in Skopje during the Bulgarian occupation. Then the Bulgarians lost again. From 1944 through 1948, as the Communists were becoming increasingly more powerful, there was essentially a reoccurrence of the position from 1919 to 1923 when the new incumbent radical government was dismissive of Macedonia and Bulgarian claims upon it. In 1919, it was an Agrarian government that assumed this position. From 1944, it was the Communist-dominated government that adopted the same attitude. At that time Macedonia had a new identity as the People's Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia. The thinking, as under Stamboliiski, was that the Balkans would evolve into a new federation, this time on a socialist rather than an Agrarian basis, in which national boundaries would cease to be of importance; there was no need, therefore, to worry about Macedonia. The Bulgarian government in 1947–48 even began to encourage the teaching of the Macedonian language in schools in Pirin, Macedonia, which was still part of Bulgaria. The government also established a theatre in the main town and Macedonian history was taught in the region's schools.

It all came to a rapid end in 1948 because the chief drivers of this movement towards Balkan confederation or consolidation were Tito and Dimitrov, who did not keep Stalin fully informed about their plans. Stalin used this lack of disclosure as one of his pretexts for breaking off relations with Tito. After the break with Tito, the Bulgarians became

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completely subservient to the Soviet line and, with a heavy sigh of relief for many Bulgarian Communists, they dropped this Macedonian line (i.e. supporting a separate Macedonian identity). From 1948 until 1989, the Macedonian question in Bulgaria was essentially a means of promoting what the Bulgarians regarded as their historical and cultural claims on Macedonia. Any historian from the West or elsewhere who went to Bulgaria was deluged with free books provided by the Institute for Balkan Studies in Sofia, nearly all of them about Macedonia and how it is, always was, and always will be Bulgarian.

As far as I know, the only time that the Bulgarian Communist government sent a note of protest to the Soviet government was when the Soviet Academy of Sciences published a Russian-Macedonian/Macedonian-Russian dictionary. The Bulgarians protested that a separate Macedonian language simply did not exist. After 1989, a period of instability in terms of Bulgaria's attitude towards Macedonia began. Yet, in 1992, Bulgaria became the first country to recognize the newly separated Macedonian state. Bulgaria feared that Turkey might do so before them and thereby establish a greater diplomatic and cultural influence in Macedonia than Bulgaria would enjoy. But there were also rumours – fairly credible rumours – that the 1913 Greek-Serbian axis was again being considered and that the Greeks and Serbs had discussed the partition of Macedonia. In this case, Bulgaria would be left out. Recognition was a half measure. The Bulgarians specifically said they did not recognize the Macedonian nation. Throughout the 1990s, relations were touchy and difficult; inside Bulgaria itself there was still considerable pressure and agitation over the Macedonian issue.

In February 1999, a second agreement between Skopje and Sofia was signed, where both sides renounced all territorial claims on the other. Negotiations between them would be conducted in the 'official languages of the two countries'. It did not specify what they were. This occurred primarily because Bulgaria was seeking admission to NATO and in the long term to the European Union; both organizations are extremely reluctant to accept any state with serious border problems. In effect, the February 1999 agreement between Skopje and Sofia seems to have settled the Macedonian issue as far as internal Bulgarian politics are concerned. That is not to say that all Bulgarians have forgotten about Macedonia – far from it. But in terms of official policy, it is no longer a feature of Bulgarian diplomacy and foreign affairs. In that sense this particular legacy of the First World War has been laid to rest.

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As for the domestic effects of the First World War, there was a huge impact on human life, in terms of lives lost, ruined, and disrupted. Bulgaria mobilized a greater percentage of its male population than any other combatant in the First World War, so the effect was considerable. The war produced internal dislocation with the mobilization of both men and animals. The crops were harder to take in, the harvest declined, and by the end of the war there was severe malnutrition leading to food riots in 1918.

One of the domestic stipulations of the Treaty of Neuilly, which also had an impact on foreign policy, regulated the Bulgarian military establishment, which was to be limited to a maximum of 20,000 men in the army, who were all to be volunteers. There was to be no general staff, no air force, and various other restrictions were imposed. These were very often evaded; arms were smuggled in and buried, and people were trained in secret military camps. In the 1930s, the evasion of the military clauses of the Treaty of Neuilly became a useful means for the King to enlist the support of the army against his other internal foes.

Another of the Treaty's stipulations concerned reparations. Bulgaria was to pay 2.25 billion gold francs to the Allies within 37 years. This sum was reduced in 1923 and the payments abolished by the convention on reparations in Lausanne in 1932, by which time Bulgaria had paid more than 40 million gold francs. It was not just cash or gold that the Bulgarians had to part with; they had to hand over coal, railway equipment, and livestock to Yugoslavia, Greece, and Romania. They were to handover a total of 125 bulls, 13,500 milk cows, 12,500 horses and mares, and 2,500 mules. These figures are mentioned for a particular reason. In Bulgaria, the need for draft animals was probably greater than in any other of the combatant states. The areas occupied by Bulgaria (except the Dobrudja) had very few roads and almost no railways at all. The only way to move equipment and supplies was by draft animals. Huge numbers of animals were moved into Macedonia and Thrace to support the Bulgarian military occupation. Most of them did not come back, so when more had to be handed over as reparation, the impact upon Bulgaria's agricultural capability was tremendous.

War also caused – in Bulgaria as elsewhere – a centralization of the economy. Indeed, it caused a military takeover of the economy in 1917 because of maladministration and corruption by the civilian authorities. The problems were intense and manifold. The Germans were buying up huge amounts of food, and each German solider sent home much more food than the permitted monthly or annual maximum. In fact, they sent

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home many thousand times more than was permitted by law. The Germans controlled the telephone service and the railway system, while German and Austrian currencies were made legal tender in Bulgaria during the war and were much stronger than the Bulgarian lev. The farmers, those who had not been mobilized, sold their produce when they could to the Germans and the Austrians before the Bulgarian requisitioning authorities seized it. Corruption was another problem.[1] The precedent for the takeover and command economy was followed in Bulgaria at the beginning of the Great Depression when the Bulgarian government set up a grain purchasing and trading agency, *Hranoiznos,* in 1930. In the Second World War and during the establishment of the command economy under the Communists, there were clear precedents to follow.

The political impact of the First World War was radicalization through deprivation and defeat, which produced the Agrarian contra Communist contest and the Agrarian regime. The Agrarians lacked an administrative cadre and proved corrupt, thus precipitating a whole series of conspiracies, many of them hatched inside the Masonic lodges. These brought about the violent coup of 1923 by the army and elements of the non-agrarian and non-socialist political parties. There was a repeat of the agrarian-communist duel after the Second World War but, of course, on this occasion the Communists came out on top. There was no doubt when that struggle began that the Agrarians were the more powerful force. The Communists were strong in Bulgaria, but the Agrarians were stronger in terms of popular support. It could be that one of the reasons why the non-Communist and anti-Agrarians were so subdued in this period (which helped the Communists to take over) was the fact that many non-Agrarians and non-Communists had been frightened by the Agrarian successes and excesses after the First World War. Therefore, they did not want to allow them to come back to power after the Second World War. All of this, together with the presence of the Red Army, made the Communist task very easy after the Second World War.

Note

1 There was one case when a Bulgarian arranged for a fake air raid on Burgas Harbour during which he loaded 30,000 sheep into two ships and made an absolute fortune on it.

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6

World War I and the Fall of the Ottomans: Consequences for South East Europe

Eugene Rogan

Abstract: *Territorial disputes and demographic shifts shaped Ottoman relations with the Balkans before, during, and after the First World War. Ottoman Great War aims included recovery of territory in Thrace, Macedonia, and the Aegean Islands lost in the Balkan Wars. Wartime deportations of Greek Orthodox Christians reached their climax in the Turkish War of Independence and the population exchanges of 1922–23. The resulting Turco-Greek antagonism was one of the more enduring legacies of the Ottoman Great War.*

Keywords: Aegean Islands; Anatolia; Balkan Wars; Central Powers; Greco-Turkish antagonism; Macedonia; Ottoman Empire; population transfers; Smyrna; Thrace; Treaty of Sèvres; Young Turks

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The big issues dividing the Ottoman Empire from the Balkan states had to do with demography and territory – before, during, and after the Great War. Thrace, Macedonia, and the Aegean Islands were lands heatedly contested between the Ottomans and their Balkan neighbours. To some extent, those disputes were resolved violently through the two Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913. Balkan nationalist movements had impressed on both Turkey and its neighbours a false sense of incompatibility between Muslims and Christians that inevitably led towards a homogeneously Christian Balkans and a homogeneously Muslim Anatolia. The means used were called 'population transfers' at that time; today, we would refer to them as 'ethnic cleansing'. Whatever the rhetoric, the devastating consequences for the populations involved left enduring scars that far transcended the period of the Great War, and paved the way for a Greco-Turkish antagonism that proved to be one of the enduring features of the Mediterranean world's international relations in the 20th century.

In the early months of 1914, just before the outbreak of war, the European Powers tried to broker peace negotiations to resolve the outstanding differences between the Ottoman Empire and its Balkan neighbours. To some degree, the injection of foreign capital helped. France's loan of a US$100 million to assist in the Ottoman Empire's reconstruction went a long way to induce the Ottomans to accept their losses in Albania, Macedonia, and Thrace, by promising real economic growth after two terrible wars. Yet even after the peace agreements had been signed and the terms of the loan concluded, significant issues remained between Istanbul and Athens.

The peace agreements left Greece in possession of three key Aegean Islands seized from Turkey in the Balkan Wars: Chios and Mytilene, dominating the entry to Smyrna (modern Izmir), were within sight of the Turkish mainland. Limnos, with its strategic harbour, Mudros, was less than 80 km from the Dardanelles Straits. The Porte never accepted the loss of these islands and was unwilling to live with Greece dominating its coastal waters through their possession. While Ottoman diplomats sought European support for their government's claims for the restoration of the Aegean Islands, Ottoman war planners worked to shift the balance of naval power in the Mediterranean instead.

The Ottoman government commissioned two state-of-the-art dreadnoughts as their solution to the naval imbalance of the Eastern Mediterranean. British shipbuilders Vickers and Armstrong took the commission in August 1911 for delivery three years later. The orders were

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placed as part of a British naval mission to help modernize the Ottoman fleet. The two ships *Sultan Osman* and the *Reşadiye*, named for the first and latest Ottoman sultans, were a tremendous drain on the Ottoman treasury. Appealing to Ottoman patriotism, the government funded the ships predominantly through public subscription. Turkish schoolchildren were encouraged to contribute their pocket money, and fundraising stands were opened across Ottoman cities. Those who made a contribution of five piasters or more were allowed to hammer nails into massive wood blocks. While the ships became a focus of Ottoman pride, redressing the Empire's naval forces after the defeats in Libya in 1911 and the two Balkan wars, Greece and Russia were much less enthusiastic about these developments. The massive battleships would give the Turkish navy not only the advantage over the Russian Black Sea fleet but also dramatically shift the balance of power in the Aegean.

The Aegean Islands dispute, and the impending delivery of British dreadnoughts to the Ottoman navy, heralded the real prospect of war between Greece and Turkey in the first half of 1914. Officials in Greece were calling for pre-emptive strikes against the Ottoman navy before these two dreadnoughts could be delivered. The Ottomans, for their part, prepared their citizens once again for war by dispatching mobilization posters to village headmen to hold until further notice. As it turned out, those mobilization posters would not be used for war against Greece but would be posted when the Ottomans mobilized for the Great War in August that year.

On 2 August 1914, the Ottoman Empire concluded a secret mutual defence pact with Germany that was, for all intents and purposes, a war alliance. The Turks presented the Germans with their war aims four days later, when the Germans desperately sought entry for two of their naval vessels into the neutral and sealed Dardanelles Straits. In a pre-dawn meeting with Ambassador Wangenheim on 6 August, Prime Minister Said Halim Pasha laid out his government's conditions for allowing the *Goeben* and *Breslau* to enter the Straits. Said Halim presented six demands to Germany that essentially represented the earliest statement of Ottoman war aims in the Great War.

Two of Said Halim's conditions addressed recent Ottoman losses in the Balkans. First, the Ottomans were determined to secure agreements with Romania and Bulgaria before engaging in any hostilities against the Triple Entente, to ensure that its Balkan neighbours would not threaten Turkish Thrace or Istanbul. The Grand Vizier also sought

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German assistance in concluding the 'indispensable understandings with Rumania and Bulgaria'[1] and in negotiating a fair agreement with Bulgaria for an equitable division of 'possible spoils of war.'[2] In this manner, Said Halim Pasha was ensuring the possibility that if the war went particularly well for the Central Powers, the Ottomans might actually recover some of the territory they surrendered in the Balkan Wars in 1912–13. Second, should Greece enter the war on the side of the Entente Powers, and be defeated, Germany would assure the return of the three Aegean Islands of Chios, Mytilene (Lesbos), and Limnos to Turkish sovereignty.

So much for the geographical issues. Equally serious were the demographic divides between Muslims and Christians in the Balkans and Anatolia. In their short time in power, the Young Turks had overseen extensive population transfers. Territorial losses in the Balkan Wars drove waves of destitute Muslims to seek refuge in Ottoman domains. Without the resources to address this humanitarian crisis, the Turkish leadership created space for these Balkan refugees by deporting thousands of Ottoman Christians to Greece. A government committee then oversaw the reallocation of the houses, fields, and workshops of deported Ottoman Christians to help with the resettlement of Muslims coming from the Balkans. These 'population exchanges' were regulated by agreements concluded between the Porte and the Balkan states – in this sense, ethnic cleansing with an international seal of approval.[3]

The deportation of ethnic Greeks from the Ottoman Empire served several purposes. Deportation not only freed up homes and workplaces for the resettlement of Balkan Muslims, but it allowed the Ottomans to expel thousands of citizens whose loyalty to the Ottoman state was dubious. There was thus a political element behind the resettlement. Tensions over the Aegean Islands that threatened renewed war between Greece and the Ottoman Empire in the first six months of 1914 had left Ottoman Greeks vulnerable and exposed. The population exchanges initiated after the Balkan Wars had provided an internationally sanctioned solution to the Empire's 'Greek problem'.

What started as a controlled exchange of border populations between belligerents evolved into a systematic expulsion of ethnic Greeks from Ottoman lands more generally. Though there are no precise figures for these deportations, several hundred thousand Christians and Muslims were forcibly relocated before and during the First World War. The deeper the deportations were applied within Asian Minor, the more

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the government had to rely on violence and intimidation to achieve its aims. Ottoman Christian villagers in Anatolia, far from the troubled Balkans, resisted the state's efforts to uproot them from homes and villages in which they had lived for generations. Gendarmes rounded up villagers, beat the men, threatened to kidnap women, and even killed Ottoman Greeks who resisted deportation. Foreign consuls, appalled by the violence against Christian civilians, reported dozens killed in some villages. Yet the expulsion of the Greeks from Anatolia could be carried out with a relatively low level of violence against individuals precisely because there was a Greece to which these people could be deported. Arguably, this accounts for the different measures employed towards Ottoman Greeks, who were uprooted and deported but not subjected to massacres, and the Armenians, who faced genocide because they did not have a country to which they could be deported.

With the defeat of the Ottomans in October 1918, these issues were only exacerbated by the terms of the peace treaty. As Margaret MacMillan has so eloquently written in her earlier work, *Peacemakers*, Greek Prime Minister Venizelos had from the very start of the Paris Peace Conference pressed Greece's claims to Anatolia, but with mixed success. He provided questionable statistics to argue that the demography of the coastline of Turkey was overwhelmingly Greek. Venizelos was particularly adamant in making a claim to the port of Smyrna (Izmir). One of the Mediterranean boomtowns of the 19th century, the pre-war population of Izmir was 250,000 'and more Greeks lived there than in Athens itself,'[4] as Margaret MacMillan notes. Yet his bid for Smyrna and its hinterlands, reaching deep into Western Anatolia, created 'a Greek province with a huge number of non-Greeks as well as a long line to defend against anyone who chose to attack from central Anatolia.'[5] Venizelos reinforced his claims to Smyrna and its hinterlands by reporting that Turks were massacring Greeks, and in this way secured authorization from the Big Three to send a Greek cruiser off the coast of Smyrna. The fateful decision of 6 May 1919 to dispatch Greek troops to protect the Greek community in Smyrna and its hinterlands followed. As we know, the landing of Greek soldiers on 15 May, far from diffusing a tense situation, inflamed it and led to riots, violence, and gunfire that left 300–400 Turks and certainly no less than a hundred Greeks dead.

However destabilizing to the peace of Western Anatolia, the Greek claim to Izmir was formalized in the Treaty of Sèvres imposed by the victorious Allied powers on the defeated Ottoman Empire (signed on

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10 August 1920). Section IV of the Treaty, which addressed the issues surrounding the future of Smyrna, created a kind of Greek condominium, using diplomatic double speak to make unpalatable matters seem positively reasonable. In a new formula, Smyrna was to remain under Turkish sovereignty, but Turkey was to transfer to the Greek government *the exercise of her rights of sovereignty* over Smyrna and its hinterlands. The Greek government was made responsible for the administration of Smyrna and would name its own officials to oversee the port and the territories behind it. The Greeks were allowed to garrison as many soldiers in Smyrna as they saw fit 'for the maintenance of order and public security.' They were to oversee the creation of a local parliament to be filled by people elected from the local population in an electoral process that was to be approved by the League of Nations. Relations between the Greek administration and a local parliament would be regulated within the terms of the Greek Constitution. In five years' time, the local parliament could petition the League of Nations for the incorporation of Smyrna into the Kingdom of Greece, at which point Turkish sovereignty would cease. In other words, one did not have to be a radical Turkish nationalist to see in the formula of the Treaty of Sèvres the transfer of a central part of Asia Minor from Turkish to Greek control. The terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, duly signed by the powerless Ottoman government, set in motion the Kemalist rejection that would lead to war, the creation of the Turkish Republic, and the expulsion of the remaining Greek population from Anatolia.

It took until 10 September 1922 before Ataturk entered Smyrna and declared it Izmir once and for all. The city was sacked and burned, and those who survived dispersed towards Greece as refugees. The war had created such antagonisms between Turks and Greeks in Anatolia that villagers across Thrace and Asia Minor abandoned their homes to join this exodus from Turkish territory. This population transfer was formalized by an agreement concluded between the governments of Greece and Turkey that arranged for a compulsory exchange of population involving 1.3 million Greeks from Anatolia and Thrace. The only exceptions to this expulsion were Greek residents of Istanbul (Constantinople), who had been living in the city before 1918. All Greeks from every other city and village were to be deported. In return, more than half a million Turks were expelled from Greece, with the exception of those Turks living in Western Thrace. Nearly two million people were displaced as a consequence of these actions.

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Thus, the demographic differences were 'resolved' by ethnic cleansing and the territorial differences by war. Turkey achieved statehood in all of Anatolia, and Greece consolidated its ownership of the three disputed islands. As for the enduring legacy, one need only point to the Turco-Greek antagonism which had at so many points provoked crises in the Eastern Mediterranean, not least in Cyprus, to see the harmful effects of the peace settlement marking the end of the First World War and the fall of the Ottomans.

Notes

1 Ulrich Trumpener (1968) *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914–1918* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 28.
2 Mustafa Aksakal (2008) *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 115.
3 Taner Akçam (2012) *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 63–96. For an examination of deportations and population exchanges along the southern coasts of the Sea of Marmara, see Ryan Gingeras (2009) *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 12–54.
4 Margaret MacMillan (2003) *Peacemakers: Six Months that Changed the World* (London: John Murray), p. 440.
5 Ibid., p. 441.

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7

Unwanted Legacies: Greece and the Great War

Basil C. Gounaris

Abstract: *Why has the Great War legacy been eradicated from Greek collective memory? Talking about this war was counterproductive. For the royal regime, the national schism of 1915 was a bitter recollection. Exploiting it was unwise for political parties and unprofitable for current diplomacy. The dubious impact of the First World War on the Macedonian Question further complicated the narrative: war helped eradicate minorities but strengthened their determination for revenge. This was also true for the Asia Minor refugees who considerably influenced the politics of Greek memory. Essentially, the national schism was a serious episode of the Greek birth trauma, the struggle between two competing cultures, pro-Western and pro-Eastern. Reluctance to deal seriously with it has turned an important legacy into a cause of national embarrassment.*

Keywords: Asia Minor; Great Idea; Great War; Greece; Karamanlis; King Constantine; Macedonia; National Schism; Papandreou; Salonica; Venizelos

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I have vivid memories from my schooldays. You may hold it against me, but the past has always been a beloved topic of discussion for me. This preference, however, had nothing to do with my school classes. My grandfather fought in three different wars. His first experience was in the Great War. An adamant supporter of Eleftherios Venizelos, he left Greek Eastern Macedonia and his unit on a boat in early September 1916 to escape captivity and thus missed the opportunity to flirt with German girls in Gorlitz, together with the rest of the Fourth Greek Army Corps. Instead, he was injured at the battle of Ravine, fighting with the French and the British. My grandmother also had vivid memories, dating back to 1908, when Greek and Bulgarian armed bands were still clashing throughout Ottoman-held Macedonia. She also kept telling me about the Bulgarian invasion of 1916. Her village was captured by the Bulgarian army; her father and brother were deported to Bulgaria and spent some time doing hard labour. She was 12 years old at the time. Her strong anti-Bulgarian sentiments marked my childhood. One of her favourite stories was about the glorious Lion statue of Amphipolis, parts of which were discovered by English soldiers digging trenches along the southern flow of the Struma River in 1916. To be honest, archaeology was my first choice, but history won me eventually.

I apologize for having bothered you with my family stories. I just wanted to make clear that the First World War – at least for me – was not a vaguely known or ill-digested historical event. I grew up not only with fairy tales but also with overdoses of history and I became addicted. To my surprise, however, at school I was taught nothing about this Great War until I was in the third grade of secondary school. My case was not exceptional considering that at the time the history of Greece after the 1821 War of Independence was not a compulsory part of any history course. There was never enough time to allow us to go beyond Independence, too much history. More important though was the absence of the First World War from public history. There were impressive celebrations for the declaration of the Greek-Italian War of 1940 and for the defence against the Germans at the Metaxas line in 1941; we knew a lot about the heroic death of Pavlos Melas, the pioneer of the struggle for Macedonia against the Bulgarians in 1904. We could see the monuments. There were films on all these topics with well-known Greek cinema stars. We also knew about the crushing of the Communists in 1949 that ended the Greek Civil War, although we learned little about Communism itself.

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Let me start by reminding you very crudely of some milestones of the crucial decade between 1912 and 1922. In 1913, following the Balkan Wars, Greece had expanded to Crete, the Aegean Islands, Epirus, and Macedonia; but at the outbreak of the First World War, it was still debatable whether she could defend her new possessions on her own. As we all know, territorial promises were crucial for the formation of alliances in the Balkans. By 1915, the course of the war and multifaceted diplomacy rendered it impossible to decide whether a particular side or neutrality was the obvious choice for Greece. There were convincing arguments for every choice, but none without great risk. Yet there was no time for contemplation. Indecision and risk aversion resulted in a heated political debate and a constitutional crisis.

King Constantine and Premier Eleftherios Venizelos drifted irrevocably apart after two elections in 1915. The political schism and the pressing necessities of war – the Gallipoli Campaign and the collapse of Serbia – led the Entente Powers to occupy parts of Greek Macedonia, Epirus, and some islands. Greece was divided not only politically but also geographically, just two years after she had secured those lands. On top of this, in 1916, Venizelos established a provisional government in Thessaloniki. It was a full-scale national schism. Reunification of the two Greek parts (the so called 'Old Greece' and the 'New Lands') was violent. It was accomplished under tremendous allied military pressure and the King was forced to abdicate. Greece joined the Entente in time to fight some big battles, but the officers' corps was divided and the army's morale did not fully recover.

The deficit in war effort was balanced by participating in the Ukrainian campaign against the Bolsheviks. Eventually Venizelos – rather than Greece – was rewarded with spoils (such as Eastern and Western Thrace and the Smyrna region in Asia Minor) too big and too fragile to handle. Eastern Thrace and Smyrna were lost after the disastrous Asia Minor Campaign. What constituted the essence of the National Catastrophe was not the military disaster but the uprooting of 1.3 to 1.5 million Greek-Orthodox civilians. In one decade, Greece marched from absolute triumph to absolute disaster. It is a series of historical events that went wrong; they could not and should not be analysed separately. But if we are to see the period as a whole, as I suggested, at this point one could reasonably ask: given the course of European diplomacy before, during, and after the Great War – undecided until the American entry – was the outcome of the decade an unmitigated disaster for Greece? Was the King

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right and should Greece have stayed neutral? Did we turn at the wrong turning point? My answer is: 'Definitely not'. In addition to Western Thrace, all the territorial gains of the Balkan Wars were confirmed, while hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Bulgarians, populations which Greece could hardly ever absorb, were evacuated or forced to flee never to return. Northern Greece, after the influx of the Asia Minor refugees, looked impressively homogenous. This was not a negligible development at all. Asia Minor had not been sacrificed in vain, considering that preserving Macedonia and Thrace on behalf of Greece was not the priority of any Great Power until then.

Since I left school in the late 1970s things have not changed much. Although eventually the history of the 20th century caught the attention of Greek education planners, the legacy of the First World War is publicly regarded as a complicated and unpleasant academic topic that has remained the exclusive preserve of specialists. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask: why has this significant outcome of the Balkan and the Great Wars combined been misplaced in public history and been eradicated from our collective memory? Some reasons are more obvious than others. Tracking them down will facilitate understanding of the long-term repercussions of the Great War for Greece.

The key persona in the 1910s and 1920s was Venizelos – from 1909 to his death in 1936, to be exact. He was involved in whatever happened during these 25 years, whether he was physically present or not. Although he had resisted a constitutional assembly in 1911, which might have led to a republican regime, it was only after his clash with King Constantine that he developed into the leading figure of the republican regime (eventually established in 1924) and certainly into an emblem for the Greek anti-royalists ever after. Greece, however, was a kingdom under the same dynasty, Constantine I's sons, George II and Paul I, from 1935 to 1974. The dynasty was aware that the popular support they had accumulated during the Second World War, the Civil War, and the Cold War had not neutralized the pro-Venizelist/republican feelings. It was only out of fraud and necessity, rather than love, that George II had been restored in 1935 and 1946, respectively. The King was the head of the State but, in the hearts of many, Venizelos was the true leader of the nation (*Εθνάρχης*). Glorifying his achievements was impossible before the Second World War and undesirable after it. The two emblems, the royal crown and Venizelos' famous silk side cap, were incompatible.

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To give you an example, in the 50th anniversary of the First Balkan War, in 1962, an impressive volume was published presenting the evolution of Salonica as a Greek city after 1912. It is amazing that there were no chapters in this book for the post-1912 political events, only presentations by subject: education, urban planning, health care, boy scouts, gendarmerie, etc. The 20th century history of Salonica, the capital of Venizelos' provisional government, the headquarters of the pro-Entente Greeks, was an embarrassment for King Paul, whose large-scale portrait covered the first page of that huge volume. Academic historians could not reassess the story of the Great War without offending him. In the second edition of the *Great Greek Encyclopaedia*, the ultimate 28-volume book of reference, in the early 1950s, under the subject 'Eleftherios Venizelos', the former director of his political office, Potis Tsimbidaros, presented Venizelos' contribution to the Great Idea (the unification of Hellenism) but not his clash with the King. Taking sides would not be prudent.

Nor was the memory of Venizelos' diplomatic initiatives and confrontation useful in terms of post–World War II politics. To start with, in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, many of the interwar protagonists were still politically active, among them Venizelos' younger son Sophocles, but were not always on good terms with each other. The Liberal Party of Venizelos split (not for the first time) in 1946 and was reunited a year later. It is impossible to analyse here the party politics of the Liberals until Marshal Alexandros Papagos defeated them in 1952. But it could be argued that, although the legacy of Venizelos was extremely important for them, reference to the First World War was counterproductive during the Civil War and meaningless afterwards, since a commonly accepted prerequisite of being nationalistic (*Εθνικόφρων*) was to be loyal to the King, apart from being fervently anti-Communist. Even the Asia Minor refugees, the par excellence supporters of the Liberal Party, scattered in the Greek Macedonian hinterland, had turned pro-Royalist in the 1940s under the threat of Communist guerrillas and brigands. The example of Venizelos' productive premiership (1928–32) was still inspiring politicians, even Constantine Karamanlis, in the late 1950s and 1960s. But this did not imply any wish to stir up the passions that the First World War had introduced to Greek politics when the nation was tormented by a new version of schism, this time between the Left and the Right wings. To sum up, the legacy of the First World War constituted a major political trauma. Healing could be achieved more effectively and conveniently through amnesia. In fact, healing this political blood feud

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was meaningless for Greek society. After another ugly decade of war, the 1940s, Greeks had learned and were used to swimming in their own blood.

At this point, one could possibly ask whether and why the Army itself – a powerful factor in post–World War II events – was similarly indifferent to the memory of significant military events, for example that of the victorious First World War battles of Skorka di Legen or Ravine. Was this not political capital to be treasured? The Army History Section published its version of the First World War military events in 1958. In the preface of the two-volume edition, General Kanellopoulos confessed that 40 years after these episodes, the major challenge they had to face as historians was how to be objective in the study of military events that could not be separated from the dramatic political background. To achieve this, he wrote, they had relied not only on objective sources but also on the assumption that time had dissolved the haze created by hatred. Yet the first page of this book was also covered – surprisingly – by King Constantine I's portrait, thus leaving little possibility of objectivity. I am not saying that the book is a libel against Venizelos, but the deliberate plan of the authors is obvious: to focus on the achievements of the soldiers and to leave aside – or be critical of – the politics which had brought this war effort to a victorious end.

Two additional points should be made here. First, the First World War was not the type of war that produces Greek heroes. Our pantheon of war heroes includes only those who fought irregular wars on the mountains as volunteers in the service of some great idea, not the reservists or the professional soldiers bound by legal obligations, no matter how heroically they fought. So, the Great War produced no heroes, because Greek heroes are not to be found in trenches and they are not dressed in uniforms but in kilts. Furthermore, the abovementioned army history publication made it clear that the Greek reservists had been dragged into this War, and many deserters had been executed.

My second point has to do with the role of the Entente powers. I return to the international relations factor later on, but here must stress that when the army history of the First World War was written in the 1950s, heroes of the traditional type were being produced in Cyprus, where the struggle for union with Greece was in full swing. Securely attached to Washington and not always on best terms with Paris, Greece had no particular reason to cover up the violent way in which French and British forces imposed their military presence in 1915 and established

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Venizelos' regime in Athens in 1916; nor could disrespect for the devious Italians be hidden. The Albanian war was too recent. As far as Greece was concerned, Entente was no longer cordial and no longer treasured as such in the 1950s. Greek-British relations were seriously undermined by the 'Cyprus question'–the 'small idea', which had replaced the 'Great Idea'. They were similarly affected by the decisive role the British had played in December 1944, never forgotten by the Greek Left. The legacy of the *Grande Armée d'Orient* was unwanted by all.

This conclusion reveals another reason for oblivion. As I mentioned, the special role Salonica had played in the National Schism was an embarrassment for my city, otherwise conservative, royalist, and nationalist-minded. But it was more than that. The memory of the First World War in Salonica and that of the Macedonian Front was related to some non-convenient historical events that did not fit very well in the post-war national narrative. Salonica, before the great fire of 1917, was not a predominantly Greek city in demographic terms. Muslims and Jews formed the majority of the population, and it was exactly this colourful picture and multilingual environment that had captured the attention of European soldiers and was preserved in their diaries and memoirs. Post–World War II Salonica was a different city, no longer the Jerusalem of the Balkans but the mother of the refugees.

Asia Minor refugees had competed bitterly with the Jews (suspected as pro-Bulgarian), had moved into the Muslims' quarters, and had (and still have) no particular interest in this 'multicultural past'. If they had one recollection, then it was the 1920 anti-Venizelist vote of these hostile minorities, which brought the Cretan Premier down at the peak of his triumph after the Treaty of Sèvres and ruined their own lives. They thought the Jews had stabbed him in the back. Anyway, there was nothing worthy for the Asia Minor refugees to recall from Ottoman Salonica, which had been 'purified' by the 1917 fire and the 1943 deportation of the Jews. (Recently this 'ghostly past' – to recall Mazower – has created many tensions between mayor Boutaris and the local bishop).

No more interesting to the national narrative were developments in the Macedonian hinterland. Bulgarian revisionism was a threat, while Serbian-Greek relations had been seriously injured. Greece was a defeated and exhausted state with unfriendly neighbours. Before the war, the future of Greek Macedonia was debated by many. Even Venizelos had participated in this 'unholy' diplomatic bargain, which included the return of Eastern Greek Macedonia, won during the Second Balkan War,

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to Sofia. After the war, the threat of mutilation was decreased but not extinct. The task of assimilating a predominantly Slav-speaking population in addition to half a million Muslim peasants and an officially recognized Romanian minority was a challenge too great to be handled by a state which had as yet to accomplish its own modernization. In 1915, when war fell upon Greece, the process of integration had not yet started. Crimes committed during the First World War were added to the very long list of massacres dating back to 1900. In the 1920s, in some regions of Greek Macedonia, the Greek state was still alien and predatory, more often coming to ask than to give. All minorities were tempted by and flirted with propaganda promoted by friends and foes alike. Armed bands reappeared. These were not pleasant episodes.

Fortunately, the mutual exchange of minorities between Greece and Bulgaria (to some degree) alleviated the distress; yet it created two long-lasting effects. The first was the Bulgarian desire to retaliate, a wish that undermined the interwar plan for a Balkan Federation and was fulfilled in blood baths during the Second World War. The second was the dominant role that refuges from Asia Minor, sometimes Turkish-speakers from Anatolia and Pontos (the Black Sea coast of Turkey), were called to play in Greek Macedonia. They became the national guards of the northern frontier in a new homeland they could not afford to lose again. This fear of yet another uprooting made them even more sensitive to the threat of the alleged internal enemy, the local Slav-speakers who had opted to stay rather than flee to Bulgaria in the 1910s and 1920s.

The same could be argued for Yugoslav Macedonia, the present Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The events of the First World War also caused them confusion. The region was annexed by the Bulgarian army, which was welcomed as a liberator. After the Bulgarian defeat, it was colonized by the Serbs and suffered the same grievances of integration experienced in the Greek part. In my view, it was this cleavage, between locals and refugees, which accelerated the formation of a Macedonian ethnic identity, noted earlier by Richard Crampton (Chapter 5). Macedonianism was strengthened by the First World War treaties and tormented Greece for decades, combined with the threat of Communism (especially during German Occupation and the Greek Civil War). This national ideology bore fruits in Socialist Yugoslavia after the Second World War, strongly supported by Slav-Macedonian Communist political refugees from Greece who fled there after the Greek Civil War. As was the case with Asia Minor refugees in Greek Macedonia, adamant

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nationalism was a very handy currency for them as well. In any case, the story of Slav-Macedonian nationalism, whichever way it may be told, is not the most popular in Greece. Nevertheless, in my view, this story is connected directly, though not exclusively, with the First World War.

The importance of expatriate Slav-Macedonians' vision of 'Greater Macedonia' –their lost Aegean homeland – could also be compared, though in a different scale, with the extremely popular (for Greek public history) legacy of the Asia Minor catastrophe. The final death of the Great Idea, which had nourished the Modern Greek state since 1844, left a vacuum that the antagonistic vision of modernization could not replace. This blow was so heavy and so clear that it became an integral part of domestic party politics, determined to a great extent by the refugee vote, especially in rural northern Greece. What had been lost following the Great War was for the resettled refugees more important than what had been gained through the war effort. The disparity between spoils and losses became the convenient measure by which to judge their political opponents and find them guilty and incompetent beyond doubt. Were there any politicians capable of restoring their prosperity? Apparently the scale of the disaster was paramount by any criteria – military, social, demographic, or ideological – their drama was real and their needs immense. But even when the process of settlement was accomplished (even after the Second World War was over, or even today), the manipulation of their drama or that of their ancestors, the decimation of the Pontic Greeks and the burning of the infidel Smyrna, are heavily exploited as symbols in Greek politics.

The pressure of Pontic associations for an officially recognized genocide, which renders impossible and impious any reconciliation with Turkey, is the best example of this practice. What happened in 1922 created a long-lasting moral debt for the Greek state. The Great Idea must live in the sacred memory of its sudden death. It is so sacred it can sanctify any demand or petition – no matter how irrelevant – in the name of the lost homelands. Obviously this is a tool used extremely effectively even by third generation refugee associations. Andreas Papandreou's famous pilgrimage in 1983 to the Monastery of Panagia Soumela, the strongest transplanted symbol of Pontic tradition in Greece, should be interpreted in this context. It established a sacred bond connecting the socialist Premier with his Pontic followers. He acknowledged his debt. To summarize, the memory of the First World War gains is less useful than that of the losses which followed, simply because bitterness creates

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more cohesive and lasting bonds. Comparing gains and losses reduces the symbolic size of the Catastrophe, making it redundant.

Having already referred to Andreas Papandreou's 'Pontic connection', I must now expound on the selective reappraisal of Venizelos' memory in the 1980s, in what Richard Clogg called the Populist Decade.[1] To my knowledge, this is a question that has not been thoroughly researched, if it has been studied at all. PASOK, the Greek Socialist Party, promoted the idea that it was a revival of the Venizelist tradition. This proclamation was widely believed, especially in Crete, judging from the rhetoric employed during the electoral campaigns and the amazingly successful results for almost three decades. Roughly speaking, for Andreas Papandreou, Eleftherios Venizelos' legacy was of paramount importance in order to (1) engulf what was left of the Centre in the 1970s and (2) defeat the conservatives, who were conveniently presented by PASOK as descendants of the Royalists. Education planners were encouraged accordingly to increase the share of the 20th century in the curriculum of all grades by adding topics such as the October Revolution, the Second World War Resistance, the Labour Movement, and the Capitalist System.

The quest was to make the new generation more sensitive to class struggles and thus to undermine the national-minded positivist history of war events. In the first history book of this kind (published in 1982), Greece's participation in the First World War featured as a 14 page-long chapter in which Venizelos' choice of side is analysed extensively and fully justified. King Constantine appears to be motivated only by his pro-German feelings and German marriage. Equally interesting is that the politics of the Entente powers towards Greece during and after the war are presented in a manner that promotes a critical, if not negative, stance. My point is that Venizelos in the 1980s was useful for PASOK *without* his Western allies, resonating with Andreas's anti-NATO and anti-EEC policy.

It was exactly the opposite task set by New Democracy (the Greek conservatives). As the party was shrinking and the Centre had been absorbed by the Socialists, Karamanlis himself and his successors were tempted and gradually claimed a part of Venizelos' liberal and pro-European tradition. It was the key to an important pool of votes, which had to be repatriated to New Democracy, by then featuring as a centre-right wing party. But again, as in the case of PASOK, the conservative image of Venizelos was a vague symbol of Greece's fundamental Western orientation – a symbol purified from his involvement in military coups, risky politics, disconnected from his responsibility in the 1932 Greek

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bankruptcy or for having been an admirer of Mussolini. This purification would have been unattainable without the paramount assistance of public history and the manipulation of education with the consent and joint action of both major parties.[2]

Before I reach my final argument – and in order to make it more credible – I should stress that even during the days of the present financial crisis the example of Venizelos' attachment and commitment to his Western allies in the First World War is constantly used by non-leftist parties to encourage the Greeks to adhere to the European Union and its rules. We must never walk alone again, they say, because another Catastrophe will follow. It may sound simplistic or even naïve, but the argument is in accordance with the tendency of respectable modern Greek historians to consider Venizelos as part of a pedigree dating back significantly: to Alexandros Mavrokordatos, the leader of the English party in the 1830s; followed by Harilaos Trikoupis, the reformer; and Constantine Karamanlis the elder being the last branch in this tree of the Greek nation's pro-European modernizers.

Here the final question must be pressed. Is there a deeper meaning in our willingness as a nation either to forget all about the First World War or to use selectively whatever is appropriate to meet our current needs, so selectively that the entire national schism becomes incomprehensible? Since the constitutional dilemma has been removed for good – Greece will not be a kingdom again – we must now look deeper into the nature of this schism of ours, misleadingly perceived by many as a side effect of the Great War.

In terms of public history and school history, as I mentioned before, the schism is regarded as a clash between the pro-German King, carried away by his wife, and the premier who acknowledged the common interests of Greece and Britain in the Near East. More elaborate analysis (to be found in the school textbook of the Socialist period) popularized the oldest interwar Marxist approach, that a further expansion to the East suited best the interests of the capitalist urban class, which supported Venizelos. The drama actually lies in the fact that the alleged united body of the Greek nation was split into two parts. If we shift from public history to academic history, then we must focus on the work of George Mavrogordatos, who has given us the best in-depth analysis, and Thanasis Bohotis, who draws much useful evidence from the unpublished PhD dissertation of Despoina Papadimitriou.[3] Notably, the making of the schism and the clash between Venizelists and anti-Venizelists stretches

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beyond the end of the First World War and beyond the Catastrophe. It includes the attempt against Venizelos in 1920, the execution of the Six in 1922, the attempted assassination of Venizelos in 1933, the execution of three Venizelist officers in 1935, and a number of other events. Such critical junctures contributed significantly to the alienation of the two parts, but the original cleavage, all agree, was a by-product of the First World War. Or was it not?

I am not referring to just the construction of party mechanisms in the 19th century which were in place and ready to be mobilized in support of partition in 1915. Professor Mavrogordatos has raised various serious bipolar confrontations: Greek-Orthodox versus minorities, refugees versus locals, 'Old Greece' versus 'New Greece', and traders versus manufacturers. He pointed out that the overlapping of these poles – to the extent it occurred – fomented the intensity of the confrontation by creating wider camps in the place of parties. The same could be argued in terms of class analysis. The two camps did not overlap with classes. The cleavage cut through the urban class, the petty-bourgeoisie, the labour class, and the peasantry. Mavrogordatos convincingly argued that the national schism could and should be studied as a crisis in the process of national integration: Greece was neither in a position to administratively integrate expanded territories nor to assimilate numerous minorities. When the First World War fell upon her, Greece was reluctant to accept the challenge of further expansion. The tension increased when refugees were added to the minorities; thus, the mismatch between the people, the nation, and the state became too drastic to be overlooked. Venizelos referred to a nation including Old and New Greece as well as the unredeemed, a state of two continents and five seas: his political opponents alluded to 'a small but honourable state'. In theory, both camps were adherents of irredentism, but in matters of practice they were antagonists in the same cause.

This antagonism – concerning the best way to get Constantinople – was deeply rooted. Bavarians tried to modernize Greece in the 1830s by using outsiders, educated Greeks of the Ottoman Empire and the Diaspora. But in 1844, after the constitutional revolt, the local notables – the popular Russian party – won the parliament and ousted the newcomers or outsiders, Bavarians and Greeks alike, who had disregarded the 'natural route' and had 'derailed' the Greek nation. In the 1850s and 1860s, the supporters of an Eastern Orthodox federation blamed the Westerners for deliberately undermining the unity of the Orient through the use of nationalism and the infiltration of an alien (European) culture. In the 1880s, Trikoupis'

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opponents supported the view that the King, if necessary, should be able to resist the majority of the parliament to temper the growing tendency for democracy, especially if democratization was in favour of the plutocrats of the Diaspora or the bourgeoisie. They maintained that the emphasis on material goods and the development of mechanisms assisting the accumulation of capital destabilized social cohesion and increased injustice. For their ostentatious consumerism, such plutocrats were called 'caviar-eaters' and 'golden flies'. Such novelties were not compatible with Greek values and morals – not that the opponents of Trikoupis had an alternative economic plan to a state-driven expansion.

By 1915, after some decades of intensive modernization, with fewer ups and more downs, discontent was mounting. Nobles from the Seven Islands, staff officers, university professors, judges, and the Crown itself were all threatened by the rise of a Western-oriented, liberal business class. Capitalist growth also threatened (or had expelled) a part of the petty-bourgeoisie from the labour market, the public sector, and trade; the same was true for their dependent workers. Farmers of some standing, who had depended on the export trade of currants, were gradually losing their financial and social privileges to small farmers growing grain for local consumption. There were many Greeks in Old Greece reluctant to sustain a modernization that required more taxes for armaments and for the growing public sector and longer military service at the front. The rising pressure of the army against the non-Venizelist parties after the 1909 military coup, which escalated into a dictatorship of the Liberals in 1916 with the support of the Entente forces and was bound to bring down the dynasty was reason enough for social tension to explode violently. If this outward or bellicose policy, bringing wealth to their opponents and misery to them, was the proposed road to Smyrna or to Constantinople, then there were many who had absolutely no interest in this Great War of Venizelos. It was not their war, not their Great Idea.

Regardless of all the complicated motives behind the schism, what is particularly revealing is the specific rhetoric used by the Athenian press to present and make palatable and digestible objection to (or support for) Greece's participation in the First World War. For the Venizelists, the state of Athens had been transformed into an ally of the nation's most despised and traditional enemies, the Turks and the Bulgarians, undoubtedly guilty of high treason. This turn constituted an internal regression, a full decomposition of the modern Hellenic body. To describe best what was the real essence of Venizelist policy in the eyes of their opponents,

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allow me to translate a brief but revealing passage from the newspaper *Neon Asty* in December 1916:

> Venizelism was nought but the imitation of the Francs (i.e. Westerners, Catholics in general) in politics. Under a healthy surface it was the most lethal disease. Under the pretence of realism it bargained Greece like a load of onions. Under the title of progress individual and group arrivisme was excited. Under the façade of renaissance, Venizelism tried to achieve the negation of all traditions. Under the pretext of an alliance sought to settle the Frank in the heart of Greece.

In fact, stated another journal edited by Ion Dragoumis, Venizelos himself did not look like a manly Greek, but like a Jew of a special kind, with a feminine intellect. Such gross and blatant propaganda was disseminated nation-wide and infiltrated the army.[4] Dragoumis was executed in 1920 by the Venizelists. Having served as a diplomat in Macedonia in the 1900s, authored many works of flagrant nationalism, and declared openly his anti-Semitism, Dragoumis developed into a major symbol of pure Hellenism, deeply rooted in the Byzantine Orient. He was acknowledged as the ideal Greek hero by many ultra nationalist, fascist, and neo-Nazi Greek organizations and parties, including the notorious Golden Dawn (*Chrysi Avgi*).

I have tried to answer the question why the Great War as a whole has been eradicated from Greek collective memory after the Second World War, although selective parts of it come in handy from time to time. In this chapter, I referred to the whole 1912–22 war decade in order to make my arguments more plausible, although I risk distancing myself from our main topic, the Great War. The presented reasons for oblivion and misuse vary from time to time. Before 1974, one could point to the royal regime, which could not claim a single share in the First World War achievements, but many in the making of the ugly national schism.

Since post-war Greece was tormented by another schism, between left and right, talking about the first one was not wise; even the army was not very proud of its performance. The fluctuating relations between Greece and its Western European allies were also a part of the nation's memory loss, which continues today. The dubious impact of the First World War on the Macedonian Question further complicates the narrative: it furthered the eradication of minorities while simultaneously strengthening their grievances and determination to take revenge. This is particularly true for Pontic and Asia Minor refugees, especially the

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former, who have turned the Catastrophe into a powerful instrument in the politics of memory – not only of memory — of which the preceding war is an unimportant detail.

My last argument focused on the nature of the National Schism, an event of paramount importance, which will endlessly overshadow Greek participation in the First World War. I argued that, despite the complexity in the formation and composition of the two camps, one could clearly see the perpetual struggle between two competing political and ideological cultures, one pro-Western and the other pro-Eastern. They are unable to realize (or to recall) that they are two sides of the same coin, two versions of the same self, Hellas and Greece. To make their difference meaningful the two camps demonize one another by mutually projecting images of our outside enemies – the Franks, the Turks, the Bulgarians, the Jews, the Slavs, the Americans, and the Germans. If I am correct, then the National Schism of 1916 was a significant episode of a birth trauma that Greece has decided to bury and to pretend amnesia rather than discussing it frankly and being cured. If you follow Greek news today (2014–15), then you know that this serial of dualism continues.

Notes

1 Richard Clogg (ed.) (1993) *Greece 1981–89: The Populist Decade* (London: MacMillan Press).

2 Venizelos' canonisation made imperative the exclusion from all Greek history textbooks of the most influential Diaspora Greek ever, Sir Basil Zacharoff, who was the major financier of the Liberals' electoral and other anti-Royalist campaigns, the broker of deals between Venizelos and Lloyd George, and the par-excellence supplier of weaponry to Greece. He is unknown to the Greeks but there is no need for him to be mentioned further in this chapter.

3 G. Th. Mavrogordatos (1982) *Μελέτες και Κείμενα για την Περίοδο 1909–1940* [Studies and Texts for the Period 1909–1940] (Athens & Komotini: A. Sakkoulas); Th. Bohotis (2009) 'Εσωτερική πολιτική 1900–1922' [Domestic Policy 1900–1922] in Χρ. Χατζηιωσήφ (ed.) *Ιστορία της Ελλάδας του 20ού αιώνα: Όψεις πολιτικής και οικονομικής ιστορίας 1900–1940* [History of Greece in the 20th Century: Aspects of Political and Economic History 1900–1940] (Athens: Vivliorama), pp. 60–102; D. Papadimitriou (1990) *Ο Τύπος και ο Διχασμός 1914–1917* [The Press and the Schism, 1914–1917] (PhD thesis, Athens: National University of Athens).

4 Th. Bohotis, Domestic Policy 1900–1922, pp. 96–7.

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8

Epilogue: ... It Is Not Even Past!

Othon Anastasakis, David Madden and Elizabeth Roberts

Anastasakis, Othon, David Madden, and Elizabeth Roberts, eds. *Balkan Legacies of the Great War: The Past is Never Dead*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
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The chapters of this volume confirm Faulkner's maxim from *Requiem for a Nun*: 'The past is never dead. It is not even past'. They show not just the continuity between past and present but also how history, even the history of one hundred years ago, can reverberate through the present. The 2014 centenary of the beginning of the Great War brought about a lively debate among intellectuals, scholars, state officials, and the public as to how this war should be remembered, why it happened, and whether it was inevitable. Although by now there is almost no living personal memory of this dramatic historical period, collective memories and national narratives live on and, in many cases, still arouse passions and heated discussions.

It is well known that South East Europe was the theatre where the rivalries of the Great Powers combined with regional conflicts to produce a global disaster. What is less well remembered are the enormous political, economic, and social consequences for the region itself – and the fact that many of the causal and resulting disputes still live on.

The 100th anniversary of the Great War has offered an opportunity to demonstrate how history weighs on the present in all the countries of South East Europe. One very indicative example of this has been the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, still one of the most controversial aspects of the Great War. Not only has it blemished the image of the region, seen as the powder keg of Europe, it has also provoked discords within the region itself. The question whether the Archduke's assassination was an act of terrorism offends many Serbs who consider this approach at worst an international conspiracy against them, and at best an abuse of historical memory. The answer to this question has important implications not just for Serbia's place in the First World War history, especially because the particular use of the term 'terrorism' bears such negative connotations in today's world (with references to Islamic fundamentalism as the number one enemy of the West), but also because in their own narrative this assassination was an act of defiance against the ruling Empire (which, in their view, had acted illegally in annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina). In the centenary commemorations of June 2014 in Sarajevo, the Serbs' leaders refused to attend, while Serbian Prime Minister Aleksander Vučić and the President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik attended the unveiling of a tribute to Princip instead – a large mosaic depicting the Bosnian-Serb radical as a hero.

The Great War brought about the disintegration of two large multinational Empires in South East Europe: leading to new regional borders,

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national territories, and identities that transformed the countries and the peoples for many decades to come. The legacy of these Empires and the way they collapsed still lives on in all the states in the region, with positive and negative connotations. Nowhere is this more evident than in Turkey, the main successor state to the Ottoman Empire. The legacy of the collapsed Ottoman Empire has been shaping Turkey's self-definition ever since, first as Kemalist oblivion and most recently as the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Ottoman resurrection. Legacies change over time through the rediscovery or reinterpretation of the past. For the majority of the 20th century, Turkey considered the Great War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as the cut-off point for the emergence of a republican, secular state, reacting against its religious Ottoman past. With the rise to power of the AKP at the start of the 21st century, the Ottoman legacy was radically reconfigured as part of Turkey's new identity, with emphasis on the multiculturalism of the Ottoman Empire and the centrality of the Muslim identity. The AKP's foreign policy has been characterized as neo-Ottoman, with a revived interest in the Muslim communities of the Balkan countries and more generally in the states of the region.

Yet the romanticizing of the Ottoman past is contradicted by the bitter legacy of the Armenian genocide, which is reflected in the adamant refusal of the Turkish state to recognize the 1915 massacres as genocide and has resulted in a series of diplomatic disagreements between Turkey and a number of EU member states (and even with His Holiness The Pope himself). The hundredth anniversary in 2015 was a natural occasion for Armenians to remind the world of their genocide. The Turkish government, in contrast, refused to grapple with or even acknowledge this painful memory. Instead, they chose to celebrate the centenary of the military operations in Gallipoli, bringing forward the commemoration by a day to divert attention from the controversial Armenian commemoration.

While historians consider the Armenian massacres the earliest genocide of the 20th century, the Great War produced another dramatic 20th century first, the exchange of populations agreed upon between Greece and Turkey, the first such case of legally stipulated ethnic cleansing. The exchange of populations left a disastrous legacy of human suffering, forced expulsion based on religion, lost fatherlands, and many decades of adjusting to new homelands. Paradoxically, this is also deemed a 'success story' from an international politics perspective, since it brought lasting

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peace between Greece and Turkey and an end to the national questions of these two states. A similar ethnic cleansing took place during the Yugoslav wars, with international agreements such as Dayton confirming new borders along ethnic lines.

While the national questions of Greece and Turkey were 'solved' in this unorthodox way, the end of the Great War created a series of other unresolved national questions in the Western Balkans, which are still haunting relations between states. One of the most sensitive national legacies of the post-Ottoman Balkans is the Macedonian question, one which more than 100 years after the Balkan Wars and the Great War is still affecting Greece's policy on the name of Macedonia, Bulgaria's attitude towards the language, and Serbia's position on the Orthodox Church of the post-Yugoslav Macedonian state. As a result of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, regional conflict, land grabs, and the subsequent formation and dissolution of Yugoslavia, the territory of geographical Macedonia is now divided between three countries: one Macedonian state, and two Macedonian regions, one in Greece and the other in Bulgaria.

The end of the Balkan Wars created the state of Albania, yet the end of the Great War left this country completely vulnerable and with a large number of Albanians living outside its borders in Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. For the whole of the 20th century, Albania continued to feel threatened by its neighbouring states, with a siege mentality and an inward-looking foreign policy, and with an undefined relationship with Albanian populations beyond the country's borders. The Greater Albanian question has been an unfulfilled nationalist project since the end of the Great War, often implied or promoted within various circles in the region but rarely, if ever, raised officially. That said, lately there have been more ambiguous statements by Albanian leaders such as Sali Berisha, or most recently Edi Rama. In April 2015, Rama mentioned the term 'unification' of Albania and Kosovo in conjunction with the goal of European integration, generating strong reactions in Serbia and feelings of unease in other places.

The redrawing of borders and the creation of new nation-states that accompanied the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire led to forced displacements of people and to the mixing and un-mixing of populations, not just between Greece and Turkey but in all other parts of the collapsed Empires. These events brought about new issues of majority-minority relations and new realities of uneasy coexistence with (and

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discrimination against) minorities, which have been evident throughout 20th century history and are still unsettling the region today. Hungarians in Romania and Serbia, Turks in Bulgaria, Muslims in Greece, Albanians in Yugoslavia, Greeks in Albania, are all legacies of the Great War. Even today minorities in most countries continue to feel disadvantaged; the Yugoslav wars are a recent indication where such unresolved ethnic questions can lead.

Dramatic developments of the first two decades of the last century and forced relocations of populations played their part in adding to pressures for mass emigration from the region, and the creation of large Diasporas around the world. These Diasporas have played their own enormous role: in keeping alive traditions, memories, and even myths; in affecting opinion and beliefs in the countries where they reside; and in interacting with developments and policies in their own native countries. This is a major legacy for the region, and one that has a significant and continuing resonance.

For countries like Britain and France, the Great War created a mythology around the millions who fought and lost their lives on the Western front and beyond, creating the heroic image of the Unknown Soldier. In South East Europe, the Great War is not associated with heroism; it resulted in internal divisions, antagonisms, and controversies not only between but also *within* states. The region was divided between countries that were on the winning or on the losing side, but no country was the real winner of this War. The Great War left an acrimonious memory for all parties in the region; they each looked at their own involvement through the lens of victimhood and unfulfilled or interrupted nationalism(s). The Greeks, despite a brief moment of victory and the establishment of Greater Greece, lost subsequently to the Turks and once and for all abandoned the Great Idea. The Turks, the biggest losers of the War, lost an Empire and gained a Republic, but from then on considered themselves the victims of Europe, never regaining trust in the continent; their 'Sèvres syndrome' keeps surfacing as distrust and scepticism vis-à-vis Europe and the European Union. For Bulgaria, another big loser, on the side of the Central Powers, the Great War was a material, demographic, and psychological disaster, significantly weakening the country's position in the region and shattering its own nationalist dreams.

One of the positive legacies of the Great War was an end to regional warfare; until the recent Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, the countries lived peacefully with one another, despite their differences and historical

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discords. Today, Greece and Bulgaria, adversaries before the Great War, are two very friendly states, members of the European Union. Greece and Turkey, having gone through cycles of tension and détente and, notwithstanding the Cyprus issue and differences over the demarcation of the Aegean sea and airspace, have built multilateral relations at multiple levels since 1999. The Western Balkan countries, following Croatia's EU membership, are queuing to become members of the same club, having defined a common destiny. Yet the legacies of the Great War are reminders of past atrocities, internal polarizations, and lingering identity and territorial issues, which makes drafting a common Balkan history an impossible task. At best, people should learn to live with their historical differences and accept that there are different national interpretations of the same events. One of the lessons of the Great War is that when governments are involved in the interpretation of historical facts, the latter can be easily abused and manipulated, creating frictions. Some countries are still struggling to understand what happened 100 years ago; a significant reason for this is that ruling elites, instead of historians and scholars, have been allowed to interpret history.

Let us conclude with one final thought: South East Europe is very much part of the global, inter-connected, inter-dependent world. As Margaret MacMillan writes, 'it is very important to treat the Balkans as part of a wider world and not to see them as an aberration in terms of European history; not to see them as a small part of Europe.' This book is not an attempt to suggest that South East Europe is essentially separate from the rest – far from it. However, since it was an event in the region that triggered the War, it is worth looking at its specific consequences and legacies for the region. Moreover, what we realize more than 100 years from the day of the Archduke's assassination is that we are incapable of understanding the present without recourse to the legacies of the past. And the Great War has been a momentous historical period that decisively shaped the subsequent course of history in South East Europe.

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