



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF MILITARY HISTORY
BULGARIAN COMMISSION OF MILITARY HISTORY



WORLD WAR ONE

1914 - 1918

*40th International Congress
of Military History
31 August – 5 September 2014
Varna, Bulgaria*

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**INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF MILITARY HISTORY
BULGARIAN COMMISSION OF MILITARY HISTORY**

ACTA 2014

**WORLD WAR ONE
1914 – 1918**

**40th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MILITARY HISTORY
VARNA, BULGARIA, 31 AUGUST – 5 SEPTEMBER 2014**



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Редакционна бележка

В рамките само на три години Българската национална комисия по военна история имаше честта да организира два годишни конгреса на Международната комисия по военна история. През 2012 г. 38-ият конгрес бе проведен в София, а през 2014 г. 40-ият конгрес се проведе във Варна – морската столица на България. Това е красноречиво свидетелство за признанието и авторитета, с които се ползват българските военни историци сред международната професионална общност.

В работата на 40-ия конгрес по военна история взеха участие близо 160 делегати и гости от 32 държави от Европа, Азия, Близкия изток, Африка, Северна и Южна Америка, сред които 11 генерали/адмирал и 27 професори, а също и над десет директори на национални военноисторически институции. В научната програма, която бе организирана в 25 паралелни научни сесии, панели и семинари и седем заседания на ръководните органи и подкомитети на Международната комисия по военна история, бяха изнесени общо над 80 научни и информативни доклади. Подобно на предходните международни конгреси по военна история бяха организирани два докторантски семинара със седем млади участници, а също и специализиран панел за военните архиви. В дните на конгреса бе представена юбилейна изложба с документални, научни и периодични издания от Военноисторическата библиотека в София, посветена на 100-годишнината от създаването през август 1914 г. на първата военноисторическа научна институция в Българската армия. Допълнително за чуждестранните гости бе предвидена богата културна програма, която ги запозна с хилядолетното историческо и духовно наследство по българското Черноморско крайбрежие.

В настоящия том с конгресни материали са включени получените в установения срок окончателни варианти на 56 доклада на делегати от 26 държави. Това е пръв по рода си широко представителен международен сборник, посветен на стогодишнината на Първата световна война. В него намират място различни гледни точки и интерпретации и паралелни исторически събития и факти за „Голямата война”, последователно представени чрез многообразието от проблематични и географски обособени тематични кръгове, които показват глобалните, регионални и национални измерения на световния военен конфликт от второто десетилетие на XX век. Публикуването на този сборник в Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски” стана възможно в резултат на съвместните усилия на Университетския комплекс по хуманитаристика „Алма Матер” и Военна академия „Г. С. Раковски”, довели до създаването на Междуниверситетския академичен консорциум „Граждански измерения на сигурността и отбраната”.

Editorial note

In a time frame of only three years the Bulgarian National Commission of Military History was honored to organize two annual congresses of the International Commission of Military History. In 2012, the 38th Congress was held in Sofia, while in 2014 the 40th Congress took place in Varna, the maritime capital of Bulgaria. This is a strong evidence of the recognition and the image that the Bulgarian military historians enjoy among the international professional community.

The 40th Congress of Military History was attended by 160 delegates and guests from 32 countries in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, North and South America, among whom were 11 Generals/Admirals and 27 Professors, as well as more than ten Directors of national military history institutions. The academic program comprised 25 parallel academic sessions, panels and seminars and seven sessions of the leading bodies and sub-committees of the International Commission of Military History. More than 80 scientific and informative papers were presented therein. As tradition has it, two doctoral seminars were organized with seven young participants, as well as a specialized panel for the military archives. An exhibition documental, scientific and periodical editions from the Military History Library in Sofia was set up to celebrate the 100th Anniversary since the establishment of the first military history academic institution inside the Bulgarian Army in August 1914. The participants enjoyed a rich cultural program, which made them familiar with the millennial-old historical and intellectual heritage along the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

The current volume of congress materials contains presented the final versions of 56 papers of the delegates from 26 countries, which were received according to the regulations. This is the first scientific international volume, devoted to the 100th Anniversary of the First World War. Different viewpoints

and interpretations, as well as parallel historical events and facts related to the "Grand War" were presented in a diversity of problematic and geographical thematic circles, which show the global, regional and national dimensions of the world military conflict from the second decade of the 20th century. The editing this volume at the St Kliment Ohridski University Press became possible thanks to the joint efforts of the University Research Complex of the Humanities "Alma Mater" and the G. S. Rakovski National Defense College, following the creation of the Inter University Academic Consortium named "Civil Dimensions of Security and Defense".

Note de la redaction

En seulement trois ans, la Commission nationale bulgare d'histoire militaire a eu l'honneur d'organiser deux congrès annuels de la Commission internationale d'histoire militaire . En 2012, le 38e Congrès a eu lieu à Sofia , et en 2014 le 40e Congrès a eu lieu à Varna - la capitale maritime de la Bulgarie . C' est un signe de la reconnaissance et du prestige dont jouissent les historiens militaires bulgares au sein de la communauté professionnelle internationale .

Dans les travaux du 40ème Congrès de l'histoire militaire ont participé près de 160 délégués et invités de 32 pays d'Europe, Asie, Moyen Orient, Afrique, Amérique du Nord et du Sud, dont 11 généraux / amiraux et 27 professeurs, et plus de dix directeurs d'institutions militaires nationales. Le programme scientifique a été organisé en 25 sessions parallèles scientifiques, dans des panels et ateliers. Sept réunions des organismes de gestion et des sous-comités de la Commission internationale d'histoire militaire ont eu lieu. Plus de 80 rapports scientifiques et informatifs ont été présentés. Dans le cadre du congrès ont été organisés également deux séminaires doctoraux avec sept jeunes participants ainsi qu'un panel spécialisé sur les archives militaires

Au cours du congrès, à l'initiative de la Bibliothèque d'histoire militaire de Sofia, une exposition commémorative de documentaires et de périodiques scientifiques à été dédiée au 100e anniversaire de la création en août 1914 de la première institution scientifique d'histoire militaire dans l'armée bulgare. Pour les participants au congrès un riche programme culturel leur a fait connaître le patrimoine historique et culturel millénaire de la côte bulgare de la mer Noire.

Dans ce volume de documents du congrès sont incluses les versions finales des rapports de 56 délégués venant de 26 pays. C'est la première de son genre collection internationale dédiée au centenaire de la Première Guerre mondiale. On y trouve différents points de vue et interprétations ainsi que des

événements historiques parallèles et des faits sur la «Grande Guerre» présentés à travers d'une grande diversité de problématiques et de sujets géographiquement spécifiés qui montrent les dimensions mondiales, régionales et nationales du conflit militaire de la deuxième décennie du XXe siècle. La publication de ce livre aux Editions universitaires "St. Clément d'Ohrid" est devenue possible grâce aux efforts conjoints du Groupe universitaire des sciences humaines "Alma Mater" et l'Académie militaire "Rakovski" qui ont conduit à la création du Consortium académique interuniversitaire sous le nom : "Dimensions civiles de la sécurité et de la défense".

40th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MILITARY HISTORY
VARNA, BULGARIA, 31 AUGUST – 5 SEPTEMBER 2014

WORLD WAR ONE

1914 – 1918



Република България
Президент

ДО
ПРОФ. ДИМИТЪР МИНЧЕВ
ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛ НА
БЪЛГАРСКАТА НАЦИОНАЛНА
КОМИСИЯ ПО ВОЕННА ИСТОРИЯ

Уважаеми професор Минчев,
Уважаеми дами и господа,

Искрено приветствам и поздравявам организаторите - Българската национална комисия по Военна история, както и членовете на Международната комисия по Военна история, с успешното реализиране на идеята за провеждането на 40-ия световен конгрес на организацията в Република България.

2014-а е годината, в която отбелязваме навършването на няколко критично важни за световната история годишнини. Това са: 100-годишнината от избухването на Първата световна война, на която е посветен и настоящият конгрес на Международната комисия по Военна история, 75 години от началото на Втората световна война и 25 години от рухването на Желязната завеса.

Първата световна война е най-мащабният и най-смъртоносен военен конфликт до средата на XX век, продължил от 1914 до 1918 г., в който са загубили живота си над 15 милиона души. В него се включват повечето Велики сили, обединени в две противостоящи коалиции — Антантата и Централните сили. Над 70 милиона войници, от които 60 милиона европейци, вземат участие в тази война, започнала отначало в Европа, а след това обхванала и редица колониални територии по целия свят. Причините за войната се коренят в тогавашните изострени международни отношения и борбата за преразпределяне на територии и колонии.

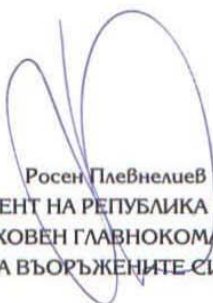
Конгресът е добър повод за Военните историци, а и за всички историци, за изследователите и гражданите да анализират фактите,

результатите, последиците и поуците от една от най-тежките за човечеството войни. Вашата инициатива ще осигури много достъпна и ефективна платформа за дискусия, обмяна на експертни и общи мнения и становища. Очаквам този форум да допринесе за извличането на важни изводи, някои от които валидни и за настоящата среда за сигурност и за военните аспекти на националната сигурност.

Днес сме свидетели на най-граматичните и необратими промени в средата за сигурност след края на Студената Война. Тези промени се характеризират с голяма динамика, глобалност и много висока непредсказуемост. Провеждането на този конгрес съвпада с актуални събития от ключово значение както за страните от Източна Европа, Черноморския регион и Балканите, така и за всички демократични страни от евроатлантическото семейство. Форуми като този ни помагат да направим връзката между минало, настояще и бъдеще, да потърсим подходи за справяне с най-сложните предизвикателства, пред които сме изправени днес, надеждно да защитим нашите демократични ценности.

Пожелавам успешна работа на Конгреса!

1 септември 2014 г.



Росен Плевнелиев
ПРЕЗИДЕНТ НА РЕПУБЛИКА БЪЛГАРИЯ
И ВЪРХОВЕН ГЛАВНОКОМАНДВАЩ
НА ВЪОРЪЖЕНИТЕ СИЛИ

Address of the President of Bulgaria, H.E. Rosen Plevneliev

TO

PROFESSOR DIMITAR MINCHEV

PRESIDENT THE BULGARIAN NATIONAL

COMMISSION OF MILITARY HISTORY

Dear Professor Minchev,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I sincerely congratulate the organizers – the Bulgarian National Commission of Military History, as well as the members of the International Military History Commission with successfully realizing the idea of holding the 40th World Congress of the Organization in the Republic of Bulgaria.

2014 is the year when we commemorate several critically important events in the world history. These are: the 100th anniversary of World War I - theme of this congress of the International Military History Commission; the 75th anniversary of World War II; and the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

World War I was the largest and most deadly military conflict before the middle of the 20th century which took place from 1914 until 1918 and took the lives of over 15 million people. It involved most of the Great Powers grouped in two opposing coalitions – the Entente and the Central Powers. Over 70 million soldiers, out of whom 60 million Europeans, took part in this war, which initially started in Europe and later spread in a number of colonial territories all over the world. The reasons for the war generated from the then exacerbated international relations and the struggle for redistribution of territories and colonies.

The Congress is a good occasion for military historians, as well as for all historians, to analyze the facts, results, consequences and lessons from one of the

most terrible wars for humanity. Your initiative will provide an easily accessible and effective platform for discussion, exchange of expert and common opinions and views. I expect that this forum will contribute to drawing important conclusions, some of which valid for the current security environment and the military aspects of national security.

Today, we are witnessing the most dramatic and irreversible changes in the security environment after the end of the Cold War. These changes are characterized with dynamics, globalism and high level of unpredictability. This congress is taking place at a time of events of key importance both for the countries in Eastern Europe, the Black Sea region and the Balkans, and for all democratic countries from the Euro-Atlantic family. Forums like this one help us to find the link between the past, present and future; to look for approaches to deal with the most complicated challenges we are facing today; and to defend our democratic values.

I wish the Congress successful work!

September 1, 2014

Rosen Plevneliev

President of the Republic of Bulgaria

and

Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces

Discours du Président de la République de Bulgarie Rossen Plevnéliev

A l'attention du
Professeur Dimitar Minchef
Président de la Commission
bulgare d'histoire militaire

Cher professeur Minchef
Messieurs, Dames,

J'ai le plaisir de saluer et féliciter la Commission bulgare d'histoire militaire ainsi que les membres de la Commission internationale d'histoire militaire avec la réalisation réussie de l'idée d'accueillir en Bulgarie la 40-ème édition du Congrès mondial d'histoire militaire.

L'année 2014 est une année qui marque quelques dates - clés d'une importance significative dans l'histoire mondiale. Ce sont : le 100e anniversaire du déclenchement de la Première guerre mondiale, à laquelle est dédié ce congrès de la Commission internationale d'histoire militaire, 75 ans du début de la Seconde guerre mondiale et 25 ans de la chute du Rideau de fer.

La première guerre mondiale qui s'est déroulée de 1914 à 2018 est le conflit le plus important et le plus mortel de la première moitié du XXe siècle dans lequel ont trouvé leur mort 15 millions d'individus. C'est un conflit entre les grandes puissances de l'époque regroupées dans deux coalitions antagoniques: l'Entente et les Puissances centrales. Plus de 70 millions de soldats, dont 60 millions européens participent à cette guerre qui a commencé d'abord en Europe et après s'est étendue sur les territoires coloniaux dans le monde entier. A l'

origine de la guerre sont les relations tendues entre les pays, l'envie de nouvelle répartition de territoires et de colonies.

Ce congrès est une bonne occasion pour les historiens militaires et pour tous les historiens, pour les chercheurs et les citoyens d'analyser les faits, les conséquences et les leçons d'une des guerres des plus mortelles pour l'humanité. Votre initiative va assurer une plateforme accessible et efficace donnant lieu aux discussions, à des échanges d'opinions d'experts, à des points de vue différents. J'attends de ce forum à aboutir à des conclusions importantes, applicables à l'heure actuelle au contexte de sécurité et à ses aspects militaires au niveau national.

Aujourd'hui nous sommes témoins aux changements les plus dramatiques et irréversibles en matière de sécurité après la fin de la guerre froide. Ces changements se caractérisent avec une grande dynamique, globalité et imprévisibilité. Le congrès se déroule dans un environnement politique intense touchant aussi bien les pays de l'Europe de l'Est, la région de la mer Noire et les Balkans ainsi que les pays démocratiques de la famille euro atlantique. Ce forum contribue à mettre le pont entre passé, présent et futur et propose des instruments à relever des défis difficiles, à garder nos valeurs démocratiques.

Je souhaite au Congrès un travail fructueux !

Rossen Plevnéliev
Président de la République de Bulgarie
et Chef suprême des armées

**Welcome by the Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Dr.
Dobromir Totev, Permanent Under-Secretary of Defense, Bulgarian
MoD**

**Dear President Kamphuis,
Dear friends from all over the world,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me to welcome you in our sunny country, after a pretty short pause of two years after the 38th Congress of the ICMH in Sofia. Varna, the place we are gathered today, during the latter years enjoys a increased interest by archeologists and historians. In this district was discovered the oldest tilled gold in Europe, dated 7000 years ago. According to some famous linguists and cultural historians, like the German Harald Haarmann, in that part of the Balkans the oldest proto-writing of the world – so called *Danube Valley Civilization Script* – was invented about 5500 years B.C., 1500 - 2000 years before the Shumer tablets. Impressing are the results from the recent research of the Black Sea bottom by the founder of Titanik, prof. Balard. According to him it is the Black Sea basin is the place of the Bible Genesis flood.

The very town of Varna has the complicated fate to start its existing as a Thracian village. Later it turns to be a helenic colony, named Odessos. In the times of Alexander the Great and his local successor Lizimah, and again during the Roman Empire in II – VI century, the City of Odessos became a large commercial center in the crossroad of Europe, Middle East, and Asia. And again here, at this rich in history place, in the Danube delta, Khan Asparukh came from Asia with his horsemen to start in the end of VII C. the beginning of a new Bulgarian state. A lot of artefacts talk about the high achievements in construction, architecture, culture, art, literacy of our combined with the Slavs

nation, a nation that has never changed its name from the very beginning. Slavs called it Varna. In this respect you may feel yourself happy to have the chance to enjoy the beauties of this multi centuries town. Known as a “Port of Inspiration”, recently Varna has it significant place in the nowadays Bulgaria and is among the few applicants for European Cultural Capital for 2019. You will also enjoy another pearl of the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, the ancient city of Messembria (currently Nessebar), a UNESCO site. According to Aristotle and Plutarch, Messembria was native land to the famous ancient fabulist Aesop, while in the period of Christianity a complex with more than 40 churches was built between IV and XIX C. in this historical city.

DEAR DELEGATES AND GUESTS,

This year is especially important for the Bulgarian military historians - we are celebrating 100-Anniversary from the establishment of the First Military History Research institution in Bulgaria. It was called initially a Military History Commission with a Museum, an Archives and a Library. Later it developed as an Institute of Military History, and today it is a Military History Research Section in our National Defense Academy. The military historians from this academic institution, subordinated to the Ministry of Defense, are fulfilling their functions as an official coordinator of the Bulgarian military history studies in our country. As a partner of the military history division within the Defense Advanced Research Institute we have organized on voluntary bases also the Bulgarian National Commission of Military History. The latter has an important contribution to the exclusively active activity on popularizing of the Bulgarian military history abroad.

We consider the place of the military history research institution and the Commission exclusively important. Bulgaria is exposed at a geographical and historical crossroad, which has always expressed and continues to express its

influence over the fate of the nation till nowadays. That is why we highly appreciate the decision of the international military history community to devote its 40th Congress to the 100-Anniversary from the outbreak of the First World War and to proceed it in Bulgaria.

The World War One and its consequences reshaped radically the geopolitical map and went across the whole XX century. In fact, the “Great War” changed the world forever, and its effects are all around us. Therefore, our congress definitely will have a great significance for all nations, which are represented here in Varna. On behalf of the Bulgarian National Commission of Military History and the Organizational Committee, I would like to wish to all delegates and guests successful academic discussions and pleasant and enjoyable stay in our country!

**Mot de bienvenue de Dr Dobromir Totev, secrétaire permanent au
Ministère de la Défense nationale**

Monsieur le président Kamphuis

Chers collègues ,

Chers amis du monde entier,

Mesdames et Messieurs!

Permettez-moi de vous souhaiter la bienvenue dans notre pays, deux ans après le XXXVIII^e congrès de la CIHM qui a eu lieu à Sofia en 2012. Aujourd'hui nous sommes à Varna, une ville qui bénéficie d'un intérêt particulier ces dernières années du côté d'archéologues et historiens.

Dans cet endroit a été découvert le plus vieux or travaillé en Europe datant de 7000 ans avant J.C. Selon quelques linguistes et historiens parmi lesquels le scientifique allemand Harald Harman c'est dans cette partie des Balkans qu'on a élaboré 5500 ans av .J.C. et 1500-2000 ans avant les tables de Schoumère, la plus ancienne écriture du monde : L'écriture civilisatrice de la plaine de Danube.

La ville même de Varna a commencé son existence comme un village thrace. Plus tard elle devient colonie hellénique nommée Odessos. Aux temps d'Alexandre le Grand et son héritier des lieux Lizimah , ainsi qu'aux temps de l'Empire romain II – IV s, Odessos se développe comme un centre commercial important au carrefour entre l'Europe, le Moyen Orient et l'Asie.

Toujours ici, à cet endroit, riche en histoire, dans le delta du Danube, le khan Asparoukh arrive avec sa cavalerie du Moyen Orient pour fonder à la fin du VII-e siècle un nouvel état bulgare. On compte des milliers d'artefacts qui parlent du haut niveau de développement de la société de notre peuple ancien dans les domaines de la construction, l'architecture, la culture, l'art et l'écriture.

Les premiers bulgares ont fusionné avec les slaves pour former un état dont on a gardé jusqu'à nos jours son premier nom : Bulgarie.

Varna doit son nom aux slaves. C'est une ville millénaire. Connue comme « Port de l'inspiration », Varna occupe une place importante en Bulgarie actuelle et fait partie des villes candidates à la nomination de Capitale culturelle Européenne 2019.

Vous aurez aussi la possibilité de savourer une autre perle des côtes de la Mer Noire, la ville ancienne de Messemvria (la ville actuelle de Nessebar), site sous l'égide de l'UNESCO. Selon Aristote et Plutarque, Messemvria est le lieu de naissance du fabuliste grec Esopé. A l'époque chrétienne, entre le IV^e et le XIX^e siècles dans cette ville ont été construites plus de 40 églises.

Chers collègues et amis,

Cette année est d'une grande importance pour les historiens bulgares. On célèbre les 100 ans de la création de la première structure militaire de recherches scientifiques en Bulgarie – la Commission d'histoire militaire avec un musée, archives et bibliothèque. Plus tard elle évolue en Institut d'histoire militaire et aujourd'hui c'est la section d'histoire militaire au sein de l'Académie nationale de défense. Les historiens militaires de cette unité, placée sous les ordres du Ministère de la défense sont dignes de leur rôle d'interprètes officiels de l'histoire militaire bulgare. Parallèlement à cette section est formée à titre bénévole la Commission bulgare d'histoire militaire. Cette dernière a un apport très important à la popularisation de l'histoire militaire bulgare à l'étranger.

Pour nous la section et la Commission d'histoire militaire ont un rôle très important dans le contexte de la position géopolitique de la Bulgarie au carrefour géographique et historique qui influence le destin de notre pays. Nous

appréciations beaucoup le désir de la communauté internationale d'histoire militaire de consacrer son XL congrès au centenaire de la Première guerre mondiale et de choisir notre pays pour ce forum prestigieux. C'est à travers cette guerre qu'on voit mieux la rivalité entre les grandes puissances pour avoir la Bulgarie de leur côté.

La première guerre mondiale et ses conséquences ont changé d'une manière radicale la carte géopolitique du XX-e siècle. En pratique la Grande guerre a définitivement changé la face du monde et on voit encore ses effets partout autour de nous. Voilà pourquoi notre congrès est d'une grande importance pour toutes les nations ici présentes. Du nom de la Commission bulgare d'histoire militaire et du nom du Comité d'organisation, je voudrais souhaiter à tous les délégués et hôtes du congrès du succès dans les discussions scientifiques ainsi qu'un très bon séjour et de beaux moments dans notre pays.

Address by the President of the International Commission of Military History, Drs. Piet Kamphuis

Your Excellencies, fellow military historians, Ladies and Gentlemen.

A well-known Dutch football trainer once famously remarked: 'Football is war'. Well, those of you who watched the World Cup in Brazil this summer will no doubt agree that the similarities are legion. Ahead of his time, the Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga, in his ground-breaking work *Homo Ludens*, likened a confrontation on the football pitch to that on the battlefield. The clash on Brazil's football fields perhaps led some of us military historians to reflect on the cataclysm of the First World War, a war that began a hundred years ago and that in many countries is referred to as the 'Great War'. Just under sixty-five million soldiers, from all continents, were involved in this war, and eleven million of them did not live to see the end of it. It was, literally, a world war, with most states being party to the conflict. It was also a war in which the combined efforts of modern industry and the centralised nation state were felt in the farthest corners of even the most remote battlefields, on a hitherto unparalleled scale. Never before had civilians and soldiers been involved in fighting on such a massive scale and never before had the ravages of war made such deep inroads on societies and generations of men and women. Small wonder then that the Great War, one hundred years later, still very much holds us in its grip, and brings us together now in Varna, the sea capital of Bulgaria, a city that was closely involved in that military conflict.

To return to our football metaphor: an experienced trainer knows how important good team spirit, or, in military jargon, 'esprit de corps' is to winning a match. 'Nothing succeeds like success' is a well-known adage. The Bulgarian Commission of Military History hosted the 2012 edition of our international

congress in Sofia and did so in great style. This success, combined with an unexpected hurdle in our congress agenda, has brought us back to Bulgaria, now two years later. Our presence here is also testimony to our appreciation for the work of our Bulgarian colleagues who are celebrating their centenary this year. It was on the first of August 1914, by Royal Decree number 39, that King Ferdinand I established a Military History Commission under the General Staff. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Colonel Stancho Stanchev, head of the current Military History Section of the G.S. Rakovski National Defence Academy, on reaching this milestone.

An experienced trainer also knows the merits of another tried and tested adage: 'Never change a winning team', that is, inasmuch as the star players are physically fit with the flame of ambition still burning in them. Well, that certainly applies to our stars from 2012, Dr Dobromir Totev, Professor Jordan Baev, Colonel Stancho Stanchev and Dr Dimitre Minchev, who, once again, staunchly shouldered the responsibility for the 2014 ICMH congress: truly heart-warming! We owe them a debt of gratitude for their commitment and their friendship. My gratitude also goes out to the civilian and military authorities whose support made this international meeting possible. I am very happy to say that Professor Ivan Ilchev, president of the renowned Sofia university, is not only here with us, he has also agreed to act as our key-note speaker. Professor Ilchev, I am very interested in what you will have to say to us, and so I will be brief.

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the beginning of each Congress, it is our tradition to commemorate the colleagues who have passed away in the last year. This is not a moment to be overcome by grief; I would rather look back with you with gratitude on the many friendly meetings and inspiring conversations that we enjoyed with them.

We remember Colonel Carlos da Costa Gomez Bessa (1922 - 2013), who, for many years, was secretary-general of the Portuguese Commission and who made an important contribution to the organisation of the Lisbon Congress. We knew him as a wise and amiable man.

We remember our honorary chairman Professor André Corvisier (1918 - 2014), who was one of the founding fathers of modern military history in France. His main publications include: *L'Armée française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul. Le soldat en Armées et sociétés en Europe de 1494 à 1789*. In addition, he was responsible for the renowned publication series entitled *Histoire militaire de la France*.

André Corvisier, a professor at the Sorbonne, was chairman of the ICMH for a period of ten years. Together with his wife Micheline, for three decades, he was a frequent visitor to our meetings and he remained interested in our work until he died. One of the most accomplished military historians of his day, the *Ancien Régime*, he was a man of great integrity, known for his kindness and open-mindedness and his gift for diplomacy. He remained true to his principles, but he was always willing to look at an issue from a different perspective. He was a great connector, trying to get people talking to each other, even across national frontiers. That to him was the essential mission of 'his' CIMH.

I ask you to please stand and remember Colonel Bessa, Professor André Corvisier and all other fellow military historians we have lost by observing a minute's silence.

Thank you.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us go back to the First World War, the war that the American diplomat and historian George Kennan designated as the 'ultra catastrophe' of the twentieth century. This war, even a hundred years later, continues to intrigue

historians, while books and films on the Great War are met with enthusiasm by a wide readership and audience. What strikes and fascinates me in this context is the fact that the image of the war as it has cemented itself in the collective memory in many societies seems to be at odds with recent historical research findings. The dominant image of the First World War is that of long-drawn-out battles in muddy trenches in the north of France and Belgium, claiming the lives of millions of soldiers who fell victim to the senseless plans of incompetent generals, who themselves stayed in their comfortable castles at an equally comfortable distance from the front. It is the image of man- and materiel-devouring attrition warfare.

This one-sided and over-simplified image proves to be rather persistent. How can this be explained? It would seem to me that the modern entertainment industry has played an important role in this. We need only think of the musical and motion picture "*Oh, what a lovely war*", which goes from one cliché to the next. And what to think of the impact of the television series "*Blackadder goes Forth*", with stars such as Rowan Atkinson, Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie?

Hew Strachan, one of the leading researchers of the First World War, once commented on this influence [and I quote]: "*The modish Blackadder school of thought is now so entrenched among a generation of schoolchildren that there is no question where blame lies: with those horrid toff generals and their Establishment chums*". [unquote]

In reality, however, the First World War was far richer, more varied, more fascinating and more relevant than the cliché image. Certainly here in the Balkans, everyone knows that the fighting was taking place on considerably more battlefields than those in Western Europe alone and that it had major political, military and social implications, both in the short and the longer term. The First World War has also been of fundamental importance to the development of modern warfare. Many technical and tactical innovations followed in its wake and in turn brought about conceptual innovations.

Esteemed colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

The Great War continues to fascinate us, also during this week in Varna. It is my expectation that the presentations and discussions to come will go a long way to dispelling some of these clichés and myths. This congress offers a unique platform for presenting and sharing recent research results with colleagues from over thirty countries, for meeting young PhD students and for catching up with old friends. I am looking forward to it, and I wish you all a most inspiring week.

Discours du Président de la Commission internationale d'histoire militaire, Monsieur P.H. Kamphuis, lors de l'ouverture du 40^{ème} Congrès de la CIHM, à Varna, Bulgarie, le lundi 1^{er} septembre 2014.

Vos Excellences, Chers confrères et amis, Mesdames, Messieurs,

Un entraîneur de football néerlandais de renom a déclaré un jour « le football, c'est la guerre ». Quiconque a suivi les matchs du championnat du monde de football dans le fascinant Brésil ne peut qu'être d'accord pour dire que les ressemblances abondent. Dès 1938, dans son ouvrage novateur *Homo Ludens*, l'historien des cultures Huizinga consacrait avec perspicacité de l'attention à la relation complexe entre l'affrontement sur le terrain de sport et celui sur le champ de bataille, dans un exposé éloquent et fécond. Pour l'historien militaire, la lutte pour la coupe du monde a constitué un bon préliminaire à une réflexion plus profonde sur la conflagration mondiale qui débuta il y a cent ans et qui est connue dans bien des pays sous le nom de « Grande Guerre ». Près de soixante-cinq millions de militaires, originaires de tous les continents, prirent part à cette première guerre mondiale et onze millions d'entre eux périrent. On parle à juste titre de guerre mondiale, car la plupart des états ont été mêlés aux affrontements. Ce fut également une guerre lors de laquelle le poids cumulé de l'industrie moderne et de l'état-nation centralisé s'est fait sentir jusqu'au fin fond des zones des combats. Jamais encore civils et militaires n'avaient été impliqués à une échelle aussi massive dans les combats, jamais encore la violence de la guerre n'avait jeté ainsi son ombre sur des sociétés et des générations entières. Il est donc parfaitement compréhensible que, cent ans plus tard, cette « Grande Guerre » continue de retenir notre attention et qu'elle nous ait amenés à Varna, la « capitale balnéaire » de la Bulgarie, ville qui a été étroitement mêlée à ces affrontements militaires.

Tout entraîneur de football expérimenté sait combien un bon esprit d'équipe, ou un bon esprit de corps, en langage plus militaire, est important pour remporter la victoire. « Rien ne réussit comme le succès » est une maxime bien connue. En 2012, la Commission bulgare d'histoire militaire avait organisé d'excellente façon le congrès international de notre organisation mondiale à Sofia. C'est ce succès qui a conduit la CIHM, confrontée à un défi imprévu dans le calendrier des congrès, à se réunir de nouveau en Bulgarie. Par notre présence, nous tenons également à souligner toute l'estime que nous portons au travail de nos collègues bulgares, qui fêtent cet année le centenaire de leur commission. Son existence est fondée en effet sur le décret royal numéro 39, par lequel le roi Ferdinand Ier institua le 1er août 1914 une Commission d'histoire militaire au sein de l'État-major. Je saisis volontiers cette occasion pour féliciter chaleureusement le colonel Stancho Stanchev, à la tête de l'actuelle section d'histoire militaire de l'Académie de défense nationale G.S. Rakovski, pour cet anniversaire.

Tout entraîneur de football expérimenté reconnaît aussi l'importance de l'adage « on ne change pas une équipe gagnante », du moins tant que les joueurs sont en bonne forme physique et que leur ambition n'est pas entamée. Il va sans dire que j'ai éprouvé un grand réconfort en recevant des vedettes de 2012, Monsieur Dobromir Totev, le professeur Jordan Baev, le colonel Stancho Stanchev et Monsieur Dimitre Minchev, l'assurance qu'ils étaient disposés à porter de nouveau la responsabilité d'un congrès de la CIHM. Nous leur devons un grand merci pour leur détermination et leur amitié. Ma gratitude s'adresse également aux autorités civiles et militaires qui, par leur soutien, ont rendu possible cette rencontre internationale. Je me félicite que non seulement le Président de la célèbre université de Sofia, le professeur Ivan Ilchev, soit parmi nous, mais aussi qu'il soit disposé à être l'un de nos conférenciers principaux. Professeur Ilchev, je me réjouis de vous écouter et je vais donc être bref.

Chers amis, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Au début de chaque congrès, nous commémorons, conformément à la tradition, ceux qui nous ont quittés durant l'année écoulée. Ce n'est pas tant un moment pour nous laisser envahir par la tristesse, mais plutôt pour repenser avec reconnaissance aux nombreuses rencontres amicales et aux entretiens inspirants que nous avons eus avec eux.

Nous commémorons le colonel Carlos da Costa Gomez Bessa (1922 – 2013), qui a été pendant des années le secrétaire général de la Commission portugaise et qui a pris une part importante à l'organisation du Congrès à Lisbonne. Nous avons appris à l'apprécier en tant qu'homme aimable et sage.

Nous commémorons aussi notre président honoraire le professeur André Corvisier (1918 – 2014), qui fut l'un des fondateurs de l'historiographie militaire moderne en France. Parmi ses principales publications, citons « *L'Armée française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul. Le soldat* » et « *Armées et sociétés en Europe de 1494 à 1789* ». La prestigieuse série « *Histoire militaire de la France* » était par ailleurs publiée sous sa direction.

André Corvisier, professeur à la Sorbonne à Paris, fut pendant dix ans président de la CIHM. Pendant trois décennies, il fut, en compagnie de son épouse Micheline, un visage familier lors de nos rencontres et, jusqu'à son décès, il continua à montrer beaucoup d'intérêt pour nos travaux. L'un des meilleurs historiens militaires de l'ancien régime, il était en même temps un homme intègre, affable et d'accès facile, doué d'un grand talent de diplomate. Il était à cheval sur les principes, mais il offrait largement à d'autres opinions la possibilité de s'exprimer. Il cherchait à mettre les gens en contact les uns avec les autres et à favoriser le dialogue, aussi par-delà les frontières. C'était là pour lui la principale mission de « sa » CIHM.

En mémoire du colonel Bessa, du professeur André Corvisier et de tous les autres collègues qui nous ont quitté, levons-nous et observons une minute de silence.

(Je vous remercie.)

Vos Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs,

Revenons à la première guerre mondiale, la « catastrophe originelle » du XXe siècle selon le diplomate et historien américain George Kennan. Même cent ans après, cette guerre continue à captiver les historiens, tandis que des livres et des films sur ce sujet touchent un large public. Ce qui me frappe et me fascine à la fois, c'est l'écart qu'il semble y avoir entre l'image de la guerre telle qu'elle s'est inscrite dans la mémoire collective de bien des sociétés et les résultats de travaux historiques récents. L'image dominante de la première guerre mondiale est celle d'une lutte dans le borbier des tranchées des années durant dans le nord de la France et en Belgique, de soldats sacrifiés en vain pour les plans stériles de généraux incompetents, demeurant eux-mêmes à l'abri dans des châteaux, loin du front. C'est l'image d'une attrition dévoratrice d'hommes et de matériel.

Cette image simpliste et peu nuancée paraît plutôt tenace. À quoi cela tient-il ? Il me semble que l'industrie du spectacle a joué un rôle important à cet égard. Pensons par exemple au film et comédie musicale « *Oh, what a lovely war* » (Ah ! Dieu, que la guerre est jolie), qui n'est qu'un tissu de clichés. Et que penser de l'influence de la série télévisée « *Blackadder goes Forth* », avec des vedettes telles que Rowan Atkinson, Stephan Fry et Hugh Laurie ?

Hew Strachan, l'un des chercheurs faisant autorité sur la première guerre mondiale, a remarqué au sujet de cette influence que toute une génération d'écoliers est maintenant si imprégnée de l'école de pensée de Blackadder, à la mode, que la question ne se pose plus de savoir qui blâmer : ces affreux généraux rupins et leurs consorts au sein de l'ordre établi.

En réalité, la première guerre mondiale aura été cependant bien plus complexe, bien plus diverse, plus passionnante et plus pertinente que ce cliché ne le laisse croire. Nul besoin de souligner ici, dans les Balkans, que la lutte s'est déroulée sur bien plus de champs de bataille que ceux de la seule Europe occidentale et qu'elle a eu d'immenses répercussions, tant politiques, que militaires et sociales, pour l'ensemble de la communauté internationale, aussi bien à court terme que dans la durée. La première guerre mondiale a eu par ailleurs une importance fondamentale pour l'évolution de la guerre moderne. De nombreuses innovations techniques et tactiques sont apparues et elles ont à leur tour conduit à des innovations conceptuelles.

Chers collègues, Mesdames et Messieurs,

La Grande Guerre continue à nous passionner, aussi au cours de cette semaine à Varna. Je m'attends à ce que les diverses présentations et discussions à venir contribuent à effriter les clichés et les mythes. Ce congrès nous offre une plateforme unique pour partager les résultats de travaux récents avec des collègues de plus de trente pays, faire la connaissance de jeunes doctorants et renouer la conversation avec de vieux amis et connaissances. Je me réjouis à cette perspective et vous souhaite une semaine inspirante.

Keynote speech:

Prof. Dr.Sc. Ivan Ilchev (Bulgaria)

The Balkans in the World War I

It would be preposterous for me to expatiate in this illustrious company on the purely military aspects of the topic. My usual professional field is a blend of diplomatic, social and microhistory and I would prefer to stick to it. What is more, the afore-mentioned purely military aspects of the war in the peninsula have been lovingly chewed over by countless military historians and participants in the actual hostilities who have told and retold the tiniest details of lengthy campaigns and of battles won and lost, focusing as a rule on the heroic behavior of "our" soldiers and belittling the enemy.

A similar and even more passionately colorful picture is painted in the extremely popular and extremely incorrect versions of history as recounted vividly by pseudo historians or by politicians striving to cultivate a patriotic fervor and exploit it to their own ends. For all of them "our" army carried the brunt of war, defeating enemy troops far outweighing "us" in numbers, relying only on élan, on an intelligent, superior strategy and fervent love of the motherland. In their speaking or writing about the allies in the coalition - and WWI was a coalition war - their victories were usually recognized grudgingly and only with a condescending quirk, "after all their task was easy, the opponents offered only token resistance to them, while "our" battlefield exploits, without saying, far surpassed theirs."

"Our" army, though underfinanced, was the most avant-garde by far, using the most up to date weaponry, being among the first to use airplanes and air bombardment, introducing night attacks helped by field lights and artillery "fire mower" tactics assisting the attacks of the infantry.

"Our" army always behaved in an exemplary and chivalrous way towards the enemy, though they didn't deserve it, because of their beastly conduct towards the war prisoners and the peaceful population.

This is if not the last word, at least the gist of not only the traditional, but also the current trends of Balkan historiography, on wars in general, and on WWI in particular.

This is the picture of the past that today's youth can read in their history textbooks. It is an almost universally acknowledged truism that the past always stays with us the way it was, or the way it has always been. Alas, this is not always the case. The past, if it is unwanted, disliked, or unloved, can be tortured, maimed, manipulated, and even erased in the public mind.

My paper is not about this. I prefer to focus on the aspects of the War in the Balkans which - in my opinion at least - are still not well researched, to touch fleetingly on the painful question of why they have not attracted the interest of historians and to try to support the idea, which of course is not an original one, that we should not be afraid of the past. A hundred years have passed since those days in July in Sarajevo. Isn't it time that we looked at the past not stooping and leaning on war hatred or war guilt like a cane but shedding off well established stereotypes?

There is a saying attributed to a number of 19th century politicians blessed with foresight that a world war would ensue because of gruesome events in a God forsaken Balkan town. It is easy to be a prophet when one knows what really happened but did it necessarily have to happen? Ever since the end of the 19th century up to 1914 every spring the media prophesied with monotonous regularity the inevitable breakout of war in the peninsula. The fact that it did not happen or at least that it was not a European war, did not discourage the journalists. And when at long last the war finally came, they sighed contentedly - didn't I tell you!

The confidence shown about the inevitability of armed conflict was rooted in the painful knowledge that the Balkan countries might be poor in many aspects, but conflict was certainly not one of the resources they lacked. In a generally civilized and peaceful Europe, which has not seen a major conflagration since the days of Napoleon, the Balkans seemed a hotbed of seething problems. Europeans were not strangers to the thought that this end of Europe was still an uncivilized, barbaric place, which belonged to the old continent only because of a whim of geography, a region where every discord was customarily settled not by amicable negotiations, but by force only.

"All the news that's fit to print" was the famous logo of *New York Times* but somehow it seems that the appropriate news that came from the West was about the annual exhibition of impressionists, or the new invention of Edison, or the achievements of science shown at the Chicago World Fair, or the introduction of the new Pullman cars. On the other hand, the news, that came from the Balkans and was considered fit to print was somewhat different - about Bulgarians setting on fire peaceful Moslem villages, or Greek andartes proudly posing for a photograph with a necklace of ears cut from rebellious Bulgarians or gouging the eyes of a defeated Bulgarian, or Turks raping pregnant Christian women or impaling their opponents, or of Serbians slaying mercilessly not only their king but his wife and her whole family.

Of course, there was a grain of truth in all that. The Balkan countries were looking with deadly suspicion at each other - a suspicion born by the painfully slow - especially from a Balkan point of view - resolving of the national problems on the peninsula. The attempts to change the status quo started as early as the 20s of the 19th century and they continued relentlessly up to WWI, not to mention that they continue even now.

The Balkan countries themselves were too weak to force a favorable, one-sided solution - a truth painfully hammered home to the Bulgarian politicians at the end of the second Balkan War when they tried all by themselves, without

the support of any major European power, to gamble for the position of leaders in the region. The failure of Bulgaria showed once more that conflicts on the peninsula were rarely if ever solved on local level. Any viable settlement would involve the direct or indirect intervention of one or more of the Great Powers and would have to heed the interests of at least some of them. That meant that the Great Powers had to be wooed and tempted to act in unison with the interests of one or another Balkan state. Thus the Balkan countries looked around with wary eyes and carefully tried to choose their winning place in the already existing system of alliances.

Another problem which in the long run would turn out to be impossible to solve to mutual satisfaction, was the incompatibility of national programs. Fired by memories of a glorious past the Balkan politicians dreamed of the times of Suleiman the Magnificent, the Byzantine empire of Justinian, the mediaeval Serbian empire of Stephen Doushan, the Bulgarian empire of Simeon the Great, the united Danubian principalities of Mircea the Great or Greater Albania of Skenderbeg, easily forgetting that the days of glory had been cut short by the vicissitudes of history.

Even a simple list of the issues at the heart of the relentless struggle would be more than a page long.

In different times the attention of Europe and the Balkan countries was attracted by Macedonia, Dalmatia, Shkoder, Epirus, Korce, Banat, Bačka, Croatia, Slovenia, Carinthia, Dobrudja, Transylvania, Bessarabia, Bukovina, Thrace, Constantinople, the Aegean islands, the Dodecanese islands, Western Asia Minor, and Pontus, to mention only a few. All of these were integral parts of the larger issue of national unification. All of these were coveted by different states.

All of these were a hothouse of intrigues, open or discreet support of educational institutions and revolutionary organizations that believed both in individual terror and mass uprisings.

Deluded by their own dreams, Balkan politicians had a somewhat exaggerated opinion of the weight of their countries in the world power struggle. Thus they tended to forget that the opening of the Suez Canal and the moving of the center of international trade from the Mediterranean across the Atlantic, severely diminished the strategic importance of the region in the 19th century.

European politicians looked down upon their petty quarrels, did not know, and what is more important did not even care, about them. On the eve of World War I, the British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey believed deeply in his heart, that the Balkan squabbles could not and should not be of interest to anyone but a handful of cranky university professors. Two years later, in the heat of the war, his secretary sent a telegram to the Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić stating that as regards the Serbians' claim for Banat, Backa and Baranya, Sir Grey had no idea what they were and where they were but as long as the Serbians wanted them, they could have them.

His Russian colleague Sergei Sazonov - and by definition the Russians were more knowledgeable in Balkan affairs - could not fathom why the Bulgarians and Serbians were quarrelling over the future fate of the small and smelly oriental city of Skopje. It was destined to fall into the hands of a Slav state - so it did not matter whether it would be Serbia or Bulgaria.

Let us say that Balkan historians have not done enough to dispel this ignorance, which remained painfully palpable in the policy of the West in the years of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the ensuing bloody conflicts at the end of the 20th century.

In fact, the Balkan countries of the 19th and early 20th century had two very important and intertwined tasks to solve.

The first was to modernize the poor backward countries as quickly as possible. Much was done in this respect - agriculture was rationalized, new breeds of farm animals and new cultures were introduced; the cities acquired central European luster; the first factories sprang up - logically enough some of

them produced munitions for the future wars, others dealt in a more mundane and far more pleasing business - brewing beer; communications became much better - railway lines crisscrossed the region over, tramways appeared in the cities, the ports were brought up to the standards of the 20th c. with the help of French, Belgian and German engineers.

The second - to reach for the stars - and to redeem the dreams of the national revolutionaries who envisioned the future limits of their countries in the broadest reaches possible. This could be done only if a new type of citizen could be moulded - one prepared to give his life up in the interest of his country. In the three decades before the Balkan Wars, the small nation states did not spare any effort, took great pains to achieve this, to turn the population of their respective countries into a monolith, to hammer all its citizens into a well sharpened dagger of their national ambitions, into an instrument of a policy that was supposed to ensure the respective country an important, and if possible, a domineering position on the Peninsula.

The process of disintegration of the traditional patriarchal model of society was a painful one. The Balkan societies, used to living in small closely knit communities, were wary of becoming citizens of a society, modern in terms of both political philosophy and political reality.

The transformation of the peasant into a citizen, the transformation of local consciousness into a national one was a difficult process even in developed Western Europe but the Balkan politicians at least had the opportunity to use the already amassed experience in this aspect and to a large extent they succeeded to do it. They built schools and founded universities, brought young, ignorant peasants in the ranks of the army and indoctrinated them with the military understanding of the tasks of building the nation.

All that I mentioned up to now, is more or less known and it has been the subject of numerous publications.

But a number of topics have been and still are neglected, even though they deserve objective research.

In the first place we do not have extensive and objectively chosen collections of documents on the War years. Especially ones published in the main European languages. This is one of the obstacles for an objective comparative analysis. We should not forget that very few historians can read and use sources in the different Balkan languages. The ones that we do have - different white or black or green books, published in Romania, Turkey, Greece, Serbia or Bulgaria are biased, their main goal is to denigrate the former enemy, to show how he violated international laws and the common law of humanity, focusing on real or purported atrocities. Another objective was to show that the present political enemy in the country itself was the principal culprit for the tragedy that happened - thus the Agrarian government of Alexander Stamboliiski published after the war in Bulgaria an impressive two volume collection of documents on the path leading to the disastrous war and defeat disparaging the political parties that took the fateful decision to join the Central Powers.

Unfortunately, only in recent years Balkan historians were granted the opportunity to work in the archives of neighboring countries and to analyze and compare the historical data and recordings of experience.

We still lack a profound history of Balkan nationalism and its role in moulding the minds of the citizens of the countries in South Eastern Europe. This has been done to a certain extent in some of the Balkan countries but the grand picture is still out of our grasp.

We lack research on the image of WWI in individual and collective myth making. And this is a very interesting subject as in the collective mind of the different Balkan nations the War is connected with different notions - for Bulgaria - a tragedy; for Serbia - martyrdom and victory; for Romania - victory and national unity; for Greece - initial victory followed by tragedy; for Turkey - tenacity and national resurrection.

We have difficulty in visualizing the War - the historians still shun at using the so-called secondary documentary materials. The visual image of the "other" - the Balkan neighbor is still not clear. In recent years some work has been done on political cartoons but only scant attention has been paid to different media visualizing the War - postcards of real and imaginary battles, of heroes larger than life and vile enemies; military art, pictures of battles, first documentaries, etc.

Almost nothing has been done to use the impressive resources of mass literature – ‘low’ literature according to some historians - song books, yearbooks, collections of primitive sounding chauvinist poems that sometimes had much stronger impact on public imagination than the official ‘high’ literature.

We still do not have a reasoned, persuasive and objective analysis of the obsession of Bulgarian and Serbian politicians with Macedonia and its role, especially in the failure of the diplomatic negotiations of 1914-1915.

This obsession is quite evident in the words of the Serbian crown prince Alexander, spoken in 1915, during the fateful negotiations of the Entente with Bulgaria, "Serbia would rather not get Bosnia than give Macedonia to Bulgaria".

We lack research on the ratio between strategic, economic, and sentimental considerations in formulating the policy of the different Balkan countries - e.g. Dalmatia versus Macedonia for Serbia, Macedonia versus Thrace and the access to the Aegean Sea for Bulgaria, Western Asia Minor versus Cyprus for Greece.

No meaningful attempt has been made to compare the reasoning and the argumentation of Balkan politicians in taking important decisions.

Bulgarian and Greek historiography still cannot come to terms with the simple fact that the Turks have been living in the Balkans for more than half a millennium now and they continue to be treated largely as intruders, invaders, an element alien to the Balkans, a foreign element which you can discount from the general picture.

The social problems of the War are largely neglected.

Nothing worthwhile has been written on the role of women in the war. Not only at the front - we have a number of articles on that - the Serbian social historians are particularly good in this field – but behind the front lines. The predominant role of women in keeping the economy running during the Wars is usually stated but not sufficiently expounded upon or properly analyzed.

Virtually nothing, apart from memoirs, has ever been published on the problems of childhood during the War, the problems of growing up in war years, and the problems of socialization in war time.

There is an encouraging trend of growing interest in war time economy. The problem is that historians look mostly at the way the state was running the economy in war years, leaving aside the psychological aspects of economic development and troubles caused by war.

We have nothing on war-induced changes in communication systems.

Nothing on requisitions that fed the war effort, the crippling effect they had on a weak self-subsistent economy, and their psychological aspect in entrenching the distrust of the peasant to the state which freely used the fruits of his labor.

The humanitarian aspects of the War have rarely been researched. Very little has been written on the "Enemy in your bed" - if we can paraphrase slightly the title of the popular Julia Roberts movie. We do not know how difficult the precarious situation of Bulgarians living in the territories of Macedonia who went to Serbia and Greece was, of Turks in Greek Western Thrace and Macedonia, of Albanians in Kosovo and Western Macedonia in the war years, the fears they lived with, or the psychological atmosphere that surrounded them. We know a bit more about the situation of Bulgarians living in Southern Dobrudja, annexed to Romania after the Balkan wars and of Greeks in Western Asia Minor.

Apart from sketchy memories and few articles, we have nothing on the prisoners of war - and there were literally hundreds of thousands of them - how they were kept, how they were fed, the treatment they got, what kind of forced labor they had to do, what kind of medical care they got when they were ill, what the mortality rate among them was, what their relations with the locals were, etc. And some of them remained prisoners for three years after the end of hostilities in places as distant as Malta, Corsica and Siberia.

A particularly painful and sensitive question is the behavior of "our" troops towards the adversaries and the civil population in temporarily occupied or acquired territories. No research whatsoever has been done on the work of the legal departments of the armies - we do not know how many soldiers deserted and for what reasons, how many were prosecuted for crimes like murders of civilians, atrocities, burglaries, plunder, rape, etc. Balkan historiographies turn a blind eye to events that could mar the image of the nation - as a result in Bulgaria very little has been written on the ruthless putting down of the Serbian uprising in the Morava region under Bulgarian occupation in 1917; in Serbia - on the rigorous regime established in Serbian held Macedonia; in Greece - on events like the Aivali massacre of Moslems; in Turkey - on the ethnic cleansing of Eastern Thrace. And this is particularly indicative of the way we manage not to see what we do not want to see because in the military archives of all Balkan countries one can find tens of thousands of documents treating different aspects of such questions.

There is one hopeful exception - an important volume of documents and a number of articles were published on the forceful conversion of Bulgarian speaking Moslems in the Rhodope Mountains to Christianity in the period from 1912 to 1918. Though frankly speaking, even this collection of documents is not objective enough, e.g. the role of the Orthodox Church in the conversion is perfunctorily glossed over.

The part played by refugees in determining the general direction of foreign policy, especially in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey is not clear enough.

Only certain characteristics of the refugee problem have been researched. Serious work has been done especially in Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey on its legal aspects. Other important characteristics, however, have never been touched upon yet.

In the first place the adjustment of the refugees to the new surroundings is taken for granted. Some work has been done in land distribution.

No research has been done on the plight of those who eventually chose cities as the place to stay and look for work. We do not even know how many in the long run stayed in the villages and how many augmented the urban population of Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

Contrary to the well established belief, rooted in a paroxysm of self-aggrandizing, the welcome outcasts got when they had to leave their birth place was rarely warm, or more to the point, the warm welcome evaporated quickly when it became clear that the locals would have to pay an excessive price for welcoming their brothers.

And this is just the bare bone. No one has ever tried to do carry out research on the impact of the change in educational patterns on the adolescents among the refugees. It is a favorite self-delusion of Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish politicians that passed unquestioned into the national historiographies that all co-nationals, no matter where they lived, spoke one and the same language with very few regional characteristics.

The reality was quite different - the spoken language of the Bulgarians in Macedonia and Thrace, the Greeks from Western Asia Minor or Pontus or Turks from Bulgaria and Thrace was quite different from the already established official literary languages and the children of the refugees who started their education in a different linguistic surrounding had serious problems adjusting to it.

* * *

To sum it up, Balkan historiography shows a general inability to let go of the mantle of pompous and traditional rhetoric when discussing WWI. Most historians in South Eastern Europe were brought up in a positivist political history tradition. Few of them see the implications of social history. Even serious historians discard the value of soldiers' diaries and memoirs with their painstaking effort to commemorate their everyday thoughts, deliberations and activities as something not important, remaining outside the main venue of history.

While we are dealing with a world war, its treatment is a Balkan one. The Balkan nations have always tried to understand themselves in relation to their neighbors. The understanding of "thou" came a lot earlier than "we". It is only rarely that they have tried to reach a comprehension of themselves in comparison with Western Europe. The comparison always stayed on Balkan level - the ill-willed neighbor.

In a word, what we do have is a history of the conflict itself. What we do not have is the man in the conflict, the man with his ideas, his dreams, his hopes and his disappointments.

In the end, let's break one deeply established rule in historiography - the unspoken law that in history the word "if" does not exist. What could have happened if at the end of 1914 and the beginning of 1915 the Entente had managed to persuade Serbia and Greece to make significant territorial concessions to Bulgaria and the Bulgarian army had attacked the Turkish one on the rear while the ANZAC was at Gallipoli? It seems that the Turks would have had no chance, the Straits would have been opened, Russia would have had a safe way to import weapons and munitions from its western allies and to export grain to them, it would have the carrot - Constantinople - dangled in front of it, the

social unrest would not have been that strong and a revolution like the Bolshevik one not very probable.

This may sound extremely hypothetical but at least one influential West European historian claims that Bulgaria's decision to side with the Central Powers was one of the crucial events that in the long run precipitated the Bolshevik revolution and it was the most important event on the Balkans in World War I.

MONDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2014

LUNDI, LE 1 SEPTEMBER

Prof. Dr. Michael Epkenhans (Germany)
***"The Sooner, the Better". The Military Leadership
in Germany and the Outbreak of World War I in 1914***

I.

19 May 1914 was a sunny day in Berlin. As it was usual on such occasions, a great "breakfast" was held in the Imperial City Palace. Emperor Wilhelm II and other dignitaries of the German Empire celebrated the birthday of Tsar Nicholas II together with the Russian Ambassador. In view of this, there is a certain irony in what happened afterwards. When the breakfast was over, the Chief of the German Great General Staff, Colonel General Helmuth von Moltke the Younger, and the German Foreign Secretary, Gottlieb von Jagow, jointly returned to their offices in a car. Moltke had explicitly asked Jagow to accompany him as there was an issue which he was obviously much concerned about in those days. It was the issue of a preventive war in the near future. "On the way," Jagow later remembered, "Moltke described to me his opinion of our military situation. The prospects of the future oppressed him heavily. In two or three years, Russia would have completed her armaments. The military superiority of our enemies would then be so great that he did not know how he could overcome them. Today we would still be a match for them. In his opinion there was no alternative to making preventive war in order to defeat the enemy while we still had a chance of victory. The Chief of the General Staff therefore proposed that I should conduct a policy with the aim of provoking a war in the near future." Jagow refused, reminding him of Bismarck's saying that "one must not try to look into the cards of Fate", and voicing his hope that it would be possible to improve the relationship with England to the point "that general war would be pretty much out of the question, or at least less of a threat". "After my refusal, Moltke no longer insisted on his proposal. Actually, he did not like the

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idea of a war.“ It took no more than than six weeks until the war Moltke had demanded and the Foreign Secretary had rejected at that time broke out. How was that possible to happen and, in particular, what was the actual role of the military leadership in provoking it?

II.

Nowadays, the many books dealing with the question as to who was responsible for provoking World War I fill up entire libraries. And additional meters of library shelves have been filled on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I. However, whether these new books, irrespective of the stupendous new knowledge or the bold assumptions they contain, can provide a conclusive answer to the question as to who was responsible for the outbreak of the war remains to be seen. I admit that it is "unfashionable" to deal exclusively with the German military in this context. However, if one fails to assess the contribution of a country to that complicated situation correctly, the answers will be unsatisfactory even in the European context.

I think to allow a proper assessment, it is imperative to consider a number of aspects.

One of the first questions to be dealt with to that end is the relationship between the military and the civilian leadership.

"The Chief of the General Staff is the highest-ranking civil servant of the Empire". The self-image of the Prussian top military leaders and their opinion about their own inherent role in the state to be derived from that, could not be expressed more classical than in this apodictic statement, allegedly voiced by General Count von Schlieffen who was the Chief of the General Staff for many years. It would be wrong, however, to draw the conclusion that Schlieffen, who was a notably "unpolitical" general, unlike his predecessor, Graf Waldersee, and his successor, Moltke the Younger, made that statement to claim the right to

lasting involvement in political affairs. Nevertheless, they did want to and, in fact, did have a say. The reason for that is one of the characteristics of the evolution of the Prusso-German constitution. We know that the Liberals' attempt to extend their influence on the military failed during the army and constitutional conflict in the early 1860s. The influence of parliament was limited to the military administration, which also applied to the *Reichstag*, the parliament of the German Empire, while the Royal-Imperial command over the troops remained one of the Monarch's prerogatives. That was not to change until the revolution of 1918. The "Iron Budgets" of the Army and – to a certain degree – of the Navy added to that special status of the military vis-à-vis parliament. In institutional terms, this implied that all top military commanders had the right of direct access to the Emperor. They were authorized to report to him at any opportunity and in all matters of military command without the political leader or the war minister having to be present. As all Prussian kings and German emperors regarded themselves not only as representatives of the Empire but also as *Army Kings*, according to the tradition of the House of *Hohenzollern* since the era of the *Soldier King*, one can imagine the consequences this had in cases of doubt. It facilitated a kind of *secondary foreign policy* so that bypassing policy-makers was possible. Otto von Bismarck, certainly a strong Chancellor, experienced that several times – for example, during the combat near Paris or the foreign policy crises of the 1880s. However, while he strongly advocated, for fundamental considerations, the top military leaders' exercising supreme command, he was not willing to permit them to call the primacy of politics into question.

That opinion was entertained by his successors as well. They, too, stood up for the primacy of politics. The dilemma, however, was the often unavoidable tightrope walk between the political and the purely military spheres. If political and military aims were largely identical, as, for example, with regard to the fleet issue, a conflict was, of course, inevitable when the Chancellor made a different

decision for political reasons. The same applies to the armaments of the Army and to the question of preventive war. In these fields, Bismarck and his successors repeatedly had to struggle with the "demigods of the General Staff", as he contemptuously called them. There was a danger that their prophecies of doom influenced the monarch and thus derailed the respective foreign policy. Politicians were faced with the dilemma that it was difficult for them to determine whether the scenarios conjured up by the military were at all realistic. They needed experience, power of judgment and the courage to make decisions which could prove to be wrong and they had to be prepared to argue directly with the military officers. In order to reject the suggestions of the military, politicians needed the trust of the Commander-in-Chief, the Emperor. Bismarck had that trust. His decision in the winter of 1887 to persuade the military to drop the idea of a preventive war against Russia, which had already been approved by the elderly Emperor, and to make members of the military, such as Moltke the Elder, familiar with the secrets of his own policies, is only one of several examples.

Bismarck's successors, too, were neither incompetent nor merely puppets of the Emperor or the General Staff, despite occasional popular statements to the contrary.

All interpretations, which want to blame "military tradecraft" for the "German catastrophe" do not describe adequately the much more complicated reality.

That conclusion does however not imply that the General Staff had no influence at all. Its influence did exist in fields where it was necessary for professional reasons: the preparation of wars and the need to advise politicians, particularly in times of crisis. These tasks were, in turn, closely connected with the threat and war scenarios envisaged by the responsible military leadership.

One of the fundamental ideas of the plans, they prepared as a result of their analysis of the military situation was that the sooner the troops would arrive

in theater the faster they would be able to "engage" the enemy troops and, as the planners in the General Staff hoped, deal them decisive "blows".

A large-scale surprise attack on a flank either east or west of Paris, depending on the situation, was to envelop the French armies from their back and finally destroy them. The required violation of the neutrality of the Netherlands and Belgium was knowingly accepted. After the expected victory over France, the German armies would engage the Russian army, which would deploy much more slowly or would even avoid fighting in view of a defeated ally.

But contrary to frequent claims, that plan, which Schlieffen elaborated on until his retirement and contemplated even after his resignation, was not a "recipe for victory". There were too many imponderabilities. For example, Schlieffen neither had sufficient troops available nor developed a supply concept. Both, however, were indispensable prerequisites for victory. That would be true, in particular, in case of an unexpected prolonged war. A more serious problem was the lack of coordination between the military and the politicians as well as between the Army and the Navy. For example, the consequences of the violations of neutrality were never discussed between the ministries and the services. Joint warfare was not considered either. The two services rather regarded each other as rivals struggling for scarce resources rather than equal components of a large force striving jointly for a rapid victory.

Moltke the Younger, who succeeded Schlieffen in 1906, retained his predecessor's basic operational-strategic idea. In many respects, however, he was more flexible, quite apart from the fact that he had been compelled to take account of the changes in the international system since 1905 – the year in which Schlieffen prepared his last study. For example, he strengthened the left wing to keep open other operational options in case of doubt. He also dropped the idea of marching through the Netherlands, which would be assigned the role of a "windpipe" in case of a prolonged war. In addition, he planned the conquest of

the fortresses around Liège in order to expedite the planned advance and the envelopment of the French armies. Consequently, the deployment of forces to the east was stopped in 1913 so as to move all available forces to the west.

Making these changes, however, Moltke implicitly increased the pressure on the government. On every day that was lost due to "unnecessary" negotiations or waiting during mobilization and deployment, the chances of victory declined. That was understandable from a military point of view, for Moltke was far from believing in a rapid victory, as we have already seen. The more important is the fact that the General Staff and the government of the Empire neither ever discussed with each other the implications of military planning nor jointly considered carefully the advantages and disadvantages.

IV.

When did the General Staff actually start to anticipate the risk of a war? Expecting war not every day but at least every year is an element of the profession of a general. As long as the political situation in Europe suggested there was no real prospect that a war would break out, there was no reason for deep concern despite the existing alliances. One of the main reasons for that perception was the unexpected military defeat inflicted by the small Japanese army on the huge army of the Russian Tsar and the concomitant domestic revolutionary turmoil which tied the Tsar's army to the country for months. From a military point of view, a preventive war would have been possible at that time but was not really desired by the responsible politicians, the Emperor and probably not even by the military.

Nevertheless, the hope that the situation would not change was illusory. The naval arms race had added to the tension with England since 1904/05, and, although there had been other reasons for the establishment of the Anglo-Russian Entente: the Empire had been "encircled" since 1907. The Bosnian annexation

crisis in 1908/09 and, in particular, the Agadir crisis in summer 1911 were different harbingers of the scenario of a large-scale war in Europe.

So there is a certain irony in the fact that, of all policy-makers, it was Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg who started the spiraling arms race on land after years of naval arms race. On the one hand, he wanted to deprive Tirpitz of financial resources and political support. On the other hand, he was convinced that, as the Prussian War Minister Josias von Heeringen put it, "no matter how resounding the victory at sea will be, it will not make up for any decisive defeat of the Army. The fate of the Crown of Hohenzollern, the weal and woe of our fatherland will stand and fall with the victory or defeat of the German army."

The Army was enlarged in spring 1912 and again in spring 1913. It grew from a peacetime strength of 609,000 in 1911 to 725,000 in 1913/14, in a country with a population of 65 million. In addition, the materiel was augmented substantially. However, the enemies enlarged their forces as well. In the same period the peacetime strength of the French army grew from 570,000 to 736,000 troops and that of the Russian army from 1,200,000 to 1,400,000. Those were enormous numbers. That was true, in particular, of France, which had a population of merely 39 million, while Russia, with a population of 160 million, had by far not fully exploited its available resources. So using the term "steamroller" in that context initially was quite justified.

But it was not only the numbers that Moltke was concerned about. They added to the Empire's numerical inferiority to an extent, which would thwart any efforts to gain a victory despite the much-praised willpower, unless the Empire would finally start to exploit its full military strength.

The Franco-Russian efforts to expedite the mobilization of the Tsarist army by extending the western Russian railways caused at least as much concern to the Chief of the General Staff as the unfavorable numerical ratio. That acceleration in combination with the growing number of enemy troops threatened to literally shake the foundations of Schlieffen's and Moltke's plans, while the

construction of German supporting railway lines, which had been demanded since 1914 would be helpful only to a limited extent and in the medium term at best.

The Chief of General Staff, Moltke, therefore made no secret of his demands. His formula "the sooner the better" virtually became a popular saying among military and government circles. He used it for the first time at the 08 December 1912 meeting of what the Chancellor ironically termed "War Council". The further course of the Balkan crisis in 1913 and, in particular, the growing German-Russian tension in winter and spring 1913/14 added to his view.

In numerous memorandums Moltke warned of an alleged danger of a downfall of the Empire resulting from a war started by the powers of the Entente. He failed, however, to furnish concrete evidence for their allegations, which is illustrated by the General Staff's thoughts in those days: "Although there is no reason to expect that Germany's enemies are going to start a war in the near future," Quartermaster General Graf Waldersee stated in a revealing memorandum on 18 May 1914, "there are increasing indications that they are incessantly arming themselves and making preparations on various fields for assaulting the Triple Alliance or its two Empires or, preferably, Germany alone with superior force from all sides in due time, probably in several years." This sounded threatening, but Waldersee had to admit in the subsequent statement that "it cannot be said that it is exactly this year which is inviting to Germany's enemies to make war against the Triple Alliance. On the contrary, none of the key actors are likely to be interested in provoking an armed conflict."

But it was exactly that assessment which was the key to the course that the politicians and the military were to follow: Just as there was little likelihood that Germany would be attacked it did not seem advisable to "steer clear of an armed conflict". "Instead", it seemed to be necessary to understand "that

Germany's and the Triple Alliance's chances of rapidly winning a great European war are still very strong today." In order to substantiate his arguments, Waldersee quoted the Chief of the Italian General Staff, Pollio, as saying, "Everywhere and everywhere abroad it is believed that in two years time, France and Russia, together with their subservient powers, will have closed the ring around the Triple Alliance." Moltke and Conrad, the Chief of the General Staff of the other alliance partner, Austria-Hungary, agreed with that assessment. In mid-May they had met in Karlovy Vary. "They agree," Waldersee wrote to the German military attaché in Vienna, Graf Kageneck, "that things are currently favorable to us, so one should not hesitate to act with determination and, if necessary, to start a war. The chances will diminish year by year." Waldersee compared the situation to that on the eve of the Seven Years' War – a frequent topos at that time – and described the solution Frederick the Great finally chose as the one his successors should choose as well – preventive war.

It is doubtlessly one of the most important tasks of military planners to warn the responsible politicians of such developments in time as they could have disastrous consequences should they occur. The dilemma that the planners were facing was that the politicians did not show much or any interest in those warnings, at least at that time.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the politicians did not much care about the military's painting an increasingly gloomy picture of the military situation. Indeed, Moltke's warnings could not be ignored by the political circles in Berlin. We do not know exactly how many concrete details of their own and the enemies' suspected plans the military revealed to the politicians. Nor do we know how many details the politicians wanted to know in order to make the right decisions afterwards. They did, nonetheless, receive the basic information.

"If a war is forced on us," Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg stated when he tendered his resignation in March 1912 because of the dispute over an agreement

with England, "then we will fight it and, with God's help, not be defeated. But for us to provoke a war without our honor or our vital interests being affected I would regard as a sin against Germany's destiny, even if we could hope for a sweeping victory as far as is humanly possible to foresee."

Drawing the conclusion that the politicians' general preparedness to wage a war suggests their willingness to deliberately provoke a war, particularly a preventive war, is misleading. In June 1914 only a few days before the assassination of the Austrian Archduke, he argued in a conversation with the Bavarian representative in Berlin: "But the Emperor does not and will not wage any preventive wars," he replied to the Bavarian Representative when the latter spoke to him about the common talk of a preventive war. The more we should ask how the relationship between policy-makers and the military developed during the July crisis erupting only a few weeks later.

V.

The genesis of the July Crisis, which eventually resulted in the catastrophe of the First World War, cannot be explained in detail here. The only crucial issue is the conduct of the military. There is no question about it: A report by the Saxon Military Representative in Berlin of 3 July, which is just five days after the assassination, about talks in the General Staff says: "I have gained the impression that in their opinion it would be convenient if a war broke out now. The circumstances and chances would not improve for us." This opinion confirmed what Moltke and others had said in the weeks and months before. That makes it even more astounding that, in other respects, the military leadership adhered to the narrow limits they were set in constitutional terms. Called to Potsdam by the Emperor in the run-up of the visit of the Austrian Special Envoy, Count Hoyos, he confirmed that, if necessary, the Army would be ready, as did the Deputy Chief of the Reich Navy Office, Admiral Capelle, for the Navy. This was his duty as war minister; he could not and did not wish to do more. Similar

to the Emperor and the Chancellor, he very much doubted the willingness of the Austrians to really let the war happen. So, like Moltke, he went on holiday. He did not even give orders for military preparations. As far as the military personnel present at this talk are concerned, he was not the only one to make this assessment. By implication this means that they neither figured out the Chancellor's considerations in the crisis nor were they able to correctly assess the attitude of the Austrians. But above all: Although the situation was as favorable as Moltke had demanded shortly before, they did not seize the moment in this small group to call for war themselves. On the contrary: Moltke and Falkenhayn – together with the minister of finance – got bogged down in a squabble over the exhaustion of conscription – a measure that had not even been in effect if they wanted to begin the war as soon as possible.

We do not know exactly which talks the responsible politicians had about the preparation of a war during the absence of the chiefs of the General Staff and the admiral staff. There were not many, according to available sources. The chiefs began to play an important role after their return from holidays: Falkenhayn according to plan on the 25th, Moltke on the 26th and Tirpitz, against the Chancellor's will, in the morning of 27th July.

Now they dutifully gave briefings in meetings convened with ever increasing urgency. To what degree they saw through the Chancellor's policy and to what extent they knew about the individual diplomatic actions is anyone's guess. Their task was to arrange for a smooth mobilization if it came to the worst, which, according to the state of affairs, was not improbable, even though not sure. "Time" was the decisive factor. Once a decision for an attack according to a certain pattern had been made, it had to run like clockwork. Otherwise a catastrophe was imminent. As soon as on the evening of the 25th July, that is after the Serbian reply had been handed over, the General Staff drafted the text of the ultimatum to Belgium. Whether Moltke at this time believed that there would be a war is an open question, at least according to the letters he wrote to his wife.

“The situation is still quite unresolved“ reads a letter of 26th July, on the 27th he wrote to her again: „The situation is always quite uncertain. It will not be resolved very quickly, another fortnight will pass until something definite will be known or told.”

However, the more the news of an imminent Russian intervention spread in the context of the Austrian declaration of war to Serbia, the more Moltke and, in particular, Falkenhayn urged to act. On 29th July, Moltke discussed the political situation in a longer report to the Chancellor. He described the correlation of the mobilizations and the resulting political consequences not only for Austria but also for Russia and its ally France. He cautioned “The mutual butchery of the civilized nations of Europe will begin“, adding: “Germany does not want to be the cause of this egregious war, but the German government knows that it would fatefully violate the deepest bonds of national loyalty—one of the noblest features of the German psyche—that it would go against national sentiment if it did not come to its ally’s aid just when this ally’s destiny is hanging in the balance.” In view of the initiated or imminent mobilizations of the enemy, he consequently urged the politicians to “clarify”. “As a result, the military situation is becoming less and less favorable by the day, which could have calamitous consequences for us if our probable opponents’ preparations carry on unchecked.”

This demand was clear enough but, nevertheless, Moltke and Falkenhayn had to be patient. The Chancellor was by no means willing to bow to the military and have his sophisticated calculation mixed up. If, given the situation, his hopes that the Tsar would give in did not realize, he should at least put himself in the wrong with his general mobilization. Moltke, therefore, had to wait further. Even though the Chancellor impatiently walked up and down his office, as was reported later, it was only after he had conclusive evidence of the Russian general mobilization having taken place that he was prepared to clear the way for a declaration of the “state of imminent danger of war” and thus for general

mobilization on 31st July. The fact that Moltke meanwhile had begun to pursue a kind of “secondary foreign policy” with the Austrian chief of the General Staff by requesting him to “persevere through the Russian mobilization; Austria-Hungary must be preserved, mobilize against Russia” and promising that “Germany will mobilize”, had thwarted the Chancellor’s policy only to a limited extent, if at all. Germany’s policy towards Austria was not very consistent in those days, and if Moltke informed Conrad about what was imminent in Berlin, then he did so because he believed that under the existing circumstances this was what he could and should do. The decision to declare the state of war triggered the course of events which the ambassador from Baden in Berlin, Count Berckheim, judged as follows on 3 August 1914: “A war of all against all will break out, the like of which world history has never experienced...” This interpretation, which referred to the hope of a short war as an illusion already at the beginning of the conflict, was in agreement with the often cited quotation of the English Foreign Secretary Grey: “The lamps are going out all over Europe: we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.”

VI.

And Bethmann Hollweg? In the spring of 1918, when he was no longer in office, he stated to a Reichstag deputy:

By God, in a certain sense it was a preventive war. But if war was in any case hovering above us; if it would have come in two years’ time, but even more dangerously and even more unavoidably, and if the military leaders declared that then it was still possible without being defeated, in two years’ time no longer! Yes, the military! It could only have been avoided by a rapprochement with England, that is still my conviction.”

The attempt to shift responsibility to the military was short-sighted. It was the Chancellor who decided in July 1914 to use the crisis to play political

vabanque. From the very beginning, the willingness to exploit the War in the Balkans politically to gain more room for movement included the readiness to wage a major war, if necessary. He did not necessarily want this war; however, it was clear to him that it might happen. In this context, the members of the military just did their jobs: to submit the necessary plans and explain possible scenarios. The decision how to deal with them was his alone. Why he believed at all that it was necessary to run the unforeseeable risks of a small or major war is a question which will have to be answered elsewhere.

Capt. Dr. Germán Segura García (Spain)

Buscando la batalla perfecta: Schlieffen y el espíritu de Cannæ

*«Para avanzar de modo que uno no pueda ser resistido, carga contra lo
vacío...*

*El agua, al moverse, evita lo alto y se apresura hacia lo bajo.
El ejército, en su victoria, evita lo que está lleno y ataca lo vacío».*

Sun Tzu, *El Arte de la Guerra*,
(Siglo V a.C.)¹

Introducción

Un siglo ha transcurrido desde el inicio de la 1ª Guerra Mundial y de la ofensiva alemana en Francia, el verano de 1914. En víspera del estallido del conflicto, Alemania estaba obsesionada por una posible lucha en dos frentes y su estrategia militar se centraba en poner cuanto antes fuera de combate al ejército francés para afrontar luego la amenaza rusa que se cernía sobre Prusia Oriental. El plan de guerra puesto en ejecución en agosto de 1914 fue ordenado por el jefe del Estado Mayor General, Helmuth von Moltke “el joven”, si bien estaba basado en una memoria (*Denkschrift*) redactada en 1905 por su antecesor en el cargo, el mariscal de campo general Alfred von Schlieffen. La detención de la ofensiva germana a orillas del Marne, con la consiguiente estabilización de los frentes y el inicio de la guerra de desgaste, pesó negativamente en la imagen que dejó para la historia el conde von Schlieffen, tachado de ser una persona obsesiva, partidaria

¹ Sun Tzu, *El arte de la guerra* (Madrid 2004), 55-58.

de los procedimientos mecánicos y con una limitada visión estratégica². Otra corriente crítica, sin embargo, arremetió contra von Moltke por haber desvirtuado el plan original de Schlieffen, intentando así dejar incólume el honor del Estado Mayor alemán³. Pero parte de la historiografía, ofuscada a su vez por el fracaso alemán en el frente occidental y la derrota final en 1918, no siempre se ha molestado en indagar en profundidad el pensamiento militar de Schlieffen, reduciéndose sus ideas estratégicas a un plan que incluso algunos autores han llegado a cuestionar su misma existencia⁴.

La Historia al servicio de la Estrategia

Entre 1909 y 1913, Schlieffen publicó una serie de ensayos que fueron posteriormente reunidos en un mismo volumen bajo el título de *Cannae Studies*⁵. El general alemán quería demostrar, a través de varios ejemplos extraídos de la Historia, que el principio del doble envolvimiento era la pieza clave de la victoria en una batalla. La aniquilación del ejército romano en la llanura de Cannae (2 de agosto de 216 a.C.) a orillas del río Ofanto (*Aufidus*) y frente a un enemigo inferior en número se convirtió en el paradigma de Schlieffen, «*a battle of complete extermination... won by a numerical inferiority*»⁶. En efecto, se calcula que los cónsules Terencio Varrón y Emilio Paulo dispusieron de un ejército de aproximadamente 70.000 soldados mientras que el general cartaginés Aníbal contaba con cerca de 50.000 hombres, sin embargo éste consiguió infligir una

² Stig Forster, "Der deutsche Generalstab und die Illusion des kurzen Krieges, 1871-1914: Metakritik eines Mythos", en *Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen* (54/1995), 61-95.

³ Wilhelm Groener, *The Testament of Count Schlieffen* (Fort Leavenworth 1936).

⁴ Terence Zuber, *Inventing the Schlieffen Plan: German War Planning, 1871-1914* (Oxford 2002).

⁵ Alfred von Schlieffen, *Cannae* (Fort Leavenworth 1931).

⁶ *Ibid.* 3.

aplastante derrota a los romanos a costa de relativamente pocas bajas. La clave, según Schlieffen, radicó en el doble flanqueo llevado a cabo por el cartaginés:

«The hostile front is not the aim of the principal attack. It is not against that point that the troops should be massed and the reserves disposed; the essential thing is to crush the flanks. The wings ought not to be sought at the advanced flank points of the front, but along the entire depth and extension of the hostile formation. The extermination is completed by an attack against the rear of the enemy. The cavalry plays here the principal role. It need not attack “intact infantry,” but may wreak havoc among the hostile masses by long range fire. A condition of success lies, it is true, in a deep formation of the hostile forces with shortened front through massing of reserves, thus deepening the flanks and increasing the number of combatants forced to remain in inactivity»⁷.

A pesar del tiempo transcurrido desde la batalla de Cannae, Schlieffen considera que los principales conceptos de la guerra han permanecido inmutables: *«The battle of extermination may be fought today according to the same plan as elaborated by Hannibal in long forgotten times»⁸*. La Historia proporcionó al general alemán nuevos ejemplos que parecían confirmar este aserto, aunque no de forma tan contundente como la victoria cartaginesa junto al Ofanto.

Federico el Grande fue uno de los generales más capacitados para dar una batalla de aniquilación con fuerzas inferiores en número, sobre todo en sus brillantes triunfos sobre los austriacos en Leuthen (5 de diciembre de 1757) y sobre los rusos en Zorndorf (25 de agosto de 1758). En Leuthen, el ejército prusiano tenía la mitad de efectivos que el austriaco, si bien Federico utilizó su orden de batalla oblicuo para conseguir la superioridad de fuerzas en un punto del dispositivo enemigo. El orden oblicuo del rey de Prusia fue resumido por el mismo Federico con el siguiente enunciado: *«on refuse une aile a l'ennemi et on*

⁷ Ibid. 4.

⁸ Ibid.

renforce celle qui doit faire l'attaque. Par-là vous portez toutes vos forces sur l'aile de l'Ennemi que vous voulez prendre de flanc»⁹. Federico dejó fuera de combate a un tercio de los efectivos austriacos, pero dada su inferioridad numérica no pudo efectuar la completa destrucción del enemigo. Por ello Schlieffen considera que «*Leuthen could be only a mutilated Cannae*», mientras que «*the turning movement at Zorndorf was executed in a still more effective way*»¹⁰ a pesar de que en este encarnizado enfrentamiento las fuerzas estaban más equilibradas y ambos ejércitos perdieron el tercio de sus efectivos. En cualquier caso, en estas batallas quedó claro que no era fácil aniquilar a un enemigo superior en número, ni siquiera de forma parcial, y que la victoria prusiana hubiera sido dudosa si no se hubiera conseguido engañar al adversario ocultando hasta cierto punto la maniobra envolvente. Pero para Schlieffen estaba fuera de toda duda la superioridad del pensamiento militar de Federico el Grande en comparación con sus adversarios:

*«His aim was to attack from the very beginning a flank or even the rear of the enemy, to push him, if possible against an insurmountable obstacle and then to annihilate him by enveloping one or both of his flanks»*¹¹.

Napoleón Bonaparte es el siguiente estratega que se asoma a las páginas de *Cannae*. Schlieffen considera que fue capaz de ejecutar a nivel estratégico, con antelación de días e incluso de semanas, movimientos envolventes a gran escala, consiguiendo clamorosos éxitos en el norte de Italia y, sobre todo, en la campaña de 1805 contra Austria. En esta última, después de copar y rendir en Ulm (19 de octubre) a 30.000 hombres del ejército austriaco, Napoleón buscó en Austerlitz (2 de diciembre) una victoria decisiva sobre un ejército austro-ruso que le superaba en más de 10.000 hombres y tenía el doble de piezas de artillería. Necesitaba aniquilar al adversario para forzarle a firmar la paz y separar a Austria

⁹ *Instruction militaire du roi de Prusse pour ses généraux* (1761), 144-145.

¹⁰ Schlieffen, *Cannae*, 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 12.

y Rusia de la Tercera Coalición patrocinada por el Reino Unido. El genio militar de Napoleón pergeñó una estratagema para atraer a las confiadas fuerzas austro-rusas al terreno por él previsto, mientras los franceses ocupaban el punto central del dispositivo enemigo —la meseta de Pratzen— y conseguían destrozar completamente su ala izquierda.

Napoleón consiguió triunfos similares siguiendo el método de reunir el máximo de fuerzas en la retaguardia o en el flanco de sus adversarios:

«He endeavored to assemble his forces on the battle field by only threatening the enemy on his front, while a detached unit was advancing from afar for a flanking attack. This could succeed when the enemy attacked and the detached army unit arrived rapidly. It did not succeed when the enemy preferred to await the attack and the detached unit was held back by a hostile detachment»¹².

Si el adversario optaba por esperar, el ataque frontal de sus posiciones no era desechado ya que era un expediente válido para distraer la atención del enemigo mientras se ejecutaba el flanqueo. Aunque Napoleón, según Schlieffen, tuvo muchas ocasiones de luchar una batalla de aniquilación por medio de movimientos envolventes, al final de su carrera buscó la decisión de forma más directa, confiando en la capacidad de sus tropas en abrir brecha en el dispositivo enemigo:

«This brought him to frontal attacks and attempts at piercing. Two of his battles, Borodino and Hanau, may be considered as victorious purely frontal battles. He owed it to his artillery that he was the victor in these combats»¹³.

Los últimos modelos históricos expuestos por Schlieffen corresponden a dos campañas en las que él mismo tomó parte como oficial del ejército prusiano: la campaña de 1866 contra Austria y la Confederación Germánica, y la guerra franco-prusiana (1870-1871).

¹² Ibid. 42.

¹³ Ibid. 38.

Helmuth von Moltke “el viejo” era desde 1857 el jefe del Estado Mayor alemán y desde su acceso al cargo había empezado a introducir cambios en la doctrina, armamento y entrenamiento del ejército prusiano. En los primeros lances de la campaña de 1866, sin embargo, Moltke encontró dificultades en desarrollar sus teorías encaminadas a buscar la batalla de aniquilación, cometiéndose innumerables errores de mando y control achacables al extremo grado de independencia de sus generales:

«The Prussian generals, notwithstanding their prominence and excellence [of Moltke], could not enter into the cycle of ideas of the grayhaired theorist who had never commanded even a company. They held to the views they had absorbed from Napoleonic principles, which they had misunderstood, and from experience gleaned in time of peace on maneuver grounds. These did not teach them annihilation battles, pursuits, turning movements, and similar phantasies. An enemy occupies a position, the other, having one or two battalions more than the former, attacks. The defeated retreats. The victor allows him to go his way and turns to the problem of the following maneuver day»¹⁴.

A pesar de la victoria de Königrätz (3 de julio de 1866) contra un ejército austriaco reputado superior al prusiano, Moltke no quedó del todo satisfecho con la actuación de sus fuerzas. Según Schlieffen, en varias ocasiones pudo repetir la maniobra de Cannae, rodeando completamente al adversario y destruyéndolo; pero era ésta una idea que escapaba a los generales prusianos, quienes tampoco se aplicaron con energía en perseguir al enemigo vencido. Las órdenes de Moltke, fruto de la situación táctica del momento, simplemente no fueron ejecutadas o, como apunta Schlieffen, no pudieron ser ejecutadas porque no eran entendidas:

«Under such circumstance no battle of annihilation or annihilating pursuit could be thought of. It had to be left to the enemy to gradually exhaust

¹⁴ Ibid. 83-84.

himself. Other generals also had to contend with the lack of understanding, training, and decision of their subordinates. They tried to eliminate these defects by the infallibility of their authority and the decision of their orders. Moltke, being no commander-in-chief, but only the Chief of the General Staff, lacked the necessary authority and was not vested with the right to speak with the assurance of a man in command. He had to content himself with polite advice, pleasant expostulations, suggestions and similar means, and only rarely could he avert the grossest mistakes by a Royal "I order"»¹⁵.

Las cosas iban a cambiar en la campaña de 1870 contra Francia, aunque Schlieffen reconoce que las primeras operaciones fueron decepcionantes:

*«The Germans marched to the Saar and to the Moselle according to Napoleon's mass tactics. They were to overwhelm the hostile position by continuous, well fed combat, shock after shock. (...) In the shortest time the linear tactics of infantry and artillery, condemned since Jena, were again assumed, though in a rough form. Line fought against line and in this combat the one who with greater front, could turn the hostile flank, won the victory. Instinctively did they return to the old mode of warfare...»*¹⁶.

El ejército francés al mando del mariscal Bazaine no pudo ser arrinconado en la frontera Norte según las intenciones de Moltke, aunque se retiró a Metz para ser más tarde completamente rodeado. En Chalons, mientras tanto, se encontraban el general MacMahon y el emperador Napoleón III dispuestos a socorrer a Bazaine con un ejército de 120.000 hombres. Frente a él, Moltke disponía de dos ejércitos y una amplia superioridad numérica.

En Beaumont (30 de agosto de 1870) uno de los ejércitos prusianos consiguió interceptar y derrotar la vanguardia francesa sobre el Mosa, imposibilitando a MacMahon el movimiento hacia Montmédy y Metz. Finalmente el mariscal francés optó por retirar su ejército a Sedán, posición

¹⁵ Ibid. 179.

¹⁶ Ibid. 257.

defendida al Sur y al Este por los ríos Mosa y Givonne. Las únicas vías de escape estaban al Norte en la frontera belga y al Oeste a través del Mosa por Mézières. Sin embargo, los franceses no aprovecharon la posibilidad que se les brindaba y fueron envueltos por los ejércitos prusianos:

«On the whole, the enemy, who must be pitilessly encircled, was freed from all molestation and could retire calmly and without danger in either of two directions. He fortunately, failed to use the advantage offered him by the generous enemy, and, after a short march, halted again in resignation to his fate before the annihilating blow, and, fortunately, Moltke was there to unravel the gigantic mass into which the two German armies had assembled and to render possible an attack from three sides, and later from four»¹⁷.

Schlieffen, entusiasmado por el alcance del triunfo conseguido por las armas prusianas, consideró que Sedán (1-2 de septiembre de 1870) había sido un nuevo Cannae y que Moltke había sido el único general capaz de destilar todas sus enseñanzas:

«A battle of Cannae had at last been fought, a complete surrounding of the enemy achieved. None of the great generals of the last century had known the course of that battle on the Aufidus. Only its final results floated before their eyes as a goal to be striven for. (...) According to the principle of Cannae a broad battle line goes forth against a narrower, but generally deeper one. The overlapping wings turn against the flanks, the cavalry preceding them, against the rear. Should the flanks be separated from the center, for some reason or other, it is not necessary to assemble them against the latter in order to continue jointly the march for a surrounding attack, as they can immediately advance, by the shorter road, against flank or rear. This was what Moltke called “the junction of separated units on the field of battle” and declares it the highest achievement of a general. It is also the most effective and, of course, the most

¹⁷ Ibid. 305.

risky. Most generals and almost all able commanders apprehend the danger of the units being defeated before their junction and zealously endeavor to execute the junction of separate units, and on the battlefield itself, but as long as possible before the battle. In this manner they relinquish the decisive result and must be satisfied with a lesser or with no result whatever»¹⁸.

Sin embargo, a diferencia de Aníbal en Cannae, Moltke contó con una superioridad numérica a su favor, ventaja que supo crear en 1870 gracias a sus acertadas disposiciones. Schlieffen concluye que una batalla tan completa como la de Cannae se da raramente en la Historia: «for this achievement, a Hannibal is needed on the one side, and a Terentius Varro, on the other, both cooperating for the attainment of the great goal»¹⁹.

Un análisis somero de los *Cannae Studies* evidencia que Schlieffen no está interesado en la verdad histórica ni tampoco ésta es su objeto. Articula su discurso en torno a algunos hechos de armas históricos que utiliza como herramientas para exponer y apoyar la supuesta certeza de sus teorías tácticas y métodos operacionales. Sus estudios sobre batallas concretas se realizan de modo subjetivo, rescatando o rescribiendo los pasajes que pueden conducir a los fines que como estrategia se ha señalado y presuponiendo acciones y decisiones más que discutibles. Nunca se propuso realizar una investigación histórica con objetividad ni creyó que fuera de ninguna utilidad para un Estado Mayor que debía afrontar una inminente guerra y cuyos oficiales necesitaban pautas, modelos capaces de inspirar la respuesta militar acertada a las amenazas que se oteaban en el horizonte. La Historia militar quedaba así, de forma consciente, subordinada a los apremiantes dictados de la Estrategia, sirviendo de paso, depurada y mitificada, para uso político como elemento aglutinador de la nación alemana.

¹⁸ Ibid. 297.

¹⁹ Ibid. 305.

La batalla total: *Gesamtschlacht*

El legado de Schlieffen fue perpetuado en el periodo entreguerras (1918-1939) por una serie de militares alemanes que consideraban que el Plan de 1905 habría sido una garantía de éxito para derrotar contundentemente a Francia, una oportunidad desaprovechada por Moltke “el joven” de acabar el conflicto con un golpe magistral en 1914. Hans von Seeckt, jefe del Estado Mayor alemán (*Truppenamt*) en el periodo 1919-1920, fue uno de los discípulos más influyentes de Schlieffen y estaba convencido de que sus lecciones seguían siendo útiles para el nuevo ejército alemán (*Reichswehr*). La idea de victoria de Schlieffen, repetida hasta la saciedad por sus partidarios, quedaba sintetizada en tres postulados:

«The annihilation of the enemy is the goal of warfare, but many routes lead to this end.

Every operation must be governed by a simple, clear concept. Everything and everyone must be subordinated to this concept of operation.

The decisive strength must be placed against the decisive point. The result is only to be achieved through sacrifice»²⁰.

De esta manera, el pensamiento militar de Schlieffen quedó encorsetado por sus mismos compañeros de armas, reducido a una memoria escrita en 1905 y que, supuestamente, constituía la respuesta válida a los retos estratégicos que debía afrontar Alemania al inicio de la 1ª Guerra Mundial. De poco sirvió que Schlieffen, como jefe del Estado Mayor alemán, hubiera valorado distintas hipótesis en sus ejercicios de planeamiento, optando incluso por la defensiva en el frente occidental. Sus ideas quedaron pronto reducidas al lema *«The Germans must therefore be as strong as possible on their right wing, because here the decisive battle is to be expected»*.²¹

²⁰Ibid.

²¹ Texto de la *Memoria* en Gerhard Ritter, *The Schlieffen Plan* (London 1958), 148.

Sin embargo, Schlieffen escribió otros trabajos aparte de los *Cannae Studies*. En especial, en enero de 1909, publicó un ensayo titulado *La guerra en nuestros días (Der Krieg in der Gegenwart*²²) que refleja de forma más amplia las ideas del autor y anticipa algunos de los problemas operacionales que deberían ser resueltos por el mando en las guerras futuras.

En las páginas de *La guerra de nuestros días*, Schlieffen introduce el concepto “guerra total” (*Gesamtschlacht*) para caracterizar la guerra moderna. A finales del siglo XIX, los teóricos militares subrayan que el tamaño de los ejércitos ha crecido tan exponencialmente que no existe la posibilidad de acabar una guerra por medio de un golpe decisivo. Schlieffen considera que los avances tecnológicos han proporcionado innumerables medios que favorecen la defensa y desaconsejan el ataque. La artillería de fuego rápido, las ametralladoras y otras armas de destrucción hasta entonces nunca vistas, manejadas por ejércitos masivos protegidos en fortificaciones modernas, condicionan la efectividad de cualquier maniobra ofensiva que, de triunfar, sería a un coste inasumible en comparación a los beneficios tácticos alcanzados:

«The Russian-Japanese war has proven that the frontal attack may succeed in spite of all possible difficulties. Nevertheless, the results or successes obtained in this manner, even in the most favorable cases, are of negligible or doubtful value. It is true that a successful (frontal) attack will drive the enemy back. However, he (the enemy) can still resume the defensive at some place in rear, which he may have previously abandoned and, as a result, the war drags on and on. Such wars are, however, unfeasible or impossible during an era in which the life of a nation depends on the uninterrupted course of commerce and industry and where, when such course is interrupted, must be put into motion

²² Alfred von Schlieffen, "Der Krieg in der Gegenwart", en *Deutsche Revue* (enero 1909), 13-24.

anew. A policy of attrition cannot be followed when the maintenance of millions of men requires billions in money»²³.

El concepto de “guerra total” no sólo hace recaer sobre la retaguardia la responsabilidad de sostener un esfuerzo bélico sin precedentes en la historia, sino que también implica que todas las operaciones militares en un teatro de operaciones están interconectadas. De esta forma, la mínima actuación de una unidad de combate acaba incidiendo en el resultado final de la campaña y favorece la maniobra de conjunto. En este escenario a escala gigantesca y surcado por millones de hombres, el jefe ya no puede dirigir personalmente las operaciones y debe aprovechar las nuevas tecnologías para hacer sentir su voluntad desde el remoto lugar donde permanece informado de los acontecimientos que se suceden:

«Not even Napoleon, surrounded by a brilliant following, would attempt to personally conduct and lead all operations. In these times, the commander is located well to the rear, in a building having ample office space and where he has telegraph, radio, telephone and such signal apparatus available. He also has numerous automobiles and motorcycles available for distant journeys and missions. The modern Alexander will be found seated before a large table, and before him will be an operations map of the whole battlefield, staked out, so as to give him, at a glance, the complete picture of the conflict»²⁴.

La verdadera acción de mando debe ser relegada en los mandos tácticos confiando en que su preparación e iniciativa les permitirá resolver los imprevistos que surjan durante las operaciones sin desvirtuar las órdenes del jefe superior. Como Schlieffen adelantó en sus *Cannae Studies* «*there are needed subordinate commanders, well trained in their profession, and able to*

²³ Schlieffen, "Der Krieg in der Gegenwart", en Wilhelm Groener, *The Testament of Count Schlieffen* (Fort Leavenworth 1936), 8.

²⁴ Ibid. 5.

comprehend the intentions of their chiefs»²⁵, y espera que actúen con decisión esforzándose siempre en tratar de arruinar las preparaciones del adversario. Por otro lado, el autor critica el viejo axioma de concentrar las tropas antes del combate en lugar de ejecutar la unión de fuerzas provenientes de distintas direcciones convergentes sobre el campo de batalla:

*«Concentration for battle begins as soon as the troops disembark from the trains. From the points of debarkation, Corps and Divisions, all marching at different rates, will approach their planned or assigned objectives. These objectives must be such, or be so located, that the forces can advance from them to their battle positions and assigned frontages without confusion or interference. The old idea of concentrating troops on the field of battle is unequivocally out of the question in future wars. All troops, who, during the advance, make contact with the enemy, must be prepared to engage them at once, without additional support or assistance»*²⁶.

Aunque Schlieffen, como buen observador, reconoce las dificultades de ejecutar una maniobra ofensiva en las guerras futuras, trata de sobreponerse a la multitud de objeciones proponiendo un modus operandi ya conocido, la maniobra envolvente, pero a mayor escala que en Cannae. Considera que los medios de aerostación permiten descubrir más fácilmente el dispositivo enemigo y que una buena coordinación de fuego y movimiento puede permitir el ataque de uno o de los dos flancos del adversario, al que no debe permitirse, a base de sucesivas acciones desbordantes, que se establezca en una fuerte posición defensiva. Al no poder contarse con una superioridad numérica que facilite esta sucesión de maniobras, Schlieffen aboga por vaciar el centro de su dispositivo, dejando mínimas fuerzas dotadas de armas modernas y municiones suficientes para sostener la acción mediante el fuego:

²⁵ Schlieffen, *Cannae*, 306.

²⁶ Schlieffen, "Der Krieg in der Gegenwart", en Groener, *The Testament of Count Schlieffen*, 6.

«In order to achieve a decisive and annihilating victory, it is necessary to attack from two or three directions, that is, against the front and one or two flanks. Such an attack should be comparatively easy for the side that has numerical superiority. It appears almost impossible to count on such superiority under our present circumstances. The means necessary for us to accomplish a powerful and successful envelopment can be gained, only by making the frontal attack as weak as possible. However, no matter how weak this frontal attacking force is made, it cannot be limited in its action to taking up a strong defensive position under cover and containing the enemy by means of long range fire. Under all circumstances, the enemy front must be attacked and an attempt made to advance against it. The long range quick firing small arms which have been developed to supplant the musket are admirably suited for this purpose, that is, providing sufficient ammunition is available»²⁷.

Termina su esquema aconsejando que las reservas debían ser empleadas en la maniobra principal, no acumuladas en la retaguardia sin tomar parte activa en la acción:

«Instead of massing reserves behind the front, where they will remain inactive and unavailable insofar as rendering assistance to the decisive effort is concerned, it is much more preferable to provide ample ammunition reserves for the force making the frontal attack. The best and most reliable means of providing an ample ammunition reserve is to have it brought up in trucks. All those combat units which were formerly kept well in rear and which were supposed to have been available and utilized in order to obtain a decision, should be sent with the enveloping force, that is, the force making the decisive effort. The stronger this enveloping force is made, the more decisive will be, the results obtained»²⁸.

²⁷ Ibid. 8-9.

²⁸ Ibid. 9.

En definitiva, Schlieffen intenta sacar partido de las nuevas tecnologías para ponerlas al servicio de la maniobra, intentando evitar la más que previsible guerra de frentes estabilizados que posteriormente proliferaría en la 1ª Guerra Mundial. Continúa confiando en los movimientos envolventes para conseguir éxitos a nivel táctico e incluso estratégico, aunque siempre fue consciente de que, a diferencia de Aníbal o Moltke, el mando debía esforzarse más que nunca en inducir al enemigo a cometer errores para explotarlos a fondo. Su optimismo y fe en este tipo de operaciones que había estado fraguando en su mente durante décadas no impidió que fuera realista e intuyera perfectamente la faz de la guerra moderna.

El pensamiento militar de Schlieffen, su idea de que la batalla ya no era un acto singular sino una combinación de acciones interconectadas a nivel global, es un modelo que aún tiene validez hoy en día, un buen ejemplo de *Gesamtschlacht*. Por otro lado, su tan ponderada teoría del flanqueo no consistía simplemente en copiar una y otra vez la conocida maniobra de Aníbal en Cannae sino, yendo más lejos, implicaba una actitud del mando, que debía siempre tratar de adivinar las intenciones del adversario, inducirle a cometer errores, encontrar sus puntos débiles y buscar el resultado más decisivo con el mínimo esfuerzo. En el siglo V a.C. Sun Tzu lo había resumido con los siguientes versos:

«El ejército, en su victoria, evita lo que está lleno y ataca lo vacío. Del mismo modo que el agua establece su movimiento de acuerdo con la tierra, el ejército establece la victoria de acuerdo con el enemigo»²⁹.

Epílogo: Un Cannae en el frente oriental

El Plan Schlieffen fracasó en el frente occidental en parte por la decisión de sustraer tropas de Francia para enviarlas a Prusia Oriental. Sin embargo, el

²⁹ Sun Tzu, *El arte de la guerra*, 58.

ejército alemán consiguió reproducir allí el paradigma de Schlieffen: la maniobra de doble envolvimiento al más puro estilo de Cannae.

El mariscal Paul von Hindenburg, junto a su jefe de Estado Mayor Erich Ludendorff, fueron enviados al frente oriental para recomponer la situación después de la invasión de dos ejércitos rusos a mediados de agosto de 1914. Hindenburg consiguió atraer al 2º Ejército ruso, al mando del general Alexander Samsonov, hacia una posición cercana a Tannenberg (26-29 de agosto), nombre que tomaría esta batalla por el hecho de que en 1410 se había dado otra del mismo nombre en la que los caballeros de la Orden Teutónica habían sido derrotados por polacos y lituanos. Las fuerzas rusas sumaban 230.000 hombres y ocupaban un frente de 50 kilómetros, mientras que los alemanes contaban con 150.000 hombres. Dada la disposición de los rusos, con un frente estrecho y mucha profundidad, Ludendorff propuso ejecutar el doble envolvimiento a gran escala, manteniendo un centro débil para hacer caer a Samsonov en la trampa. Al cabo de varios días de marcha de las unidades alemanas, el cerco se fue cerrando y los rusos fueron completamente embolsados, rindiéndose cerca de 100.000 hombres del 2º Ejército y perder otros 70.000, entre ellos Samsonov, que se suicidó al conocer el alcance de la derrota. Una semana más tarde, el dúo Hindenburg-Ludendorff intentó hacer lo propio con el 1er Ejército ruso del general Pavel (Paul von) Rennenkampf en la batalla de Angerburg o de los Lagos masurianos (8-11 de septiembre). En esta ocasión, sin embargo, Rennenkampf se mostró lo suficiente hábil para sustraer su ejército de la amenaza de envolvimiento que ya dibujaban las columnas germanas. El 11 de septiembre, ordenó la retirada hacia la frontera rusa no sin dejar atrás abundante material y cerca de 120.000 hombres entre prisioneros y bajas.

Al fin, los discípulos de Schlieffen, en especial Ludendorff, habían conseguido un éxito contundente contra un enemigo numéricamente superior siguiendo las líneas trazadas por su predecesor. El espíritu de Cannae seguía vivo en la oficialidad alemana, pero no sólo en su variante geométrica —el doble

envolvimiento completado en Tannenbergr y trazado en Angerburg— sino también en su vertiente doctrinal, pocas veces valorada en su justa medida: «*Para avanzar de modo que uno no pueda ser resistido, carga contra lo vacío...*»³⁰.

³⁰ Ibid. 55.

BG Marco Ciampini (Italy)

***The System of Alliances at the Eve of First World War
and the Theory of Complexity***

“The unexpected transition, in just few 1914 midsummer weeks, from an apparently stable peace condition to a bloody World War has no reason at all”.

This sentence by the English military historian John Keegan explains how difficult it is to find a logical walk-through as a cause of World War I. As a consequence, we should consider this situation according to a different logic, that is to say the logic of “complexity”. The starting point of this line of reasoning will be the system of the alliances existing in Europe between 1887 and 1907 as well as a close examination consistent with it as during the above mentioned period the European layout became and remained stable until on the eve of World War I.

The system of alliances between European nations – which strengthened from 1887 to 1907 – was essentially the European system just before 1914, when World War I was ready to burst. Such a system draws our attention because of its multiple connections which suddenly change in all directions. These multiple connections are much more intricate than one is supposed to imagine. Moreover, they get us to define such a system of alliances as a “complex system” which is to be understood according to the logic related to the “theory of complexity”. Let’s have a general description. Problems in the continent are strongly connected with imperialist conflicts of interest in different parts of the world.

In that period Great Britain faced France in Africa and in the Southern East as well as Russia in Persia and in the Middle East. Due to its defeat in 1870, France entertained the wish of taking revenge on Germany. Opposed interests in

the Balkans gave rise to tension between Russia and Austria-Hungary. Austria and Italy were separated by their rivalry in the Adriatic and by the destiny of Italian communities within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Moreover, Italy took position against the French policy in Northern Africa. In 1887 this situation seemed to be stable because of different treaties. In spite of that, it would soon change due to conflicting interests.

The Triple Alliance (that is Italy, Austria-Hungary and Germany) as well as the Treaty of Counter Insurance (Russia and Germany) and the Mediterranean Agreement between England, Italy and Austria were the pillars of such a system. How this situation changed? The first step was represented by the French trend to become a partner of Russia. The major problem France could not overlook was the recovery of the Alsace-Lorraine territories lost during the 1870 War against Germany as well as the new threat against French security caused by the German Empire and confirmed by the War itself.

If we consider the dimensions and the potential military capability of the new German Empire, the French policy aimed essentially at controlling Germany by the creation of an anti-German Alliance. Although its political system was really different, the most suitable candidate for such a partnership was Russia.

However, the above mentioned alliance became impossible because of the sharp Chancellor Bismarck. The latter had made Russia and Germany become partners in the 1873 “Three Emperors’ Agreement” with Austria-Hungary. Bismarck’s policy was to present Germany as a warrantor of peace in Europe and as a mediator of continental conflicts being a link for all European Countries and creating the idea that German security would mean peace in Europe.

The Triple Alliance with Italy and Austria as well as the Counter Insurance Treaty with Russia had made the lasting expulsion of France from this system possible. That way, France could no longer get ready for the establishment of an anti German coalition. The Mediterranean Agreement

contracted between Italy, Austria and Great Britain thanks to Bismarck's mediation linked even Berlin – although indirectly – with London through the Triple Alliance. However, Russian interests did not meet those of Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, Russian affairs did not meet the Austro-Hungarian ones in the Balkans, just like the 1885 crisis in Bulgaria proved. On that occasion, war could be avoided but, in spite of that, a strong anti German feeling arose among Russian public opinion and top managers in those days. Bismarck replied to this situation by the Counter Insurance Treaty. It was meant to support Russia in its policy aiming at approaching Turkish Straits and, by that, mending relations with the Russian Empire. Under the circumstances, why should Russia have accepted to become a partner of France? Undoubtedly due to the new German policy after 1890, on Bismarck's downfall together with the Emperor William 2nd's resulting political weight but also, and first of all, due to the fear of an Anglo-German approach.

The bond that seemed to link more and more Britain with Germany threatened to connect the problems of Russia in the Balkans with the tensions generated by the bitter rivalry of Russia itself with Britain in various theatres: Afghanistan, Persia, China and the Turkish Straits, making Great Britain and Germany two natural allies.. To counter this situation, perceived as a threat, the Russians openly pursued an agreement with France. The purpose of this alliance was no longer to manage the conflicts in the relationships between the members of the Alliance but to face and contain the threat of a hostile coalition. In this sense, the Franco-Russian Alliance represented a turning point in the prelude to the Great War. The Franco-Russian alliance as such, however, did not make a clash with Germany inevitable. In the first decade of the Alliance Russian rulers focused more on the economic and political penetration in northern China , rather than extending Russian sphere of influence in Europe. The interest of Russia to secure an informal control on Chinese Manchuria led to a clash with the British policy in China resulting in future relationships much more strained with London

than with Berlin. France instead had to find a balance between the imperatives generated by the rivalry with Britain and those that arose from its relations with Germany.

Hostility between France and Britain reached its climax in the Fashoda Incident, so France decided to make an attempt to create a bond with Germany, however temporary and specious. In order to increase the pressure on Britain, France tried to lure the Germans in a consortium with Italy and Russia. This action did not lead to anything because the Germans refused to join the French plan to set up a continental league against Great Britain. The French then were oriented to achieve their goals in collaboration with, and not in opposition to, the United Kingdom through a barter in the colonial sphere: Britain would strengthen the control over Egypt and in return accept French control of the Morocco. The new orientation of French policy in the anti-German feeling was evident during the Moroccan crisis of 1905. As you can see the attitude of the various continental nations towards England was crucial for political considerations. The British position towards Germany's victory over France in 1870 is clearly illustrated by the words of the 1st Minister Disraeli "war represents the German revolution, a political event even bigger than the French Revolution of the last century," "the balance of power has been completely destroyed and England is the country that suffers the most because of the effects of this change. "France was not so much worried by the rise of Germany as from the fact that Russia, the old enemy, was dissolved by the terms imposed by the Crimean War (1853-1856) and proceeded to the remilitarization of the Black Sea. A new era of Russian expansionism seemed to be dawning , both in Central Asia, in the Far East (China) and it was this perspective to capture the attention of Disraeli in a speech in 1871. The British rulers reacted to the Russian threat by adopting a policy that was oriented in two directions. The first approach involved a rapprochement with Japan and France, the second approach involved the search of a power-sharing agreement with Russia itself that would have eased the

pressure on the British imperial periphery. After the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance became a staple in British international system. The 'Entente Cordiale' of 1904 aimed at easing tensions with colonial France while generating an indirect influence on Russia. Neither the Entente Cordiale with France nor the Convention with Russia were designed by the British rulers as instruments to be used primarily against Germany. If Germany appeared in the British plans, this was due mainly to the tensions between Britain and France and between Britain and Russia.

But the strategy of Bismarck, joining Germany with almost all the European powers, restricted the German share in the process of expansion and created a strong national resentment against other powers that resisted every minimum German initiative; for example the acquisition of some African territories of southern Namibia. Thus in 1890 to the fall of Bismarck's Germany abandoned the reinsurance treaty earnings with Russia.

The new German policy was directed not to depend on any foreign power and consequently to increase the defensive capacity and military independence. Attempts to have better relations with Great Britain and Russia remained disappointed due to the preference of the latter to remain allied to France and to the tensions with England, caused by the desire to pursue the German interests outside Europe, which reached its culmination during the crisis of the Transvaal. (The "Kruger telegram"). For this reason the 90's were a period of increasingly deep isolation for Germany. It was difficult to obtain a commitment by England, and the French-Russian alliance seemed to reduce considerably the leeway on the continent. However, the German statesmen were very slow in realize the extent of the problem; they thought that the continuing tension between the global empires was already a guarantee that these have never been allied against Germany. So instead of opposing their isolation, the German leaders elected to their leading principle the search for their own self-sufficiency. The most

important demonstration for such development was the decision to build a large fleet. This decision turned Germany into a natural and direct rival of England.

In 1904 with the defeat of Russia, the Russian-Japanese war turned around a precarious and uncertain situation. The impact of the Russian-Japanese conflict was deep and ambivalent at the same time. In the short term, the war seemed to offer to Germany unexpected opportunities for moving away themselves from the constraints imposed by the French-Russian alliance and the English-French agreement. In the long term instead, it had an opposite effect producing a strengthening system of alliances, gathering in Europe tensions considered peripheral before that and reducing freedom of movement in Germany. Germany failed to bind to Russia and to detach it from the alliance with France and attempt to get closer to the England, and break so its isolation on the occasion of the Moroccan crisis and the subsequent Algeciras Conference, where France had substantially the support of England, Italy and Spain although not of Austria. The Anglo-French agreement strengthened rather than being weakened by German challenge to France on the Moroccan question. The prospect of bind to Russia, it closed in the summer of 1907 when Great Britain and Russia signed a treaty with which solved all their contrasts on Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet.

The new international system that emerged in 1907 sabotaged mainly Germany, but this outcome did not reflect faithfully the plans on the basis of which the system was conceived.

Only in the case of France, we can speak about a policy which attributed constantly a high priority to the containment of Germany. At European level it is more reasonable to think of this series of agreements as a consequence of historical confrontations in act on a global scale.

As we can see, the considered period is characterized by a very high number of connections, which change continuously and rapidly, among the nations, that is to say the units of the system. The entire system of alliances then

can be considered as a complex system and regarded according to the principles of complexity. Which aspect characterizes then this kind of system? The mask of complexity has many faces and it is not possible to synthesize them in a measurement unit or in only one aspect. Instead, it is possible to define the seven faces of complexity stressing the fact that one aspect could be dominant in one situation more than in another. The seven aspects, listed in the picture below, are the various ways complexity shows itself in the real world and could be synthesized with a significant phrase. In general terms we can say that in every situation there is a dominant principle while the others act as secondary actors in the drama of the catastrophic events. But the important fact is that the catastrophic event, in our case the outbreak of the 1st world war, derives as final analysis from a complexity out of control.

The seven principles of complexity and their features	
Emergency	The whole is different from the sum of its parts
Red Queen hypothesis	Evolving to survive
Everything has a cost	Compromise between efficiency and resilience
Goldilocks principle(Golden curls)	Degrees of freedom “appropriate”
incompleteness	Logic alone is not enough
Butterfly effect	Small changes can produce enormous effects
Law of the required multiplicity	Only complexity can control complexity

Now briefly we will examine the various principles and their correspondence with the European situation characterized by the alliances set up in the period 1887-1907.

The emergency

A whole of elements interacting one with each other forms a “system” and this system, considered as a whole, has got most of the times some unique characteristics absent in the elements as singles. These emerging characteristics are defined as systemic traits, different from the traits belonging to the single elements, in fact they get origin from the interaction among the elements of the system: they are often considered ”unexpected” or “surprising”. The system of the European nations shows this “unexpected” and “surprising” trait quite apart from the political will of the governors of the single nations, this is what usually sounds like ”nobody wanted war”.

The antagonism towards Germany and the new system of alliances were not determined by the German international behaviour but above all, by the unexpected and surprising effect that the new system had got, which mainly consisted in directing and intensifying a general hostility towards the German Empire.

RED Queen Hypothesis

The expression derives from a concept expressed in the novel by Lewis Carroll “Trough the Mirror”, where the Red Queen points out to Alice” in this country you can run as long as you want but you will be at the same place”, referring to the social field it means that in a system composed of a whole of adaptive organisms in continuous evolution, every single organism must evolve to face competition with the other elements and this must happen only to survive. In the case of the historical period we are examining, every nation evolved to face the competition of the other nations/states and only to avoid their extinction.

According to these conditions, the global attitude of the system to survive was more and more increasing up, so leading to a systemic collapse (war) that determined the ruin of the existing set up. Inside the nations the political-diplomatic-military decisions regarding the formation and the stabilization of the alliances, have been taken quite apart from a “systemic vision”, paying attention only to adapt themselves to the competition among “individuals” so arriving at the inevitable result of the systemic collapse (war).

Everything has a cost

If a system is supposed to have a very high level of efficiency then it is necessary to optimize its way of working in such a manner that its resilience should be reduced evidently towards unknown shocks and perhaps not foreseeable and/or towards change of the environment in which it operates.

There is an inevitable price to pay in efficiency if you want to gain the advantages of the adaptability and the ability to survive in a very unstable and uncertain environment. The various alliances, numerous and interconnecting all the elements (nations) of the system (Europe) represent an attempt of optimizing the system but by reducing the resilience of the system itself, they made it more sensitive to unpredicted shocks (crisis and then war).

Goldilocks Principle

Systems operate in the most open, dynamic and adaptive way when the degrees of freedom available are like the cups of milk for “golden curls” in the homonymous fable, that means neither too hot nor too cold, but at the right temperature. In the language of the “systems theory” they often call the edge of chaos the thin line between the phase in which the system is stiffened and has very few degrees of freedom and the phase in which the degrees of freedom are so many that any action can be possible. The system of alliances didn’t move on the edge of chaos, it would have been necessary to carry out more flexible

diplomatic agreements, open to changes, to let the entire structure move towards new structures(the blocks established in 1887 -1907 and stabilized in 1914 had become so rigid as to leave no diplomatic space to manoeuvres or adjustments.).

Incompleteness

The rational argument is not sufficient to predict the possibility that an action or a behaviour occur. In other words, events which can't always be predicted by a logical deductive reasoning will always occur. An effective prediction requires also intuition and information which are not contained in the initial data. The prediction of catastrophic events is characterized by the tendency of human brain to tell stories which give a logic to the past events also if that logic is not the real cause of the events. On the contrary, as to the catastrophic events, the case chain is as much important as the logic chain to identify what could occur in the political-social-economic environments. In short, not everything is obtainable only through rational thinking. The most notable setback in German politics in the years around 1900 was the inability to realize how the international environment was rapidly changing to the detriment of Germany. The rulers of Berlin continued to be confident that the tension on a global scale between the British Empire and Russia would continue to guarantee a certain freedom of manoeuvre to Germany. In the short term, their attention focused on maintaining good relations with Russia; in the longer term they believed that the force of Russian opposition and the strengthening of the German fleet would force Britain to establish better relations with Berlin. They were rational arguments that didn't take into account the inevitable incompleteness of the rational approach towards a "complex system" and its logics, as it emerged during this period as a result of the swirling formation of the alliances, and the possibility that a "complex system" moves itself according to different rules.

Butterfly effect

A peculiar feature of complex systems is that a change or a disturbance apparently insignificant spread as a cascade across the entire network and generate a significant change in another part of the system or at another time. The meteorologist Lorenz called this effect “Butterfly effect”, referring to the process whereby a butterfly flapping its wings in the Amazon jungle could give rise to a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico in a week. The Bulgarian crisis in the mid-eighties is a clear example of it. In fact, the Bulgarian crisis, that broke out in the Balkans with the annexation of Eastern Rumelia by a Bulgarian irredentist movement and the creation of a Great Bulgaria with the involvement of the great powers (Russians against Great Britain and Austria-Hungary) made visible for a moment the immense danger connected with the instability of the Balkan region and in particular the fact that the action of a small sized state could lead one day two great powers to take decisions that could cause war.

Law of the required multiplicity

The control system should be at least as much complex as the controlled system. Otherwise the gap of complexity between them could generate and often generate the most diversified inconvenients. When the relative complexities diverge too much one from the other, the system tries to reconfigure itself to reduce or to compensate them. These self-organized and systemic actions are usually rapid and disruptive and frequently can cause a catastrophic event. The system of alliances was not able to reduce its complexity by its own unless causing a systemic collapse and on the other hand there was no controlling system, at least as much complex as the same system, capable of controlling such multiplicity; at the end of the war the “Society of Nations” could have been able to perform this task.

To correctly understand the coming head of the events on the eve of 1914 to an unprecedented massacre that also marked the end of an era (in fact empires

of ancient tradition, Hapsburg, ottoman, Russia of the tsars collapsed, the importance of Europe was reduced in the world), it is perhaps necessary to examine the situation of that time with a different logic, operating that paradigm shift in the evaluation of the various scenarios, that could allow us to get out of the traditional schemes. We hope that the leading elites of each country daily perform, in their ceaseless political and diplomatic working, the difficult intellectual exercise of the search of this new interpretative paradigm.

Prof. Marcos da Cunha e Souza (Brésil)

Max Hoffmann: La Guerre des Occasions Manquées

1. Introduction

Parmi les livres écrits par des soldats qui ont été témoins de la Première Guerre Mondiale, l'œuvre du Général allemand Max Hoffmann se distingue d'une façon particulière. Il n'a pas commandé quelconque des théâtres d'opération. Il n'a pas non plus devenu célèbre pendant le conflit. Cependant, il a joué un rôle important derrière la scène du front de l'Est, étant considéré par de nombreux spécialistes¹ comme le véritable architecte de la bataille mythique de Tannenberg (1914).

Hoffmann, dans son livre *Der Krieg der versäumten Gelegenheiten* ("La Guerre des occasions Manquées"), qui parut en Allemagne en 1922, non seulement nous raconte ce qui s'est passé dans ce théâtre du conflit, mais aussi ce qui aurait pu arriver dans les autres théâtres. Son compte, véritable source primaire, est impossible d'être ignoré lors de l'étude des actions militaires allemandes. La preuve, c'est qu'il a été fréquemment cité par les principaux chercheurs de ce conflit, comme Barbara Tuchman, Liddell Hart et JFC Fuller. Bien que Tuchman n'a pas toujours fait confiance aux rapports de Hoffmann, elle le mentionne à plusieurs reprises dans son livre « The Guns of August ».

Max Hoffmann était, au début de la Première Guerre Mondiale, un simple Lieutenant-colonel, commandant de Bataillon au bord de la frontière française. Cependant, il parlait la langue russe, avais appartenu, pendant cinq ans, à la section russe du Grand État-Major Général et avait personnellement accompagné la guerre russo-japonaise du côté japonais, en qualité d'attaché militaire. Il possédait donc une expérience rare (et réel) de la façon dont les

¹ Liddell Hart, *La Guerre Mondiale* (Paris 1932) 141-142.

Russes ont combattu en Asie. Dans ce contexte, il a rapidement été envoyé pour travailler au quartier général de la 8^e Armée allemande au front de l'Est. Là, il n'a pas tardé à montrer ses qualités.

L'objectif de ce papier est de montrer quelques-unes des observations faites par ce militaire, montrant que le texte reste précieux à la compréhension de cet immense conflit.

2. Sur la Bataille de Tannenberg

Pour les chercheurs de l'histoire militaire, la question est bien connue. Le plan de campagne allemand, rédigé par le comte Schlieffen en 1905, consistait à mener rapidement une offensive contre la France, tandis que les forces russes seraient maintenues en arrêt par une seule Armée allemande en Prusse Orientale et par des formations de Landwehr et Landsturm. Il y avait aussi l'aide de l'Armée austro-hongroise au sud, face à la fois les Russes et les Serbes.

Dans ce contexte, la 8^e Armée allemande, forte de 160.000 hommes, avait pour mission de couvrir la Prusse orientale et occidentale contre une attaque russe. Elle devait veiller, en cas d'attaque par des forces supérieures, à ne pas se laisser battre jusqu'à la destruction. Les instructions prévoyaient aussi, en cas d'avance de forces adversaires très supérieures, l'abandon de la Prusse orientale et le retrait de l'armée derrière la Vistule².

Depuis les premiers jours d'août, la Russie était sans cesse pressé par les Français à faire quelque chose pour soulager la pression allemande exercée sur la France. Par suite, l'invasion russe de la Prusse orientale commença avant d'être prête.

Avec cet objectif, les Russes avaient assemblé deux Armées. La 1^{re} Armée (200.000 hommes), ou Armée de Vilna, sous les ordres de Rennenkampf,

² Max Hoffmann, *La Guerre des Occasions Manquées* (Paris 1927) 27.

et la 2^e Armée (250.000 hommes), ou Armée de Varsovie, sous les ordres de Samsonov.

Le plan russe était bon et simple: La 1^{re} Armée devait avancer contre la pointe orientale de la Prusse, attirant sur lui les forces allemandes de la région. Deux jours plus tard, la 2^e Armée russe devait franchir la frontière sud et déchaîner contre l'arrière des Allemands, qu'elle couperait de la Vistule. Selon « La Guerre des Occasions Manquées », ce plan était déjà connu par les Allemands depuis 1910, quand l'officier de renseignements du 1^e Corps d'Armée à Königsberg « réussit à se procurer un ordre donné à un détachement de la 26^e Division russe à Kovno »³. Néanmoins, en 1914, la valeur de ce plan a été bien prouvée par le désordre provoqué au quartier général de la 8^e Armée allemande au début de son exécution.

En fait, la 8^{ème} Armée a réagi à l'invasion de la 1^{ère} Armée russe, comme prévu. Ce fut la bataille de Gumbinnen (20 Août). Mais, le même jour, le Corps allemand qui avait été laissé au sud pour observer Samsonov, signala à Prittwitz (commandant de la 8^e Armée) l'avancement de la 2^e Armée russe. Cette nouvelle a perturbé les nerfs de Prittwitz que, selon le rapport de Hoffmann, a dit à ses officiers : « si nous continuons le combat, l'Armée russe de Varsovie va nous prendre à revers et nous couper de la Vistule. Notre Armée va donc rompre le combat et se retirer derrière la Vistule »⁴.

Cette retraite aurait eu un grand impact sur le sort de la guerre dans le front de l'Est et aussi à l'Ouest. Heureusement pour les Allemands, Hoffmann et le général Grünert ont réussi à convaincre Prittwitz, compas en main, qu'une simple retraite derrière la Vistule était impossible, parce qu'il faudrait combattre pour opérer ce repli, vu que l'aile gauche de l'Armée de Samsonov était plus près que la 8^e Armée pour atteindre la Vistule. Après cette rencontre, Prittwitz maintint sa décision de rompre le combat contre la 1^e Armée, mais abandonna le

³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

projet de repli derrière la Vistule, reconnaissant la nécessité d'une action offensive contre l'aile gauche de la 2^e Armée russe. Les chemins de fer devraient aider les troupes allemandes à atteindre leurs points de concentration.

Selon le plan, le 1^{er} Corps d'Armée (général von François) et la 3^e Division de Réserve seront ramenés par voie ferrée, vers l'aile gauche de Samsonov. Ainsi, l'avance de Samsonov devait être arrêtée par une action offensive de ces deux unités et du 20^e Corps contre l'aile gauche et le flanc de cette Armée russe. Mais Hoffmann prévient que on ne pouvait encore envisager la possibilité d'employer tous les Corps d'Armée vers le sud. Le 1^{er} Corps d'Armée de réserve et le 17^e Corps d'Armée ont été laissés en face de la 1^{ère} Armée russe (Rennenkampf) parce qu'à ce moment-là personne ne pouvait supposer qu'elle resterait inactive.

Selon Hoffmann, les dispositions prises le 20 août au soir formèrent les données essentielles de la bataille de Tannenberg. Le lendemain Prittwitz était confiant mais, le 22 août, un télégramme arrivait annonçant que la 8^e Armée avait un nouveau commandant et un nouveau Chef d'Etat-major. Le premier était le général von Hindenburg et le second le général Ludendorff. L'infortuné Prittwitz, trop indécis, avait perdu la confiance du Haut Commandement Allemand.

Hindenburg était jusqu'à présent un Général inconnu. La célèbre bataille de Tannenberg, qui a suivi ces faits, ferait sa réputation, devenant l'idole du peuple allemand. Cependant, comme nous pouvons le voir, elle a été préparée par Hoffmann, sous les ordres de Prittwitz. En plus, Hoffmann ne cache pas, dans ce livre, que Ludendorff était le véritable commandant de la 8^e Armée. Son témoignage permettra de réduire considérablement la mystique à propos de Hindenburg (au moins en dehors de l'Allemagne).

La dimension de l'attaque contre Samsonov dépendait de la vitesse de l'avance de Rennenkampf. Dans ces circonstances furent captés par les Allemands deux transmissions télégraphiques russes non chiffrés. Le premier

message indiquait que la lenteur de la 1^{ère} Armée russe ne lui permettait pas d'aider Samsonov s'il était attaqué. Le deuxième message montrait que Samsonov avait interprété la retraite d'une division du 20^{ème} Corps allemand comme une retraite de l'ensemble du front. En raison de cette mauvaise interprétation, Samsonov lançait un ordre de poursuite contre l'ennemi.

Ces informations cruciales ont permis à l'Armée allemande d'adopter un plan plus ambitieux. Il serait possible, comme évalué par Tuchman⁵, d'attaquer Samsonov sur les deux flancs et d'atteindre un double enveloppement classique. En effet, la 2^e Armée russe avançait sur le territoire allemand, sur un front de plus de 90 kilomètres, sans protection de flanc. En outre, elle était séparée de la 1^{ère} Armée par la chaîne des lacs de Masurie. Ainsi, grâce à l'inconcevable inaction de Rennenkampf, le commandement allemand pouvait diriger le 1^{er} Corps de Réserve et le 17^e Corps vers le sud, en attaquant le flanc droit de Samsonov.

Hindenburg ordonna l'attaque décisive pour le 26. Quant à la direction de l'attaque principale, Ludendorff donna l'ordre au général von François d'attaquer le front gauche le 26 août sur Usdau et de percer la ligne ennemie. Le général von François éleva quelques objections contre le moment et le point choisis pour l'attaque. Il ne voulait pas attaquer avant que fût achevée la concentration de son Corps d'Armée. Quant à la direction d'attaque, le général était pour une manœuvre enveloppante.

Quand le moment vint, von François évita le front des russes au premier jour. Cependant, au matin du 27 août, maintenant largement approvisionné en obus, il ouvrit un violent combat contre l'aile gauche russe, qui s'effondra⁶.

Les détails de la bataille sont au-delà de la portée de ce travail. Mais il faut dire que le 31 août Hindenburg pouvait déjà envoyer au Kaiser un télégramme annonçant que trois Corps de l'Armée russe avaient été entourés et

⁵ TUCHMAN, Barbara, *Canhões de Agosto* (Rio de Janeiro 1994) 336.

⁶ Hart, *La Guerre Mondiale*, 143-144.

détruits et deux autres étaient en fuite, après avoir subi de lourdes pertes⁷. Le sort de la 2^e Armée Russe était réglé et Samsonov, quand il vit le désastre total, se suicida.

Parmi les détails rapportés par Hoffmann, un est particulièrement pittoresque. Il dit que, selon un “bruit”, “Rennenkampf n’a pas voulu porter secours à Samsonow par hostilité personnelle contre ce dernier”. Cette hostilité datait de la bataille de Liao-Yang (1904) quand Samsonov fut contraint d’évacuer les mines de Yentaï parce que Rennenkamf resta inactif avec son détachement, em dépit d’ordres réitérés⁸.

3. À propos du plan Schlieffen.

Hoffmann, au chapitre VI, semble mettre en évidence sa foi dans le Plan Schlieffen, qui visait à retirer la France de la guerre d'un seul coup. Schlieffen, dans son plan élaboré en 1905, a voulu amener la décision par l’offensive d’une forte aile droite, ignorant la neutralité Belge, en tournant la ligne française avec une masse de manoeuvre de 53 Divisions. Pour concentrer le maximum d’énergie possible, il avait prévu refuser complètement l’aile gauche du dispositif allemand, formé par 8 Divisions. Mais Hoffmann admet que « il n’était pas facile de faire mouvoir plusieurs armées l’une derrière l’autre, si l’on ne voulait pas violer aussi la neutralité de la Hollande »⁹.

En raison de cela, il a admis que, dans un premier temps, une partie des forces, condamnée à l’inaction, pourrait être laissé sur le flanc gauche, seulement pour repousser une attaque française, car « il était à prévoir que, dans les premiers jours de la campagne, les Français essaieraient d’envahir les provinces d’Alsace et de Lorraine qu’il s’agissait pour eux de délivrer »¹⁰.

⁷ FULLER, J.F.C. *A military history of the Western World. Vol. III* (New York 1957) 210.

⁸ Hoffmann, *La Guerre des Occasions Manquées*, 48.

⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 72.

Cependant, dès que l'Armée allemande sera prête à ouvrir d'espace suffisant à droite, il fallait absolument retirer des troupes de l'aile gauche et les transporter par voie ferrée et par étapes de marche vers le nord, leur véritable destination.

Pourtant, dit Hoffmann :

« A en juger par l'attitude du Haut Commandement allemand, ce ne fut sans doute pas le cas, car on laissa à l'aile gauche les effectifs considérables que s'y trouvaient, on fit continuer la bataille de Lorraine sous une forme offensive par la VI et VII Armées, et l'on approuva la tentative de rompre la ligne de fortifications françaises qui barraient la haute Moselle. C'était là, incontestablement, une dérogation consciente au plan primitif de Schlieffen »¹¹.

Plus tard, au cours de l'exécution du plan (25 août), Moltke prit la décision d'envoyer 4 Divisions arrêter l'avance russe en Prusse orientale, malgré les protestations de Ludendorff, qui a nié la nécessité de ces ressources. L'excuse donnée après la défaite à la bataille de la Marne fut celle-ci : le Haut Commandement allemand pensait que la bataille décisive était déjà livrée et gagnée sur le front Ouest¹².

Hoffmann croyait que, même après le résultat de la bataille de la Marne, il était encore temps de revenir au plan primitif de Schlieffen, en transportant dix Corps d'Armée de l'aile gauche à l'aile droite et en reprenant une offensive d'ensemble. Même si la situation en Alsace-Lorraine en devenait alors un peu difficile, ce fait serait compensé par le succès des forces allemandes dans le nord. Il semble qu'une suggestion très similaire a été faite au général von Falkenhayn, le nouveau Généralissime Allemand. Mais cette suggestion fut écartée. Ce fut, selon Hoffmann, « la première occasion manquée ».

La deuxième chance manquée, selon l'auteur, est venue quelques mois plus tard. Si Falkenhayn jugeait l'armée trop faible pour risquer une offensive de

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 73.

grande taille sur le front d'occident, il fallait au plus vite renoncer aux combats inutiles autour d'Ypres et se demander s'il n'était pas plus approprié transférer l'effort principal vers l'Est. La preuve serait le cours des combats sur le front de l'Est entre Septembre et Décembre 1914. Autour de la ville de Lodz combats ont eu lieu où les Allemands, indirectement soutenus par leurs alliés Autrichiens-Hongrois étaient très proche d'une grande victoire contre les Russes. Le 18 novembre quelque 150.000 Russes sont encerclés dans la ville par 250.000 Allemands. Mais le 23, le 25^e Corps d'Armée allemand, composé de jeunes soldats insuffisamment instruits et de sous-officiers trop vieux, est lui-même menacé d'encerclement par des Russes venant de Varsovie. Il manque de munitions. Il se produisit – dit Hoffmann – « un revers sensible au moment même où nous espérions un grand succès »¹³.

Seulement à partir du début de décembre les renforts promis (trois Corps d'Armée) commencèrent à arriver du front Ouest. Lodz fut prise le 6 décembre, mais les opérations n'obtinrent pas le succès décisif voulu. Il est possible de conclure que les renforts sont arrivés trop tard. Selon Hoffmann, avec deux Corps d'Armée de plus, au début de la campagne, en partant de Mlava (rive droite de la Vistule) et le résultat aurait pu être décisif. Ils aurait « facilement » atteint Varsovie et sa grande voie ferrée, qui était la principale ligne de ravitaillement de l'Armée russe.

4. Salonique

Lorsque, à la fin de 1915, on s'est rendu compte que la chute de la Serbie était imminente, ses alliés envoyèrent précipitamment des Divisions britanniques et françaises au port grec de Salonique, d'où partait le seul chemin permettant de porter aide aux Serbes. Mais il était trop tard et le chemin a été bloqué par les Bulgares, les nouveaux alliés de l'Allemagne.

¹³ Ibid., p. 85.

Au moment où l'Armée Serbe était en retraite vers l'Albanie, une divergence survient entre les puissances centrales. Franz Conrad, chef d'état-major de l'Armée Austro-Hongroise, voudrait avancer vers le sud, jusqu'à la prise de Salonique. Falkenhayn a toutefois considéré ce plan difficile à mettre en œuvre. Selon l'opinion de Hoffmann, la prise du port était nécessaire. Elle aurait entraîné l'abandon des projets de l'Entente contre la Bulgarie et les troupes bulgares auraient pu être utilisées contre la Roumanie ou pour forcer ce pays à rester neutre. Mais ce n'était pas le plus grave. Il dit :

« Le front de Salonique fut donc maintenu, ce qui nous força à maintenir des troupes en Macédoine et amena enfin, en 1918, l'effondrement complet de la Bulgarie, notre alliée. »

5. L'inutile Révolution Russe

Au printemps de 1917 le moral du soldat Allemand baissait et les difficultés de ravitaillement augmentaient. Les États-Unis avaient déclaré la guerre aux Puissances Centrales.

En ce grave moment, il se produisit un événement notable, en mesure à offrir à l'Allemagne la possibilité de vaincre par les armes: ce fut la déposition du tsar et l'arrivée de Kerenski au pouvoir en Russie. Toutefois, selon le témoignage de Hoffmann, l'Allemagne n'a pas su faire face à ce changement de scénario. Le ministère des Affaires Étrangères Allemand a nourri l'espoir de conclure la paix avec le nouveau maître de la Russie et la tendance était donc de ne pas attaquer les Russes pour le moment.

Hoffmann, écrivant sur ce sujet en 1922, déplorait la décision adoptée :

« Aujourd'hui, où l'on voit plus clairement la situation d'alors, on ne peut que regretter que nous n'ayons pas (...) essayé de faire céder l'Armée russe par une offensive générale dès les premiers jours de la révolution, alors que le soldat russe était disposé à tirer de cette révolution les conséquences qui, pour

lui, semblaient toutes naturelles, en abandonnant son fusil et en rentrant dans ses foyers »¹⁴.

Sur le front Est, les mois de mai et de juin furent une période d'inaction. Mais le temps a montré que Kerenski n'avait pas l'intention de faire une paix séparée avec l'Allemagne. Compte tenu de cette situation, l'Allemagne cherchait à augmenter par la propagande la désagrégation jetée dans l'Armée russe par la révolution. Puis vint l'idée d'aider certains exilés Russes résidents en Suisse à faire le chemin de retour à leurs pays. « C'est ainsi – dit Hoffmann – que se prépara le voyage célèbre de Lénine, transporté à Pétersbourg à travers l'Allemagne ».

L'auteur n'est pas au courant si le Haut Commandement allemand avait connaissance de cette mesure. Pour sa part, avoue Hoffmann :

« Si l'on m'avait demandé mon avis, j'aurais pu difficilement élever des objections, car personne à ce moment-là ne pouvait prévoir les désastreuses conséquences que l'apparition de ces hommes devait entraîner pour la Russie et pour l'Europe entière »¹⁵.

6. Conclusion

Ces brèves observations démontrent que le livre de Hoffmann continue à fournir des informations précieuses sur les doutes et les crises qui ont frappé le Haut Commandement allemand pendant les quatre années de guerre. Mais il ne parle pas seulement des grandes questions. Il fournit également des détails qui aident à expliquer les particularités de ce conflit. Il parle des transmissions télégraphiques, des messages radio interceptés, du « brouillard de la guerre », des moyens de transport, des difficultés logistiques, parmi d'autres questions qui ont limité les opérations militaires. Il nous montre, par exemple, que les généraux allemands positionnés sur le front de l'Est avaient peu de connaissance de ce qui

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 177.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 184.

se passait réellement sur le front de l'Ouest, et vice versa. Nous dit encore que, à l'Est, « une Armée allemande était condamnée à s'arrêter si elle s'éloignait d'une centaine de kilomètres de la voie ferré »¹⁶. En résumé, le livre est un témoignage de l'importance de la mémoire individuelle pour l'étude des faits historiques.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 69.

Captain (N) Dr. Denis Kozlov (Russia)
Strategic Command of Russian Armed Forces
in the First World War: Achievements and Problems

On the eve of First World War Russia had been intensively developing her armed forces as a vital means of achieving the goals of foreign and domestic (to some extent) policies. In the arms race that began on the threshold of First World War Russia did not lagged behind much from her potential enemies and future allies as concerned rearmament and military strength, as well as military potential in general. In spite of the economic and technological backwardness, insufficient transport and mobilization capacity, internal instability and other problems fighting efficiency and readiness of the Russian Army and Navy were in general at the level of the main European countries, and in some parameters even took first place in the world.

In particular, before and during First World War, Russia made significant progress in development and improvement of the strategic command of the Armed forces.

Russian War Ministry prepared a new edition of "Regulations of the Field Command and Control in Wartime". The previous edition of this document was published in 1890¹ The document defined the *"organization of the higher military command and control of the troops, designed for military actions ... as well as duties, rights and responsibilities of the field command and control bodies and officials"*². The Regulations established the position of Supreme Commander-in-Chief, who was the highest commander of all land and naval

¹I. I. Rostunov, *Russky front pervoi mirovoi voiny (issledovanie opyta strategicheskogo rukovodstva vooruzhennymi silami)*. Dissertation (Moscow 1974) 74–76.

² *Polozhenie o polevom upravlenii voisk v voennoe vremia* (Saint-Petersburg 1914) 1.

forces. He had in his hands absolute power and the right to conduct military operations in *"all ways, which he recognizes right"*. With the Supreme Commander-in-Chief there were formed Headquarters, consisting of departments: Quartermaster General (operational), Duty General (responsible for organization of the forces and communication with War Ministry), Chief of Military Transportation, Commandant and Naval Department. In accordance with the 1890 "Regulations ..." each field army was subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief. The new document stated that *"several armies, designed to achieve certain strategic objectives and acting at a certain front, can be joined in a higher military formation, organizing an Army Group of the front"*. Thus it was formally established a new interim echelon of command – the Front. These measures were intended to facilitate the control of large force groupings.

However, the idea of Supreme Commander-in-Chief post establishing appears in the earlier strategic planning documents, in particular, in "Notes for commanders-in-chief in case of war with the Triple Alliance countries", the highest approved 1 (14) May 1912³. Even earlier – in 1902 – it has been suggested the creation of front-level management⁴.

New edition of the "Regulations..." was prepared by the middle of 1914. In early June, it was sent out to the concerned departments for "review and conclusion". War Minister V. A. Sukhomlinov supposed in mid-July to submit the project for consideration by the Military Council. After that it was to be submitted for the highest approval by the Tsar⁵. A special commission of the Military Council, headed by General A. P. Vernander, did not find any serious

³ Rossiisky gosudarstvenny voenno-istorichesky arkhiv [hereinafter RGVIA], *fond* [collection] 2000, *opis'* [inventory] 1, *delo* [item] 2236, *list* [folio] 2–7.

⁴ Yu. N. Danilov, *Veliky knyaz' Nikilai Nikolaevich* (Moscow and Zhukovsky 2006) 102–105.

⁵ Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Imperii [hereinafter AVPRI], *fond* [collection] 134, *opis'* [inventory] 473, *delo* [item] 5, *list* [folio] 12.

faults in the project⁶, but the Naval General Staff found a number of serious drawbacks in the proposed system of strategic control. First of all, "naval" part of the "Regulations..." was in clear contradiction with the Navy Manual and with regulations of the Naval central departments. It should be also noted, that Front received the status of "strategic echelon of command", which independently fulfilled the tasks on its own theater of war or strategic direction. However the highest naval task force – the fleet – was not positioned in the military structure. According to the report of the Navy Minister Admiral I. K. Grigorovich, Nicholas II ordered to revise the appropriate sections of the "Regulations..."⁷ Due to the rapid escalation of the international tension War Ministry had to insist to put the new document into force immediately. 16 (29) July 1914, a few days before the war, "Regulations..." were approved by the General Staff, and also received the highest approval. *"Since 1908 I worked about this "Regulations...", but it was forgotten. Only 15 July (1914 – D. K.) it was bethink and 16 July was taken to the Emperor for approval. One day, to do such work, of course, impossible"* – shows F. F. Palitsyn, who headed General Staff in 1905–1908⁸. According to the memoirs of Yu. N. Danilov (at that time – Lieutenant-General, Quartermaster-General of the General Staff), the problem was solved *"on one night session on the eve of the war"*⁹. *"It was one of the major defects in our preparation. This important document was completed and approved under the thunder of coming war"* – rightly observes S. K. Dobrorolsky, who in 1914 headed the Mobilization Department of the General Staff Main Directorate¹⁰.

⁶ Ibid, ll. 14–129.

⁷ Rossiisky gosudarstvenny arkhiv voenno-morskogo flota [hereinafter RGA VMF], f. 716, op. 1, d. 63, l. 2.

⁸ *Voenny dnevnik velikogo knyazia Andreyia Vladimirovicha Romanova (1914–1917)* (Moscow 2008) 142.

⁹ Yu. N. Danilov, *Rossiia v mirovoi voine, 1914–1915* (Berlin 1924) 52.

¹⁰ S. Dobrorolsky, "O mobilizatsii russkoi armii v 1914 godu", in: *Voenny sbornik Obshestva revnitel'ei voennykh znaniy*, Vol. 1 (1921), 103.

This document was approved in a hurry and contained a number of other even more serious flaws as compared with the bad cooperation between Army and Navy Command. The authors of "Regulations..." thought that with the beginning of the war Tsar Nicholas II would fulfill the duties of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. That almost happened in 1914. But under the pressure from ministers Nicholas II gave up that idea and gave the command to his uncle – Grand Duke Nicholas¹¹. As a result, the new document in *"a very vague and incomplete manner established"* the relations and distribution of functions between the high military command and the government¹². In addition, future war was seen as short termed operations, and that is why the operational command and control of the Supreme Headquarters was completely separated from the problems of logistics, which were under War and Naval Ministries. This situation was corrected in the course of the war¹³. Gradually, the Supreme Headquarters (Stavka) took over the control of all the sectors of the logistical support.

War Ministry and its departments continued to work, in fact, in the mode of peace time because there were no documents specifying their work in the state of war. General Staff Main Directorate (Chart 1), that was the central body of the General Staff remained as part of War Ministry, and had no effect on the strategic planning and control of troops. After replacing of N. N. Yanushkevich in Supreme Headquarters, General Staff Main Directorate was headed by Lieutenant-General M. A. Belyaev. This body became *"a unifying for the distribution of all accumulated and available military resources between the fronts and districts depending on the actual needs and in accordance with the Supreme Commander Staff instructions for any cases"*¹⁴. Despite the fact that

¹¹ O. R. Airapetov, *Generalny, liberalny i predprenimateli: rabota na front i na revolyutsiyu (1907–1917)* (Moscow 2003) 32–36.

¹² A. D. Bubnov, *V tsarskoi stavke* (Saint-Petersburg, 1995) 7.

¹³ I. I. Rostunov, *Russky front pervoi mirovoi voyny (issledovanie opyta strategicheskogo rukovodstva vooruzhennymi silami)* 75–79.

¹⁴ RGVIA, f. 2000, op. 2, d. 2883, l. 124.

General Staff Main Directorate had no direct by forces, its role during the war remained significant. The Main Directorate was responsible for the mobilization, organization of the field, reserve and militia forces, training of officers and non-commissioned officers, reinforcements. It was also responsible for the domestic and foreign military purchases, transportation of troops and military cargos, including coming from abroad, evacuation to the rear areas, using of POWs and others¹⁵. One of the most important function of the Main Directorate in time of war was the control of all intelligence and counterintelligence services.

Thus since the beginning of mobilization and for the entire period of the war the military organization of the country was divided into two separate and independently controlled parts: Theater of War that was under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, and rear regions of the country ("deep rear"), where there were located military establishments, and reserve troops, – they remained under War Minister. There were no special body that coordinated the actions of the front and rear in the interest of winning the war. Extremely negative on the activities of the Military Ministry, especially in the field of military supplies of the forces, reflected the lack of a common plan of action and unity in the work of the departments, as well as the absence of a close relationship between these departments and supply authorities of fronts.

Concentration of several armies on the theater of war required joining them in the fronts (Chart 2). After the war began Russia for the first time in the world organized two fronts – North-Western Front (two armies), and South-Western Front (four armies). During the war Russia also organized three fronts more. In the land armed forces of Western Europe soon appeared similar formations, which were called "army group".

During the war, the Russian army developed a clear system of strategic decision-making and transmission of the orders to troops in the field. Usually

¹⁵ A. Kavtaradze, "Iz istorii russkogo Generalnogo shtaba", in: Voennno-istorichesky zhurnal, 1976, № 3, 103.

high command assessed the situation, made a preliminary decision and transmitted it to the chiefs of the armies. After receiving feedback of proposals and amendments (if necessary), the final directive was issued. In critical cases, the Supreme Headquarters held meetings with army commanders and chiefs of their staffs. For example, it was the case on 1 (14) April 1916, on the eve of "Brusilov Breakthrough". Those meetings were aimed to clear up situations and fronts missions, determine the needs and moods of the troops, and consider the commanders decisions. In general, Supreme Headquarters carried out only general control of the field troops, and did not interfered in the management of fronts operations, although there was a significant telegraph correspondence. Every day Supreme Headquarters received about thirty operational and intelligence reports. Daily each army sent four telegraphic reports, and staffs of the three fronts, and the Black Sea Fleet sent summarized reports ("information summaries"). Supreme Headquarters accumulated a significant amount of documents, and staff workers were struggling to cope with their analysis and processing. Reporting this to Naval General Staff, V. M. Altfater wrote: *"How to think about the operations and management, when armies and fronts have only one thought – in good time send to the General Headquarters all ocean of the papers"*¹⁶. As Yu. N. Danilov wrote, the army commanders *"seldom raised in their thinking to the height of the overall objectives and were usually confined to the private interests of their own front"*¹⁷. The front commanders also usually confined themselves to drawing up a general plan of the battle. They did not assigned concrete missions to the armies and thus did not control their implementation.

Sometimes armies were assigned missions that were absolutely impossible. Decision-making at various levels took a long time. Directives of Front

¹⁶ V. Simonenko, "Organy upravleniya russkogo flota v pervuyu mirovuyu voinu", in: *Voenno-istorichesky zhurnal*, 1975, № 9, 105.

¹⁷ Yu. N. Danilov, *Rossiya v mirovoi voine, 1914–1915*, 130.

Commanders as a rule were not timely received in the armies while the situation on the battlefield could significantly change. In other words, Supreme Headquarters, Field staffs of Fronts and Armies acted in different manner and were not coordinated. It was no good for the effectiveness of command and control. Further objectives were not planned during the operations of the fronts¹⁸. Thus the method of joint decision-making and coordination of the decisions of the fronts Commander-in-Chiefs was not very effective especially when the Supreme Commander-in-Chief was not a strong man.

Sustainable development trend of forces control system in the First World War was the increasing role of staffs at all levels. The scope of their tasks compared to past wars has grown considerably. The main of them were: collecting and processing data about the situation, needed for confirm solutions and forces control; planning and organization of operations; creating of regulations and orders for the forces; their delivery; analysis of the reports and creating of proposals to leadership; establishing and maintenance continuous communication with subordinates and higher headquarters; resolution of any question, related with the preparing and implementation of operations. Using of communication equipment (telegraph, telephone, radio, airplane) has been important factor in increasing the centralization and strengthening control of forces, acting on remote areas.

The Navy command and control system changed greatly during the war. Since the beginning of the war, its organizational basis included Naval department under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief (control of the Black Sea Fleet), and Naval department of the 6th Army Staff (control of the Baltic Sea Fleet) (Chart 3). The administrative and supply management, shipbuilding, training of the reserve forces and recruitment for the Navy remained under the Naval Ministry. In the opinion of V. M. Altfater, Navy Minister became "*chief*

¹⁸ *Gosudarstvennoe i voennoe upravlenie Rossii i SSSR v voinah XVIII–XX vekov* (Moscow 2003) 286.

supplier and technical-economic preparer"¹⁹. Naval departments were manned by "pulling out" officers from the Naval General Staff. Moreover, since the beginning of the war it was excluded from the control of the fleets²⁰. Deputy Chief of the Naval General Staff Rear Admiral D. V. Nenyukov was appointed Chief of Supreme Commander's Naval department.

In remark of I. K. Grigorovich, functions of Naval departments were "*absolutely not designed and not determined*"²¹. In Naval Regulations, these control bodies were not mentioned at all. As for the "Regulations of the Field Command and Control in Wartime", it Art. 88 shortly determined the functions of Naval Department. This functions reduced to inform the Supreme Commander informing about the for the arising rate "*Naval question*", which can appear in Supreme Headquarter.

Practically the activities of the Naval department were reduced to drawing up directives for fleets and control of their fulfillment. According to B. P. Aprelev, "*close and friendly*" work of naval departments and fleet commander staffs helped a lot of long-standing work relationships and personal knowing between Supreme Headquarters naval officers and operating officers of Baltic and Black sea fleets. Many of them were from Naval General Staff²². At the same time, as noted by A. V. Nemitz, "*Admiral Nenyukov held wisdom not to prevent for fleet commanders and their staffs to operate independently*"²³.

¹⁹ K. B. Nazarenko, *Flot, revolyutsiya i vlast' v Rossii: 1917–1921* (Moscow 2011) 268.

²⁰ A. Shtal', "Sovmestnaya rabota vyshego morskogo i verhovnogo komandovaniya Rossii v mirovuyu voinu", in: *Voennaya mysl' i revolyutsiya*, 1924, June–July, 127–129; V. G. Simonenko, "Morskoi generalny shtab Rossii. Iz istorii sozdaniya i deyatelnosti v 1906–1917 gg.", in: *Voenno-istorichesky zhurnal*, 2004, № 7, 24–29.

²¹ RGA VMF, f. 716, op. 1, d. 63, l. 3.

²² "Vyderzhki iz dnevnika kapitana 2 ranga Apreleva (ot 14/27 fevralya po 12/25 iyulya 1915 g.)", in: *Zarubezhny morskoi sbornik*, 1930, № 11–12; 5, 6.

²³ A. V. Nemitz, "Nedavnee proshloye russkogo flota (po lichnym vospominaniyam)", in: *Grazhdanskaya voina v Rossii: Chernomorsky flot* (Moscow 2002) 312.

The experience of the first campaigns showed that Naval departments have *"neither authority, nor competence and resources of the Naval General Staff"*²⁴. The departments were cut off from the active fleets. They did not command, but only fixed events on naval theaters. Grand Duke Kirill Vladimirovich, whose memoirs contain very frank discussions about the activities of the Supreme Headquarters, called service in the Naval department "idle". He complained that, as a naval officer, he *"could hardly find anything to do"*²⁵.

After painful failure of 1915 campaign Nicholas II partly reorganized the military command and control system at the strategic level and replaced the high command. 23 August (5 September) 1915 Nicholas II made a very controversial decision (from both military and political point of view) to take over the Supreme Command²⁶. In fact, the Chief of Supreme Headquarters Staff General of Infantry M. V. Alekseev carried out daily duties of commanding the troops in the field. The Headquarters was relocated to Mogilev, and its structure had changed. The number of departments increased from 6 to 12. The number of officers and personnel increased three times and exceeded more than two hundred people²⁷. *"With the adoption of the High Command by the Emperor, Supreme Headquarter became the Paradise, the states began to increase, and climbers of all ranks are come there in the hope to get their piece of the pie. Special talents, however, did not appear"* – not without sarcasm remarked D. V. Nenyukov²⁸. Baltic Fleet was moved to the operational control of the Northern Front Commander-in-Chief,

²⁴ A. Shtal', "Sovmestnaya rabota vyshego morskogo i verhovnogo komandovaniya Rossii v mirovuyu voinu", 128.

²⁵ Kirill Vladimirovich, velikiy knyaz', *Moya zhizn' na sluzhbe Rossii* (Moscow 2006) 167.

²⁶ RGVIA, f. 2000, op. 1, d. 8375, l. 7; S. V. Tyutyukin, "Rossiya: ot Velikoi voiny k Velikoi revolyutsii", in: *Voina i obshestvo v XX veke*, Vol. 1: *Voina i obshestvo nakanune i v period Pervoi mirovoi voiny* (Moscow 2008) 135–137.

²⁷ Yu. A. Alekseev, A. A. Budko, M. M. Galanov and others, *300 let voennoi istorii Sankt-Peterburga* (Saint-Petersburg 2003) 202.

²⁸ Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Rossiyskoi Federatsii [GARF], f. p-5881, op. 2, d. 532, l. 85.

General of Infantry N. V. Ruzsky. Naval department was included into his headquarters. Black Sea Fleet remained under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief.

The reorganization carried out in August 1915, essentially did not contribute to optimization of the command and control from both the front level and the Supreme Command. As example of "inconsistencies" in passing of instructive documents can be statement by General of Infantry M. V. Alexeyev "Regulations on the intelligence and counterintelligence departments of Black Sea Fleet Staff in time of war". This document was approved by flag-captain by an operative part of the Black Sea Fleet Staff Captain 1st Rank K. F. Ketlinsky without official permission of Naval General Staff. This fact displeased I. K. Grigorovich and temporary executed post of Naval General Staff assistant Captain 1st Rank earl A. P. Kapnist and provoked intense correspondence between Naval General Staff, Supreme Headquarters and Black Sea Fleet Staff²⁹.

The Navy Minister was not satisfied by the command and control system of the fleet forces, which had arisen with the beginning of the war. He tried to save the formal rights of "superior head" of the Navy and Navy Department for war time³⁰. In one of reports I. K. Grigorovich wrote that he continues to implement the duties about *"the content of the Navy in the proper composition and combat readiness, as well as the direction of all naval units ... to the purpose of their establishment"*³¹. Navy Minister claimed that fleets commanders-in-chief usually subordinate him. That's why he insisted in authorities about issue directives on fleets and monitoring of their implementation.

²⁹ RGA VMF, f. 418, op. 1, d. 1416, ll. 29–31.

³⁰ Navy Minister was directly in charge of the Navy only in peacetime. According to Art. 29 of Naval Regulations in time of war fleets commanders-in-chief were subordinated to the Emperor or appointed Supreme Commander-in-Chief. (Svod morskikh postanovlenii. Kniga desyataya. Morskoi ustav. (Petrograd 1914) 5.)

³¹ V. Simonenko, "Organy upravleniya russkogo flota v pervuyu mirovuyu voinu", 105.

In October 1915, the Minister proposed to establish an independent Naval Staff in the Supreme Headquarters under the command of the chief of the Naval General Staff vice admiral A.I. Rusin. In the "Explanatory note to the project of statute of His Imperial Majesty Naval Staff" I. K. Grigorovich, in particular, wrote: *"The operational work center of gravity should certainly be placed in His Majesty Naval Staff as a body that has an immediate capacity to carry out its plans by presenting its proposals to the Supreme Commander..."*³².

The Emperor approved the report of the Minister, but the final decision postponed until the return of Vice Admiral A. I. Rusin from a two-month trip to England and France³³. 24 January (6 February) 1916 I. K. Grigorovich presented to the Emperor a new report. This report, which contained the project of the Supreme Headquarter Naval Staff creating, offered to release the Baltic Sea Fleet from the jurisdiction of the Commander-in-Chief Northern front armies³⁴. The same day, "Statute of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Naval Staff" came into force (Chart 4). That body had been functioning in Supreme Headquarters until September 1917.

Thus, during the First World War, control over naval forces was concentrated in the Naval departments assigned to the Staffs of land forces, which operatively controlled the subordinate fleets, and also in the Naval Staff of the Supreme Command. That chain of command practically excluded the Naval General Staff (Chart 5) from the control system, although it was ready to fulfill that task and had the necessary control capacity. The naval subdivisions of the Supreme Headquarters did not make effective bodies of Navy strategic control. *"Misunderstanding of the naval warfare conditions on the one hand, distrust of the navy and the lack of sufficiently authoritative body of fleets control in Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the over hand, became a source of constant*

³² RGA VMF, f. 418, op. 1, d. 1416, ll. 25–27.

³³ AVPRI, f. 138, op. 467, d. 644, ll. 2–12.

³⁴ RGA VMF, f. 716, op. 1, d. 63, l. 4.

friction between the Supreme Headquarter and the naval command on both seas"
– rightly pointed A. V. Shtal'³⁵.

However the main problem of command and control over the country and armed forces was disability of Nicholas II and the state high bureaucracy to ensure the unity of the military, economic and political leadership. Finally, it became one of the major causes of the defeat of Russia.

³⁵ A. Shtal', "Sovmestnaya rabota vyshego morskogo i verhovnogo komandovaniya Rossii v mirovuyu voinu", 138.

Chart 1

The structure of General Staff Main Directorate

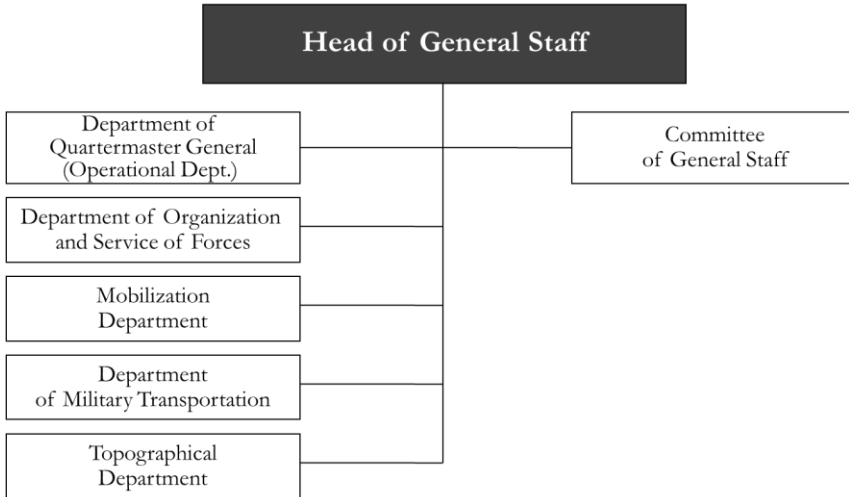


Chart 2

Scheme of field forces control in the Eastern European theatre of war (august 1914)

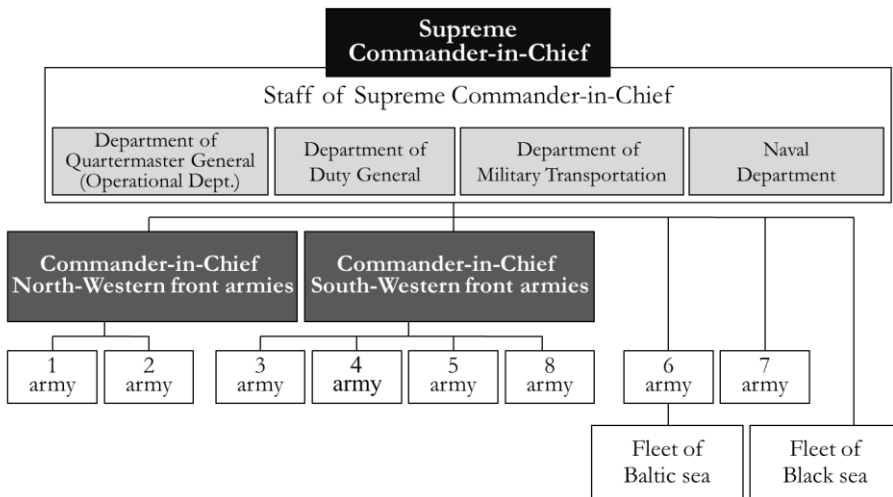


Chart 3

The system of acting naval forces command (august 1914 – august 1915)

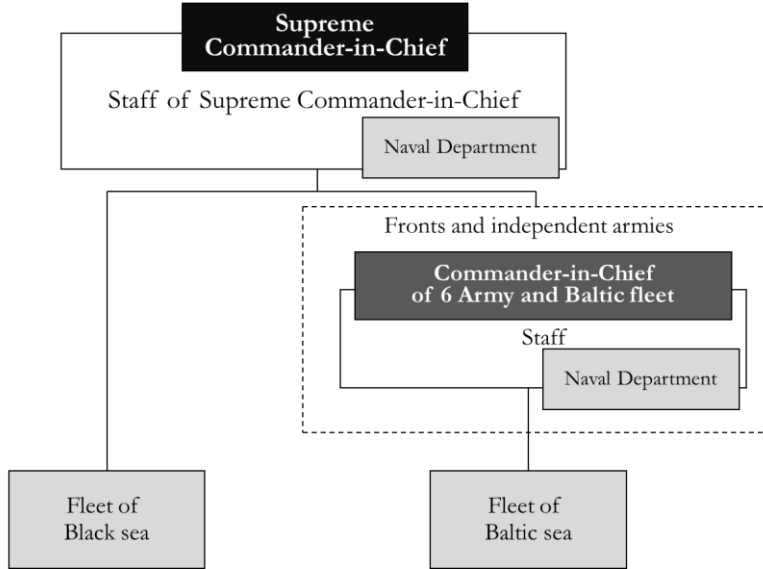


Chart 4

Naval Staff of Supreme Commander-in-Chief (1916–1917)

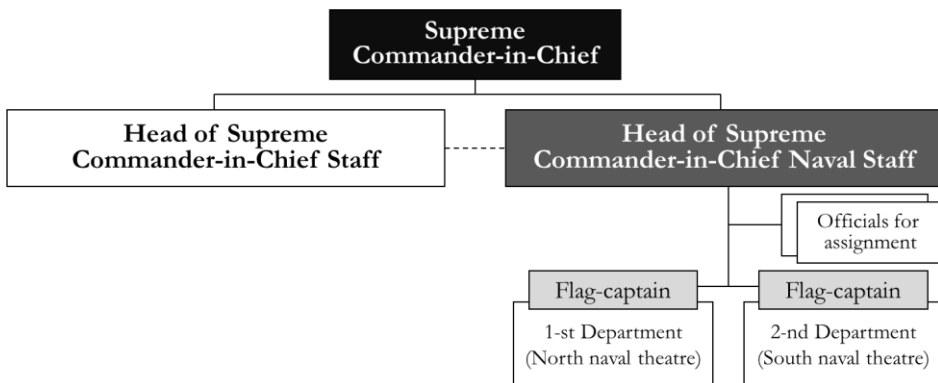
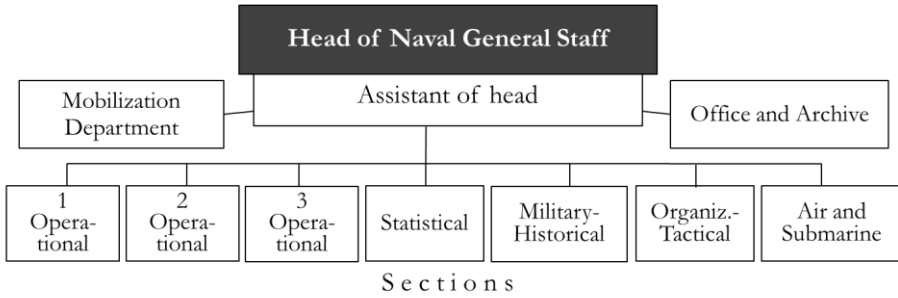


Chart 5

The structure of Naval General Staff
in accordance with temporary wartime staff
(Resolution of Admiralty-Council 1 (14) December 1914)



Prof. Dr. Recep Boztemur (Turkey)
The Ottoman Empire in the First World War

Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing the position and policies of the Ottoman Empire before and during the Great War. Central to the paper is, on the one hand, to understand domestic and foreign policies of the Ottoman Empire during the war, and on the other, to evaluate the effects of the war on the political changes at the end of the age of empires.

The most important battlegrounds of the war for the Ottoman Empire were Gallipoli, Eastern Anatolia, and Southern Front in the Arab territories. Though Ottoman Armies fought the wars well in contrast to their performances in the Balkan Wars, the end of the Great War happened to be lethal for the Central Powers that were forced to be dissolved in favor of nation-states. As the war brought an end to the age of empires, the post-war arrangements led to the establishment of mandate regimes in the Arab territories, and the occupation of Anatolia by the Allied Powers. The paper will conclude with an analysis of the continuation of war three more years as an anti-imperialist struggle by the Turkish nationalists as the only forces to rise against the Allied after the Great War.

William E. Gladstone:

*[The Turks] one and all, bag
and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out*

*from the province they have desolated
and profaned. (1876)*

An American Officer:

*The Greatest reward of the
war is the Middle East.*

Introduction

The Great Powers of Europe started to change the world map decisively since the Congress of Vienna with the power and impetus provided by technological developments and economic power, gained as a result of capitalist world economy, and its last stage, imperialism. The Great War was not only the end result of the struggle among the Great Powers for world hegemony, but also was the beginning of another new world order, established by the nation-states as a new form of political and economic competition in the global scale. The Ottoman Empire, already subject to partitioning by Britain, France and Russia in the 19th century, became the most important scene of the Great War due to the Great Power's objectives and ambitions in the post-war order. While the war became a war of attrition in the Western Front between the Allied and central powers, it became a war of partition in the Ottoman territories.

The Ottoman Position in the War

As the first decade of the twentieth century ends, the alliances among the Great Powers of Europe were already established. The 1894 French-Russian Treaty, the 1904 *Entente Cordialé* between the British and

French, and the 1907 British-Russian Treaty established the Allied Powers, as the Central Powers, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy were trying to attract the Balkan states, namely, Bulgaria and Romania, and the Ottoman Empire, which, was pursuing a policy of balance and playing off between the powers against each other until the Fall of 1914. The Ottoman Empire, undecided yet, for whom to play the cards in the Summer of 1914, were hosting the British naval advisors under Admiral Arthur Limpus for the renovation of the Ottoman navy, and German advisors, since 1893, under Colmar von der Goltz, for the reform of the Ottoman land troops. Another German mission led by Liman von Sanders arrived at Istanbul in 1913 for military reforms. While a part of the Ottoman ruling CUP, Cemal Pasha, Minister of Navy, for example, was trying to convince the French to ally with the Ottoman armies, Cavit Bey, Minister of Finance, was considering a rapprochement with France, and the other part, led by Enver Pasha, the Minister of War, and acting General Chief of Staff, believed that Germany would win over in any war against the Western Powers, and inclined for a treaty with Germany and its allies against Russia. Enver Pasha was also planning his Panturkist ambitions of unifying the Turks in Russia to be realized with the German support (Ülman, 216). The Ottoman participation into the Central Power was not because of rational accounting of the Ottoman position in the coming international conflict, but because of arbitrary personal ambitions of a part of Ottoman authorities, namely Enver Pasha. The CUP triumvirate, Enver, Cemal and Talat Pashas (Minister of Interior), were looking for the support of rising Germany against Russia, since for them if nothing was done, the Empire would continue to lose especially after the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgarian independence in 1908, the Italian

occupation of Libya in 1911 and the humiliating Ottoman defeats in 1912-13 Balkan wars. The CUP considered German and Austrian-Hungarian alliance as the only way for the liberation of the Empire from dissolution.

The Ottoman Entrance to the War

On August 2nd 1914, just between two days when Germany declared war against Russia on the 1st and against France on the 3rd of August, the Ottoman Empire signed a treaty with Germany, which provided to both states with neutrality in case of an Austrian-Serbian war. The treaty required the Ottoman Empire to ally with Germany in case of a German-Russian war, and required Germany to send a military mission led by Liman von Sanders to Turkey. Germany was going to support the Ottoman Empire as well in case of a Russian attack. (Ülman, 218). However, Germany had already started its campaign against Luxembourg, and begun to engage in the occupation of Belgium for a passage towards France on the same day in accordance with the Schlieffen Plan. Therefore, the Ottoman-German alliance already started to be effective, even at the time of the signature.

As stated above, Germany already declared war against Russia one day before the Ottoman treaty. This was a *fait accompli* for the Ottoman participation into the Central Powers, however, as the treaty required for the Ottoman Empire to join the German-Russian war, the Ottoman government led by Sait Halim Pasha declared neutrality on the 3rd of August. The PM, Sait Halim Pasha, asked German help for the removal of capitulations and German military support to the Ottoman army, and Bulgarian alliance and Romanian neutrality for the Ottoman participation

in the war. Germany helped the Ottoman diplomacy to sign a treaty of friendship and mutual support with Bulgaria on 19th of August, however, Bulgaria asked for Romanian neutrality for her participation.

The Importance of the Ottoman Empire for the Central Powers

The war in the Western Front became a trench war, a war of attrition, between the French and British allies against the Germans in a 650 km front in Marne, and the war in the Eastern Front was settled as another trench war between Austria-Hungary against Russian troops in an area from the Russian Baltic to Poland and Romania. The war in the South was certainly secondary to the real war scene, where even Verdun and Somme in 1916 could not break up the balance between the Allied and Central armies.

The Ottoman position in the war became clearer with a second *fait accompli* in the summer of 1914 by Churchill's (Minister of Navy) takeover of two warships, Sultan Osman I and Reşadiye, built in the Tyneside dockyard. These two dreadnoughts were going to give naval superiority in the Black Sea to the Ottoman Empire, and to strengthen the Ottoman navy against the Russian fleet for the defense of the Straits. The Ottoman government was manipulated by the two German warships, Goeben and Breslau's entrance through the Turkish Straits, most possibly by the invitation of Enver Pasha. The Ottoman government challenged the British takeover of Ottoman warships by declaring that these two German warships were bought from the German navy, and became part of the

Ottoman fleet, but only by name as Yavuz and Midilli, and under the Turkish flag.

The Ottoman Empire was vital for the success of German and Austria-Hungarian war aims for several reasons. The Ottoman Empire was first a Mediterranean power, and always a threat to British communications to the East. Though Egypt was under British occupation since 1882, the possible Ottoman attacks to the Suez Canal might have prevented the transportation of British forces from India and Australia to the Western fronts. Lord Kitchener once rightly pointed out that the war with Turkey must have been avoided, the Suez must have been kept open at least until the British colonial forces passed through safely (Fraser, Mango, 2011, 59). Second, the Ottoman armies were controlling Mesopotamia, a region which was so important not only for the passing of British Indian army, but also so close to Abadan where oil for the British war machine was provided.

Third, the Turkish Straits were critical for the communication of the Allied Powers, and when necessary, were the only sea route for the British to send food aid and military and arms support to Russia. Russia had an eye on the Straits since 1770s, not only they were the only outlet for the Russian trade from the Black Sea, but also Russia needed the control of the Straits in order to enlarge its empire to the Mediterranean in the age of imperialism. Russia also wanted the control Istanbul and its hinterland, as it was agreed upon in the secret treaties signed between the Allies during the war. However, the British never wanted such a Russian control of Istanbul and the Balkans, as it became obvious during the Gallipoli Campaign.

Fourth, the Ottoman Empire had a very long border with its traditional enemy, Russia along the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia. The Caucasus and Central Asia along with Iran was another passage for Russia to take its hegemony to India and the Indian Ocean. For Germany, the Ottoman Empire could have opened new fronts with Russia in the east, and kept the Russian armies busy, and diverted Russian focus from European war scene. The Ottoman Empire's closing of the Straits to the Ally vessels could have helped the Russian army's breaking up against the German and Austrian attacks.

Finally, the declaration by the Ottoman Sultan of jihad was another German war aim. Jihad (holy war) might have moved the Muslims in the British and Russian empires toward rebellion against the imperial authorities, and might have contributed to the explosion of internal disorders in British and Russian empires.⁸² Britain's Indian troops were mostly collected from Muslim-populated Panjab, French troops were coming from France's North African colonies. Jihad, therefore, of the Ottoman Sultan Caliph was expected to create chaos and anarchy in the Allied armies.

⁸² In mid-August, the Allied representatives in Istanbul offered the Ottoman government to keep neutrality in the war in return for the protection of the territorial integrity of the empire. The Ottoman authorities asked the return of Dodecanese islands from Italy and Egypt from Britain, and British and French protection against Russia, and the removal of capitulations. However, these demands were essential for the Allied agreements, and their refusal strengthened the position of those Ottoman leaders who wanted an alliance with Germany (Ülman, 222).

The conflict within the Ottoman government, and the hesitation of Sait Halim Pasha towards the participation into the war on the side of Central Powers were unraveled with the move of the Ottoman navy, together with newly-acquired Turkish warships, Yavuz and Midilli, on 27th October, to the Black Sea under German Admiral Wilhelm Souchon, and with its bombardment of Russian naval bases and port cities, Odessa, Sevastopol and Novorossiysk on 29th October. Russian declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire on Nov. 2nd was followed by Britain and France in few days. The Ottoman Empire was now forced to fully engage in war, with the entire domestic economic and financial difficulties, an unprepared, tired and dispirited army, lack of war supplies, and even in the absence of a war plan.

The Sultan declared jihad on November 14 against the Allies, however, the declaration did not receive any return, even from the Sultan-appointed Sharif Hussein, the emir of Hejaz, the Ottoman province covering Mecca and Medina, and the eastern coast of the Red Sea. The religious authority in India, the Nizam of Haydarabad, issued a decree to call the Muslims to fight on the side of the Allies (Fraser, Mango, 2011, 60).

The Ottoman War Fronts

The Eastern Front: Sarıkamış

The first battleground of the Ottoman armies was, in December 1914, in Eastern Anatolia. Enver Pasha's move towards Kars in Eastern Anatolia, under control of Russia since 1878 was a full disaster for the

Turkish army in the Caucasus front. Almost 90.000 Turkish troops could not reach to Sarıkamış, and remained at the Allahüekber Mountain in January 1915 just as Napoleon's army lost to General Winter in 1812. The Ottoman army was weak in arms, ammunition, outfit and leadership, and the nearest Turkish communication lines were far by tens of kilometers. Only 12.000 soldiers could make it back safely in both battles.

The Turkish military operations continued in summer 1916 in Eastern Anatolia. One of the operations was conducted via Erzurum, and the other via Van and Muş towards the Russian occupied Kars. Also in the same year Enver Pasha started a further movement towards Iran to stop the British Indian army moving northward from Basra Gulf, and to prevent the unification of this army with the Russian troops.

Çanakkale Battles

On February 19, 1915, the Allied Navy, formed by the British Queen Elizabeth type dreadnoughts and French warship started bombarding the Gallipoli Peninsula to open a passage way to Istanbul. Forcing the Turkish troops back in Çanakkale was the Minister of Navy, Winston Churchill's decision. If the Allied forces would get to Gallipoli, he thought, Istanbul would have fallen to the Allied troops, and this would have created two important consequences for the benefit of the British Empire. First, if the capital city was captured, it would have facilitated the surrender of the Ottoman Empire, and the British would have much easily convinced the Balkan states, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria that hesitated to enter into war. Additionally, in case of the Ottoman defeat, the British

would have withdrawn the soldiery from Turkey and sent them to the other fronts against Germans and/or Austrians, where they were much needed. Second consequence of a possible capture of Istanbul was to take over the Ottoman capital before any action taken by Russia in the same vein. Additionally, the Straits were going to open to provide the connection between the Allies for the military and food needs of Russia.

On March 18, 1915, in the early morning, the Allied Navy commanded by Admiral de Robeck entered into the Dardanelles by heavily bombarding the Turkish bastions to pass through the Straits, but the Turks fought hard, and did not permit the Allies to do so. The Çanakkale Naval Wars ended in the evening with a heavy defeat of the Allied Navy, who lost a total of six warships, had to return to the Aegean Sea.

The Allies landed troops to Gallipoli on April 25, 1915, the British to the Peninsula in the European side, and the French to Kumkale in the Anatolian side. The British forces were recruited from its colonies in Australia and New Zealand, and named as ANZAC troops. Upon the Turkish resistance to the Allied forces, a second landing was done on August 6, 1915 to Suvla Bay. Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) appeared as the most successful commander of the Çanakkale Wars, from April landing to Anafartalar battles. The Allied troops, unsuccessful to overcome the Turkish resistance in Çanakkale, quit the war in about six months, and withdrew in Jan. 9, 1916. Mustafa Kemal, now ranked as Lieutenant General, the emerging leader of the Turkish army left for the Eastern front leading the troops sent to stop the Russian advance, which was still on with the help of the Ottoman subjects, the Armenians. The most important

consequences of the war are the failure of the Allied Powers to occupy Istanbul, to establish the communication with Russia, and the Bolshevik Revolution due mainly to the political, economic and financial difficulties of the Czar's Empire.

Most of the victorious troops of Çanakkale Wars were sent to the Balkan Fronts. Each of these forces was organized in corps to fight to prevent the spread of the Russian armies into the Balkans on the Galician, Romanian and Macedonian Fronts. 15th corps consisting of 19th and 20th divisions was sent to the Galician Front. These corps, composed of 33,000 well-trained troops was commanded by Colonel Yakup Şevki (Subaşı). The 6th corps consisting of 27,000 troops under the commands of Mustafa Hilmi Pasha was sent with commands from the German Commander McKenzie to the Romanian Fronts to prevent the Russian co-operation with the Romanians and to control the Romanian oil. The Austrian and Ottoman resistance against the Russians in the Carpathians led to the occupation of Romania by the Central Powers. On the other hand, the 46th and 50th Divisions and 20th Corps headquartered in Drama were sent to the Macedonian Fronts to fight, in the Fall of 1916 for Bulgaria, against the attacks of the Entente Powers in Thessaloniki, under the command of General Serrial. Lieutenant Colonel Şükrü Naili was commanding the Corps.

The Armenian Question

Unfavorable developments the Ottomans experienced in the East became the opportunity for the Armenians, who wanted some room for their autonomy and/or independence under the Russian protection since 1878. The revolutionary Armenian Hinchak and Tashnak committees were

terrorizing not only the Muslims, left in Eastern Anatolia under the Russian rule, but also against the Armenian subjects and the Russian army. The Armenian revolutionary committees sent men, arms, and weapons to the Ottoman-controlled Eastern Anatolia, and formed voluntary Armenian troops to fight with the Russian army, Armenian longings, nevertheless, lacked two important components of the building of a nation-state in Eastern Anatolia.

The CUP government issuing a law in May 1915 – Transportation and Settlement Law – required Armenian subjects in the war front in Eastern Anatolia be transported to safer areas in the South of the Empire, mainly to the Ottoman cities of Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Deyr-ez Zor, and Mosul. The Armenian tragedy happened during the transportations, both due to the attacks organized during disorder, and due to the harsh conditions of travel and diseases.

The Wartime Secret Treaties

The Allied Powers also engaged in partitioning the Ottoman Empire in a series of wartime secret treaties. The basic aims of the Allies with the treaties were strengthening the alliance among the Allied Powers, solving the Eastern Question by partitioning the Ottoman Empire among them, protecting the British communications to the East, protecting the rights of the non-Muslim populations in the Middle East, drawing Italy into the War, preventing Russia from becoming a powerful actor in the Balkans, and forming a strong bumper between Austria and the Ottoman Empire by supporting Serbia, Greece and Romania. The series of treaties was opened during the Gallipoli Naval Wars, between 4 and 10 April, 141

1915, when Russia became anxious about the Allied success in the Straits. Through a series of correspondences, Britain and France recognized the Russian rights in Anatolian side of Istanbul, Western Thrace, the Marmara Sea, and on the Straits.

The second treaty in London was signed between the Allied Powers and Italy on 26 April 1915 for Italian entrance into the War with the Allies. In return for the Allied promises to Italy in Dodecanese islands and the Mediterranean region of Anatolia, Italy declared war on Austria on May 5, and on the Ottoman Empire in August 1915.

Possibly the most important treaty was between Britain and France on 15-16 May 1916, signed by British representative Sir Mark Sykes and French counterpart George Picot. The Sykes-Picot treaty was for the division of the Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire, basically giving Syria and Lebanon to France, Mesopotamia to Britain. The treaty was also going to create an international zone in Palestine, and an Arab state in the adjacent areas of the British and French zones. Additionally, Britain and France decided to determine the fate of Eastern Anatolia with Russia in order to convince Russia of their rights in the Middle East. This was the most controversial treaty among the Allies, since it created conflict among the French, the Arabs, and the Jews, that were all claiming rights over the same territory.

The St. Jean de Maurienne Treaty was signed by Britain, France and Italy on 19 April 1917 to secure the Italian rights in Anatolian Eastern Mediterranean region and İzmir. The treaty was to be enforced in August; however, Russia could not sign it because of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Therefore this treaty was announced as annulled and İzmir was granted to Greece in 1919.

The Southern Front: Mesopotamia and the Canal

The year 1916 was the turning point for the Ottoman Empire in the Great War. In 1916, the Russian armies had already entered Erzurum on 16th February, Trabzon had been seized in April. In the same month, with aim to spread to Eastern Anatolia, Russian armies had entered Van, Muş and Bitlis. The aim of Russia in this front was to connect with the army which had seized the Iranian cities, Hamedan and Kum to stop the Turkish army fighting against the British in Mesopotamia. The Russians also aimed to save the British troops commanded by General Townsend who had been captured in Kut al-Amara. The Union and Progress leaders understood that the war in the South Front had to be conducted between the British army advancing from Basra to the North and the British troops settled in Egypt and that the key to success was to cross the Channel and take back Egypt.

War and Arab Revolt

The seizure of the Suez Canal was, for Cemal Pasha, to cut England's connection with its Eastern dominions and also prevent the use of Egypt as a base to carry out its suspected landing to Çanakkale and İskenderun. The 8th Corps under the command of Mersinli Cemal Pasha was added to the 4th army consisting of two corps in charge of the defense of Damascus, Jerusalem, and Aleppo. To ensure support from the Arabs in

the region, Deputy Commander in Chief and Minister of War Enver Pasha, commissioned Cavalry Major Muhtar Bey and İzmirli Kuşçu Eşref in the Channel operation. German military expert Von Kress was given into the span of command of Mersinli Cemal Pasha. However, when the 4th Army Commander Zeki Pasha began to approach the Channel operation adversely, Enver Pasha brought 2nd Army commander and Minister of the Navy Cemal Pasha in command of the army in charge of the Channel operation on 13th November 1914. Once assigning German military expert Von Frankenberg as executive officer, Commander Ali Fuat (Cebesoy) as the first branch manager and Commander Refet (Bele) second branch manager, Cemal Pasha arrived at Damascus on the 6th December 1914 to start the operation.

The Arab Revolt, led by Sharif Hussein, the leader of the Hashemite tribe, and the governor of Mecca, evolved with the Ottoman Empire's operations and failures on the South Front during World War I. During the war, Union and Progress leaders decided the Channel operations with the Syrian-based 4th Army with the aim to save Egypt from the occupation of Britain since 1882. The Sinai-Palestinian Front during World War I, witnessed the two channel operations, three Gaza defenses, and two Be'er Sheva battles. Whilst these wars continued, the Ottoman army fought not only with British troops, but also with the Arab uprisings that began in the summer of 1916 forced them to withdraw from Arab lands at the end of 1917.

However, Sharif Hussein's unlimited demands for land, present Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel, Jordan and Iraq and almost the whole Arabian Peninsula were not realized. The correspondences between Sharif

Hussein and McMahon during 1915-1916 were about McMahon's promises to the Hashemites for financial and military aid and for the establishment of an independent Arab state on Arab lands and on the Fertile Crescent in return for an up-rise of the Arabs against the Ottoman Empire. The Arab revolt and the Arab alliance with Britain not only brought the Channel operation to an end, it also caused for the invasion of Sinai and Palestine, the loss of Jerusalem and the collapse of the Southern Front.

Conclusion

Though unprepared, militarily weak, politically highly personalized and ambitious, and unplanned for a war, the Ottoman Empire did much better than expected by the British and the Germans alike. The Ottoman armies fought well in Gallipoli, which ended up with preventing the Allied communications with Russia, and at the end with the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The Ottoman troops also stood well until the end of 1917 in the Southern fronts, stopping the British northward movements from the Canal and from Basra, preventing their unification with the Russian armies in Iran and the Caucasus. The Kut victory of the Ottoman armies kept the British busy to move to oil-rich Northern Mesopotamia almost until the end of the war. The Ottoman presence in the Carpathian region against the Russian advance resulted in the occupation of Romania and the Wallachian oil fields by the Central Powers.

The Great War was concluded with the end of an era, which started a new world order with the removal of great empires, and their ruling dynasties, the Romanovs, the Germans, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans.

Like the Versailles, Trianon, Neuilly treaties signed at the end of the Paris Conference in 1919, the Ottoman delegation signed the Sevrés, which brought the occupation, partition, collapse and the end of the Ottoman Empire. However, the last Ottoman Parliament did not ratify the Sevrés, and a new nationalist movement led by Mustafa Kemal started in Anatolia against the Allied occupation of Turkey. It was only the Turks that did not accept the Allied dictations and moved against the Allied aims after the Great War. For the Turks, the Sevrés was the decree of death for Turkey, and they continued their war three more years until the Fall of 1922. The Turkish victories against the Allies and occupying Armenian and Greek armies ended with the establishment of the new Turkey.

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Dr. Efpraxia S. Paschalidou (Greece)

“Greece confronts the conflict; assuming benevolent neutrality”

Confronting the outbreak of the Great War, Greece adopted a stance of benevolent neutrality considering that it was helping its ally Serbia, while at the same time, it was ready to repel any potential Bulgarian attack. According to a ten year-alliance between Greece and Serbia on 19 May/1 June 1913, one of the terms of utmost importance, was the cause of many disagreements between Greek political groups over the course to be followed during the upcoming war; if Serbia had to defend itself against a country other than Bulgaria it was obligated to help Greece with forces that both countries would agree upon, if the latter came under a Bulgarian attack¹. The victorious end of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 found Greece with almost double its territory and population, proud, united and full of confidence in its future; in Europe, by contrast, the atmosphere was heavy and the clash inevitable.

On 31 January/13 February 1914, the Great Powers ceded to Greece the Aegean islands, under the condition that the region of Northern Epirus would be included in the newly established Albanian state.² The Ottoman Empire rejected,

¹ The ten year defense alliance mainly provided for mutual assistance in the event of attack by another country; even more, for the assembly of 96,000 men from Greece into the broader area of Thessaloniki and of the Hellenic Fleet in the Aegean sea upon the outbreak of hostilities. Serbia would assemble 156,000 men at its southern borders with Greece and Bulgaria. Detailed analysis in: Hellenic Army General Staff/Army History Directorate (HAGS/AHD), *A Concise History of the Balkan Wars, 1912–1913* (Athens 1987).

² Northern Epirus forms that segment of Epirus lying to the north of the present Greek-Albanian border and reaching as far north as the Genusus river. Up to the year 1913, the term Northern Epirus didn't exist, as Epirus was considered a coherent and indivisible space, but it has been established since December of that year, when the region was made part of the newly-formed state of Albania by the terms of the Protocol of Florence (17December 1913). Detailed analysis in: HAGS/AHD, *The Struggle for Northern Epirus* (Athens 2002).

a strong recrimination passed between the two governments and a new threat of war appeared imminent. Greece informed Serbia on 30 May/12 June 1914, stressing its decision to take action if the Ottoman Empire did not comply with the demands, moreover requesting Serbia's moral support. Serbia favored the preservation of peace; its economy had to recover and it had to make up its lack in war material. It added that Bulgaria and Albania were waiting for an opportunity to take advantage of the situation and also mentioned that the Triple Entente desired calm in the Balkans, requesting that extreme actions should be avoided. The Greek and Ottoman governments finally adopted a more conciliatory tone. Upon learning of the ultimatum of Austria-Hungary to Serbia, the Greco-Ottoman dispute was swallowed up in the main current of European affairs. A Serbian petition dated 12/25 July 1914, requested Greek aid in the event of an attack by Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. Greece responding on 20 July/2 August, advised Serbia to be more conciliatory as it was not prepared for war, something that the Serbs themselves had admitted earlier, when Greece had requested help to deal with the possible Greco-Ottoman conflict.

Under intense Allied pressure, Greece was politically divided into two blocs. Thus, while seeking neutrality, the country had become an enemy of both warring sides, its territory had been violated by both and its sovereignty had been deliberately trampled. At first, Germany's pressing demand to join the Central Powers was rejected and both King Constantine and Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos were adamant in their decision to remain strictly neutral. A round of telegrams exchanged between Kaiser Wilhelm and King Constantine clearly reveals the pressure put by the German side; the King was reminded about the help offered during the negotiations in Bucharest - the final act of the Second Balkan War - which ended to the acceptance of Kavala as the northern possible border line between Greece and Bulgaria.³ In August 1914, Great Britain stressed

³ Ioannis Passas, *O Protos Pangosmios Polemos kai o Ethnikos Dichasmos (The First World War and the National Schism)* vol. I (Athens) 81-85.

that if the Ottoman Empire remained neutral, Greece should do the same; if however that was not the case, then it would be welcomed as an ally. One of the most important terms in the Greco-Serbian ten years-alliance, provoked many disagreements between Greek political groups over the course to be followed during the upcoming War; if Serbia had to defend itself against a country other than Bulgaria it was obligated to help Greece with forces that both countries would agree upon, if the latter came under a Bulgarian attack. Greece deemed that the military accord with Serbia was not valid because it included two conflicting elements: the obligation of Greece to rush to the aid of Serbia and the obligation of Serbia to assemble a force of approximately 150.000 men in Macedonia as soon as hostilities broke out, something not feasible for Serbia after its engagement in war with Austria-Hungary. In August 1914, Great Britain stressed that if Ottoman Empire remained neutral Greece should do the same; if however that was not the case, then it would be welcomed as an ally. Russia did not want Greece to undertake action in the Balkans, while all desired the participation of Bulgaria on the side of the Entente forces. The government adopted the position of the Army Staff Service, namely of Lieutenant Colonel Ioannes Metaxas, that Greece could not intervene unless Romania intervened simultaneously, owing to the threat arising from the policies of Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire.

The entry of the Ottoman Empire into the war immediately made the support of Greece much more desirable to the western allies, but it did not decisively alter the interior calculation. In the beginning of 1915 the powers of the Triple Entente had no decisive victory on any front. Some of the Allied leaders, such as Lloyd George in London and Briand in Paris, were convinced that such success should be sought in the Balkans with an event that would alter the stance of Italy and Bulgaria in order to shift the balance of power. Moreover, the Central Powers were preparing a major offensive against Serbia. On 26 December 1914/8 January 1915 Lloyd George addressed a letter to Prime

Minister Venizelos requesting that Greece rush to the aid of Serbia promising financial aid and reinforcement with an army corps. The Greek government reiterated that it would agree on the condition of a simultaneous Romanian commitment or the securing of Greece from Bulgarian attack. On 11/24 January 1915, the British government, acting also on behalf of the other Allies, informed the Greek government, through a note, that significant concessions to Greece in the coast of Asia Minor would be recognized if it helped Serbia. It also asked Greece to give assurances to Bulgaria that it would acquiesce to territorial concessions in Macedonia, if Bulgaria either entered the war against the Ottoman Empire or remained neutral. The important elements of the note were that for the first time territorial concessions were made to Greece in the coast of Asia Minor, and the Allies insisted on the participation or neutrality of Bulgaria in return for territorial concessions in Macedonia, regardless of the displeasure this action would provoke in Greece and Serbia.⁴

The allied attack in the Dardanelles moved public opinion in Greece since it had Constantinople as its primary objective. On 20 January/2 February 1915 the head of the Staff Service, Lieutenant Colonel Ioannes Metaxas, submitted a report ⁵ to the Prime Minister in which he ruled out the entry of Greece into the war because of the risk of total destruction of the Hellenic Army, even if Romania and Bulgaria were to enter the war, and even if the British did dispatch an army corps to Thessaloniki, based on the following rationale: The Austrian attack against Serbia was imminent. Therefore, by the time the mobilization would be completed and the Hellenic Army arrived at the front, the Serbian army would already have been destroyed and the Greeks would have had to face the Austrian army on their own; Bulgaria could strike the Greek and Serbian forces from the flanks and rear and cut-off their supply lines thus

⁴ HAGS/AHD, *O Hellenikos Stratos kata ton Proton Pangosmion Polemon, 1914-1918: He Hellas kai o Polemos es ta Valkania (The Hellenic Army during the First World War, 1914-1918, 1; Greece and the War in the Balkans)* (Athens 1958) 41.

⁵ HAGS/AHD Archive, F.380/B/7

annihilating these forces; If in the meantime Romania intervened it would be unable to contain the forces of the Central Powers; The landing of one British army corps in Thessaloniki was considered negligible. Only the dispatch of four Allied army corps would be a considerable contribution; Even if Bulgaria did side with the Allies it would be impossible for the Balkan states to win a decisive victory over the Central Powers. The most that they could achieve would be to stabilize the situation; If Greece abandoned its neutrality towards the Ottoman Empires' allies, then the latter would resort to persecuting the Greeks of Asia Minor. Prime Minister Venizelos did not agree with the report of the Army Staff Service, believing that the nation had the duty of assuming a risk in the name of the unredeemed Greeks, the independence of small nations, and humanity, which would be threatened if the Germans prevailed. For this reason, he submitted a memorandum to the King proposing the entry of Greece into the war under the condition that the stance of Bulgaria and Romania was secured beforehand. Finally, it was decided that before any decision was taken Romania's stance had to be established. Romania had again refused to participate.

At the same time, it became known that Germany and Austria-Hungary had advanced Bulgaria a loan of 150 million golden francs and that an Ottoman-Bulgarian accord had been signed to secure the unimpeded transportation of war materiel through Bulgaria to the Ottoman Empire. Therefore Bulgaria was deemed to be on the side of the Central Powers. Following this, Greece informed the Allies that it would not enter the war because it would be in danger from Bulgaria. Romania also remained neutral. The Entente Powers asked Greece to join their alliance with a new *démarche* presented on the 2/15 February 1915, promising to dispatch French and British troops to Thessaloniki and Russian troops to the Balkans. Greece refused again since Romania also had refused, and reserved its rights regarding the explanation of the military reasons behind its decision until the arrival of French General Pau, expected in Athens on 3/16 February 1915. After long deliberations with the King, the Prime Minister and

Metaxas, Pau acknowledged the correctness of the Greek position and cabled this immediately to his government stressing that "from a military point of view the Greek version was reasonable and sensible".⁶

The Serbian campaign in autumn 1915 was the moment in which the Greek question became urgent. The German Army Commanders in Serbia, Field Marshal August v. Mackensen and his Chief of Staff, Hans v. Seeckt, wanted to attack the Allied forces in Thessaloniki and "throw them into the Mediterranean". Their Bulgarian allies were in a very similar mood, but they did not attack for two essential reasons: The railway connections were not sufficient to bring the necessary troops and ammunition to the Thessaloniki front, and, the Germans did not want to bring Greece into the war, since they knew quite well the very difficult internal situation and feared that an advance into Greek territory would drive the country into the arms of the Allied powers. Greek neutrality was considered a great advantage and the Germans initially respected it, despite the open violation by the Allied Powers.⁷

Realizing its strategic position in the Balkans in relation both to the Straits and to Serbia, Bulgaria tried to keep its neutrality or to enter the war with the highest price, having in mind not only the fulfilment of its territorial claims in Macedonia, but also the imposition of its hegemony in the Balkans.⁸ Following the Bulgarian mobilization on 9/22 September 1915, Venizelos once again decided that the country would join the Allied camp and announced his willingness to help Serbia, claiming at the same time Serbia's obligation by the terms of the aforementioned alliance. Greece was informed of the Bulgarian

⁶ Edouard Driault, Michel Lh eritier, *Histoire diplomatique de la Gr ce, vol. V, La Gr ce et la Grande Guerre 1908-1922* (Paris 1926) 179.

⁷ Holger Afflerbach, "Greece and the Balkan Area in German Strategy, 1914-1918", in: Institute for Balkan Studies – National Research Foundation 'Eleftherios K. Venizelos' (eds), *The Salonica Theatre of Operations and the Outcome of the Great War* (Thessaloniki 2005) 53-66.

⁸ Ibid, Spyridon Sfetas, "From Expectation to Disappointment: Bulgaria's Capitulation in Salonica", 356-366.

mobilization on 8/21 September. Venizelos immediately decided to declare a general mobilization, an action with which the King also agreed.⁹ Serbia, of course, was unable to fulfil its obligation owing to the situation it was facing, and for this reason the allied governments were asked whether they could provide the force with which to confront the Bulgarian threat. The Allies welcomed the help as essential; moreover, this provided a good opportunity for them to abandon their failed campaign in the Dardanelles and to raise their prestige in the Balkans. Thus they accepted the Greek proposal but could not provide the required number of men, so their reply of 11/24 September 1915 was rather unclear. King Constantine, the Army Staff Service, and the opposition held that national interests would best be served if Greece remained neutral until certain guarantees were secured from the Allies or until Bulgaria attacked first. Relative differences of approach surfaced during the talks that followed on the matter. Great Britain maintained that help was being given to Greece to entice it to declare war against Bulgaria. France, conversely, insisted that this help was destined for Serbia, to enable it to fulfil the terms of the Greco-Serbian military agreement, as well as to succeed in enlisting the help of the Hellenic Army. According to the first view, Greece's entry in the war was a prerequisite. By contrast, according to the second view, Greece was not bound to any condition. Furthermore, Great Britain supported the view that it would not be possible for the 150.000 men of the expeditionary force to save Serbia without the participation of Greece.

In September 1915, Venizelos after winning the elections, assumed again the government with the intention of bringing Greece into the war and meanwhile the Allies began to land troops from Gallipoli in the harbor of Thessaloniki without the official consent of the Greek government. The situation, however, had become very delicate and unusual from the point of view of international law because Greece, despite being neutral, had become an Allied base for the support

⁹ HAGS/AHD, *Greece and the War in the Balkans*, 57-58.

of Serbia. The King forced the resignation of Venizelos, despite the fact of him receiving a vote of confidence at the same day. The allied forces landed in Thessaloniki, anticipated a Bulgarian attack against Serbia. The British government, seeking the Greek entry into the war, declared officially on 3/16 October 1915 that it would offer Cyprus to Greece if it rushed to help Serbia against Bulgaria. Greece insistent in neutrality and this reply caused great displeasure among the countries of the Triple Entente. On 22 October/4 November 1915, Germany asked the Greek government not to allow the withdrawing Allied forces to reorganize on its territory, in exchange for hindering the Bulgarians from crossing the border. The government requested the opinion of the Army Staff Service, which again proposed that Greece remain neutral and that it keep its military forces intact.

Greece, under intense Allied pressure to enter the war, politically was divided into two blocs. The one, led by Venizelos, supported the immediate entry into the war on the side of the Allies; the other, led by King Constantine, wished to maintain neutrality. The prevailing opinion is that both wanted to serve the best interests of Greece. They differed on the terms of cooperation with the Allies, each seeking to limit the risk to the security of the country. On the one hand, Venizelos: ambitious, most audacious in taking advantage of circumstances, a resourceful spirit, a demagogue who roused the masses. On the other hand, King Constantine: the victorious commander of the Balkan Wars, of conservative impulse, driven by a calculated realism in favor of security, avoiding the bold stirrings of the imagination. Both great patriots; they clashed because each believed that his policy served his country. Venizelos believed that the early entry of Greece into the war on the side of the Allies was necessary so as to ensure soon after territorial gains. The King believed that Greece would be crushed in a conflict among the Great Powers, and the fate of Serbia and Romania strengthened this belief. An additional reason to maintain neutrality concerned the fate of unredeemed Hellenism in Ottoman Empire that would be

subject to persecution by the Turks if Greece abandoned neutrality in favor of joining the Allies.

Through November 1915, a French expeditionary force, the Armée d' Orient under General Maurice Sarrail, was established at Thessaloniki. Meanwhile, differences in views existed within the supreme military leadership of the Central Powers. The German General Staff - following the occupation of Serbia and the restoration of unobstructed communication between the Central Powers and the Ottoman Empire - was content to switch into a defensive mode in Macedonia and for that particular reason did not allow the crossing of the Greek borders. This was precisely what King Constantine had asked Kaiser in order that Greece remain neutral. In contrast to the German approach, the Austro-Hungarian Army Staff, proposed that the German-Bulgarian forces occupy Thessaloniki and expel the French and the British, so that the Austrian forces sweep through Montenegro and Albania; and that, as a consequence of the above, Greece and Romania be forced to join the Central Powers and all forces would turn against Italy.

The issue of the withdrawal of the Allies into Greek territory created much friction between the Greek government and the Allies. On 6/19 November 1915 the Greek government stated to the Allies that the Hellenic Army was in Macedonia to protect it from the Bulgarians and that it did not intend to implement the disarmament as foreseen by the Hague Convention. This settlement with the Allies provoked Germany's reaction which on 27 November/10 December 1915 stated that they also had the right to ask the same privileges. Greece arrived at an exceptionally difficult position; it was now evident that providing accommodation to the one of the two warring sides was not consistent with the neutrality of the country, because through its stance, it allowed inevitably, the clashes on its territory. In the meantime, elections took place without the participation of Venizelos' Liberal Party. Immediately after, friends of him and military men formed the National Defense Committee in

Thessaloniki, with the objective to defense Macedonia in case of a Bulgarian invasion.

On 28 December 1915/10 January 1916, British and French forces occupied Corfu in order to use it as an area to assemble and reorganize the remnants of the Serbian army. Consultations between Greece and the Central Powers on the issue of the violation of Greek borders continued until the spring of 1916. After successive interruptions and conflicting proposals, the German High Command finally decided to enter into Greek territory. On 1/14 May 1916, fort Rupel surrendered to German and Bulgarian forces, provoking feelings of profound indignation among Greek people. The government, bearing in mind the neutrality of the country, the demobilization of the army, and considering that the political polarization had made its appearance within the army as well, decided to maintain a passive stance, while sought to prevent the invaders from moving further south through negotiations and not to offer armed resistance.¹⁰ In the end of August 1916, a sore impression created on the Allies by the capitulation of Army Corps D in Kavala,¹¹ which actually accepted the request to surrender to the Germans. The unit was transported by rail in Görlitz Silesia, where it remained until the end of the war. The Allies considered that this action was the result of collusion between the governments of the Central Powers and Greece and thereafter made no effort to conceal their dislike for the Greek government and the Greek people in general.

Meanwhile, the military revolt that had broken out in Thessaloniki, led by supporters of Venizelos, succeeded because of the support of General Sarrail. It formed the National Defense Committee. A provisional government was established in early October 1916 by Venizelos and the two other members of the Triumvirate, General Georgios Danglis and Admiral Pavlos Kountouriotis. The immediate objective was to declare war against Bulgaria and the Central Powers,

¹⁰ HAGS/AHD/F.373, 380

¹¹ HAGS/AHD, *Greece and the War in Balkans*, 145-154.

while the longer term political objective was to participate in the peace conference at the end of the war, as an ally of the forces expected to be victorious. It devoted itself to reinforcing the Allies and to the swift building up of an army, recruiting men from Macedonia and the islands. The Provisional Government, a month later, declared war against Germany and Bulgaria in order to legitimate national character to the movement on which it was based. The Greek state was divided into two parts, one under the government in Athens and the other under the revolutionary government of National Defense in Thessaloniki. The country's political polarization provoked a national schism that led the Allies to conclude that, as long as the King was there, the foreign policy of Greece would be dictated by political passions.

The battle of Athens, the November incidents¹² as broadly known, determined the developments. A squadron composed of 37 ships and 3,000 men, commanded by the commander of the Allied Naval Forces in the Mediterranean himself, Admiral Dartige du Fournet, reached the bay of Salamis on 19 August/1 September 1916.¹³ Its objective was to occupy strategic points in Athens in order to force King Constantine to withdraw troops from Thessaly and to deliver the quantities of the military material that was demanded of it. There followed an artillery bombardment and a battle in the city's center with significant losses. From that point on a long period of oppression, lasted until July 1917, began for Greece. The day after the arrival of the naval squadron in Salamis, the ambassadors of France and Great Britain in a common note requested the removal of citizens of countries hostile to theirs and they imposed censorship on Greek telegraph and post offices. The Greek government, despite its strong protests, finally was forced to submit to pressures and to accept the Allied demand. On 3/16 October 1916 large demonstrations against the Allies took

¹² Vice-Amiral Dartige du Fournet, *Souvenirs de Guerre d'un Amiral 1914-1916* (Paris 1920) 212-290.

¹³ HAGS/AHD/F.373/D

place and became an occasion for mob violence against Venizelos supporters, who were deemed as responsible for the military action. The situation continued to be uncertain and explosive. The intervention of the Allies in the domestic affairs proved that what they really were after was to expel King Constantine and bring in Venizelos to lead the country into war. Meanwhile, demobilization and the withdrawal of the army were agreed. Italy, taking advantage of the events in Greece, found the opportunity to complete the occupation of Epirus and this without coming to any understanding with the Allies beforehand. The Italians had occupied Northern Epirus as of September 1916, expelling the Greek authorities.¹⁴

On 25 October/8 November the ambassadors of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria protested strongly to the government, because by its handing over of the light fleet to the Allies Greece abandoned neutrality.¹⁵ Moreover, they advised that it not surrender the military equipment. On the same day the government received a hail of protests from the ambassadors of the Central Powers concerning the surrender of the Fleet, because this action constituted violation of neutrality; they therefore reserved the right to determine their stance accordingly. In addition, Admiral du Fournet, in contravention to international law, expelled from Athens the ambassadors of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria with all their staff. They protested to the Greek government which, however, was powerless to react. The casualties were heavy. The news of the clash between Allied and Greek troops in Athens reached Paris in a telegram from Admiral du Fournet, who asked for permission to bombard Athens in order to teach Greece a severe lesson. The French government, influenced by these events, decided on 23 November/6 December 1916 to dethrone King Constantine and to recognize Venizelos as the legitimate governor of Greece. The view of British government on this matter,

¹⁴ HAGS/AHD/F. 316/B

¹⁵ HAGS/AHD/F. 335/IA

however, was diametrically opposed and France temporarily was obliged to abandon its aims. On the other hand, the King and the legitimate government of Athens were forced to witness the spectacle of the occupation of territories by the Allies that the Hellenic Army had evacuated, the dismissal of the legal authorities and their substitution by individuals and groups faithful to the Provisional Government of Thessaloniki. Worst of all was the fact that while Greece had begun to fulfill the conditions of the Allies they did not begin to lift the blockade as agreed. Indeed, the blockade continued and progressively became more severe. France, however, insisted that the King should be expelled as soon as possible, for the government of Venizelos to be established in Athens and for Greece to enter the war on the side of the Allies. The British agreed, but the other powers, Italy, Serbia, and Russia that were notified regarding these decisions, were opposed to the use of force against Greece; it was possible that such an action would provoke anarchy and civil war, resulting in added risks for the security of the Allied Armies. The Allies landed forces in Piraeus and the Isthmus of Corinth under the command of Senator Jonnart of the French Parliament who had been appointed by the Allies as their High Commissioner in Greece. On 27 May/9 June 1917, the day that Jonnart returned to Salamis, the British government sent a note of strong protest to the French government on the planned dethronement of King Constantine by force. This action was completely contrary to the decisions of the conference of London according to the British view. In addition, it was emphasized in the note that the best way was to seek to persuade the King to leave Greece until the war's end, leaving behind one of his sons as viceroy. Russia, Italy, and Serbia also supported this view. Finally, on 29 May/11 June 1917, the Allies forced King Constantine to resign from his throne and leave Alexander, his second born son, as successor.¹⁶

¹⁶ I. Ioannides, *Constantine XII*, Govostis (Athens 1931) 358-362.

Venizelos formed a government on the basis of the parliament elected as the result of the elections held on May 1915 - it came to be known as the "Parliament of Lazars" - and immediately declared war on the Central Powers. The organization of the army was completed at a rapid pace, while the country officially entered the war with the recall of the diplomatic representatives, and declared that it considered the country to be in a state of war on the side of the Allies as of 11/24 November 1916, when the original such declaration had been made by the revolutionary government in Thessaloniki. Public opinion, however, generally was opposed to the war. For this reason Venizelos began the mobilization partially and from the areas that were favorable to his policies, calling up the newer draft classes of 1916 and 1917. France provided Greece with a loan in order to assist the country's war preparation.

Greece, following a gradual abandonment of neutrality, finally entered the war in 1917. The Hellenic Army participated with all of its forces, which were mobilized and trained within a short period of time, so as to be incorporated into the other Entente allied forces in the Macedonian Front. During the last seven months of the war, the Hellenic Army participated with all of its troops, was distinguished by its heroism, especially in the battle of Skra di Legen, won the admiration of the allied commands, and with its brilliant victories, contributed decisively to the termination of the First World War.

Dr Zisis Fotakis Greece

Greece and the First World War: Her actual role and performance

This paper provides a bird's eye view of the role of Greece during the First World War. The twists and turns of Greek war policy are briefly shown in its international context, while the utility of certain Greek territories and facilities for the belligerents is summarily explained. The wartime role of the Greek armed forces is also examined in terms of its achievements and contemporary constraints.

When Austria-Hungary declared war against Serbia in 1914, she thought of a sharp, short, military engagement, which would have resolved the South Slav question to her benefit. However, the absorption of much of her military resources in the fighting against the Russians, and several suboptimal decisions of the Austrian High Command, enabled Serbia to withstand successfully several Austrian offensive operations.¹ The concurrent failure of the Moltke's version of the Schlieffen plan, the nature of the coalition warfare, which encouraged exhausted belligerents to remain in the war by the hope-and promises- of aid from their allies, and the singular inability of achieving a breakthrough through the enemy lines for most of the war, led to its prolongation, and spurred a search for new allies by the competing European Alliances.²

Despite the fact that the grand total of the mobilized men of the Balkan states could have been higher than that of Austria-Hungary, their backward transport system and underdeveloped productive base, meant that they could not

¹ Hew Strachan, *The First World War: To Arms*, vol. 1 (Oxford New York 2001) 335-347.

² Terence Holmes, (April 2014). "Absolute Numbers: The Schlieffen Plan as a Critique of German Strategy in 1914", *War in History* 21 (2) (2014) 194, 211. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York 1987) 256, 260.

sustain a long war without outside help. Indeed, the geographic unity of the Balkans and the relative weakness of the Balkan States made advisable their entry to the Great War as a Bloc, since this would have enhanced their military and diplomatic standing, while opening the way for a mutually-agreed post war settlement of the outstanding questions there.³ To this end, Eleftherios Venizelos, the contemporary Prime Minister of Greece, proposed the reconstitution of the Balkan Bloc and its accession to the Entente in early August 1914. His proposal eventually fell through due to the preference of Russia for a Serbo-Bulgarian understanding and British pre-occupation with the situation in Antwerp and the Channel ports during much of the autumn of 1914. Venizelos further offered to place all the naval and military forces of Greece at the disposal of the Entente. This was also declined, since it was feared that it would push Turkey and Bulgaria into the opposite camp and complicate the Russian claim to Constantinople before the stabilization of the Western front and the reinforcement with Indian troops of the Suez Canal had been effected.⁴

Venizelos never really abandoned the idea of a reconstituted Balkan Block against the Central Powers and their Balkan Allies (Turkey and Bulgaria) with which Greece was seriously divided on a number of issues, but the course of the War dictated that Greece would enter it individually.⁵ He had always intended to "tie Greece to the apron-strings of the Sea Powers,"⁶ and the First World War offered a promising opportunity for this to happen. Realizing that domestic and

³ Maurice Larcher, *La grande guerre dans les Balkans, direction de la guerre* (Paris 1929) 15-16. Mathew S. Anderson, *The Eastern question, 1774-1923 : a study in international relations* (London & New York 1966) 310.

⁴ Jay C. Smith, "Great Britain and the 1914-1915 Straits Agreement with Russia: The British Promise of November 1914" *The American Historical Review*, 70 (4) (1965) 1017. Keith Robins, *Politicians, Diplomacy and War in Modern British History* (London 1994) 220-221. Zisis Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy and Policy 1910-1919* (London & New York 2005) 106.

⁵ Constantinos Svolopoulos, *He Hellenike Exoteriki Politiki 1900-1945* (Athens 1993) 109.

⁶ George F. Abbot, *Greece and the Allies 1914-1922* (London, 1922) 4-5.

inter-allied considerations precluded the conclusion of a formal alliance between Greece and the Entente at the time,⁷ he offered good services to it, without usually asking for quid pro quo.⁸ At the beginning of the War, he permitted the use of various bays in the Ionian and the Aegean Seas by Entente destroyers and torpedo boats.⁹ He also entrusted the command of the Greek fleet to Vice Admiral Mark Kerr, the Head of the British Naval Mission to Greece¹⁰ in the aftermath of the Greek rejection of Kaiser's offer of alliance and the escape of the Goeben and Breslau to the Dardanelles; an escape which was made possible only after Venizelos released sorely needed coal for the German ships in a way that was promptly noticed by the British who, probably, turned a blind eye on it.¹¹ Following the appointment of Kerr, the Greek fleet and a British squadron patrolled the Dardanelles' exit for several months obliging Sir Edward Grey, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs to thank Venizelos profusely.¹²

At the beginning of 1915 a Greek offer of support for Serbia conditional upon Roumania covering Bulgaria was withdrawn because Sazonov promised Roumania in October 1914, all that she could have reasonably hoped to gain in return for her neutrality, thus making Roumania unwilling to enter the war, unless she was tempted with extravagant promises by the Allies.¹³ On January 7 1915 Venizelos also told Elliot that a war against Turkey would be popular in Greece and that in return for Greek intervention the allies should guarantee his country territorial gains in Asia Minor. Thus he alluded for the first time to a possible partition of the Ottoman Empire and to a firm allied control of the Straits

⁷ These are succinctly presented in George Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers, 1914-1917* (Thessaloniki 1974)..

⁸ George Leontaritis, *Greece and the First World War: From Neutrality to Intervention 1917-1918* (New York 1990) 409.

⁹ Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 108.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 102-106.

¹² *Ibid.*, 109.

¹³ Cedric J. Lowe, "The Failure of British Diplomacy in the Balkans, 1914-1916", *Canadian Journal of History*, 4 (1) (1969) 81.

as the only guarantee for the future security of Greek acquisitions in Anatolia. His Majesty's Government took up this proposal and offered on 24 January the Smyrna area to Greece in the event of Greek help to Serbia against Austria. Venizelos and King Constantine of Greece eventually shrunk from this, since it did not appear to be a practical proposition given the poor state of the Salonica-Belgrade line and the reluctance of Roumania to help.¹⁴

In March 1915 the Greek Prime Minister offered to help the Allies in the Dardanelles campaign, thus creating a profound impression in London.¹⁵ Notwithstanding the quality of the Greek troops, which appeared eminently high to the British military attache in Athens,¹⁶ the contribution of the Greek light fleet was, in British eyes, of greater importance for the success of this campaign. Time and again, Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, spoke of the "excellent and efficient Greek flotillas of destroyers, the Greek submarines and other small craft" and their "inestimable value".¹⁷ Jackie Fisher, the First Sea Lord of the Admiralty was so much distressed by the failure to secure Greek assistance in the Dardanelles campaign that wrote to Admiral Carden, the Commander in Chief of the British Dardanelles Squadron, 'Let us hope that the Dardanelles will be past & over by the desired date to your honour & glory and that these d-d Greeks will be jolly well sold by the Bulgarians being first in & so getting Salonica & Kavalla and Macedonia generally as their reward! I EARNESTLY HOPE THIS MAY RESULT! Had the Greeks come in all would have been well without doubt!'¹⁸

The insistence of the British Admiralty on the participation of the Greek flotillas in the Dardanelles operations is understandable considering that Greek

¹⁴ Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*, 99, 107-120.

¹⁵ Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 112.

¹⁶ The National Archives, ADM 116/1437B, (Dardanelles Commission), Examination of Sir Thomas Montgomery Cunninghame, 13 March 1917, 1152.

¹⁷ Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 105, 112, 117

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 118-119.

naval assistance could have been useful for minesweeping purposes. It is well-known that an efficient minesweeping force capable of operating against a strong current, in a narrow channel dominated by shore batteries was singularly lacking in the Dardanelles campaign. In fact, this task was entrusted to undisciplined, untrained Grimsby and Hull fishermen, who had been hurriedly recruited for a task beyond their abilities. By contrast, the large stocks of Turkish mines that came in Greek possession during the Balkan Wars, and the drifting of a mine from the Dardanelles minefields into Greek waters in 1912, had made the Greeks relatively familiar with the various types of German mines that were used by the Turkish navy in 1912. These were possibly still in use. Considering also that the Greek crew knew the waters of the Dardanelles better than their British colleagues and that they would have been more motivated in their task by the desire to liberate their Ottoman brethren, it is likely that they would have performed better than the British fishermen did.¹⁹

King Constantine of Greece eventually blocked Greek participation in the Dardanelles campaign setting off the "National Schism", which divided the Greek people until the Second World War.²⁰ Indeed, in Greece, "as in other belligerent regimes across Europe, the war served to radicalize pre-war political animosities and expose political military tensions."²¹ The Dardanelles campaign took then its well-known, unhappy path and contributed to the prolongation of the war and its many, severe concomitants.²² However, what was unfortunate for humanity at large, was not necessarily bad for Greek national interests, since the

¹⁹ Ibid., 191-192.

²⁰ Georgios Christopoulos & Ioannes Bastias (ed.) *Historia tou Hellenikou Ethnous. Neoteris Hellenismos apo to 1913 os to 1941*, vol. 15, (Athens 1978), 18-34, 36-38, 41-55, 144-150, 154-155, 159-160, 186, 196-198, 255-259, 271-281, 290-293, 318-326, 358-380, 382-396.

²¹ Andrej Mitrovic, *Serbia's Great War 1914-1918* (West Lafayette Indiana 2007) xii.

²² There is a long list of books and articles on the Dardanelles Campaign. A good starting point is Alan Moorehead, *Gallipoli* (London 1968).

Greek King maintained 'that it would be folly to go to war in order to help Russia to obtain and retain Constantinople". In the summer of 1915, after his visit to the Balkans, Hankey, the Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence similarly reported that 'all authorities on the Balkans and on Turkey . . . insisted on the objections which all Balkan states have to a Russian occupation of Constantinople'. In all truth, the establishment of Russia in the Balkans would have made a Greek alliance of little utility to Serbia, thus opening the way to a Serbo-Bulgarian territorial understanding at the expense of Greece. Unless, Venizelos foresaw the collapse of Russia, something not unlikely for a statesman of his foresight, he was probably taken over by his enthusiasm for the Allied cause, when advocating Greek participation in the Dardanelles campaign.²³

March 1915 marked the high tide of Greek Ententophilia. The entry of Italy into the war on the side of the Entente two months later encouraged the Royalist party in Athens in their neutralist policy. Since it was believed that Italy had been the stumbling block that prevented the Central Powers from adopting a friendlier attitude towards Greece, it was now hoped that the Italian abandonment of its erstwhile allies would open the door to a *rapprochement* between Greece and the Germanic Powers. Furthermore, the expectation that Italy would make the Entente less sympathetic to Greek territorial aspirations than they had previously been was an additional reason that pointed to such a *rapprochement*. Finally, the favourable impression created by the efficiency of the Central European railway network, the effectiveness of submarine warfare and the inability of the naval blockade thus far to effect any substantial damage to the German war machine, reinforced the advisability of Greece staying neutral. It was intended, however, that postwar Greece would extricate itself from the dependence on British controlled maritime communications by connecting her railways with the Central European network and by developing a strong

²³ Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 114-115.

submarine fleet, which could spare herself and Turkey from the ‘tyrannical pressure’ of the Entente fleets.

These hopes appeared to earn an early justification when Jagow, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, intimated to Nikolaos Theotokes, the Greek Minister in Berlin, on 18 May 1915 that an Italian alliance with the Entente would be followed by Germany’s efforts to weaken Italy’s Mediterranean position. Jagow ‘explained that the only reason Germany had supported the creation of an independent Albania was to prevent an Austro-Italian conflict over Valona. Now, with Italy joining the Entente Germany would abandon the idea of an independent Albania and would welcome Greece’s unlimited expansion there.’ The Austrian Minister in Athens also made a similar *démarche* without requesting a reply.²⁴

The drift of Greece to the side of the Central Powers was made obvious on the occasion of the Allied landing in Salonica in October 1915. Consequent to the British offer of Cyprus and military reinforcements to Greece after the return of Venizelos to power in August 1915,²⁵ the latter tried, once again, to tie Greece to the Entente by inviting an Anglo-French expeditionary force to help Greece fulfill her Treaty obligations vis-a-vis Serbia, which was simultaneously being attacked by the Bulgarian, Austrian and German armies. Not surprisingly, he was forced again to resign by the Germanophile Greek King, thus signaling the alienation of Greece from the Entente.²⁶ In the next couple of years, the Armée d’Orient established itself in Macedonia in order to preclude Roumania or Greece from coming in against the Entente according to Asquith²⁷, and to prohibit the use of Greek naval facilities by German submarines.²⁸ The Armée d’Orient also prepared the ground for the postwar economic penetration of the Balkans by

²⁴ Ibid., 119-121.

²⁵ Lowe, "The Failure of British Diplomacy", 92-93.

²⁶ Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 122-123.

²⁷ Lowe, "The Failure of British Diplomacy", 94.

²⁸ Larcher, *La grande guerre dans les Balkans*, 203.

France and for the containment of Russia, Italy and Germany in the Near East. It was finally expected that it would facilitate the postwar political preponderance of France in Greece and French territorial expansion into Syria and Cilicia.²⁹

Over the same period Britain shifted her attention to the protection of her Eastern Empire through the encouragement of Arab nationalism and payed a reluctant regard to the French insistence on maintaining the Allied camp in Macedonia,³⁰ whose high handiness vis-a-vis Royalist Greece climaxed. The French led Entente forces in Macedonia and the Greek seas occupied strategically located Greek islands and brought under their control many of the Greek ports, railways, telecommunications and Greek army materiel.³¹ France and Britain also helped Venizelos to establish a revolutionary government in Salonica which sided with the Entente in the autumn of 1916, thus guarding against from a rear-attack upon the Allied camp by the Greek Royalist forces. Nevertheless, the concurrent success of the German submarine warfare, Italian reaction to Venizelos, the royal sympathies of many influential Englishmen and the vain Western hope of a reconciliation between the Greek King and Venizelos meant that the Salonica government received considerably much less than its due part of the allied aid.³²

Royalist Greece was responsible for much of her sufferings at the hands of the Entente because she had adopted a harmful, passive resistance to the Entente. The partial demobilization of her army in June 1916, her reluctance to resist the occupation of Eastern Macedonia by the German and Bulgarian armies two months later,³³ and the activities of royalist bands against the Entente in

²⁹ David J. Dutton, "The Balkan campaign and French war aims in the Great War" *English Historical Review*, 94 (170) (1979) 101-107, 111-112.

³⁰ Lowe, "The Failure of British Diplomacy", 93-98.

³¹ Bastias (ed.) *Historia tou Hellenikou Ethnous*, 32. Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*, 413-414, 428, 432-433, 446-47, 450-451, 470. Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 126, 128, 130-131.

³² Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*, 419-420, 463-468.

³³ *Ibid.* 369, 380-382.

Macedonia³⁴ constituted transparent signs of her hostility towards it. Also, the intermittent negotiations between the Greek General Staff and the German High Command regarding the possibility of a joint attack upon the Allied camp in Macedonia constituted another important item in the long list of Royalist activities against the Entente.³⁵

The naval policy of Royalist Greece further increased the concerns of the Entente, since it called for maintaining sizeable British naval forces in Greek waters which had a negative impact on the British Grand Fleet. Given that its fighting ability was being diminished by the withdrawal of trained ratings for new vessels, it was preferable to pay off some of the older ships in the Mediterranean so that their crews could be more effectively deployed. For this reason, it was thought that ‘the settlement of the Greek question would go far to relieve this pressure’. Moreover, the threat of either the *Goeben* or the Austrian fleet breaking out and attacking Salonica was a contingency which had to be guarded against. Admiral de Robeck could do little to counter these threats since his Eastern Mediterranean Squadron was dispersed across the Aegean. This potentially dangerous disposition was made necessary by the fear of a seditious movement in or a Greek attack upon the allied camp at Salonica and by the supposed supplying of enemy submarines with stores and intelligence by the Greeks. On top of this all, the unsuccessful Allied blockade of Greece during the first half of 1917 occupied sorely needed small craft for escorts and anti-submarine patrols in the Mediterranean at a time of a highly successful German submarine warfare.

The immunity from submarine attack enjoyed by Greek shipping, which heeded the secret German advice to adopt markings that were visible from a great distance, and the potential financial losses caused by the state encouragement to

³⁴ Ibid., 443, 452-453, 459. Diefthinsis Historias Stratou, *O Hellenikos Stratos kata ton Proton Pagosmion Polemon 1914-1918. He Hellas kai o Polemos eis ta Balkania* (Athens, 1958) 250-251.

³⁵ Leon, *Greece and the Great Powers*, 347-348, 352-353, 443-444.

Greek merchants and financial institutions to secure supplies and facilities in America and other neutral countries, was also resented in Britain. In addition, the Greek fleet was thought to be "a menace to the Entente powers in the Aegean" therefore the sequestration of the Greek light fleet in October 1916 put an end to fears that it might slip into the Dardanelles by prior arrangement with the Turkish fleet.³⁶

Obviously the Greek imbroglio could not last forever. The fall of Tsar Nicholas II, whose influence had frequently restrained the French from actively intervening in Greece, and the downfall of the Briand Ministry whose moderation in Greek affairs had frequently held back the French extremists, foreshadowed the settlement of the Greek Question in favor of Venizelos. Moreover, the Italian co-operation on the Greek Question, after Italy received new promises of postwar territorial expansion into Asia Minor at St Jean de Maurienne, and Britain's decision of April 1917 for disengaging herself from the Macedonian front accelerated the settlement of the Greek question. The entry of the United States of America into the war on the side of the Entente in April 1917 was equally helpful, since it removed the fear of hurting the susceptibilities of American public opinion on the rights of neutrals. Against a background of instability in Russia, the British and French decided in London at the end of May 1917 to take drastic action in Greece. In accordance with the decisions of the Anglo-French conference, Charles Jonnart was sent to Greece as High Commissioner to represent both Britain and France and to demand the abdication and withdrawal of King Constantine. Under the guns of the Allied fleet King Constantine abdicated on 11 June 1917.³⁷

A few days later Greece was reunited under Eleftherios Venizelos whose efforts to undo the damage were noteworthy. The Greek Prime Minister could hardly rely on the erratic material support of his Allies, which resulted in the

³⁶ Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 128-129, 134.

³⁷ Ibid., 134. Leontaritis, *Greece and the First World War*, 9-14.

deficient equipment of the reconstituted Greek army whose number reached 260.000 men by the end of the war. Suffice to mention that the Greek forces in Serbia were still wearing summer uniforms in November 1918, despite the influenza epidemic that had wrought havoc on them. The Greek expeditionary force in Ukraine was similarly underequipped in January 1919 with many soldiers marching there with their civilian shoes. Greece eventually financed her own war effort, as well as a good part of allied expenditures in Greece, through deficit financing and inflationary economic policy with devastating effects for her economy.³⁸

These sacrifices eventually paid off. Being a third of the Allied forces in Macedonia during their victorious final push against a demoralised enemy, the Greek Army also accounted for half of the Allied dead in September 1918. Franchet d'Espérey, the French Commander in Chief confessed that he could not have undertaken the victorious operations of that September without the splendid fighting and numerical prowess of the Greek army, who had also distinguished itself in June 1918 at the battle of Skra di Legen.³⁹ This, of course, was hardly the only Greek contribution to the successful issue of the war for the Entente. The Salamis Arsenal and the private Greek dockyards in Piraeus and Syra proved "useful at a time of emergency",⁴⁰ while the Hellenic Royal Naval Air Service "carried out valuable services at Mudros, Thassos and other places".⁴¹ The Greek light fleet also covered, to an appreciable extent, the Allied deficit in small craft in the Mediterranean and proved highly capable in anti-submarine warfare. Its best units, the *Aetos* class destroyers distinguished themselves in the Dardanelles patrol and the final verdict of the staff of the British Mediterranean Commander

³⁸ Bastias (ed.) *Historia tou Hellenikou Ethnous*, 50. Leontaritis, *Greece and the First World War*, 243-246.

³⁹ Leontaritis, *Greece and the First World War*, 188-190. Dieftinsis *Historias Stratou, O Hellenikos Stratos kata ton Proton Pagosmion Polemon 1914-1918. He Symetochi tes Helladas eis ton Polemon 1918*, 36-45, 204-205.

⁴⁰ Fotakis, *Greek Naval Strategy*, 140.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

in Chief was "The record of these Greek ships was a most satisfactory one and they performed good, and where the opportunity offered, gallant service."

The sizeable Greek merchant marine, also ended up being, proportionately, the highest sufferer amongst all Allied merchant marines, with the possible exception of the Portuguese, which was only a quarter the size of the Greek. This great loss in tonnage conveys the magnitude of the services rendered to the Allied cause by the Greek merchant marine. In fact, according to 1918 estimates, the approximate annual saving to the Allies by its use was no less than 7.5 million pounds.⁴²

In conclusion, Greece did not constitute a negligible quantity during the First World War as Asquith, the British Prime Minister, had correctly predicted at the very opening of the hostilities.⁴³ On the contrary, her services to the Entente had been noteworthy as well as her capacity for passive resistance to it. Moreover, Venizelos came out, in Winston Churchill's words, as "the true hero of the present war".⁴⁴ Indeed, his persistence and diplomatic dexterity had been remarkable; as long as he was at her helm his country could safely sail in the heavy seas of European power politics.

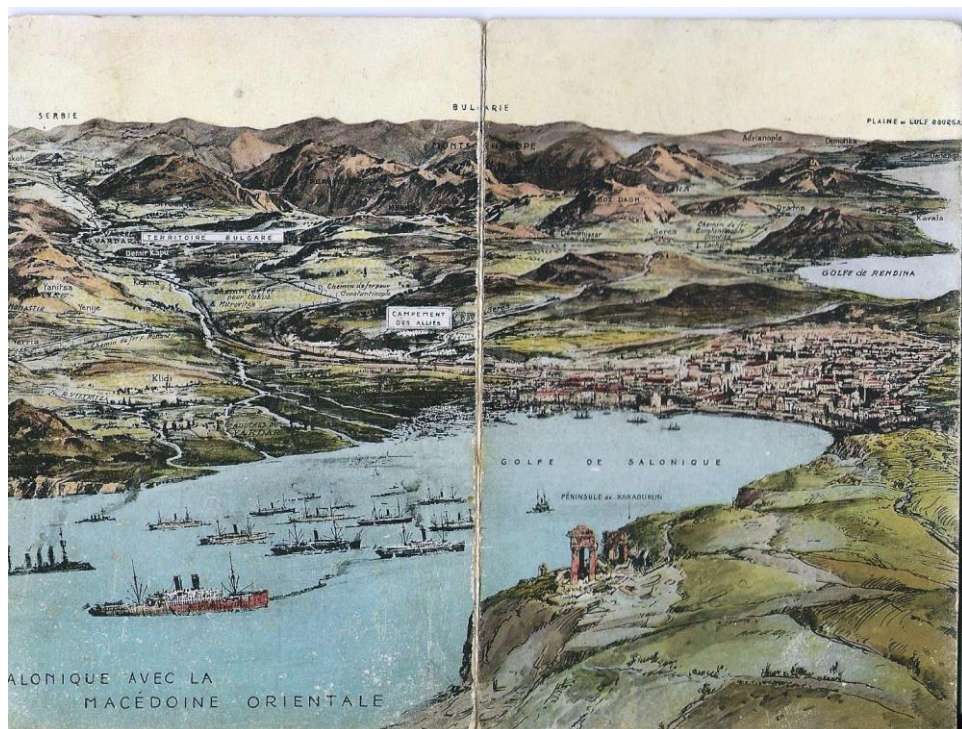
⁴² Ibid., 141-142.

⁴³ Gracham T. Clewes, *Churchill's Dilemma : the real story behind the Origins of the 1915 Dardanelles Campaign* (Santa Barbara California, 2010), 82.

⁴⁴ Leontaritis, *Greece and the First World War*, 418.

Francine Saint-Ramond (France)

Regards de militaires français de l'Armée d'Orient sur la guerre en Macédoine 1915-1918



Plus de 500 000 combattants français de métropole et des colonies, représentant huit divisions, ont été engagés dans l'Armée dite « d'Orient » au cours du premier conflit mondial, aux côtés des forces de l'Entente. Le plus grand nombre a affronté les Bulgares. L'échec du forçement des Détroits par le Corps Expéditionnaire franco-britannique débarqué sur la presqu'île de Gallipoli à l'entrée des Détroits des Dardanelles, les menaces sur la Serbie alliée, l'engagement soudain de la Bulgarie, ont pour conséquence le déplacement du front vers la Macédoine avec pour base arrière le port de Salonique.

Cet exposé tentera de répondre à une triple problématique : Quelle image ont les Français des Bulgares lors de leur départ ? Quels types d'affrontements se déroulent ? Enfin, quelles expériences les combattants retiennent-ils de cette campagne ?

1. Se préparer à affronter les Bulgares

Une remarque à propos du terme Orient. En ce début du XXe s, le souvenir de l'occupation ottomane dans les Balkans est encore présent. Le temps n'est pas si lointain où le voyageur occidental qui franchissait la Save et le Danube à Belgrade pénétrait alors dans l'espace dit « oriental ». L'expression a perduré après la restauration des unités nationales chez les peuples balkaniques. Les combattants qui embarquent sur les bateaux dans les ports de Marseille et de Toulon, pour la plupart d'origine rurale, ont une vision déformée des réalités qui les attendent sur le terrain. Ils ont en tête une vision idéalisée de l'Orient véhiculée par les mouvements artistiques orientalistes et la littérature populaire. Ils méconnaissent la situation de dévastation des espaces macédoniens et la détresse de leurs populations gravement affectés par les conflits balkaniques de 1912-1913.

Ils n'ont reçu aucune préparation, ni à un voyage lointain, ni à un conflit contre les Bulgares, dont le souverain était populaire en France et dont le peuple était considéré avec sympathie.

L'engagement de la Bulgarie au sein de l'Alliance ne génère pas en France de réaction violente de ressentiment, comme c'est le cas par rapport à l'Allemagne. L'un d'eux écrit : *Les Bulgares, je ne suis pas encore habitué à les haïr comme les autres, les ennemis héréditaires*. On constate des similitudes avec l'entrée en guerre contre les Turcs.

Ferdinand de Bulgarie dont la mère était Clémentine d'Orléans, était très valorisé dans la presse car il avait toujours mis en avant son attachement à la France. Lors d'un passage en France en 1910, il avait déclaré que la moitié de

son cœur était français. Les Bulgares n'ont jamais été considérés dans l'avant-guerre comme des ennemis potentiels. Et au début de la guerre, la propagande de guerre française, dans l'expectative d'un engagement en faveur de l'Entente les a toujours ménagés. Les espoirs d'une prise de position favorable existent d'autant que la France a formé avant-guerre des officiers bulgares très appréciés et a vendu des armes à la Bulgarie, dont le fameux canon de 75. Des officiers bulgares ont reçu une formation à l'École Supérieure de Guerre à Paris où enseignaient des officiers tels Joffre et Pétain.

On note une évolution très nette dans la perception des Bulgares par les combattants français et par la presse nationale. Dans un premier temps, le ressentiment de ce qui est perçu comme une trahison de son souverain, se porte entièrement sur lui l'accusant d'avoir trompé son peuple. A partir de 1916, elle vise plus directement le peuple bulgare. Des surnoms sont alors trouvés tels que « Prussiens des Balkans », soldats de « Ferdinand de Cobourg », « Boulgres » ou « Bougres ».

L'objectif du front d'Orient, qui s'intègre dans une stratégie périphérique de revers, échappe totalement aux combattants français.

2. La nature des affrontements franco-bulgares

La campagne des Balkans en Macédoine présente globalement les mêmes rythmes que le front de métropole : Une interminable guerre de position avec de faibles évolutions du front s'intercale entre deux épisodes majeurs de guerre de mouvement. J'évoquerai brièvement quelques affrontements.

Guerre de mouvement La campagne de Serbie menée d'octobre à novembre 1915, est destinée à porter secours aux Serbes en déroute. Elle se solde par un échec de la jonction des armées rendue impossible par la rapide progression bulgare. Les trois divisions françaises engagées dans la vallée du Vardar doivent se replier sur le territoire grec épargné par les Bulgares qui

cessent leur poursuite à la frontière, tandis que les Serbes sont refoulés vers l'Albanie. Les combats sont particulièrement violents :

Kara Hodzali notamment, qui marque l'ultime avancée française vers le nord.. Les combats à la baïonnette y ont duré six jours. Les Français ont surnommé ces lieux Kara Rosalie, surnom de la baïonnette française appelée Rosalie, un prénom féminin en vogue. D'autres combats importants ont lieu afin de protéger la vallée du Vardar au niveau de la gare de Stroumitza-station, en des lieux proches de la frontière bulgare. Je citerai quelques lieux très disputés avec des combats violents comme les villages de Dorol Oba, Ormanli, Tatarli.

L'année 1916 voit se déplacer le front à la suite d'une offensive bulgare en août et une contre-offensive alliée qui se concrétise avec la conquête de la ville de Monastir actuellement Bitola sur le territoire serbe. La grande offensive finale qui marque la rupture du front bulgare, a lieu à partir du 15 septembre 1918 sous la forme d'une percée. Elle est un élément majeur de la déstabilisation des Empires Centraux.

La guerre de position présente des caractéristiques bien différentes de celles du front de France. Elle se déroule sur des territoires désolés, difficilement pénétrables, dans des cadres de montagnes et de marais avec des conditions climatiques extrêmes. .Eloignées de leurs bases, sur des territoires dépourvus d'infrastructures, les armées se trouvent dispersées, avec des moyens militaires au départ inadaptés à ce front où l'on ne peut accéder que par des pistes muletières.

Pour se rendre sur le front au départ de Salonique, la plupart des combattants effectuent d'interminables marches à pied. Il fallait environ dix jours de marche pour se rendre de Salonique à Florina dont la distance est de 200 km. Seize jours étaient nécessaires pour rejoindre la région de Koritza d'Albanie sur une distance de 300 km en passant par tous les temps par le col de Pisoderi à 1600 m d'altitude. Que dire du sort des blessés graves acheminés à l'arrière sur des cacolets fixés sur des ânes.

Les premières lignes sont de petits postes isolés proches des crêtes. Je prends pour exemple le secteur de la Boucle de la Cerna, la « Rivière Noire » occupé par les Français. Les combattants des deux camps restent face à face dans un cadre hostile de montagne, dépourvu de végétation, sont dispersés et s'abritent dans des trous ou derrière des rochers dont certains ont des formes étranges qui les impressionnent et qu'ils comparent à de gigantesques monuments mégalithiques.

Les troupes doivent faire face à des problèmes d'approvisionnement car tout vient de France. L'absence de bois si nécessaire à des armées en campagne, génère des difficultés : les lignes téléphoniques sont souvent sectionnées par manque de perches pour les soutenir. Les soldats se plaignent de ne pouvoir se construire des abris en bois appelés « cagnas » si protecteurs sur le front de France.

Par manque de moyens, les affrontements se présentent sous la forme de coups de main sans réel intérêt stratégique. En 1916, ils prennent la forme de guérilla avec du côté français, l'envoi de patrouilles chargées de missions de localisation des Bulgares mieux adaptés au terrain et difficilement repérables car très mobiles. D'où l'étonnante plainte des services de renseignements français : *On se contente trop souvent de déterminer où l'on est, sans se préoccuper de ce qu'est devenu l'ennemi.*

Les Français notent les spécificités des méthodes de combat des Bulgares qui utilisent une meilleure connaissance du terrain: charges de cavalerie comme à Pétorak en 1916, présence de tireurs d'élite, protection avec des réseaux denses de barbelés, mise en défense des villages. Sur le plan de l'artillerie, les moyens sont insuffisants. L'artillerie bulgare privilégie les obus fusants qui sont plus redoutables que les percutants. Eclatant sur les crêtes rocheuses, ils provoquent de véritables pluies de pierres qui sont comme autant de nouveaux projectiles difficiles à éviter. Les Bulgares utilisent des moyens psychologiques qui impressionnent les Français et utilisent leurs points faibles à savoir le

sentiment d'isolement : assauts nocturnes en pleine montagne accompagnés de cris effrayants, chants impressionnants lors de la conquête de sommets, émission de tracts démoralisants. Un exemple de message reçu est : *Rentrez chez vous braves poilus, c'est aux Serbes que nous faisons la guerre.*

Les progrès techniques de l'armement réalisés sur le front occidental ne sont pas transposables à ces espaces. Et le haut commandement français répugne à renouveler les effectifs en raison des impératifs du front de France.

2. La détresse des soldats d'Orient

Car en effet, et ce sera ma dernière partie, les combattants français comprennent mal les raisons de leur présence si loin du sol natal dont l'intégrité est gravement menacée par les Allemands qui sont arrivés à 50 km de Paris en septembre 1914. Leurs familles sont en danger et ils ont le sentiment de ne rien pouvoir faire pour eux. Ils ont donc le sentiment d'être des inutiles, des sacrifiés, des oubliés, le temps n'est plus à l'enthousiasme de certains lors du départ. Une grave crise d'identité se manifeste. Elle concerne les territoires traversés : les impressions sont davantage empreintes de bon sens que d'émotions esthétiques : la vision de pays arides, d'espaces laissés en friches, l'absence de verdure les apitoient. Les ruraux émettent des jugements de valeur négatifs sur l'absence de mise en valeur de ces terres et dont ils rendent responsables les populations qui y vivent. Malgré de multiples manifestations de compassion à leur égard, les autochtones ne sont pas toujours jugées favorablement : Que dire des conditions d'arrivée à Salonique où personne ne répond à leurs signes d'amitié adressés du bateau, alors qu'ils pensent être les sauveurs des Grecs ! Leur présence n'est pas toujours la bienvenue sur le sol serbe où certains villageois sont acquis à la cause bulgare et leur manifestent de l'hostilité alors qu'ils pensent être venus également les protéger. Vus davantage comme des troupes d'occupation, ils supportent mal en outre l'hétérogénéité des populations de diverses confessions et également des réfugiés, qui leur manifestent de l'indifférence qui blesse leur

amour-propre. Venant d'une nation très unifiée, fiers de leur appartenance à un pays industrialisé et dynamique, dans une totale méconnaissance des cultures et du contexte balkanique, ils jugent avec sévérité ces populations déshéritées. On saisit là la manifestation d'un complexe de supériorité en relation avec les mentalités coloniales de l'époque.

La détresse morale de ces hommes est à mettre en relation avec la maladie. Sur ce front, les maladies infectieuses ont sévi tel le typhus. Le paludisme a frappé bien davantage que le feu, plus de 90 % des hommes en ont été affectés. Le général Sarrail a fait savoir au Haut Commandement qu'il commandait une armée de malades. Sur le front de France la majorité d'entre eux auraient été évacués. Cette détresse a pour corollaire l'angoisse de ne jamais rentrer au pays et génère de nombreux suicides.

Conclusion

Dans l'après-guerre, l'importance de ce front a été sous-estimée. Il fut pourtant une composante importante de l'histoire du premier conflit mondial et de l'histoire commune des Bulgares et des Français. Les hommes ayant combattu en Orient ont été considérés à tort en France, même par leurs familles, comme ayant moins souffert que leurs camarades qui ont participé aux grandes batailles comme Verdun ou la Somme. Pour eux, l'ennemi fut davantage « l'Orient » que les Turcs ou les Bulgares.

Il faut dire qu'ils ont adressé à leurs proches des cartes postales représentant des sujets non militaires, parfois légers, tels que des femmes orientales qu'ils n'ont jamais rencontrées, des palais qu'ils n'ont jamais vus, et qui ont fait d'eux des combattants-voyageurs malgré eux. On voit là les effets d'une désinformation bien loin des terribles réalités vécues.

15 mai 1915

J'ai vu...

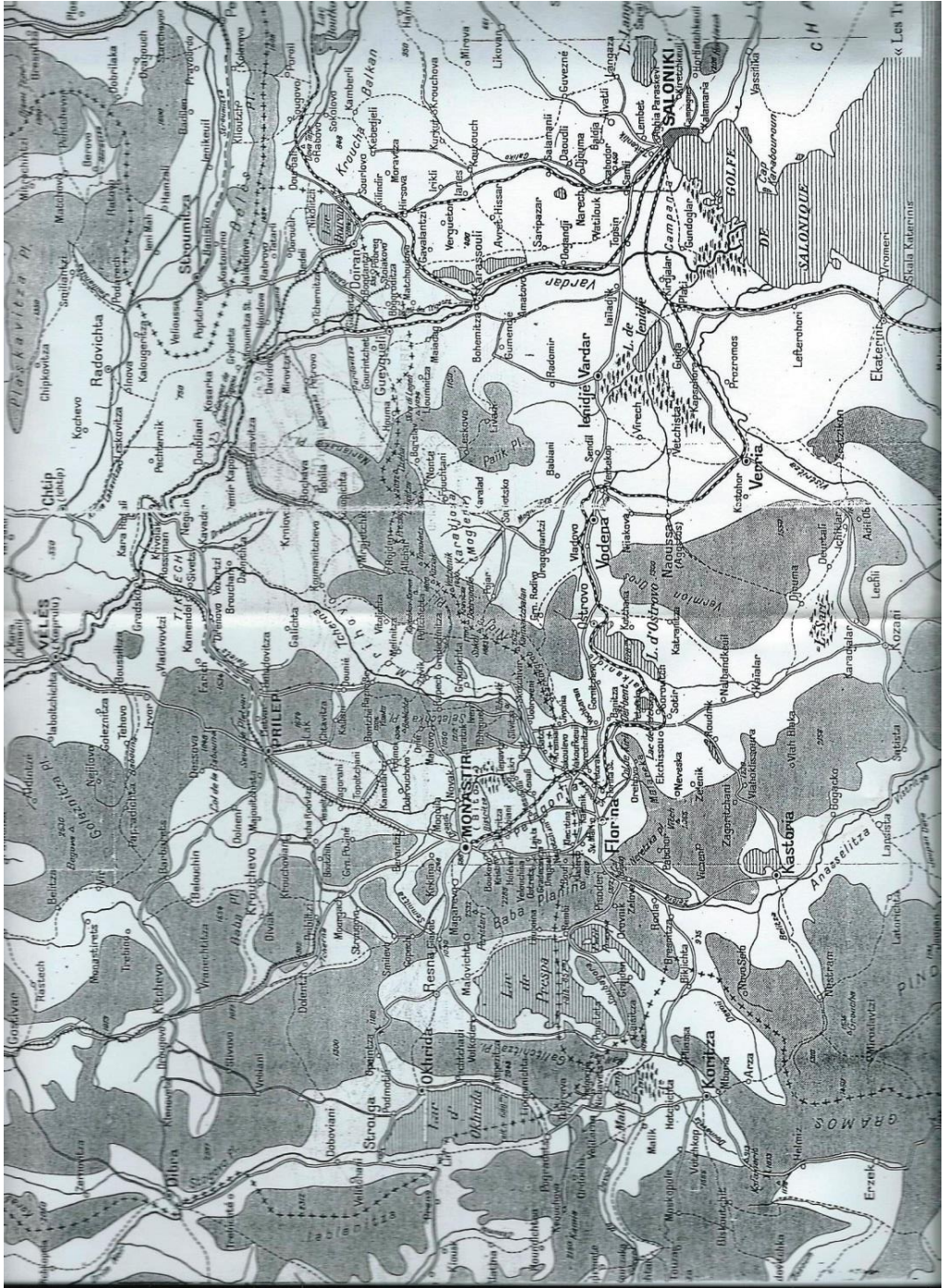
REDACTION et ADMINISTRATION : 8, Bd des Capucines, PARIS. — Tél. : Gutenb. 04-58, 03-37, 03-11, 16 inter.

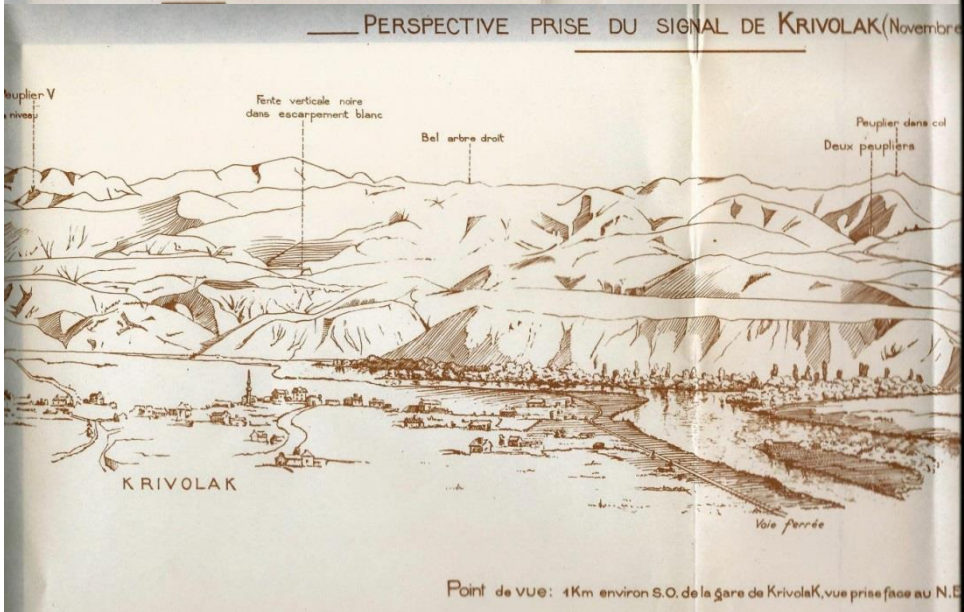
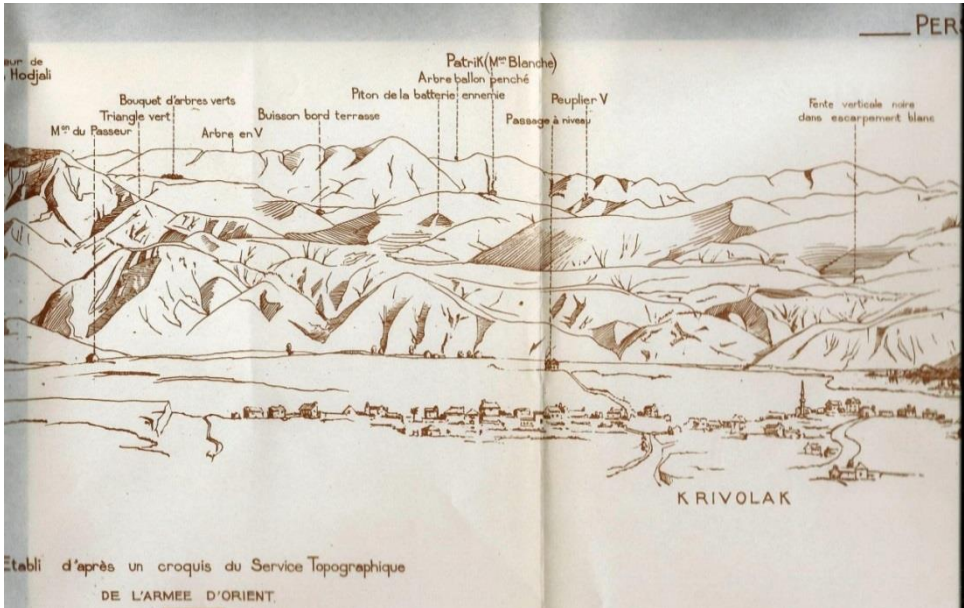
J'ai vu ... consacre annuellement 52.000 francs à l'achat de documents inédits sur la guerre et l'actualité.



LE PROBLÈME DE DEMAIN : UNE ÉQUATION A QUATRE INCONNUES

Neuf mois de guerre acharnée et sanglante ont mis aux prises la civilisation et la barbarie déchaînée ; nul n'a plus le droit d'être neutre. Voici de gauche à droite, les rois : Victor-Emmanuel d'Italie, Ferdinand de Roumanie, Ferdinand de Bulgarie et Constantin de Grèce à la veille des décisions suprêmes qui feront d'eux et de leurs peuples les défenseurs de la Justice et de la Liberté.

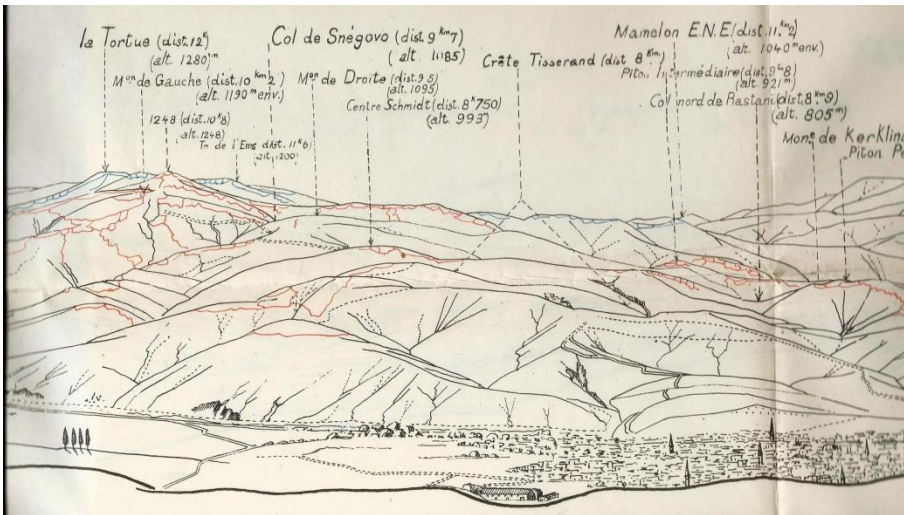




Armées Françaises dans la Grande Guerre
Tome VIII croquis 4
d'après un croquis du service topographique de l'Armée d'Orient



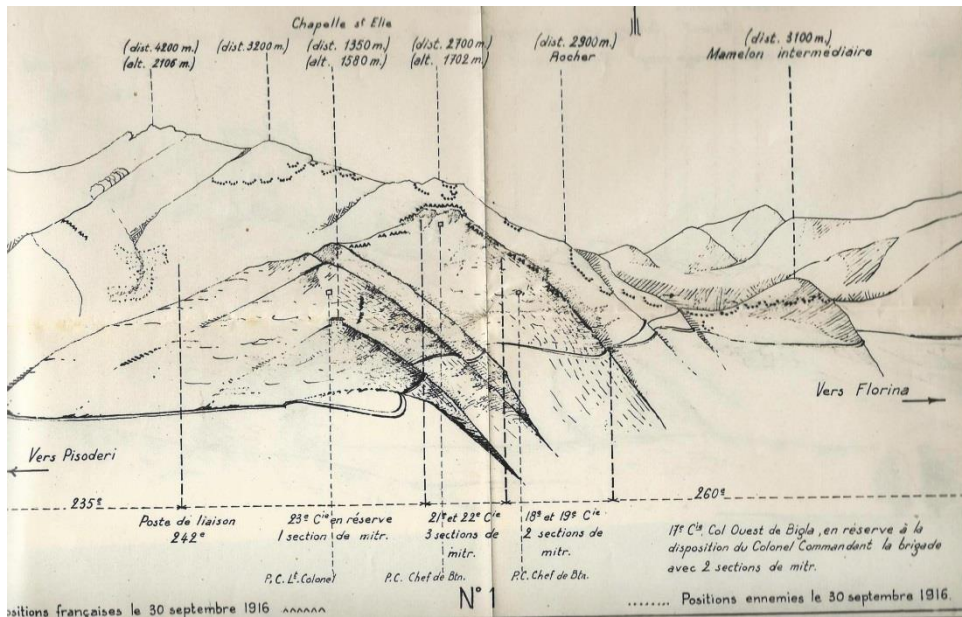
*Campagne de Serbie (octobre-décembre 1915)
Documents de la Section photographique de l'Armée (Ministère de la Guerre)
Fascicule III Les Alliés à Salonique*



*Région Nord de Monastir/Bitola
Croquis pris depuis un observatoire au S.E. de Bukovo – altitude 1025 m
Armées Françaises dans la Grande Guerre – T. VIII, VOL.2, Planche 5*



Sur 1.248. Les Franks-Comtois du capitaine Lempereur, dans la tranchée conquise le 16 mars 1917.
 (Photo Archives Photographiques d'Art et d'Histoire).



Région Nord du col de Pisodéri d'après un croquis du 242° R.I. – septembre 1916
 Armées Françaises dans la Grande Guerre – T. VIII, VOL.2, Planche 1

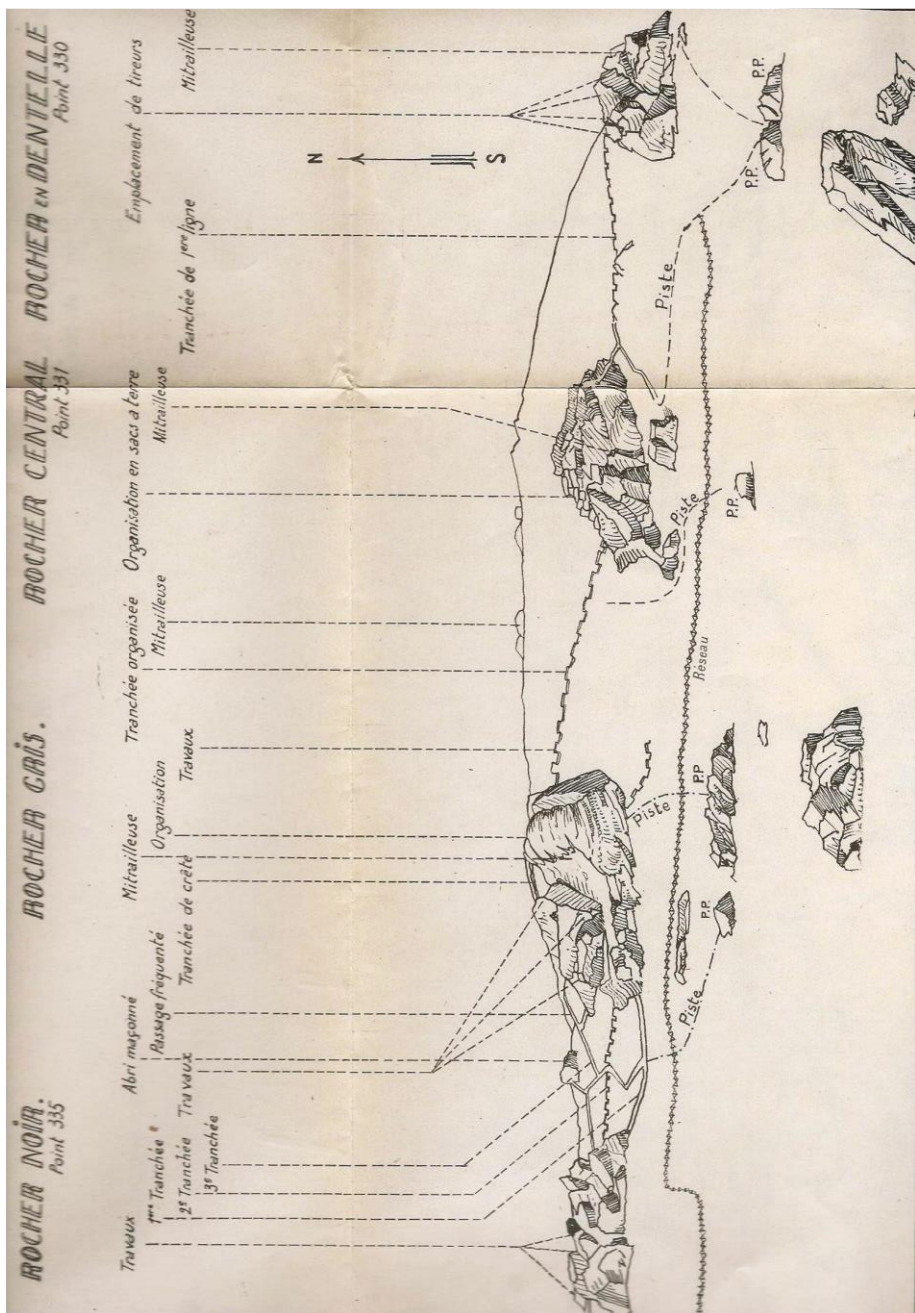


L'ouvrage Prussien (Redoute de Starovina) enlevé le 16-9-18 par le 20^e B.T.S., 22^e B.I.C.
(Photo L.C. 1933).



Skotchivir. L'entrée de la Cerna dans ses gorges. A l'horizon, Jélak. A droite, le Starkov Grob.

(Photo Reiss. Collection L.C.).



LE PITON JAUNE vu du pignon des italiens (avril 1917)

AFGG, T VIII, VOL.2, Planche 4



160. IADLAZIK. - Hutte Macédonienne



Imp. Bureau, Marseille.
SOUVENIR D'ORIENT 1914-18
Campagnards Macédoniens en tenue de Fêtes



33. *Souvenir de SALONIQUE — Beauté Macédonienne*
Souvenir from SALONICA — Macedonian beauty



imp. H. Grimaud Fils et Cie, 54, Rue Mazenod, Marseille
CAMPAGNE D'ORIENT 1914 18
Voûtes d'un Monastère en marbre blanc et noir, près de MONASTIR

8^a



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivan Petrov (Bulgaria)
The Offensive of the Entente in Macedonia in the Spring of 1917

The plans for the military campaign of the Entente in 1917 were discussed at a conference of the representatives of the allied armies, held on 15 November 1916, in Chantilly /France/. It was decided that in the winter of 1916 - 1917 the Allied armies will continue the offensive operations in full power on every front, as far as possible depending on the weather conditions. In order to ensure maximum ability to counter each new situation and especially not to give the enemy an opportunity in any way to regain the strategic initiative in the war, the Allied armies were required to be ready to advance with all available forces in the first half of February 1917. The offensive operations were planned to begin as soon possible as to be consistent with the offensive operations on other fronts.

Regarding the Balkans, it was decided: 1. the coalition would seek a way to expel Bulgaria from the war as soon as possible. In this regard, the Russian High Command wished to continue and intensify the ongoing operations at that time. 2. Russian-Romanian forces would act against Bulgaria from the North, and Allied army in Thessaloniki would act from the South, as their actions would be closely linked, in order to achieve decisive results on the fronts depending on the course of the operations. 3. Numeric strength of the Eastern allied army must be brought as soon as possible up to 23 divisions. 4. The specified number of members of the Eastern Allied army had to be maintained.¹

These figures corresponded to one the side of the scope for maneuver and stores for this war theater, on the other side to the size of the contingents that could be taken from the Western Front. In order to bring the armed forces up to the specified size - the British government had to increase its troops to 7

¹ Давид Ллойд Джордж. Военные мемуары. Томы I – II. Москва, 1934, 621 – 622.

divisions, the French government – up to 6 divisions and the Italian Government up to 3 divisions. The unsuccessful campaign of the Entente in Romania in 1916, however, led to a change in the tasks of the Allied forces in Macedonia. On December 11, Joffre withdrew its directive to Sarrail from 17 November 1916, laying down preparation for the offensive.² The final strategy of the Allied actions in the Balkans was adopted at the conference in Calais on 26 February 1917. The situation at the fronts of the war was considered there and the capabilities of the Allies to send reinforcements to the Balkans because of the expected large Nivelle offensive on the Western Front. The Allies concluded that the decisive defeat of the Bulgarian army at that moment with these forces was practically impossible. The assigned task to the Allied troops in Macedonia was to create a strong defense, to numb the enemy's forces and to strike the enemy at every opportunity.³

Big problem for the Allies was the increased losses in ships due to the increased activity of the German submarines. For the last six months of 1916 losses to the Allies in the Mediterranean were 256 ships with 662,131 gross tonnages. England accounted 32% of the number of sunken ships and 62% of the tonnage losses. This problem was an extreme obstacle for the supply of the Allies in Macedonia. For these reasons, 15 000 people were not able to be transported to Thessaloniki and were forced to wait in England.⁴

Issues with the supply and communications of the Allied troops in the Balkans were too heavy and were dealt with by the leaders of the Entente at a

² Мировые войны XX века. Книга 1. Первая мировая война. Москва, 2002, 214.

³ Paul G. Halpern. *The Naval War in Mediterranean 1914 – 1918*. Oxford, 1987, 343. David Dutton. *The Politics of Diplomacy. Britain and France in the First World War*. London, 1998. 121. J. K. Tanenbaum. *General Maurice Sarrail 1856-1929. The French Army and Left-Wing Politics*. Chapel Hill, 1974, 150. Cyril Falls. *Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. From the outbreak of war to the spring of 1917*. London, 1933, 296. Alan Palmer. *The Gardeners of Salonika*. London, 1965, 116. Николай Н. Корсун. *Балканский фронт мировой войны 1914-1918 гг.* Москва, 1939, 79 – 80.

⁴ Cyril Falls. *Military Operation*. Vol. I. 254.

conference in Rome in early January, 1917. It was decided to improve the roads for the transportation of British and French troops to Brindisi and also to reconstruct the road from Santi Quaranta to Monastir.⁵ At the conference Italy and England refused to send additional troops to the Balkans demanded by France. Besides, English and Italian military representatives offered to abandon Monastir, occupied in November 1916, in order to facilitate the organization of the defense of the Allies. This proposal was not adopted because of the adverse political consequences.⁶ As to the question of command of the army in Macedonia, General Sarrail was committed as chief commander to be in charge of commanding the various national contingents and the relation with them to be similar to that in the conduct of the Dardanelles operation, i.e. only in connection with military operations and the relevant commanders of national contingents to be in direct communications with their own governments.⁷

As for the Central Powers, the situation at the fronts of the war did not give Germany the opportunity to allocate additional forces in the Balkans. The Bulgarian army lost in the fall and winter of 1916/1917 a significant part of their draft animals and that deprived it of mobility. Bulgaria also achieved all of its objectives in the war, except the loss of Monastir. An advance to Salonika, that was an aspiration to Austro-Hungary, did not cause enthusiasm in Bulgarian command. These reasons led to the perception of passive positioning tactics in the coming year.

In January and February the whole Macedonian front was quiet, big battles were not taken. The time was used by the Allies to reorganize and strengthen their forces. France increased its contingent with additional parts.

⁵ Lord Maurice Hankey. The Supreme Command 1914 – 1918. Vol.II. London, 1961, 610 – 611.

⁶ Мировые войны XX века. Книга 1. Первая мировая война. Москва, 2002, 214.

⁷ Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 255 – 256. Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika. 112.

Except of 11th and 16th colonial divisions that arrived in Macedonia in late 1916, in early 1917 in the Balkans were sent the 30th and 76th divisions. These divisions were of nine battalions instead of 12 or were a total of 35 000 people who had arrived by the end of February. To each colonial regiment was added one Senegalese battalion. However, they had to be withdrawn from the front line during the winter months because they couldn't withstand the cold.⁸

The British contingent was enhanced with the new 60th division and 3 - 120 mm batteries. Back in December 1916 reorganization was carried out in the English artillery and infantry. Each English division consisted of three infantry brigades. Each brigade had two 6-gun 83.8 mm batteries and one four 4.5 inch cannon battery. A brigade with three 83.8 mm batteries was designed to transform into mountain artillery. The English cavalry, bicycle parts and fortress troops in Thessaloniki were also reorganized.⁹

The Serbian Army was also reorganized as personnel reached the critical minimum of warfare due to heavy losses. From 12 battalions in the state in division in the summer of 1916 Serbian divisions were transformed into 9 battalions. Serbian High Command began a campaign to attract recruits from captivity in Russia and Italy and immigrants in America and Canada. Even if requested by the U.S. government to send troops to the front, U.S. refused on the grounds that they were not at war with Bulgaria.

As a result of the reorganization of the Serbian army regiments were transformed into the fourth division and the 3rd Army was disbanded. There was 1st Army: Moravian, Drina and Danube division and 2nd Army: Shumadiyska, Timoska and Vardar division. The Cavalry division was left in reserve.¹⁰

Despite the changes the army was not united. Strong influence among senior officers had the organization "Black Hand", which was opposing to the

⁸ Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 255.

⁹ Ibid. 257 – 258.

¹⁰ Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign. London, 1922, 120.

Serbian government. For this reason, the most influential supporters of the organization as commander of the Moravian division, several brigade commanders, chief of staff of Shumadiyska division and the Deputy Chief of Staff of the 3rd Army were dismissed from their positions.

Burdens of war strengthen desertion. Many soldiers left their parts and passed the front line to go home. Small groups communicated in captivity and there were also cases of suicide. Some Serbian soldiers began establishing contacts with Bulgarian soldiers at the front line. Chief of Staff of the Serbian Supreme Command in a secret order to the headquarters of Second Army of 30 December 1916, revealed unauthorized links between Serbian and Bulgarian troops in some sections of the Second Serbian army.

Bulgarians took letters from the Serbs to deliver them to their families. In a section of the front near the village of Tushino Serbs and Bulgarians settled regular exchange of letters. In the valley of the Vardar sector Karadzhitsa Bulgarian soldiers also provided letters to Serbian troops from their relatives. Such relationships were created between Bulgarians and Russians as well. On neutral ground between the front lines at night, there were meetings between soldiers of different nationalities.

Allied Command gave an order to the French artillery without warning to open fire in places with such gatherings. Serbian command prohibited contacts with the enemy soldiers and civilians. In the prefrontal zone under the authority of the Security Service of the Serbian army in settlements like Yenidje-Vardar, Ostrovo, Verria, Vodena, etc. were established surveillance posts to monitor the links of the Serbian soldiers with the local population.¹¹

On 15 February with a surprise attack 76th French division pushed weak Austro-Hungarian forces and on 17 February established physical contact with

¹¹ Велики рат Србије 1914 – 1918. Београд, 1970, 341, Др. Петар Опачит. Солунска офанзива 1918 године. Београд, 1980, 22. Юрий А. Писарев. Србија и Черногогория в Первой мировой войны. Москва, 1968, 248 – 251.

the Italian 16 Corps based in Valona. A single Allied front from Orfano bay at the Aegean Sea to the Valona bay at the Adriatic Sea was established.

Much more significant, however, for the allies is gaining the control of the port Santi Quaranta. This is a small port situated only 50 km away from the Italian coast, 62 km away from the port of Brindisi and 93 km away from Taranto. The roads linking the port with allied troops were in poor condition, but could be reconstructed. Thus significantly shorter the route from Italy to Santi Quaranta and avoid the threat of German and Austro-Hungarian submarines in the Aegean.

In February, more significant fights were in the bend of the Cerna River. On 12 February 1917, at 18.45 o'clock after a heavy artillery preparation German attack areas held a surprise attack against the Italian positions at elevation 1050. For the first time, at the Macedonian front, they used flamethrowers. The results were appalling - more than 600 meters from the item was destroyed as a result of the shelling, and half of the company was burned with flamethrowers. Fierce fighting continued until 27 February. In general, the Italian losses in the fighting were around 400 people.¹²

On the eastern flank of the Allies - from Orfano bay to the river Vardar the weather during January to February was much worse: constant rain, and often snow. For these two months due to the cold weather from the 16 English Corps 4000 people were evacuated because of being sick.¹³

Unpleasant surprise for the Allies was the emergence on 26 February of a German squadron under the command of the famous Baron Richthofen, based at Hudova. This was a squadron of 15 heavy aircraft armed with four machine guns.

¹² Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 260 – 261, Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 122 – 125. Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 117.

¹³ Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 261.

At the first air attack on 27 February of this squadron against the French, at the airport Dudular, 8 aircraft were destroyed and 4 damaged.¹⁴

In March and April Richthofen's squadron subjected to attacks Dudular, Vertekop, Monastir, Brod , Ekshisu, Surovichevo, Karasouli, Yanesh, Leskovo and the positions between the Vardar and Doiran, Dobroveni, Kalinovo, Kalindir, Skochivir, Vodena.¹⁵

With zeppelins NN 101 and 97 the Germans in March and April attacked even Mudros and Valona.¹⁶ By early May, when Richthofen's squadron flew to Belgium, the activities of the Allied aviation in the Macedonian front were virtually paralyzed.¹⁷ In order to repel German air attacks in the UK sector, the Allies had an additional fighter squadron and a bomber.¹⁸ Many planes of the British naval forces were based on the island of Thasos and in Stavros in the mainland of Greece. Britain had also planes on 2 ships - aircraft carriers: British ships "Ark Royal" and "Empress".¹⁹

During the winter, the Allies made great efforts to improve communications. They built a great road to supply the troops at the bend of the Cerna River. Significantly improved was the railway network, which was under the control of the Entente. Large quantities of ammunition were accumulated for

¹⁴ Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 266 – 267. Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 117. Martin Gilbert. The First World War. London, 1994, 310. Owen H. Collinson. Salonica and after. The sideshow that ended the war. London, 1919, 262. H. A. Jones. Over the Balkans and South Russia. Being the history of No. 47 squadron royal air force. London, 1923, 38 – 39.

¹⁵ Сражения и боеве на Балканите през Голямата война 1915 – 1918г. Извлечение от официалните сведения на германския главен генерален щаб от 1919 год. Приложение на ВИСб, 1927, кн. 5 и 6, 28 – 30. Alan Wakefield & Simon Moody. Under The Devil's Eye. Britain's forgotten army at Salonika 1915 – 1918. London, 2004, 186 - 187.

¹⁶ Пак там, 29 – 30.

¹⁷ H. A. Jones. Over the Balkans and South Russia, 38 – 54.

¹⁸ Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 117.

¹⁹ Walter A. Musciano. Rudolf von Eschwege: German World War I Ace Fighter Pilot. 2. In: www.historynet.com/air_sea/aces/3032996.htm

the upcoming offensive. For one month from Marseille to Thessaloniki via sea were transferred 120 heavy guns and were prepared to ship 90 guns.²⁰

In the second half of February, Sarrail prepared the Allies' plan for the spring offensive. It provides an impact at five different points on the front. It was envisaged that the main attack to inflict the Serbian army in Moglena mountain, east of the bend in the Cerna river and to emerge behind Bulgarian positions in the area of the river Vardar. On the west flank, the French parts must occur between Ohrid and Lake Prespa, taking into connection with the Franco-Italian forces occurring upstream of the Cerna River between Monastir and Prilep. The plan provided at the same time the British 28th division to come out to Mount Bellasitsa valley between Doiran and Rupel Gorge. It was planned on the right flank the Allied British 10th and 27th division to occur and to occupy Serres. The main task of the Allied armies was to break the Bulgarian defense and to offense in Kumanovo and Stip, and to reach Sofia. The British troops, after the conquest of the Rupel Gorge, were scheduled to occur in the river valley in direction to Sofia.²¹

In early March, the French Government informed general Sarrail that because of the expected attack of general Nivelle on the Western front, was obliged to take active steps to the front in order to prevent the transfer of German troops from Macedonia to France.

The spring offensive of the Allies began on 11 March after a long artillery preparation of the 76th French division in the pass between Ohrid and Lake Prespa. The advance of the French was preceded by long preparation including the repair of the road from Florina through Pisoderi to Coritsa. The purpose of the attack was to break the Bulgarian defense and the capture of Resen. After the capture of Resen was planned an invasion of Allied armies in

²⁰ Георги Марко. Голямата война и Българската стража между Средна Европа и Ориента 1916 – 1919г. София, 2006, 96.

²¹ Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 113 – 114.

direction eastwards in order to interrupt the communications between the Bulgarian and German troops stationed north of Monastir.

The right flank of the Bulgarian positions from the Prespa Lake to Cerna River was defended by 6th division from the lake near the village of Rashani and by 8th division from the village till the Cerna River and in total a line of 36 kilometers. The positions were not adequately supported because of the nature of the terrain, the winter storms and blizzards and the scarcity of building materials. Fighting in that area with short breaks was kept until 22 March and all attacks were beaten back with heavy losses for the attackers.²²

On 12 March a strong shelling started upon the entire stretch of Prespa Lake to Cerna River. Against some key points in the Bulgarian defense as elevation 1248, Red Wall, and for the road north of Monastir, the French attracted additional artillery. Their goal in that section was the expulsion of Bulgarian and German troops at such a distance from the town, which would allow them to shoot over the city. Shelling continued throughout the day and night. Bulgarian positions were subjected to systematic destruction. The next day, the artillery fire of the Entente units became drum fire and under cover they started infantry attacks at elevation 1248, Red Wall and to the right wing of the 8th division. With the barrage shooting in front of the attacked sections the Bulgarian artillery dispersed the attackers and caused their heavy losses. Severe losses of the French were at the right flank of the 8th Division, where they were strafed by six field and 6 heavy batteries.²³

On 14 March the French renewed the attacks. They managed to cross the barrage of Bulgarian artillery and took some of the trenches of 3, 15 and 56 regiments. They were pushed back with a counterattack by the reserves. The

²² ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, лл. 358 – 360, 363 – 365, 367 – 368. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 126. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 296.

²³ Атанас Христов. Исторически преглед на Общоевропейската война и участието на България в нея. София, 1925, 432. ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 359.

French managed to hold only the Red Wall, but were not able to develop their success.

From 15 March until 18 March the fierce fighting continued. The French used gas shells. The Bulgarian front trenches passed several times from one hand into others hand. French 57th division was able to conquer elevation 1280, where it took many prisoners /between 1200 and 2000 people/ but then it was repulsed from the height. In the battles, both sides suffered huge losses. The Bulgarian troops involved in the fighting, 3rd Infantry Regiment lost 75% of its staff and the 15th Infantry Regiment 50%.²⁴

Heavy fighting raged on 19 March for the elevation 1248. The opponent managed to break through the defense between the 55th and 56th Regiments. With German reinforcements that arrived, the French were repulsed.

Fighting continued on 20 March at the Red Wall, elevation 1248 and at the villages of Snegovo, Tarnova and Veshtani. Despite the heavy shelling the defenders repelled the attacking French. The price for that was too severe: 6th division within ten days fights gave 496 killed and 1010 wounded and 8th division - 479 killed, 1497 wounded and 930 missing.²⁵ The fights for elevation 1248 continued, but at the end, the place remained in the hands of the French.²⁶

By the end of the month, the Bulgarian troops with counterattacks, backed by artillery, managed to recover almost all items lost in battles with the exception of the Red Wall and elevation 1248. On 17 April with a sudden attack, the Bulgarian and German troops retrieved also the Red Wall. In the battles were

²⁴ Атанас Христов. Исторически преглед на Общоевропейската война..., 434. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 296. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 126. ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае. 550, лл. 360 – 361.

²⁵ Георги Марков. Голямата война и Българската стража..., 99.

²⁶ Подполковник Ан. Разсуканов. По бойните полета с 8-и артилерийски полк. София, 1929, 190.

captured three officers and 200 French soldiers. The French attempted on 19 April to regain the lost positions but were repulsed.²⁷

Monastir was in the area of hostilities. Because the French had a lot of artillery in the city, it was subjected of fire during the war, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of it burned in a fire by the end of the war.

After a relatively quiet period in April in Macedonia, the Allied offensive was resumed in the English sector at Doiran. Since the autumn of 1916 the defense of that part of the front was taken from the 9th Infantry Pleven division. The position occupied by the division defense had a total length of 28 km and was one continuous trench with a depth from 1.60 to 2.00 meters, and with a whole system of hidden messaging watchtowers, shelters for staff and guns, ammunition depots. In front of the trench, a wire was loaded netting at one or two strips with a width of 5-10 meters. In many places was built a second line of trenches, equipped in the same way.

South of Doiran on the heights Pazardzhik, Prince Boris, General Jekov, and Prince Cyril, General Nerezov constructed a front position 5 km long. It was built in the same way and aimed to keep the enemy away from the head position. Forefronts were deployed in order to compel the security of surprise attacks.

The Field artillery in this section of the front was under concrete lids that were able to withstand several direct hits from 150 mm shells. During the fighting in April and May 1917, that save the guns from destruction. A streamlined system for signaling was created, allowing the artillery barrage to shoot in 1 minute after the disclosure of the position. All logistics, bodies, headquarters, warehouses and hospitals were dug in the ground and camouflaged against attacks from the air. Overall the engineering unit of the item was much better in comparison with August 1916.

²⁷ ЦБА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, лл. 394, 396.

By mid-April that stretch of the front was relatively calm. The British attempted to advance on 10 and on 21 February, but they were repulsed.

On 17 March the Bulgarian artillery in that area carried out firing over British positions. The shelling began at 7:30 a.m. and ended at 8.00 p.m. For the first time were used gas shells. The total number of shooting was 6551 rounds. British losses were 164 people, of which 103 died from gas poisoning.

As a consequence of the use of chemical warfare against the British army, the British contingent commander General Milne required from England 65,000 gas shells. They were received in late April after the first attack of the British. From the ordered items arrived only 20 000, 13 000 of which proved to be faulty.²⁸

On 21 April in the morning, began the shelling upon the Bulgarian positions and the flame was adjusted by aircraft. In the trenches and on the barbed wire were created a lot of destructions. About 16 guns, of which 86 heavy and 74 field ones, were shoot. On 22, 23 and 24 April the shelling intensified and on the day of 24 April was very strong.

As a result of continuous bombardment of the trenches and compel the heights Pazardzhik, Boris and Jekov were almost destroyed. The barbed wire to these points in the most parts was also destroyed. Three shelters were destroyed and elsewhere remained healthy. Observatory for the outposts and a watchtower height Nerezov were also destroyed. At many places the ports and links for messages were also destroyed and buried. At around 5 p.m. on 24 April the artillery fire abated and even stopped at some places totally. It was clear to everyone that this lull preceded an infantry attack of the opponent.

The main impact of the 22nd and 26th English division was directed to the left section of Doiran position that was defended by the 34th Trojan and 33rd Svishtov regiments. At 20:15 the front position was subjected to a drum fire.

²⁸ ЦБА, ф.40, оп.2, ас.1052, стр. 64. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 300 – 301.

After the shelling followed the English attack on the positions of two Bulgarian regiments. Fierce fighting continued until 8:30 next morning. Heavy fighting resumed on 25 April in the evening.

At 23:20 the British army made one last attempt to advance. In three lines they occurred at the height Nerezov and with weaker parts against the rest of the forefront, but were easily repulsed.²⁹ Total losses of the English parts reached 1519 killed.³⁰ In the hospitals were evacuated 3456 officers and soldiers.³¹

In two days of fighting, Bulgarians and English show the best features of their nations that deserved admiration. The description of the fighting found a place in the newspaper "The Times" in the issue of 30 April 1917.³²

In early May, the Allied troops took new offensive in Macedonia. On 5 May began heavy artillery shelling and mining over the Bulgarian-German positions along the front. Bombardment continued with unprecedented force in two days without interruption. In response to that on 6 May the Bulgarian and German artillery in the bend of Cerna River subjected to heavy shelling the positions of the Allies.³³

²⁹ Никола Недев. Дойранската епопея 1915-1918. София, 1923, 104 – 106, ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.1052, 7 – 10, 64 – 76, 83. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 302 – 316. Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 119 – 122. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 127 –128. Martin Gilbert. The First World War, 326. More details for the fights on April 24th and 25th see the issues: ЦВА, ф.48, оп.5, ае.149, лл. 393 - 395, 430. ф.40, оп.5, ае.150, лл. 141 – 142, 194 – 201. ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, лл. 401 – 403. Димитър Зафиров. Отбраната при Дойран. ВИСБ, 2004, кн. 1, 9 – 12.

³⁰ Георги Марков. Голямата война и Българската стража..., 118.

³¹ Major-General Sir W. G. Macpherson and Major T. J. Mitchell. Medical Services. General History. Vol. IV. Medical Services during the Operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula; in Macedonia; in Mesopotamia and North-West Persia; in East Africa; in the Aden Protectorate, and in North Russia. Ambulance Transport during the War. London, 1924, 135.

³² ЦВА, ф.48, оп.5, ае.316, лл. 109 – 112.

³³ Подполковник Ан. Разсуканов. По бойните полета с 8-и артилерийски полк, 195 – 196.

On 7 May after a long drum fire at 8:00 in the morning, the French, Italian and Russian units began mass attack in the bend of the Cerna River. They were beaten back by artillery barrage, and suffered heavy losses. After preparation, the Allies attacked two more times during the day and for the fourth time at night, but these attacks were beaten back by fire and partly by counterattacks. A weaker attack of the French troops between Ohrid and Prespa Lakes was repulsed with artillery fire.³⁴

The same day, the British artillery opened fire on a continuous destructive entire front at Doiran position. The shelling continued throughout the day and at 20:30 changed into drum fire. Weak English units occurred at heights Boris and Chepino, but were scattered by the artillery barrage.³⁵

On 8 May in the morning, the Allies renewed attacks in the bend of the Cerna River. That day they carried out three attacks, but were repulsed with rifle and machine-gun fire, grenades and melee fighting.³⁶ The Bulgarian artillery fired 1000 gas shells against the positions of the Allies.³⁷

Same day at 6:00 a.m. at Doiran the British artillery started strong fire at the forefront, which continued throughout the day. The shelling in the evening turned into a drum fire with just the use of heavy shells. At 20.50 the English infantry attack started from Doiran to the village of Krastali in several waves of lines. Heavy fighting between English and Bulgarian parts began. At 9:30 in the morning, on May 9th, the Bulgarian parts obtained control over the entire front position. On the battlefield remained the corpses of 5 English officers and 1556

³⁴ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 415, 436. Петър Дошкинов. Майското сражение в Завоя на Черна-1917г. Действията на артилерията и поуки от тях. София, 1935, 63. Подполковник Ан. Разсуканов. По бойните полета с 8-и артилерийски полк, 197.

³⁵ Никола Недев. Дойранската епопея..., 109 – 110. ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 436.

³⁶ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 417, 436. Петър Дошкинов. Майското сражение в Завоя на Черна-1917г. 67 – 71.

³⁷ Подполковник Ан. Разсуканов. По бойните полета с 8-и артилерийски полк, 197.

soldiers.³⁸ English data about their losses of the troops were for 1861 soldiers - (1743 from 26th division, 108 from 22nd division and 10 from 60th division).³⁹ To the hospitals behind were evacuated 1274 officers and soldiers.⁴⁰

General Milne in a letter to the British chief of staff W. Robertson, evaluating the results of the fighting, admits about the superiority of the Bulgarian soldier in the mountain fighting.⁴¹

When the British attacks at Doiran faded, on the morning of 9 May in the bend of Cerna River began a new offensive of the Allies. Under the guise of drum fire, there were three attacks. The first attack began in the morning around the corner in front of Cerna River, but was beaten back by fire and counterattack. A second mass attack was held at noon on a front of 16 kilometers. Parts of enemy attackers entered the first line of defense, but the Bulgarian and German troops counterattacked by recovering the situation. In the evening, a new attack was held, but was repulsed with fire. The losses of the attackers were very large and 2 officers and 200 soldiers were captured.⁴²

³⁸ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.1052, лл. 15 – 21. The British description of the fights in Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 319 – 331. See also: Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 23 – 25. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 129 – 130. Николай Корсун. Балканский фронт мировой войны 1914-1918гг., 80. Martin Gilbert. The First World War, 331 – 332. Димитър Зафиров. Отбраната при Дойран. ВИСБ, 2004, кн. 1, 12. ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, лл. 417 – 421, 436 - 437. ф.40, оп.5, ае.179, лл. 69, 73, 83 – 84. ф.40, оп.2, ае.150, л. 424. ф.48, оп.5, ае.134, лл. 61 - 64. ф.48, оп.5, ае.150, лл.358 – 359.

³⁹ G. Nicol. Field – Marshal Lord Milne of Salonika and Rubislaw, London, 1976, 134. Alan Wakefield & Simon Moody. Under The Devil's Eye. Britain's forgotten army at Salonika 1915 – 1918, 96.

⁴⁰ Major-General Sir W. G Macpherson and Major T. J. Mitchell. Medical Services. General History. Vol. IV. Medical Services during the Operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula; in Macedonia; in Mesopotamia and North-West Persia; in East Africa; in the Aden Protectorate, and in North Russia. Ambulance Transport during the War. London, 1924, 138.

⁴¹ Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 334. Charles Packer. Return to Salonika. London, 1964, 73, 111.

⁴² ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, лл. 437 – 438. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 130 – 132. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 340 – 341.

Here's what a participant in the fighting said for those battles "Franco-Russian attacking groups when approached the barbed wire, came with an unusually heavy rain of iron and lead bullets that rained down relentlessly on boldly advancing chain of 54 Colonial and 3 Russian contingent. The whole battlefield for more than five minutes, look like a boiling cauldron. Attackers were stirred, moving in different directions, but most were killed or injured, others formed the pits before the barbed wire and very few managed to return to their trenches, being pursued on the way of their escape back with fire from the field batteries."⁴³

The losses of the Italian-Franco-Russian forces in the bend of the Cerna River battles of 9 May 1917 reached 5425 people.⁴⁴ Bulgarian losses in this region are 1605 officers and soldiers, or about 12% of the staff of the troops defending this stretch of the front.⁴⁵

Meanwhile in Moglena mountain began the offensive of 2nd Serbian army. It was able to capture elevation 1824, after which its advance had been halted. In Monastir happened fierce battles for elevation 1248 and the Red Wall and the French parts were repulsed with heavy losses.⁴⁶

The advance of the Allies was renewed on 11 May in the morning on the bend of Cerna River. The attack was beaten back by fire, and in some places with melee fighting. In the afternoon another attack was beaten off only with fire.

In Moglena the Serb forces attacked across the whole front, but were beaten back by fire and counterattacks. Early in the morning, under the cover of intense artillery fire, the French parts attack heights Yarebichna and Bossilkova kitka south of the village of Huma. The battle continued the whole day. The

Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika. 125 – 126. Подполковник Ан. Разсуканов. По бойните полета с 8-и артилерийски полк, 197 – 199.

⁴³ Петър Дошкинов. Майското сражение в Завоя на Черна-1917г.. 85.

⁴⁴ Пак там, 88.

⁴⁵ Пак там, 101.

⁴⁶ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ас.550, л. 419, 438. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 341.

French managed to get in the trenches, but with counterattack and melee fights were repulsed.⁴⁷

On 11 May in the morning at section Stravina - Trnava was stopped an attack. In the afternoon and during the night, three more attacks were repulsed.

In Moglena after very strong shelling, Serb forces took new offensive along the entire front. Especially strong was their pressure at Dobro pole, where they entered the front trenches of the defense. West of the Vardar River near the village of Huma kept on the fighting with the French. They attacked several times the positions of 5th Danube division and managed to break into the front trenches. With a strong counterattack they were pushed back. On the battlefield were left more than 1,000 corpses. Prisoners were captured. At noon and in the evening were conducted new attacks which were repulsed by fire. In the bend of Cerna River diversion an attack to elevation 1050 was repulsed.⁴⁸

On 12 May after a very strong artillery fire, in the afternoon, the French took part in a mass attack against the heights of Yarebichna and Bossilkova kitka. The attacks were renewed several times, but were beaten back with heavy losses for the French.

In Moglena, after strong artillery preparation, in the afternoon the Serb forces took three attacks at Dobro pole but were rejected by fire and partly by counterattacks. The Bulgarian trenches that were occupied the previous day by the Serbian parts were taken back with a counterattack by 32 Zagora regiment. On many other places in Moglena, the repeated Serb attacks were repulsed.⁴⁹

On 13 May violent attacks of the Serbs continued. In the morning their attack at Dobro pole was beaten back by fire. In the afternoon were held a few

⁴⁷ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 422, 438. ф.48, оп.5, ае.151, л. 12 – 13, 35, 372 – 373. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 132. Атанас Христов. Исторически преглед на Общоевропейската война... 430 – 431.

⁴⁸ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 423, 439. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 132 – 133. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 341.

⁴⁹ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 424, 439.

attacks, but they were repulsed. In the evening was held a new attack that was repulsed. Fighting continued all night with great bitterness. At many other places in Moglena all attempts to advance were repulsed. Attempts to advance on the eastern shore of Lake Prespa, the Red wall and Gradeshnitsa east of Cerna River were repulsed.⁵⁰

On 14 May the French infantry attacked heights at Yarebichna and Bossilkova kitka but were repulsed. The attack at Gradeshnitsa village, east of the Cerna River was also repulsed.⁵¹

On 15 May two attacks at the village of Sbarsko and one east of Dobro pole were repulsed. Fighting is held in the bend of the Cerna River and east of it and all attacks were repulsed. Fighting began near the village of Down Struma - Barakli Djumaya with English parts.⁵²

On 16 May after strong artillery preparation the French parts held three attacks in the Red Wall. In the first attack, they managed to penetrate into the trenches, but were repulsed by a counterattack by Bulgarian and German troops. The next two attacks were repulsed with fire. The same day around 10 in the morning, the French infantry attacked several times the elevation 1248, north of Monastir. With knife attacks they were repulsed with heavy losses. Prisoners were taken. Attempts to attack in the bend of the Cerna River, west of Dobro pole and east of the Vardar River near the village of Resen were repulsed.⁵³

The last attacks by the Allies during the spring offensive were on 17 May in the bend of the Cerna River after a four-day artillery bombardment. French parts in the morning attacked on German positions. In the second attack, the French come into the trenches and only after 1.5 -hour fierce dogfight were

⁵⁰ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 425, 440.

⁵¹ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 440.

⁵² ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 428, 440.

⁵³ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л. 429, 440 – 441. Георги Марков. Голямата война и Българската стража..., 120. А. Лулчев. Септемврийски дни 1918 година (Лични спомени). София, 1926, 18 – 19.

repulsed by the Bulgarians and inflicted heavy losses. With large losses for the attacking areas - more than 1100 people - the French attack north of Monastir was also repulsed, held at the same time. In the region of Lower Struma continued artillery shootings.⁵⁴

Inability to break through the defense of the Bulgarian and German troops created feelings of bitterness and despair in the Allies. On 18 May their activity dropped sharply across the front and on 21 May the offensive was halted. Total losses of the Allies reached between 13000-20000 people.⁵⁵

In general, the spring offensive of the Entente in Macedonia in the spring of 1917 was a failure. It could not reach the aims for a strike into the Bulgarian positions and transfer of the German troops from the Western front to the Balkans.

⁵⁴ ЦВА, ф.40, оп.2, ае.550, л.441. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 342. Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 127. Петър Дошкинов. Майското сражение в Завоя на Черна-1917г., 92 – 93.

⁵⁵ Николай Корсун. Балканский фронт мировой войны 1914-1918гг. 81 – to 20 000. Luigi Villari. The Macedonian Campaign, 134 – between 13 000 and 14 000 men. Cyril Falls. Military Operation. Macedonia. Vol. I. 342 – 14 000 men. Alan Palmer. The Gardeners of Salonika, 129 – 14 000 men. J. K. Tanenbaum. General Maurice Sarrail 1856-1929, 153 – 14 000 men.

TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2014

MARDI, LE 2 SEPTEMBER

Senior Colonel Chunqiao Ke (China)

The Historical Status of World War I in the World Military History

World War I takes a unique status in the world military history. This is not only because of its unprecedented scale, intensity and influences, but also because of its outstanding creativity, which is to create a new pattern of warfare—the World War, bring forth new war guidance—the total war, and start a new military revolution—the mechanized military revolution.

1. A new pattern of warfare—the World War

There are about 15 thousands of wars in the recorded history of human kind, only two of which could be defined as “world wars”. The outbreak of World War I at the beginning of the 20th century attributes to the combination of many interactive factors.

Firstly, the second industrial revolution provided material basis for World War I. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the second industrial revolution, which is characterized by the invention of electric power and internal combustion engine, had led to rapid economic development. The achievements of the revolution were widely used in military field in an unprecedented speed. For example, the smokeless powder replaced black powder, machine gun and repeating rifle became the main weapon of infantry, and new types of artilleries and mortars enhanced the power of artillery units. “A single machine gunner or artilleryman in 1914 could rain down more death than an entire regiment a hundred years before.”¹ The revolutionary advancement of transportation and communication upgraded army’s strategic maneuver capability, and enabled it to overcome the geographic limitations and practice long-range command and

¹ Max Boot. *War Made New*, penguin group (USA) Inc. P 198.

control. The substantial growth of population and the standardized mass production of weapons helped expanding the size of the army to an unparalleled level. Many countries established General Staff as a new mechanism to implement strategic command to millions or even tens of millions of troops. In the early 20th century, with an upgraded capability, human beings were well prepared to wedge a worldwide war materially.

Secondly, the prevailing social Darwinism laid the ideological foundation for World War I. In the late 19th and early 20th century, several European powers dominated the world while most countries and nations were still in a benighted situation. The dominant ideology in Europe was the social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer and his followers. Social Darwinists tried to explain social phenomena with the doctrine of “survival of the fittest”, and claimed that human society follows the doctrine as well. They openly advocated war; believed war could purify the air just like storms. Meanwhile, extreme nationalism, like the Pan-Germanism, French national revanchism and the Pan-Slavism, caused a great clamour in Europe. As we see, the social Darwinism and the extreme nationalism combined to form a strong ideological trend and pushed European powers to bloody confrontation.

Thirdly, the competition for the world hegemony between two imperialistic military groups was the main drive of World War I. In the late 19th and early 20th century, capitalism had completed the transition from free capitalism to the monopolistic capitalism, which means the competition based on monopoly was international, exclusive, and life-or-death. The result was doomed to be worldwide conflicts. The rising imperialistic powers required re-division of the colonies and spheres of influences due to unbalanced development, which challenged the old imperialistic powers. The struggle and realignment of old and new powers formed two military groups-the Alliance and the Entente, and their fierce competition caused frequent military crisis and regional wars. The

Sarajevo Assassination on June 28, 1914 brought the international society into a 4-year war with 33 countries participated and 30 million people died.

World War is a great havoc in human history as well as a new pattern of war. The outbreak of two World Wars in the first half of 20th century is more inevitable than occasional. Nowadays, peace and development are the themes of our time, while the root of new World War still exists, so we should take the responsibility to safeguard the world peace and prevent the outbreak of new World War.

2. New war guidance----the total war

“Total war” means in industrial age, a country, by viewing from the grand social system perspective, should mobilize all its current and potential material and spiritual strength to struggle for victory in wars. It emerged in US Civil War combining industrial forces and military forces.

At the beginning of World War I, the major warring powers fought the war in the pattern of Napoleonic wars and the Franco-Prussian War that is to win quickly and decisively only with the pre-war mobilized armed forces instead of comprehensive strength. Thereafter when the war came to a stalemate and the prewar storage had been drained, they had to operate in war time system that is to explore the countries’ military potential and prepare for a long war. Warring powers followed the guidance of total war unconsciously.

The total war is not only a competition of military forces, but also a competition of economic forces. Germany was the first one to follow the trend and establish the “Industrial Committee at War Time” and the “Bureau of Material Management Army Department”, and transferred civil companies to military industries. The proportion of military industries in the entire industrial production increased from 3% of 1915 to 75% of 1917. According to the “National Service Act” in December 1916, all males from 17 to 60 years old had to work in factories, or serve in the army. In 1915, Britain and France established

Department of Military Supplies, and Russia established a special committee of national defense, transportation, fuels and food supplies to manage the production, distribution and supply of military materials. The Entente established the “food, sea transportation and military supplies committee” led by Britain in order to secure the orderly distribution of strategic materials; prevent the competitive acquisition in the international market.

The total war is not only a competition of real powers, but also a competition of potentialities. The dominant position of the Entente on the sea enabled them to gain manpower and materials from dominions, colonies and military supplies from United States, which compensated their huge consumption in the war. While blocked by the Entente, Germany lost its colonies, and suffered from shortage of strategic materials, such as food and nonferrous metals. From 1917 to 1918, Germany was in serious food shortage, which caused widespread war weariness and hurt the morale grievously.

The total war is not only a struggle of material strength, but also a struggle of spiritual strength. Total war theory regards that spiritual strength is equal to material strength, and psychological warfare, ideological warfare and propaganda warfare are significant means of war. In ancient wars, spiritual factors operated unconsciously. In modern warfare, due to the formation of nation state and national consciousness, spiritual factors play a more important role. During the war, major powers paid great attention to the operation of spiritual motivation and propaganda warfare, for example, the wide usage of radio and organized spiritual motivation by specially established units. German bombed UK with Zeppelin airships and bombers causing more than 4800 casualties, spreading terror and panic in civilians.² The economic blockade operated by UK caused 800 thousand starvations in Germany. In 1915, the

² 军事科学院世界军事研究部：《世界军事革命史》中册，军事科学出版社，2012年版，第805页。

French General Headquarters established a special unit of psychological warfare to deliver 290 million leaflets and pamphlets to the German front and rear area. Ludendorff said the Propaganda warfare of the Entente damaged Germans' confidence in the final victory.

It is said that World War I formally initiated the total war, and World War II is the climax of it leading to the usage of "absolute weapon"-the atomic bomb. However, things will turn into its opposite if pushed too far. The world of post-World War II entered a new phase of limited war under nuclear deterrence. The objectives, scales and means of warfare are limited more strictly by political and international factors; however, limited wars of post-World War II still represent the competition of comprehensive national power, requiring the integrated application of multiple means and powers, as well as higher level of war guidance.

3. A new military revolution-the mechanized military revolution

Military revolution is the overall and systematic transformation and innovation in military field. World War I is the climax of the rifle and artillery revolution which began from the last half of 19th century, as well as the start of mechanized revolution in the first half of 20th century, so it is the turning point of two military forms.

Mechanized weaponry developed. Although the dominant weapons in World War I were machine gun and artillery, mechanized weaponry, such as tanks, aircraft and carriers had emerged and showed huge potential. Tank was produced by British in 1915, and was firstly used in the battle of Somme in 1916. By the end of the war, the total number of tanks available amounted to 9200. The small aircraft were about 1000 at the beginning of the war which could only carry out noncombatant missions, such as reconnaissance and fire directing. During the war, more than 170 thousand aircraft were produced by 6 major warring powers. Britain had only two seaplane tenders in 1914. In October 1918, the first real

aircraft carrier-the Argus came into active duty with its 20 aircrafts, which unveiled the age of aircraft carriers.

Mechanized forces organized. With the development of mechanized weaponry, mechanized combat units, such as tank units, aviation units, naval aviation units and submarine units, were quickly established and developed. The British army was the first one to establish tank units in February 1916. By the end of the war, it had 25 tank battalions. France and United States also established their own tank forces. Aviation developed from reconnaissance and fire directing units to fighter, bomber and attacker units, the combatant units accounted for 55% of the overall aviation forces and became the main part of the aviation. In October 1918, Britain established independent Royal Air Force, realizing unified and strategic command and control of the airpower. In 1914, British army renamed the naval Flying Corps as the naval aviation, which represented the birth of a new arm.

Mechanized operations emerged. Generally Speaking, the mechanized weapons were at their initial stage in World War I, but once used in battle, their advantage over the traditional weapons caught people's eyes. The battle space extended from two dimensions of land and sea to multi-dimensions of land, sea, air, subsurface and electro-magnetic; operations developed to 3D and combined operations of multi services and arms. In the land battle, 476 tanks of British army operated in Cambrai battle in 1917, broke through the German front and advanced 10 kilometers into the depth within 10 hours with the support of artillery, aircraft and infantry. Normally, the achievement could only be achieved in 3 months with casualties of tens of thousands of soldiers. This battle exemplified the value of tanks, and set a precedent of modern combined operations of multi services and arms. In the air battle, the operation of aircraft extended from basic reconnaissance and fire directing to air superiority, strategic bombardment and close air support. In the sea battle, 7 British aircrafts from seaplane tenders attacked a cruiser and a seaplane base of German army on

Christmas Day 1914, which showed a new blueprint of carrier operation. With the participation of aircraft and submarine, sea battle expanded from surface to the air and subsurface. The electronic warfare, such as electronic jamming, radio deception and crypto-battle, also came into being as the wide application of radio technology.

The mechanized warfare theories bloomed. After the World War I, mechanized warfare theories emerged, such as “Total War”, “Grand Strategy”, “Mechanized Warfare”, “Operation in full Depth”, “Blitzkrieg” and “Air Force Dominance”. They provided theoretical guidance for the military reforms of different countries between two World Wars and were tested in the World War II.

The mechanized military revolution initiated in World War I and reached its maturity in World War II basing on the development of military reforms of different countries between two World Wars. The duration of mechanized military revolution from initiation, development to maturity is no more than 3 or 4 decades, which mainly benefited from two World Wars practice. History fully proved the practice of war is the most powerful pushing force of military revolution.

Prof. Tomoyuki Ishizu (Japan)

***Japan and the First World War: Focusing upon its Naval Escort
Mission in the Mediterranean¹***

Foreword

In 1914 the provisions of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, first signed in 1902, for mutual defense encouraged Japan to enter the First World War on the British side.² Japan declared war against Germany on the 23rd of August under the spirit of the Alliance, with the aim of capturing the German base of Tsingtao on mainland China and occupying the German Marshall, Caroline, and Marianas(except Guam) island groups in the Western Pacific.³

Tsingtao (and Kiaochow Bay) was besieged and taken on the 7th of November 1914 by a largely Japanese naval and land force, with token British participation for political reasons.⁴ By then, the German island groups in the Western Pacific north of the equator had been occupied by the Japanese.

¹ The views expressed in this paper are the author's own and do not reflect the views of the NIDS, the Defense Ministry or the Government of Japan.

² The Alliance was renewed and extended in scope twice in 1905 and 1911, before its demise in 1921. It officially terminated in 1923. For the English literature on the Anglo- Japanese Alliance, see Ian H. Nish, *The Anglo- Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires 1894-1907* (London: Athlone Press, 1985), pp. 23- 95; Phillips O'Brien, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2004).

³ On the 15th of August Japan issued an ultimatum to Germany, stating that Germany must withdraw its warships from Chinese and Japanese waters and transfer control of Tsingtao to Japan. When the ultimatum expired on the 23rd Japan declared war on Germany.

⁴ For the Japanese, Tsingtao was the object of great interest. For the English literature on the Tsingtao campaign, see John Dixon, *A Clash of Empires: The South Wales Borderers at Tsingtao, 1914* (Wrexham: Bridge Books, 2008); John Dixon, "Germany's Gibraltar: The Siege of Tsingtao," *Britain at War* (October 2008), pp. 25-31; Charles B. Burdick, *The Japanese Siege of Tsingtao: World War I in Asia* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1976); Mark J. Grove, "The Development of Japanese Amphibious

The Imperial Japanese Navy also helped escort ANZAC troopships across the Indian Ocean and some of its warships took part in the hunt for the German light cruiser *Emden* in the East Indies and Indian Ocean, and for Admiral von Spee's German East Asiatic Squadron in the Pacific Ocean. The German squadron destroyed a Royal Navy squadron at the Battle of Coronel before being itself destroyed at the Battle of the Falkland Islands.

Until 1917 however, the Japanese forces stayed mainly in the Asia-Pacific region.

1. Japan's Decisions for War

Anglo-Japanese relations before and at the outbreak of the First World War were not cordial. Far from it.⁵

Britain withdrew its earlier request for Japan to join the War, and when Japan did declare war on Germany, Britain maintained that Japan had to limit the scope of its military or naval operations just off the coast of China, which naturally upset Japanese political as well as military leaders.⁶

Warfare, 1874 to 1942," in Geoffrey Till, Theo Farrell, Mark J. Grove. eds., *Amphibious Operations* (SGSI, The Occasional, No. 31, October 1997).

⁵ For example, the Australians were alarmed rather than reassured when, after the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1905 the British withdrew ships from the Asia-Pacific in order to better counter German naval growth in the North Sea arguing that Japan could protect British interests in the region. Carl Bridge, "W. M. Hughes and Japan at the Paris Peace Conference and After, 1916-22: A New Assessment" (paper presented at NIDS seminar, April 2012).

⁶ For more details, see, for example, Ian H. Nish, *The Anglo-Japanese Alliance*, pp. 365- 377; Ian H. Nish, *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908- 23* (London: Athlone Press, 1972), pp. 115- 157; Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and Japan, 1911-1915: A Study of British Far Eastern Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 177- 219; Frederick R. Dickinson, "Japan" in Richard F. Hamilton, Holger H. Herwig, eds., *The Origins of World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 300- 336; S. C. M. Paine, *The Wars for Asia 1911- 1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 13- 47.

This is because many British leaders quite correctly suspected that far from aiding the Allied cause in the War, the Japanese aimed simply to profit at the expense of the European powers' interests in the Asia- Pacific region.

Japan for its part, regarded the outbreak of the War as “god- given opportunity” to expel the Germans from the Asia-Pacific, establishing and strengthening its sphere of influence in the region, most notably in China. Japanese Foreign Minister Takaaki KATO expected that the War in Europe could spell opportunity for Japan to assert itself as the hegemon of the Asia- Pacific, and therefore took the government into the war although Japan was technically not obligated under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁷

Sakuzo YOSHINO, soon to gain celebrity among the Japanese as the preeminent champion of democracy, saw it as “absolutely the most opportune moment” to advance Japan’s standing in China.⁸

At the same time, however, the Japanese military, especially the Imperial Japanese Army, worried about potential Japanese losses in a military engagement with Germany. In fact, most of the military experts gave Germany a better than even chance of victory in Europe.⁹

Even the students of the First World War sometimes overlook Japan’s role in the War, but there are four areas where, the author believes, Japanese commitment was important.

⁷ KATO was an early advocate of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. For him, the key to Japan’s world standing remained in steadily expanding economic privileges in China and continued association with the world’s greatest naval power and largest commercial presence on the Asian Continent, Britain.

⁸ Williamson Murray, Tomoyuki Ishizu, “Introduction to Japan and the United States,” in Williamson Murray, Tomoyuki Ishizu, eds., *Conflicting Currents: Japan and the United States in the Pacific* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010), pp. 1- 17; Jonathan Bailey, *Great Power Strategy in Asia: Empire, Culture and Trade, 1905- 2005* (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), pp. 61- 84.

⁹ Germany for its part approached Japan in 1916 for a separate peace.

These are; (1) the landing and siege operations on the German base in China at Tsingtao, combined with the occupation of various islands in the Western Pacific, (2) the expedition against the Bolsheviks in Siberia from 1918 onwards, (3) exports of weapons and ammunitions to the Allied, and, (4) the naval escort mission in the Mediterranean.

In addition, Japan was asked to contribute more to the Allied over the course of the First World War, and these included; to send land forces to the Eastern Front; to send land forces to the Western Front; to send a naval force to the American Atlantic coast; to send an expedition to the Gulf of Aden or the Red Sea, but the Japanese government turned all of them down mainly because of its military reasons.¹⁰

Let us now briefly examine the four areas in turn.

2. Japan in the Asia-Pacific Region

Firstly, Japan was active over the entire course of the First World War in the Asia- Pacific region and the Indian Oceans, and this is mainly by naval commitment.

This includes, once again, the attack on the German base in China at Tsingtao,¹¹ combined with the occupation of the German island groups in the Western Pacific, hunting for the German East Asiatic Squadron in the Pacific Ocean, escorting ANZAC troopships across the Indian Ocean, and patrolling in the Pacific.

¹⁰ These Allied requests were presented over the course of the War, officially or not, and were on the whole not pursued if they were once rejected by Japan.

¹¹ The Tsingtao campaign was a naval blockade followed by landing and siege operations. From the British side, the 2nd Battalion of the South Wales Borderers and a half battalion of the 36th Shirks took part in the campaign. See Dixon, *A Clash of Empires*, pp. 13- 37; Dixon, “Germany’s Gibraltar,” pp. 25- 31.

Japan even helped British forces to put down a mutiny by Indian soldiers in Singapore in February 1915.¹²

3. Japan and the Siberian Intervention

Secondly, the so-called Siberian Intervention from 1918 onwards may have been a small issue in the First World War for most of the European powers, but it was strategically very important for Japan.

The Siberian Intervention was the dispatch of troops of the Allied to the Russian Maritime Provinces as part of a larger effort by the Western powers and Japan to support White Russian forces against the Bolshevik Red Army during the Russian Civil War.

The collapse of the Russian Eastern Front presented a tremendous problem to the Allied, since not only did it allow Germany to shift troops and war material from its Eastern Front to the west, but it also made it possible for Germany to secure the huge stockpiles of supplies that had been accumulating at such strategically important places as Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Vladivostok.

In addition, some 50,000 Czech Legion, fighting on the side of the Allied, was now trapped behind “enemy- lines,” and was attempting to fight its way out through the east to Vladivostok, along the Bolshevik- held Trans-Siberian Railway.

Faced with these concerns, Britain and France decided to militarily intervene in the Russian Civil War against the Bolshevik government.¹³ The

¹² In February 1915, marine units from the Imperial Japanese Navy ships based in Singapore helped suppress a mutiny by Indian troops against the British government.

¹³ Britain and France had three objectives that they hoped to achieve: (1) prevent the Allied war material stockpiles in Russia from falling into German hands, (2) rescue the Czech Legion and return it to the European Front, (3) resurrect the Eastern Front by installing a White Russian backed government. For the English literature on the Siberia Intervention, see Paul E. Drnscomb, *Japan's Siberian Intervention 1918- 1922: 'A Great Disobedience against the People'* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011).

Japanese viewed the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917 as an opportunity to free Japan from any future threat from Russia by, if possible at all, detaching Siberia and forming an independent buffer state.

However, the Japanese government had in the beginning refused to undertake such a military expedition and it was not until the following year, 1918, that events were set in motion which led to a change in its policy. The agreement of the United States was obtained. Whereas Britain and France would have been happy to give Japan a free hand, the United States would not agree, and the Japanese leaders had declined to send an expedition to the area of Amur basin unless they were invited to do so by the United States.¹⁴

After lengthy discussions, Japan and the United States reached an agreement (without really consulting their European allies) to undertake an inter-Allied expedition on the 2 August and Japan dispatched more than 70,000 soldiers in total to Siberia.¹⁵

Although Western powers finally decided to withdraw from Russia in 1920, the Japanese stayed on, primarily due to fears of the spread of communism so close to Japan, and the Japanese controlled Korea and Manchuria, north-eastern part of China.

¹⁴ When the United States entered the War on the 6th of April 1917, Japan and the United States found themselves on the same side, despite its increasing acrimonious relations over China and competition for influence in the Asia-Pacific region. This led to the Lansing- *Ishii* agreement of the 2nd of November 1917 to help reduce tensions. See Murray, Ishizu, "Introduction to Japan and the United States," in Murray, Ishizu, eds., *Conflicting Currents*, pp. 1- 17.

¹⁵ There were of course other strategic reasons behind the Japanese intervention including the expansion of Japan's sphere of influence. True, Japan was in Siberia primarily to safeguard stockpiled military supplies and to rescue the Czech Legion. However, the Japanese government's intense hostility to communism, a determination to recoup historical losses to Russia, and the perceived opportunity to settle the "northern problem" in Japan's security by either creating a buffer state, or through outright territorial acquisition, were also important factors.

It was not until 1922 that Japan decided to withdraw from the Russian Maritime Provinces, and finally in 1925 Japan withdrew from the northern half of Sakhalin after it had established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

4. Japan as a logistical Base

A third area is the exports of weapons and ammunitions to the Allied. Military supplies were sold on a large scale to the Russians for use on the Eastern Front. One could argue that the Brusilov Offensive of 1916 could not have been carried out without Japanese military supplies. In fact, almost two- thirds of the weapons and ammunitions used by Russian soldiers in 1916 were imported from Japan.

In addition, Japan helped the French by, for example, constructing 12 destroyers to the French navy, and again, vast amount of Japanese military supplies were used by the French soldiers, say, at the battle of Verdun of 1916. And it is needless to say that Japan exported weapons and ammunitions to its most important ally, Britain as well.

5. Japan's Naval Escort Mission in the Mediterranean

A fourth area of commitment is the Imperial Japanese Navy's escort mission in the Mediterranean, upon which the author will focus in the following sections.

As was mentioned above, it was Japan's desire to occupy Tsingtao and the German island groups in the Western Pacific that led Japan to war. Japan also needed to consolidate its position in China, as exemplified by the presentation of

the so-called “Twenty- one Demands” of 1915, and to secure a voice at a peace conference after the War.¹⁶

The Imperial Japanese Navy, which had long advocated Japan’s advance to the South as opposed to the Army’s desire for Northward advance, was among the most powerful driving forces.¹⁷ It is little wonder that Real Admiral Saneyuki AKIYAMA, the main architect of the Japanese naval operation plan at the Battle of Tsushima in 1905, vigorously supported not only Japanese participation in the War, but its escort mission in the Mediterranean.¹⁸

Responding to the British request for further support to the War, from April 1917, 8 destroyers with a flagship cruiser under the command of Rear Admiral Kozo SATO (the Second Special Squadron with the 10th and 11th Japanese flotillas) were based at Malta in the Mediterranean, playing an

¹⁶ For more details about this issue and the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919, see Frank Dikotter, *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 101- 104, 160- 161.; Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race, and Equality* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 115; Frederick R. Dickinson, *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 84- 116; Frederick R. Dickinson, *World War I and the Triumph of a New Japan, 1919- 1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp.1- 22.

¹⁷ This escort mission gave the Imperial Japanese Navy a rationale for enlarging its budget *vis-avis* the Army and expanding the fleet. See J. C. Schenking, “Bureaucratic Politics, Military Budgets and Japan’s Southern Advance: The Imperial Navy’s Seizure of German Micronesia in the First World War,” *War in History*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (July 1998), pp. 308- 326.

¹⁸ Admiral Saneyuki AKIYAMA, who had long advocated Japan’s Southward advance, argued strongly in favor of not only participation in the War, but also sending a squadron to the Mediterranean on the ground that, though there would be danger and possibly casualties, it would contribute to a greater understanding of naval techniques and technology and lead to the improvement of weaponry in the Japanese Navy.

At the same time, however, there was a strong group in the Naval General Staff who opposed this course on the ground that “for Japan to operate in a war zone which is of no direct interest to the Empire will not only cause disaster to its ships but also put at risk the valuable bulwark of the state.” Those who opposed to AKIYAMA’s course also argued that, by sending a considerable naval force to the Mediterranean, Japan would be leaving its home island undefended and vulnerable. For AKIYAMA and his argument, see Sadao ASADA, *From Mahan to Pearl Harbor: American Strategic Theory and the Rise of the Imperial Japanese Navy* (Annapolis: US Naval Institute Press, 2006).

important and efficient part in anti- submarine convoy escort- duty against German U- boats, along the sea lines of communication between Marseille and Malta, Taranto and Malta, and Malta and Alexandria.¹⁹ A further 4 brand-new destroyers arrived in Malta in August as the 15th flotilla with the armored cruiser *Izumo* to add to the Japanese commitment.²⁰ As one may as well recall, Germany had declared the policy of unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917, and overall casualties of the Allied transports were increasing dramatically since then.

Apart from the warships mentioned above, two British destroyers, *Minstrel* and *Nemesis* (renamed as *Sendan* and *Kanran* respectively) were handed over to the Japanese Navy in June 1917 and manned by its sailors for the duration of the War. In addition, two British sloops, renamed *Tokyo* and *Saikyo*, were also in the Mediterranean. As was mentioned above, 12 destroyers made by the Japanese were handed over to the French Navy, all of which were on the active duty there during the entire course of the War.²¹

The Japanese were nominally independent, but they actually carried out whatever orders they received from the British Commander- in- Chief at Malta, Admiral George A. Ballard. According to Japanese sources, the Japanese Navy by the end of the War carried out escort missions 348 times, escorting 788 Allied warships and transports and 750.000 personnel, with 34 actual combat operations.

¹⁹ When Japan received assurances from its allies of something tangible in return: an immediate promise by the Allied to support Japan's claims to former German possessions which it then occupied, Japan decided to send a naval force to the Mediterranean.

²⁰ Cruiser *Akashi* arrived in Malta in mid-April 1917 as flagship of eight destroyers of the 10th and 11th flotillas. In August 1917, armored cruiser *Izumo* arrived in the Mediterranean to relieve *Akashi* as flagship.

²¹ Furthermore, two of the four cruisers of the First Special Squadron were sent to Cape Town, South Africa.

Three episodes are worth mentioning in this short paper.

First, in May 1917, two Japanese destroyers engaged in a rescue operation, saving British personnel from the transport *Transylvania* which was sunk by the German torpedoes, despite the fact that the German U-boat was still in the vicinity. 3.000 out of 3.300 personnel were rescued. In recognition of this rescue operation, 27 Japanese officers and sailors were awarded military medals by the King George V.

A second episode was rather tragic. One of the Japanese destroyers, *Sakaki*, was torpedoed by the Austrian U- 27 on the 11th of June 1917 in the Eastern Mediterranean off Crete. She was badly damaged, with 59 dead including the Captain of the ship, Commander Taichi UEHARA.²²

Thirdly, in the face of the German spring offensive of 1918, *Kaisersschlacht*, the Allied employed the so- called “Big Convoys” in the Mediterranean between Marseille and Alexandria, and all of the five round- trip convoys were escorted mainly by the Japanese destroyers with a minimum loss of transports.

With these Japanese activities in the Mediterranean, Admiral, G. C. Dickens, Commander- in- Chief of the British Mediterranean Fleet reported back to the Admiralty that, “whereas Italians are inefficient, French are unreliable, Greeks are out of the calculation, and Americans are too far away, the Japanese are excellent, but small in number.”²³ *The Times* newspaper also praised the Japanese Navy using such expressions as “speedy arrival and seamanlike,” and “good seamanship and greatest rapidity of action.”²⁴ From these remarks, one could easily imagine how grateful the British felt at that time to have Japanese destroyers in the Mediterranean.

²² *Sakaki* was salvaged and repaired.

²³ Paul G. Halpern, *The Royal Navy in the Mediterranean 1915-1918* (London; Temple Smith, 1987), p. 496.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Indeed, Ian Nish wrote in his *Alliance in Decline*;

“If we try to assess Japan’s naval contribution to the allied effort, we have to conclude that it was considerable in the last stage of the war. It was by no means the sole cause of allied success in meeting the submarine onslaught; but it has to be numbered as one factor alongside the contribution of American destroyers and the success of the British convoy system. Her contribution in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean was a great relief to the Royal Navy. Finally, Japan’s naval assistance was more valuable to Britain than to other members of Entente who were less dependent on keeping open trade channels.”²⁵

Paul Halpern also concluded in his *A Naval History Of World War I* that “this Japanese contribution.....at a critical moment in the war against submarines has been largely forgotten, but under the circumstances it was far from negligible.”²⁶

It is, however, true to say that these commitments by the Imperial Japanese Navy during the First World War have almost been “forgotten,” even remaining outside conventional appreciation by historians, partly because it was overshadowed by the memories of the Second World War in 1939-45.

This is why the author wants to draw the attention of the audience to a small but remarkable aspect of the history among the Allied and that, some 100 years ago, Japan and the Allied European countries fought side by side in the Mediterranean for common causes.

Conclusion

²⁵ Nish, *Alliance in Decline*, p. 228.

²⁶ Paul G. Halpern, *A Naval History of World War I* (Abington; Routledge, 1994), p. 393.

If one visits Malta today, one can see a memorial built in 1918 at the Commonwealth War Graves, to the 78 Japanese sailors who fell in the Mediterranean. 73 out of these 78, including the Captain of the destroyer *Sakaki* were buried there.

Ironically, the memorial was destroyed by a German air raid during the Second World War at the Battle of Malta and then left unattended until 1973 when it was reconstructed.

True, compared with the fierce battle and sheer slaughter of the Western Front, say, in Somme and Verdun, the Japanese naval commitment and casualties in the Mediterranean may only be a side- show in the First World War.

Even among naval operations during the War, the Mediterranean campaign could only be a small footnote if one compares its significance with that of, say, the Battle of Jutland to the entire course of the War.

True, compared with the US Navy's contribution in the Mediterranean (Note that the US was a late comer to the First World War),²⁷ Japanese commitment cannot be exaggerated.

Having accepted this, however, one could still argue that the importance of logistics or supplying the theatre of war must never be underestimated.

However, the lessons of the Mediterranean operations, including the importance of the *guerre de course*, of blockade, of submarine and anti-submarine warfare, and the value of the merchant navy and convoy systems for example, were neither properly learned nor implemented in its policy by the Imperial Japanese Navy in the 1920s and 30s.

Hence, the Second World War in the Pacific.²⁸

²⁷ For the US contribution in the Mediterranean, see for example, *The Times History of the War* (London: Times Publishing Company, 1919), Vol., XVIII, p. 449.

²⁸ For the good account of the Pacific War, see Daniel Marston, eds., *The Pacific War Companion: From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima* (Oxford: Osprey, 2005).

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La Primera Guerra Mundial 1914-1918

Evaluación y Consecuencias para España

El Sistema de Alianzas: hacia el Armagedón

En 1900 había en Europa seis potencias, que eran: Alemania, Austria-Hungría, Francia, Gran Bretaña, Italia y Rusia. No habían existido guerras entre ellas, desde la guerra franco-prusiana de 1870-1871, y también escasos encuentros internacionales, exceptuando el Congreso de Berlín de 1878, en el que se actualizó el tratado de paz que Rusia había exigido a Turquía¹.

Bismarck estableció un sistema distinto, cuando hizo una alianza con Austria-Hungría en 1879, y en 1882 Italia se incorporó a esta relación, constituyéndose de esta manera la Triple Alianza. El equilibrio se mantuvo, con la alianza en 1894 entre Francia y Rusia. En 1904 se formalizó la Entente Cordial, entre Gran Bretaña y Francia. En 1907 se estableció la Entente, entre Gran Bretaña y Rusia, para arreglar sus diferencias sobre Persia, Afganistán y el Tíbet². De esta forma se llega a la constitución de la Triple Entente.

Una vez expuesto el panorama general europeo, nos preguntamos. ¿Cuál es la posición de España, respecto a estas dos alianzas?

Después de la crisis de 1898, la Regencia española tenía que moverse entre las siguientes directrices: los vínculos de todo tipo, que unían a España con Francia y Gran Bretaña, la relación complicada con la Tercera República Francesa, la defensa de los principios monárquicos en consonancia con los

¹ TAYLOR A.J.P., *L Guerra Planeada. Así empezó la Primera Guerra Mundial*, Traducción Sara Estrada, Barcelona, Nauta, 1970, p. 5.

² *Ibidem*, p.8.

Imperios Centrales, y por último, la dificultad que ocasionaba la política colonial francesa en Marruecos, propiciada por Bismarck³.

La relación de España con la Triple Alianza, nunca fue muy estrecha, y a finales del siglo XIX quedó bastante debilitada, pues con ocasión de la guerra con Estados Unidos en 1898, se buscó el apoyo diplomático en París y Londres⁴.

Después de unos veinte años de mayor relación con Alemania, es decir, desde el comienzo de la Restauración hasta finales del siglo XIX, España vuelve a su tradicional política exterior de la primera parte del siglo⁵. Mediante el Tratado de 1834, la España liberal se incardina entre París, Londres y en menor medida Lisboa, siguiendo un aforismo que se mantendrá mucho tiempo: “Cuando Francia y Gran Bretaña marchen juntas, seguir las, cuando no, abstenerse”.⁶

Este cambio de rumbo de España, se plasmó en los “Acuerdos de Cartagena” de 1907, iniciados por la labor diplomática de Fernando León y Castillo, mediante los cuales, las dos Potencias principales de la Entente garantizaban el “statu quo” de la región del Estrecho, así como los archipiélagos importantes, es decir, las islas Baleares y Canarias⁷. El interés británico era notorio, pues el embajador alemán Ratibor escribió al canciller Bethmann Hollweg, que Gran Bretaña haría todo lo posible para que el archipiélago canario,

³ SALON COSTA Julio, “La Restauración y la política exterior de España” en *Corona y Diplomacia. La Monarquía española en la historia de las relaciones internacionales*, Madrid, Ministerio Asuntos Exteriores, 1988, p. 135.

⁴ DE LATORRE DEL RIO Rosario, *Inglaterra y España en 1898*, Madrid, EUDEMA, 1988, pp. 18-30.

⁵ ARAGÓN REYES Manuel et al. *El Protectorado español en Marruecos: la historia trascendida, Volumen III*, Edición Colección páginas de historia, Manuel Gahete Jurado, p. 168.

⁶ JOVER ZAMORA José María, *La era isabelina y el sexenio democrático (1834-1874)*, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1981, p. CXXXV.

⁷ MORALES LEZCANO Víctor, *León Castillo, embajador (1887-1918). Un estudio sobre política exterior de España*, Ediciones del Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 1975.

no terminase en poder de otra Potencia, decía el embajador alemán al final de su carta: “Islas Canarias por la Gracia de Inglaterra”⁸.

Los Acuerdos de 1907, representaron para España una seguridad exterior, al quedar comprometida en el sistema de seguridad de las potencias occidentales europeas. Al comenzar 1907, tuvo lugar un cambio en la situación interior de España, que con la actuación de Maura y Canalejas cristalizó en un regeneracionismo económico, político y militar⁹.

Antes de la Gran Guerra, Alfonso XIII intentó la unidad ibérica aprovechando la crisis portuguesa, que desembocó en el establecimiento de la República Portuguesa en 1910. La pretensión de unir Portugal, que Gran Bretaña nunca iba a tolerar, sobre todo después del Tratado de Windsor que firmó con Portugal, se excedía con mucho de los Acuerdos de Cartagena, meramente defensivos. Tanto¹⁰ el Quai d’Orsay, como el Foreign Office, no prestaron la más mínima atención a las ideas de Alfonso XIII sobre el tema portugués.

La política exterior española, se orientaba a metas poco compatibles con los acuerdos de 1904, 1907, 1911, y de esta forma en 1914, aunque sin variación en los Acuerdos de Cartagena, ya no existía en la realidad, el espíritu de esos Acuerdos¹¹. En 1913 se reafirman las opiniones, que España y Francia son adversarios en Marruecos, y en consecuencia no pueden ser aliados, y lo lógico sería una alianza con Alemania.

⁸ RATIBOR, embajador alemán, a Bethmann Hollweg, canciller imperial, Madrid, 29 Marzo 1912, *England 91*, R 6069, PAAA (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlín).

⁹ DE LA TORRE GÓMEZ Hipólito, “El destino de la regeneración internacional de España (1898-1918), en *Proserpina*, n° 1, UNED, Mérida, diciembre 1984 pp. 9-22.

¹⁰ DE LA TORRE GÓMEZ Hipólito, *Antagonismo y fractura peninsular. España y Portugal, 1910-1919*, Espasa-, Madrid, Calpe, 1983, pp. 20-40.

¹¹ DE LA TORRE DEL RIO Rosario, *La política española en el año de la Crisis de 1911 a través de la correspondencia del Marqués de Alhucemas*. Homenaje a los profesores Palacio y Jover, Universidad Complutense Madrid, 1990, vol.1.

Por estos motivos, en diciembre de 1913 España toma conciencia de una postura neutralista, y cuando comienza la guerra declara la “Neutralidad”. Además continúa la discusión de la posición internacional de nuestro país, entre “aliadófilos” y “germanófilos”. Un resumen interesante sobre la política exterior de España, antes de la Gran Guerra, se encuentra en el “memorándum” de dimisión con carácter irrevocable, que presentó el 20 de abril de 1917 al Rey Alfonso XIII, el Presidente del Consejo de Ministros, Álvaro de Figueroa, Conde de Romanones. (Ver Apéndice 1)

La Posición de España: la neutralidad

El 28 de julio de 1917, Austria-Hungría declara la guerra a Servia y empieza el conflicto europeo. El 4 de Agosto, Gran Bretaña y Bélgica declaran la guerra a Alemania, siendo la última de las declaraciones de guerra, que se producen entre todos los contendientes¹².

Según la opinión de la mayoría de los investigadores, el comienzo de la conflagración se debió al célebre Plan Schlieffen, que imponía la rapidez en la ofensiva. Es de destacar, que era un plan puramente militar, que no tenía en cuenta el aspecto político. Era todo lo contrario a lo que enseñó Clausewitz, al establecer que la guerra es la continuación de la política por otros medios, o dicho de otra manera, un plan de guerra, no puede ser solo militar¹³.

Clausewitz, en su obra *De La Guerra*, Libro Primero, que trata sobre la naturaleza de la guerra, y más concretamente en el capítulo XXIV, dice: “Así vemos, pues, que la guerra no es simplemente un acto político, sino un verdadero instrumento político, una continuación de las relaciones políticas, una gestión de las mismas con otros medios”.

¹² Op. Cit. 1, p.122.

¹³ VON CLAUSEWITZ Carlos, *De La Guerra*, Madrid, Ediciones Ejército, 1978, p. 43.

La Gaceta del 30 de julio de 1914, publicaba un Decreto por el que Gobierno conservador de Eduardo Dato, se creía en: “el deber de ordenar la más estricta neutralidad a los súbditos españoles con arreglo a las leyes vigentes y a los principios del Derecho internacional”¹⁴. En un telegrama al embajador español en Bélgica, el 4 de agosto de 1914, el Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores, Marqués de Lema, señala la intención de España de: “... observar la neutralidad más absoluta...”¹⁵.

Pero, ¿qué es la neutralidad?, para algunos es un signo de cobardía, una falta de valor para distinguir lo correcto, de lo incorrecto. Para otros, la neutralidad representa la capacidad de una nación, de superar la barbarie de la guerra y utilizar los métodos más civilizados de la diplomacia. Merriam -Webster define como neutral: “el que no favorece a uno, ni a otro en una pelea, concurso o guerra”¹⁶. Así pues, la neutralidad no es una decisión fácil, es una elección calculada, para no tener implicación militar y evitar el favoritismo a cualquiera de las partes.

Estamos de acuerdo, con el autor Hermógenes Cenamor, en que: “la neutralidad no es imparcialidad”. La neutralidad puede crear en la sociedad, las mismas divisiones que la guerra, porque es prácticamente imposible eliminar o ignorar las filias y fobias, es decir, las pasiones que se originan, en cada lado de la nación¹⁷.

Por lo tanto, la declaración de guerra trae unas consecuencias en un determinado sentido, de vencer o perder en la contienda, con las consecuencias que eso acarrea. Mientras que la neutralidad, lleva aparejadas múltiples

¹⁴ Op. Cit. 5, p.173.

¹⁵ Marqués de Lema citado en AGUIRRE DE CÁRCER, Nuño, *La Neutralidad de España durante la Primera Guerra Mundial (1914-1918)*, Madrid, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1995, p. 1.

¹⁶ *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “neutral”.

¹⁷ CENAMOR Hermógenes, *Los intereses materiales de España en la guerra europea*, Madrid, Librería de la Viuda de Pueyo, 1916, p. 163.

consecuencias, de todo tipo, unas a favor y otras en contra del país neutral, que como veremos, le sucedió a España, en la Primera Guerra Mundial¹⁸.

Para los liberales y demócratas españoles, Francia era el centro mundial de la libertad, y por reacción aumentó la francofobia de los españoles tradicionalistas, que orientaron sus simpatías hacia Alemania. Suiza siempre ha sido neutral, porque su pueblo no ha querido mezclarse en asuntos extranjeros, pero España fue neutral porque media España, era contraria a la otra media, y las dos posturas se anularon mutuamente¹⁹.

El Conde de Romanones publicó en el periódico “Diario Universal”, el 19 de agosto de 1914, un editorial célebre que terminaba diciendo: “hay neutralidades que matan”. (Ver Apéndice 2). Lerroux, declaró a “Le Journal” parisino: “Todo nos empuja a colocarnos al lado de Francia”. Ángel Ossorio era germanófono, dado su antimilitarismo, pero paradójicamente actuó como germanófilo. Como representante germanófilo estaba Juan Vázquez de Mella²⁰.

La germanofilia más característica, era propia de los tradicionalistas, y de casi todas las derechas políticas y católicas. Por el contrario, las izquierdas eran casi todas aliadófilas, pues en principio no tenían nada que esperar, y sí mucho que temer, con el triunfo de los Imperios Centrales²¹.

Pero la neutralidad, era también una demostración de la postración española, con una economía poco desarrollada, un sistema político ineficaz, un Ejército poco preparado, como demostraba en Marruecos, y una Armada muy

¹⁸ LOWRY Carolyn S., *At what cost? : Spanish neutrality in the First World War*, University South Florida, 2009, p.12.

¹⁹ MADARIAGA, Salvador de, *Carácter y Destino en Europa*, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1980, p.261.

²⁰ DÍAZ-PLAJA Fernando, *Francófilos y germanófilos*, Madrid, Alianza, 1981, p.30.

²¹ DUQUE DE MAURA Y MELCHOR FERNÁNDEZ ALMAGRO, *Por qué cayó Alfonso XIII*, Madrid, Ediciones Ambos Mundos, Segunda Edición, 1948, p.270-275.

pequeña para defender las extensas costas atlánticas y mediterráneas, contra cualquier ataque²².

La realidad era que, aunque el Gobierno de Dato había ordenado la neutralidad, España por su situación geográfica y por sus relaciones comerciales, estaba muy relacionada con la Entente²³. Fernando León y Castillo, manifestó en 1916, con motivo de su incorporación a la Embajada española en París: “Somos neutrales en la Gaceta, pero no en el espíritu, porque no podemos aguardar indiferentes e impasibles el resultado de esta contienda, con el cual están ligados nuestros intereses, los más vitales”²⁴.

La neutralidad oficial de España, se mantuvo durante los cuatro años que duró la guerra, pero las relaciones comerciales, se intensificaron hacia los países de la Entente. Entrando en consecuencia, en la órbita de los aliados, y llegando a ser España, uno de los países llamados “neutrales aliados”²⁵.

Impacto económico del conflicto en la sociedad española

Numerosos historiadores militares, entre los que se encuentra Brian Bond, consideran que a partir de principios del siglo XX, se difumina la separación entre militares y civiles. Esto origina la diferenciación, entre la historia militar y la historia de la guerra. La historia militar trata de planes de guerra, estrategia y el conflicto armado, pero eso ya no basta. Una parte importante, de la población civil de los países beligerantes e incluso neutrales, sufrió las consecuencias de la guerra²⁶.

²² Op. Cit. 8, pp. 44-54.

²³ Opus. Cit. 5, p.174.

²⁴ Borrador de un discurso, *Fondo Fernando León y Castillo*, Legajo 21, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Las Palmas.

²⁵ PONCE MARRERO Javier, *La Política exterior española de 1907 a 1920: entre el regeneracionismo de intenciones y la neutralidad condicionada*, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Historia Contemporánea, 34, 2007, p. 103.

²⁶ BOND Brian, *Guerra y Sociedad en Europa (1870-1970)*, Madrid, Ministerio de Defensa, 1990, p. 179.

Al comenzar la contienda, se preveía que tendría una duración corta, pero al prolongarse más tiempo, tuvo cada vez más importancia la “guerra económica”. Dada la situación de España, como acabamos de ver, cada vez más en la influencia de la Entente y por su situación fronteriza con Francia, se convirtió en un importante abastecedor de materias primas, así como de mano de obra en las fábricas francesas, con menos personal, por estar en el frente de guerra²⁷.

Como reacción lógica ante esta actitud, es decir, que España dejase de ser neutral en favor del lado aliado, Berlín ofreció a Madrid ayuda financiera y política, para poder convertirse en una potencia después de la guerra. Además, si Alemania lograba derrotar el poder británico en el mar, insinuaba que Portugal ya no tendría la protección británica y podría pertenecer al territorio español²⁸.

España fue un importante abastecedor de productos para Francia, y en menor medida para los otros países aliados. La economía española, antes de la guerra, estaba pasando lentamente de un sistema basado en la agricultura, a otro basado en la industria, y gracias a estas exportaciones se aceleró este desarrollo industrial²⁹.

Durante los primeros meses después del estallido de las hostilidades, hubo cierto estado de desorden y confusión en la economía. Es interesante constatar, que ya en una carta fechada en Madrid el 25 de agosto de 1914, el Presidente del Consejo de ministros, Eduardo Dato, advertía a Antonio Maura de esta posibilidad al decir. “...realizamos esfuerzos gigantescos para librarnos de la

²⁷ DELAUNAY Jean-Marc, “España trabajó por la victoria”, *Historia 16*, nº 63, Madrid, 1981, pp. 38-44.

²⁸ Op. Cit. 9, p.74.

²⁹ “Spain during the First World War”, disponible en <http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/spain.html> [consulta: 12 enero 2014]

ruina económica. Hasta ahora parece que Dios nos va auxiliando y si no se pierde la serenidad tal vez seamos nosotros de los que menos padezcan...”³⁰.

Sin embargo, a principios de 1915, se produjo una caída radical de las importaciones, y a su vez se produjo un creciente volumen en las exportaciones, con un aumento espectacular de los precios. En consecuencia, se produjo un enorme flujo de oro hacia España, que permitió una rápida acumulación de capital. Las reservas de oro del Banco de España, se duplicaron entre 1914 y 1916, desde 543 millones, a mil treinta y dos millones en julio de 1916, y como resultado el gobierno pagó una parte de su deuda nacional³¹.

Gracias a las nuevas salidas comerciales, se produjo en la industria y el comercio español, un crecimiento espectacular. El textil, artículos de cuero, la minería, el hierro, el transporte y las industrias químicas, prosperaron, porque la demanda de las potencias beligerantes creció exponencialmente. Entre 1913 y 1918, la capacidad eléctrica casi se duplicó³².

Mientras que la guerra, ayudó a la expansión de empresas industriales y financieras, favoreciendo a las clases medias vascas y catalanas, también produjo una escasez de alimentos, productos manufacturados y aumento de precios. En general, un empeoramiento de las condiciones de vida de los trabajadores rurales y urbanos, especialmente del sur de España. Esta situación se conoce como la “Crisis de Subsistencias”³³.

A pesar de la publicación por el Gobierno de la Ley de Subsistencias, el 18 de febrero de 1915, para mantener estables los precios de los alimentos básicos, y de todo tipo, éstos se dispararon. La Ley de Subsistencias decía: “...para contrarrestar las deficiencias de nuestras cosechas siempre amenazadas

³⁰ Op. Cit. 18, p. 471.

³¹ CARDEN, *German Policy Toward Neutral Spain*, p. 100.

³² BALFOUR, *The End of the Spanish Empire*, p. 211.

³³ GARCÍA DELGADO, S. ROLDÁN y MUÑOZ, *La formación de la sociedad capitalista en España*, Madrid, 1973, p.35.

por los rigores de nuestro clima, la creciente alza de precios en los mercados extranjeros y el ininterrumpido encarecimiento de los fletes y conseguir que vendiendo los productos de primera necesidad de manera reglada, se impidan las perturbaciones al consumo...”. Para su aplicación se crearon las Juntas Provinciales de Subsistencias, formadas por el Gobernador Civil, el Alcalde y el Delegado de Hacienda, en cada capital de provincia³⁴.

La prensa anunció el 27 de febrero de 1915, que nuestra moneda la peseta, se apreciaba en las Bolsas mundiales con total libertad de cotización, siendo esa revalorización, del dos por ciento sobre la paridad de la libra esterlina y franco francés, seis y medio por ciento sobre el franco suizo, cero ochenta por ciento sobre el dólar y quince un cuarto por ciento sobre el marco alemán. De la misma manera, se apreciaba un aumento del dinero circulante, al aparecer en numerosas localidades establecimientos de ocio, como cafés con mesa de bacarrá y casinos con ruleta³⁵.

Pero también, el 4 de noviembre de 1915, la misma prensa se hacía eco de las protestas contra la carestía de los alimentos³⁶. (Ver Apéndice 3).

A finales de 1915, el Gobierno abandonó los esfuerzos para enderezar la economía, Dato opinaba que las reformas militares debían tener prioridad, sobre cualquier otra de tipo económico, incluido el Presupuesto. El Conde de Romanones presentó una propuesta que equivalía a una moción de censura, y Dato al no tener apoyos dimitió como Presidente del Consejo de Ministros³⁷.

El Gobierno de Romanones, prometió resolver la Crisis de Subsistencias, estimulando la economía, mediante un plan de medidas económicas y financieras, para luchar contra la escasez, la inflación y el desempleo. Además de

³⁴ BERNÍS Ignacio, *Consecuencias económicas de la guerra*, Madrid, 1923, p.41.

³⁵ Op. Cit. 18, p. 280.

³⁶ Op. Cit. 18, p. 281.

³⁷ CIERVA DE LA Juan, *Notas de mi vida*, Madrid, 1955, p. 180.

fomentar la agricultura, el crédito, el transporte público, evitar la emigración, fortalecer la defensa nacional y mantener una estricta neutralidad³⁸.

Aunque pueda parecer contradictorio, que como veremos no lo es, aumentaba tanto el valor de la peseta, como el coste de la vida. A finales de 1916, el franco francés valía 79 céntimos y la libra esterlina 22 pesetas, pero el coste alimentario seguía subiendo. Los desórdenes y motines, contra la carestía de los alimentos básicos, con asaltos a panaderías fueron frecuentes, y a veces de forma sangrienta.

La razón de esta aparente contradicción, se encuentra en la estructura económica española. Unos exportadores, actuando de forma especuladora, por la necesidad acuciante que tenían los beligerantes de bienes, generaron amplios medios financieros. Pero al quedar desabastecido el mercado nacional por dichas exportaciones, subieron fuertemente los precios de los alimentos, sin estar respaldada esa subida, por el incremento en los salarios³⁹. (Ver Apéndice 3)

Acciones militares con relación a España

España fue un país neutral durante toda la contienda, y en consecuencia, no estuvo implicada en ninguna acción militar directa. Sin embargo, es interesante ver las acciones en las que estuvieron implicados efectivos militares, y que afectaron de forma indirecta a nuestro país. Consistieron principalmente, en el internamiento de una pequeña fuerza alemana en el Noroeste de la colonia africana de Guinea española, la intervención en zonas de guerra para ayudar a prisioneros de guerra, y el ataque de los submarinos alemanes a buques españoles⁴⁰.

1º.-En febrero de 1916, tropas coloniales alemanas destinadas en Camerún, entraron en la Guinea española, ante el empuje de las fuerzas británicas

³⁸ LACOMBA Juan Antonio, *La crisis española de 1917*, Málaga, 1970, p. 31.

³⁹ CARR Raymond, *Spain, 1808-1975*, Oxford, 1982, pp. 481-482.

⁴⁰ Opus. Cit. 9, pp. 389-43.

y francesas en la zona⁴¹. Gran Bretaña y Francia dieron su consentimiento al internamiento de sesenta oficiales alemanes, para su posterior traslado a la Península española, además del internamiento de los soldados nativos al servicio de los alemanes, en la colonia española⁴².

En octubre, el embajador francés Geoffroy, expresó su malestar al ministro de Asuntos Exteriores español Amalio Gimeno, por la aparición de rifles y municiones en el campo de internamiento de los oficiales alemanes. Y porque todavía, no se había realizado el traslado de dichos oficiales a la Península, ni de los soldados nativos al servicio de los alemanes de vuelta al Camerún, para que no volvieran a tomar parte en la contienda⁴³.

Se hizo evidente, el grado de entendimiento entre los oficiales alemanes y las autoridades españolas, que eran el Gobernador Ángel Barrera y el Comandante Jefe Manuel Giménez Pidal, pues eran conscientes de la existencia de armamento en poder de los alemanes, que pretendían volver a su antigua colonia del Camerún. En octubre de 1916, dos cruceros franceses, el Surcouf y el Astrea llegaron a la colonia española, para impedir la presencia de alemanes armados, amenazando a su nueva colonia, el Camerún. En vista de lo cual, el ministro Gimeno fletó dos barcos para traer a la Península a los oficiales alemanes y terminar este incidente⁴⁴.

2º.-El Rey Alfonso XIII se convirtió en “espejo de neutrales”, como explicaba Víctor Espinós al decir: “Convirtió nuestro Rey a España en un albergue del dolor universal, un remanso de esperanza y de consolación, donde

⁴¹ ROMERO SALVADÓ Francisco J., *Spain: and the First World War: Neutrality and Crisis*, Queen Mary and Westfield College, 20 June 1994, p. 144.

⁴² Opus. Cit. 36, p.145, Apud. A.G.A., Foreign Office Section, Paris, Box 5947.

⁴³ Opus. Cit. 36, p. 146, Apud, Foreign Office 371-2762/229.037, Hardinge to Grey, 11 noviembre 1916.

⁴⁴ Opus. Cit.36, P. 147, Apud. Para actividades del Gobernador de Fernando Poo en favor de los alemanes, Foreign Office 371-2762/260.662, Grey to Hardinge, 23 Diciembre 1916.

tiene su alivio la pena oculta...”⁴⁵. Alfonso XIII, como iniciativa personal al margen del Gobierno, organizó una infraestructura llamada “Oficina Pro Cautivos”, cuyos gastos se cubrían con las rentas del patrimonio real⁴⁶.

La acción humanitaria de la “Oficina Pro Cautivos”, consiguió ayuda para 120.000 prisioneros franceses y belgas, 7.950 ingleses, 6.350 italianos, 400 portugueses, 350 americanos, etc. Los agregados militares españoles, realizaron unas 4.000 visitas a campos de concentración, para ver el trato a los prisioneros de guerra. Se gestionó, desde la “Oficina”, medio centenar de indultos de pena capital, casi todos con buen resultado, se atendieron unas cinco mil demandas de repatriación de heridos graves y se realizaron cerca de veinte mil informes familiares, en territorios ocupados. También Alfonso XIII consiguió un acuerdo, para que no se torpedearan los buques-hospital⁴⁷.

3º.-El hundimiento de barcos mercantes españoles por submarinos alemanes, constituyó al principio de la guerra un asunto diplomático menor, pero a medida que se prolongaba el conflicto, estuvo a punto de involucrar a España en la guerra⁴⁸. Numerosos buques españoles de todo tipo fueron hundidos, siendo una gran pérdida para la economía española. Se calcula que fueron unos 65 barcos mercantes de tamaño medio, sin embargo, los alemanes pensaban que contribuían al esfuerzo de guerra aliado⁴⁹.

A partir de febrero 1915, y durante un periodo de siete meses, los submarinos alemanes hundieron 787.120 toneladas de barcos mercantes. Al final

⁴⁵ Opus. Cit. 18, p. 275.

⁴⁶ CORTÉS-CABANILLAS Julián, *Alfonso XIII. Vida, confesiones y muerte*, Barcelona, Juventud, 1966, p. 79.

⁴⁷ “La primera misión de paz española”, Luis Reyes, disponible en <<http://www.tiempodehoy.com/cultura/historia/la-primer-mision-de-paz-espanola>> [consulta: 13 enero 2014].

⁴⁸ Opus. Cit. 15, p.39.

⁴⁹ SIERRA DE LA LUÍS, *El mar en la Gran Guerra*, Barcelona, Juventud, 1984, p. 99.

de este periodo, suspendieron la campaña submarina por el daño que se estaba produciendo en los países neutrales, sobre todo en EEUU. En 1916 se reanudó una campaña submarina restringida, y en consecuencia, la continuación de hundimientos de mercantes españoles, produjo una grave crisis⁵⁰.

Durante la primera semana de abril de 1916, las tensiones se agudizaron cuando hundieron al vapor “Essex”, falleciendo el compositor Enrique Granados y a su esposa. En las siguientes semanas, también hundieron a los barcos “Vigo” y “Santanderino”. Por las protestas de Alfonso XIII, los alemanes presentaron una disculpa el 14 de mayo de 1916⁵¹.

El 31 de enero de 1917, Alemania anunció la renovación de su campaña submarina sin restricciones, en las aguas próximas a Gran Bretaña y Francia, que afectaban a España. El ministro español Gimeno, expresó su disconformidad al embajador alemán Max von Ratibor, aunque sin amenazar con romper las relaciones diplomáticas⁵².

Los alemanes se mostraron indiferentes ante los ruegos españoles, y hasta abril de 1917, treinta y tres barcos españoles con 80.000 toneladas fueron hundidos. El momento culminante tuvo lugar el 9 de abril de 1917, cuando fue torpedeado el barco “San Fulgencio”, que iba a España⁵³. El Conde de Romanones vio la oportunidad de romper relaciones con Alemania, pero Alfonso XIII no estuvo de acuerdo. Romanones al no estar respaldado presentó la dimisión. (También en el Apéndice 1)

Crisis militar en España

⁵⁰ SONDHAUS Lawrence, *Navies of Europe, 1815-2002*, London, Longman, 2002, p. 162.

⁵¹ “Demands That Spain Act”, *New York Times*, 15 April, 1916.

⁵² Ministro Asuntos Exteriores Amalio Gimeno al Embajador alemán Max von Ratibor, 6 Febrero 1917, en *Algunos datos sobre la guerra submarina*, pp. 10-11.

⁵³ Conde Romanones a Fernando León y Castillo, 14 Abril 1917, citado en Salvadó, *Spain, 1914-1918*, pp. 79-80.

Por último, nos referiremos a la crisis militar de carácter interno. Se produjo por la reducción de la capacidad adquisitiva de los militares, con retribuciones estancadas ante las fuertes subidas de precios⁵⁴. El Ejército, se había convertido desde la Ley de Jurisdicciones de 1906, en un grupo de presión⁵⁵. En el primer trimestre de 1916, los oficiales se organizaron en una especie de sindicato, no previsto en la legislación, llamado “Juntas de Defensa”, porque entendían que lo mejor para defender sus intereses, era crear un movimiento reivindicativo pacífico⁵⁶.

A finales de mayo de 1917, el Gobierno de García-Prieto⁵⁷ ordenó el arresto de los dirigentes de la Junta de Infantería, presidida por el Coronel del Regimiento de Vergara, de guarnición en Barcelona, Benito Márquez⁵⁸. Pero inmediatamente, se formó una Junta Suplente, que recibió el apoyo de las Juntas de Artillería e Ingenieros y también de la Guardia Civil. El 1 de Junio, las “Juntas de Defensa” pidieron la libertad para los arrestados, y ante estas circunstancias García Prieto prefirió dimitir. Le sustituyó como Presidente del Consejo de Ministros, Eduardo Dato, que aceptó las peticiones de las “Juntas de Defensa”, permaneciendo su reglamento hasta 1922⁵⁹.

La petición militar del 1 de junio, marcó el momento decisivo de la monarquía constitucional, pues salieron a la superficie las fuerzas de la reacción y de la revolución⁶⁰. Para controlar la agitación social que existía, y que se manifestó en la Huelga General de 1917, el Ejército se puso del lado de la

⁵⁴ Opus. Cit. 34, p. 500.

⁵⁵ Opus. Cit. 5, p.178.

⁵⁶ DÍAZ PLAJA Fernando, *España, los años decisivos: 1917*, Barcelona, Plaza & Janes, 1969, p. 19.

⁵⁷ Opus. Cit. 5, p. 181.

⁵⁸ Opus. Cit. 18, p. 298.

⁵⁹ RAMOS OLIVEIRA A., *Politics, Economics and Men of Modern Spain 1808-1946*, New York, Arno Press, 1972, p. 169.

⁶⁰ Opus. Cit. 52, p.183.

Corona, favoreciendo decisiones autoritarias. En septiembre de 1923 Primo de Rivera no derrocó al último Gobierno constitucional, sino que relleno un vacío que existía desde 1917⁶¹. (Ver Apéndice 4).

Conclusiones: aplicación a situaciones futuras

La labor del historiador es comprender y describir los acontecimientos pasados, para evitar que se vuelvan a producir los errores acaecidos. La opinión, generalizada al principio de la guerra, consistía en creer que la neutralidad, con sus ventajas económicas al abastecer a los dos grupos beligerantes, mejoraría la condición de España y la convertiría en una gran potencia.

Esta idea fue equivocada, y al terminar la conflagración, España era una sombra de su pasado reciente. Esta conclusión, puede ser la “lección aprendida”, para que en un futuro se impida la ruina de los ciudadanos, cuando en un país afluyen desde el exterior cantidades importantes de medios financieros.

Respecto al ámbito internacional, Francia recordó la “germanofilia” de importantes instituciones españolas, y España ni siquiera fue invitada a participar en la Conferencia de Paz de Versalles. Tampoco se tuvo en cuenta al Rey Alfonso XIII, por sus esfuerzos en favor de los heridos y prisioneros en cautividad. El resultado de este aislacionismo, dio lugar en gran parte, al desastre de Annual en 1921, parecido a la crisis de 1898.

En cuanto la situación interna, fue la Primera Guerra Mundial, con los cambios que originó, quien aceleró la desintegración del sistema político español. En 1917, nombrado Dato presidente de Gobierno, dada la grave crisis, militar, parlamentaria y de agitación social, suspendió las garantías constitucionales y aceptó el reglamento de las “Juntas de Defensa”, para desactivar la protesta militar. Ante esta situación, recurrió al Ejército, para sofocar la huelga general revolucionaria de Agosto de 1917, convocada por los sindicatos mayoritarios UGT y CNT.

⁶¹ Opus. Cit. 36, p. 201.

En 1918, en la mayoría de las ciudades se generalizaron los disturbios por la falta de alimentos, y se sucedieron las protestas de los trabajadores contra el creciente coste de la vida. La situación, era igual o peor para los campesinos, que tenían salarios muy bajos y dietas poco saludables.

Las clases dominantes, temían una victoria revolucionaria como en Rusia. La burguesía no quería perder sus privilegios, y se volvió hacia el Ejército para buscar su protección. Éste fue movilizadado en 1919, tras la declaración del Estado de Guerra, para desalojar a los campesinos de los latifundios ocupados, sobre todo, en Andalucía y Extremadura.

Entre 1917 y 1923, hubo 30 crisis de gobierno parciales y 13 totales. El poder auténtico en un territorio, estaba en manos del correspondiente Capitán General. Los militantes de los sindicatos fueron perseguidos, Eduardo Dato fue asesinado, y en definitiva, España parecía un país en guerra civil. En muchos ámbitos se esperaba una solución autoritaria, que llegó en 1923 con Primo de Rivera.

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Apéndice 1

Escrito de dimisión del Presidente del Consejo de Ministros Álvaro de Figueroa, Conde de Romanones, entregado al Rey Alfonso XIII, el 20 de abril de 1917:

“El profundo convencimiento adquirido de que la defensa de las vidas e intereses españoles no puede hacerse eficaz mientras nuestra política ante la guerra se desenvuelva dentro de las mismas limitaciones que hasta ahora, obligan Señor, a mi conciencia de patriota y de gobernante concedor de sus obligaciones ante el presente y el porvenir de la Patria, a hacer a V.M. y a la Nación las manifestaciones que este documento contiene y a adoptar irrevocablemente la resolución que tales convencimientos imponen...

Siempre he estado convencido de que la política internacional que permitía engrandecer a España es la emprendida en 1902. Aquella política se inició con un Gobierno del cual tenía el honor de formar parte y fue reiterada y acentuada en los Tratados de 1904, 1905 y en las declaraciones de Cartagena de 1907 y 1913...

Siendo ésta mi convicción en punto que afecta a las futuras directrices de la Patria, honradamente no puedo gobernar sino ajustando a ella mis actos. Vuestra Majestad, dispensándome una honra para la cual nunca será bastante la gratitud mía, depositó en mí su absoluta confianza, autorizándome en todo

momento para proceder como a mi juicio mejor conviniera a los intereses del país. Pero lealmente reconozco, después de haber recogido con patriótica ansiedad las manifestaciones de la conciencia pública (algunas surgidas del propio partido que me honra con su dirección y Jefatura), que hoy una gran parte de la opinión española no participa de mi convicción...Ni debo ni quiero gobernar contra la opinión. No la comparto; pero ante ella me rindo. Y por eso pongo en manos de V.M. la dimisión del Gobierno que tengo la honra de presidir...

Esta dimisión tiene carácter irrevocable. Por eso no someto a V.M. la elección de dos políticas, sino que declaro resueltamente que hoy no puedo seguir asumiendo las responsabilidades del Gobierno de mi país.”

Fuente: DUQUE DE MAURA Y MELCHOR FERNÁNDEZ ALMAGRO, Por qué cayó Alfonso XIII, Madrid, Ediciones Ambos Mundos, Segunda Edición, 1948, p. 292.

Apéndice 2

Editorial publicado en el “Diario Universal” por Álvaro de Figueroa, Conde de Romanones, el 19 de agosto de 1914 y del que se extractan estos párrafos:

“España, aunque se proclame otra cosa desde la Gaceta, está, por fatalidades económicas y geográficas, dentro de la órbita de atracción de la Triple inteligencia, Francia, Inglaterra y Rusia; asegurar lo contrario, es cerrar los ojos a la evidencia. España, además, no puede ser neutral, porque, llegado el momento decisivo, la obligarán a dejar de serlo...”

“Si triunfa el interés germánico, ¿se mostrará agradecido a nuestra neutralidad? Seguramente, no. La gratitud es una palabra que no tiene sentido cuando se trata del interés de las naciones...”

“Por el contrario, si fuese vencida Alemania, los vencedores nada tendrían que agradecernos; en la hora suprema no tuvimos para ellos ni una

palabra de consuelo; nos limitamos tan sólo a proclamar nuestra neutralidad y entonces ellos, triunfantes, procederán a la variación del mapa de Europa como crean más adecuado a sus intereses...

“La suerte está echada; no hay más remedio que jugarla; la neutralidad no es un remedio; por el contrario, hay neutralidades que matan.”

Fuente: DUQUE DE MAURA Y MELCHOR FERNÁNDEZ ALMAGRO, Por qué cayó Alfonso XIII, Madrid, Ediciones Ambos Mundos, Segunda Edición, 1948, p. 273.

Apéndice 3

Se pueden ver el alza de precios desde octubre de 1914: kilo de carne de carnero desde 1,60 a 2,40, de vaca desde 1,90 a 2,60, de ternera desde 2,10 a 3,00, de jamón desde 3,50 a 4,50, kilo de pescado: De sardinas desde 0,85 a 1,10, de merluza desde 1,88 a 2,00. La langosta, una pieza había subido desde 17 reales a un duro, el kilo de patatas, desde 16 céntimos a 22 y el ciento de huevos que se compraba el año anterior a 12 pesetas y media, ahora costaba 14 pesetas.

Balance de Comercio, 1914-1920					
Valor			Volumen		
En millones de pesetas Oro			Índice 1913=100		
	Importaciones	Exportaciones	Balances	Importaciones	Exportaciones
1914	1,169	937	-232	79,0	74,9
1915	1,367	1,454	+87	77,9	98,0
1916	1,531	1,975	+443	68,9	105,0
1917	1,556	2,541	+985	52,9	102,1
1918	1,683	2,437	+754	43,1	73,8
1919	2,119	2,470	+611	66,9	101,8
1920	2,571	1,875	-706	100,0	79,6

Evolución de los Precios. (1914-1920)		
Semestres	Campo	Ciudad
Abril 1909-Marzo 1914	100	100
Abril 1914-Septiembre 1914	106	106,9
Octubre 1914-Marzo 1915	110,8	107,7
Abril 1915-Septiembre 1915	117,1	113,8
Octubre 1915-Marzo 1916	118,4	117,6
Abril 1916-Septiembre 1916	123,4	120,3
Octubre 1916-Marzo 1917	125,6	123,6
Abril 1917-Septiembre 1917	139,8	136,1
Octubre 1917-Marzo 1918	149,3	145,4
Abril 1918-Septiembre 1918	172,8	161,8
Octubre 1918-Marzo 1919	178,5	167,7
Abril 1919-Septiembre 1919	190,9	180
Octubre 1919-Marzo 1920	208,1	192,3
Abril 1920-Septiembre 1920	220,3	202,3

Fuente: ROMERO SALVADÓ Francisco J., Spain: and the First World War: Neutrality and Crisis, Queen Mary and Westfield College, 20 June 1994, pp. 49-50.

Apéndice 4

La pregunta sobre el impacto del gasto militar en la riqueza económica, ha generado muchos estudios y bastante atención en las tres últimas décadas, con bastante controversia sobre la incidencia de este gasto, asociado con los índices de crecimiento más altos o más bajos.

Gran parte de la discusión de las políticas económicas de seguridad nacional y gasto militar llevan implícitas un modelo de defensa tipo “racional” o “neoclásico”. Éste asume que el bienestar social es función del presupuesto civil y de una variable, la seguridad; y ésta seguridad depende, entre otras cosas, del gasto militar.

El papel del Estado por tanto sería hacer un balance entre el beneficio en bienestar de seguridad extra derivada del gasto militar con su oportunidad de coste en presupuesto civil perdido. Para evaluar esto de forma objetiva, hay que recurrir a un modelo matemático neoclásico.

El beneficio W , puede expresarse en función de la seguridad S y del gasto que cuesta:

$$W=W(S, C)$$

A su vez, la seguridad S , es función del volumen del gasto militar M y de la peligrosidad del ambiente estratégico E :

$$S=S(M, E)$$

El presupuesto final Y , estará compuesto por gasto civil C y militar M :

$$Y=pC+qM$$

Donde “ p ” y “ q ”, son los precios relativos respecto al presupuesto total.

Por lo tanto, nos queda la función:

$$W(S, C)=W[S(M, E), C(M)]$$

Por último, todo lo que se requiere es maximizar el beneficio W , bienestar social agregado, con la restricción del presupuesto Y , y con la función de seguridad $S=S(M, E)$.

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Col. (R) Manuel Gracia Rivas (Spain)

La labor humanitaria de España en la I Guerra Mundial

Cuando el 28 de julio de 1914 se produjo la declaración de guerra del imperio austro-húngaro a Serbia, en España se encontraba al frente del gobierno D. Eduardo Dato, del Partido Liberal Conservador, quien inmediatamente se decantó por una postura de neutralidad que fue apoyada por todas las fuerzas políticas. Dos días después del estallido del conflicto, la *Gaceta de Madrid* insertaba una nota del Ministerio de Estado¹ ordenando la más estricta neutralidad a los súbditos españoles y prohibiendo el reclutamiento de soldados para servir en los ejércitos contendientes. El 7 de agosto, aparecía en la *Gaceta* otra nota similar², tras la declaración de guerra por parte de Alemania contra Rusia, Francia y el Reino Unido, volviendo a aparecer cada vez que el conflicto se extendía³.

Han sido varias las causas aducidas para justificar la postura del gobierno español y algunos autores consideran que fue una neutralidad “obligada” por la situación de las Fuerzas Armadas y la vulnerabilidad económica del país⁴. De hecho, esa había sido ya la opinión expresada por Manuel Azaña en una

¹*Gaceta de Madrid* nº 211. 30 de julio de 1914. Pág. 238.

²*Gaceta de Madrid* nº 219. 7 de agosto de 1914. Pág. 308.

³ Así, por ejemplo, con ocasión de la declaración de guerra de Austria Hungría a Montenegro (*Gaceta de Madrid* nº 226. 14 de agosto de 1914. Pág. 390); en la de Austria Hungría a Francia y el Reino Unido (*Gaceta de Madrid* nº 227. 15 de agosto de 1914. Pág. 418) o con motivo del conflicto entre Alemania y el Japón (*Gaceta de Madrid* nº 229. 26 de agosto de 1914. Pág. 489), por citar otros ejemplos. Todas las notas citadas carecían de firma por lo que, en contra de lo que habitualmente se afirma, no pueden ser consideradas como Reales Decretos de declaración expresa de neutralidad.

⁴PONCE MARRERO, Javier. “La neutralidad española durante la Primera Guerra Mundial: Nuevas perspectivas”. *IX Congreso de la Asociación de Historia Contemporánea*. Universidad de Murcia, 2008.

PARDO SANZ, Rosa. “España ante el conflicto bélico de 1914-1918: ¿Una espléndida neutralidad?” en Salvador FORNER (Ed.). *Coyuntura internacional y Política española*. Alicante, 2010. Pp. 45-63.

conferencia pronunciada en el Ateneo de Madrid, en 1917, donde aseguró que la neutralidad española no había sido libre, sino forzosa, “impuesta por nuestra propia indefensión”⁵.

El 25 de agosto, Dato envió una carta personal a Antonio Maura, justificando la postura adoptada que estaba dispuesto a mantener, salvo en caso de agresión, y apuntando la posibilidad de que la misma sirviera para que España fuera escenario de una conferencia de paz que pusiera término a la lucha⁶.

Más tarde, el Presidente del Gobierno volvió a reafirmar su posición, respondiendo a una pregunta parlamentaria formulada por la minoría republicano-socialista, recabando una verdadera solidaridad nacional para “la mejor salvaguardia de los altos y sagrados intereses de la Patria”⁷.

Es cierto que, en aquellos momentos, se abrigaba la esperanza de que el enfrentamiento se resolviera con rapidez; pero conforme la guerra se fue dilatando y nuevos países se incorporaron a la misma, surgieron posturas contrapuestas en el seno de la sociedad española, llegando en algún momento a plantearse la posibilidad de un cambio radical de postura.

De hecho, las fuerzas conservadoras se mostraban más proclives a los Imperios centrales, mientras que los progresistas eran decididamente partidarios de la Triple Entente, aunque evitaron que el debate llegara a las Cortes para que no se acrecentara la polarización de la opinión pública. La caída de Dato en diciembre de 1915 y la llegada a la Presidencia del Gobierno del conde de Romanones representó una discreta alteración del equilibrio que hasta entonces se había mantenido, debido a su posición claramente favorable a los aliados.

⁵ AZAÑA, Manuel. “Los motivos de la germanofilia”. Discurso pronunciado en el Ateneo de Madrid el 25 de mayo de 1917.

⁶ Carta de D. Eduardo Dato a D. Antonio Maura de 25 de agosto de 1914. Citada por MORALES LEZCANO, Víctor. “La neutralidad española” en *España y la Gran Guerra*. Cuadernos Historia 16, nº 197. Madrid, 1985. Pp. 4-7, entre otros autores que la reproducen parcialmente.

⁷ *Diario de Sesiones del Congreso*. Legislatura 1914. Sesión de 5 de noviembre de 1914.

Fueron los hundimientos de mercantes españoles por los submarinos alemanes los que, entonces y especialmente en 1918, estuvieron a punto de provocar una ruptura con Alemania que no llegó a materializarse.

En realidad uno y otro bando prefirieron que España mantuviese su posición inicial, a lo largo de todo el conflicto. Ello no fue obstáculo para que, en determinados momentos presentaran propuestas para el caso de que el gobierno español se inclinara hacia ellos. Alemania llegó a prometer Tánger, Gibraltar y libertad de acción en Portugal, a cambio de nuestra beligerancia. Sin embargo, era consciente que ello desembocaría en un inmediato ataque a las islas Baleares y Canarias y a la interrupción de las comunicaciones con Marruecos, sin que se pudiera hacer nada por evitarlo⁸.

Aunque el gobierno español no llegó a tomarla en consideración, se tanteó la posibilidad de una contraoferta por parte de Londres y París. Se ha llegado a sugerir la posibilidad de que los británicos estudiaran la cesión de Tánger y el cambio de Gibraltar por Ceuta⁹, pero nunca hubo una propuesta concreta, entre otras razones porque lo que España podía ofrecer al esfuerzo bélico era muy poco y los suministros que les interesaban quedaban garantizados desde una posición de neutralidad.

Mientras tanto, en el seno de la sociedad española se habían ido decantando las posiciones a favor de uno y otro bando. En unos casos por motivaciones políticas pero también por razones geográficas. Mientras las zonas del interior eran partidarias de la Triple Alianza, las periféricas se manifestaban claramente favorables a la Triple Entente. Esto fue especialmente significativo en el caso de Cataluña, donde los sectores nacionalistas mostraron un decidido

⁸ PONCE GUERRERO, Javier. *Op. cit.*

⁹ PARDO SANZ, Rosa. *Op. cit.* Pág. 6.

apoyo a Francia y el Reino Unido con la esperanza de que, al término de la guerra, les ayudaran a conseguir su aspiración de proclamar el Estado catalán¹⁰.

La Unió Catalanista creó, en 1916, el “Comité de GermanorambelsVoluntarisCatalans” que presidía el Dr. D. Joan Solé y Pla para ayudar a quienes se habían enrolado en las filas francesas, a través de *AmitiésFrançaises*, un órgano constituido por el Ministerio de Guerra francés para canalizar el encuadramiento de los voluntarios extranjeros, el cual disponía de centros en París y Perpiñán. La propaganda nacionalista llegó a afirmar que fueron cerca de 12.000 los catalanes que participaron en el conflicto. Sin embargo, esta cifra se aleja mucho de la realidad contrastada por otras fuentes. Myriam Mayer y Emilio Condado¹¹, que han estudiado la presencia de españoles en la Gran Guerra, hacen referencia al informe del barón de Lyons de Feuchan¹² quien, ante la Cámara de Diputados francesa, cifraba en 1.328 el número de voluntarios españoles, mientras que las fuentes procedentes de la propia Legión Extranjera lo reducen a 642.

Todos ellos estuvieron encuadrados en el Regimiento de marcha de la Legión Extranjera, en el que se reagruparon los Regimientos de marcha creados al comienzo de la guerra. Es interesante destacar que los voluntarios españoles no fueron solamente catalanes, pues los hubo también de otras regiones. Algunos de ellos se distinguieron en acción de guerra, como los cabos Arocas y Leva, condecorados con la Legión de Honor¹³.

No fue la única iniciativa de apoyo a los ejércitos aliados ya que, en Madrid, el duque de Alba, D. Jacobo Fitz-James Stuart creó el Patronato de

¹⁰ MARTÍNEZ FIOL, David. *Elsvoluntariscatalans a la Gran Guerra 1914-1918*. Publicacions de l'abadia de Monserrat. Barcelona, 1991.

¹¹ MAYER, Miriam y CONDADO, Emilio. “Españoles en la Gran Guerra: Los voluntarios cántabros”. *Monte Buceiro*, nº 10. Santoña, 2004. Pp. 172-194.

¹²*Rapport sur le biñan des pertes en morts et en blessés des Nations belligérantes. Journal Officiel. Documents parlementaires, annexe 335. Année 1924.*

¹³ MAYER, Miriam y CONDADO, Emilio. *Op. cit.*

Voluntarios Españoles, sobre cuya actuación publicó una memoria en 1920¹⁴, así como una obra de José Subirá con testimonios de la presencia española en la contienda¹⁵.

Pero hubo también españoles, aunque en menor número, que apoyaron a los imperios centrales, bien como combatientes o como agentes de espionaje. Alfred López dio a conocer el caso de Adolfo Guerrero, detenido en Londres cuando realizaba actividades a favor del ejército alemán, bajo la cobertura de corresponsal del diario madrileño *El Ideal*. Condenado a muerte, logró salvarse merced a la intervención personal del rey Alfonso XIII¹⁶. Ya, en 1917, el enviado especial de *ABC* en Londres, Miguel de Zárraga, había hecho alusión a este asunto que tuvo para él complicaciones, al dar a conocer este caso, dando lugar a que ese diario fuera acusado de ser “un periódico germanófilo y, por lo tanto, enemigo declarado de Inglaterra”¹⁷.

Entre los que realizaron labores de espionaje a favor de los aliados destaca Jaume Mir Mas, un catalán residente en Bélgica que pasó numerosos documentos a Holanda en el doble fondo de un carruaje de dos ruedas¹⁸. El contraespionaje alemán le tendió una trampa y, tras ser detenido, fue condenado a muerte. Una vez más, la intervención de Alfonso XIII le salvó de la pena capital y, en 1920, el gobierno belga le concedió la medalla de la Orden de Leopold. Seis

¹⁴ *Patronato de Voluntarios Españoles. Memoria de su actuación (1918-1919)*. Comité de aproximación franco-española. Madrid, 1920.

¹⁵ SUBIRÁ, José. *Los españoles en la guerra de 1914-1918*. 4 volúmenes. Patronato de Voluntarios Españoles. Madrid, 1920.

¹⁶ LÓPEZ, Alfred. “Los españoles que combatieron en la Primera Guerra Mundial”. *Cuadernos de Historias*. Blog de es.noticias.yahoo.com

¹⁷ ZÁRRAGA, Miguel de. “Lo que no puede decirse”. *ABC*. Sábado 27 de enero de 1917. Pág. 6.

¹⁸ PASTOR PETIT, Domingo. *Espías españoles*. Argos Vergara. Barcelona, 1979.

años después, publicó sus memorias¹⁹ y, durante la Guerra Civil española, llegó a ser Comisario de Propaganda del Govern catalá en Bruselas.

Uno y otro caso son, tan solo, meros ejemplos de las muchas personas que colaboraron con los contendientes, realizando labores de espionaje en los distintos países y en la propia España que durante toda la guerra se convirtió en un importante núcleo de este tipo de actividades.

Observadores en los frentes de batalla

Para el Ejército español las acciones bélicas que se desarrollaban en los distintos frentes de batalla suscitaban un interés profesional al que el Ministerio de la Guerra quiso responder creando una revista, en mayo de 1916, que se llamó *La guerra y su preparación*,²⁰ en la que, desde un punto de vista estrictamente técnico, se abordaron los aspectos más interesantes del conflicto relacionados con armamento, táctica y planteamientos de las operaciones militares.

La información que en ella se insertaba procedía de la recabada por los agregados militares en los diferentes países y, en algunos casos, de las memorias elaboradas por los observadores enviados a los frentes de batalla.

Precisamente, en relación con la labor desarrollada por estos últimos en el transcurso de la guerra, el coronel Redondo Díaz presentó una comunicación al X Coloquio de la Comisión Internacional de Historia Militar, celebrado en Stuttgart en 1985, que fue publicada en la *Revista de Historia Militar*²¹.

Como señalaba este historiador militar, la presencia de observadores españoles en diferentes conflictos era una práctica que gozaba de larga tradición por lo que, tras el desencadenamiento de la Gran Guerra, se puso especial interés

¹⁹ MIR, Jaime. *Mémoires d'un condamné a mort (1914-1918)*. Librairie Plon. París, 1926.

²⁰ Era una publicación mensual que se distribuía en todos los centros y dependencias del Ejército de Tierra. Continuó editándose hasta 1931.

²¹ REDONDO DÍAZ, Fernando. "Los observadores militares españoles en la Primera Guerra Mundial". *Revista de Historia Militar*, nº 58. Madrid, 1985. Pp. 197-208.

en conocer de cerca el desarrollo de las operaciones, facilitando la presencia de observadores la condición de España como país neutral.

Fue Francia el escenario que más tempranamente recabó la atención de los militares españoles. Por ese motivo, en noviembre de 1914, se creó en París una comisión permanente integrada por el coronel de Ingenieros D. Francisco Echagüe Santoyo y el teniente coronel de Estado Mayor D. Juan García Benítez. De esta comisión formaron parte, más tarde, diversos oficiales de los distintos cuerpos, alguno de los cuales, como el capitán D. Pedro JevenoisLabernade, tenían experiencia en estos cometidos, pues había sido observador en la guerra ruso-japonesa.

Junto a la labor desarrollada por esta comisión permanente hay que señalar la realizada por otras comisiones “extraordinarias” que, por propia iniciativa o atendiendo a las invitaciones formuladas, recorrieron algunos escenarios bélicos.

El 13 de enero de 1916, el infante D. Carlos de Borbón, que era general de división y cuñado del rey Alfonso XIII, visitó el frente francés en compañía del su hermano D. Rainiero de Borbón, príncipe de las Dos Sicilias. En Rossons fueron recibidos por el general Alby, comandante del 6º ejército y, posteriormente, cumplieron al mariscal Joffre en Chantilly.

Respondiendo a invitaciones del gobierno británico visitaron los frentes ingleses en Francia varias comisiones. En agosto de 1916, lo hizo la que presidía el teniente coronel de Estado Mayor D. Emilio Figueras Fernández que ya había estado en la guerra turco-balcánica.

De mayor nivel fue la que, en enero de 1917, presidió el general de división D. Miguel Primo de Rivera. En Amiens, fueron recibidos por el general Rawlinson, jefe del 4º ejército, y por el general Allenby, comandante del 3º. Aunque la visita había sido programada por iniciativa de los británicos, en París recibieron autorización para recorrer, posteriormente, la zona de operaciones del ejército francés, siendo recibidos en Chalons-sur-Marne por el general Roques.

En marzo de ese mismo año, el general de brigada D. Dámaso Berenguer Fusté presidió otra comisión que, invitada por los británicos, pudo recorrer sus líneas y, como en el caso anterior, el Ministerio de Guerra francés les permitió visitar posteriormente las posiciones francesas en el Somme.

A estas visitas hay que sumar la llevada a cabo por otra comisión, en agosto de 1918, por invitación de las fuerzas expedicionarias norteamericanas en Francia y alguna iniciativa “privada” como la visita efectuada por el general de brigada D. Manuel Fernández Silvestre al frente francés, en diciembre de 1916, cuando regresaba de Viena, tras haber asistido a los funerales del emperador Francisco José.

Pero no fueron únicamente los frentes de la Triple Entente los visitados por las comisiones de observadores españoles; también recorrieron los de los imperios centrales. La primera de ellas llegó a Berlín el 15 de febrero de 1917 y estuvo presidida por el general de brigada D. Luis de Santiago Aguirrebengoa. A diferencia de las visitas efectuadas a los frentes aliados, generalmente de corta duración, en este caso el recorrido de los observadores españoles se prolongó durante un mes.

También fue muy minuciosa la visita efectuada, durante los meses de abril y mayo de ese mismo año, por otra comisión presidida por el coronel de Estado Mayor D. Bartolomé de Zayas y Borrel que pudo conocer, en Prusia Oriental, los escenarios donde habían tenido lugar las batallas de Tannenberg y de los lagos masurianos, en 1914. Por su parte, en abril de 1917, el gobierno de Austria-Hungría formuló otra invitación para visitar a sus tropas, siendo enviada una comisión que presidió el general de brigada D. Ricardo Burguete Lana. Circunscrita, inicialmente, a un recorrido por los pasos del Danubio utilizados durante la campaña contra Serbia, el viaje se prolongó durante un mes, al ser autorizados a visitar el frente del Tirol y, posteriormente, a Bucarest, atendiendo a una invitación personal del mariscal Mackensen.

Es importante resaltar la importancia de todas estas visitas, tanto por el hecho de formar parte de las comisiones una serie de prestigiosos militares que, más tarde, desempeñarían cometidos relevantes en el Ejército español, como por la influencia que las enseñanzas obtenidas tuvieron a la hora de modificar la doctrina operativa del mismo.

Supervisión de los campos de prisioneros

Cuando dio comienzo la I Guerra Mundial ninguna de las potencias implicadas creyó que el conflicto llegaría a dilatarse en el tiempo. Por este motivo, hubo aspectos que no fueron suficientemente previstos, como el establecimiento de campos de internamiento para prisioneros. Sin embargo, a lo largo del conflicto fueron numerosos los creados en todos los países implicados, tanto para combatientes como para personal civil.

En aquellos momentos, el Derecho Internacional era muy impreciso a la hora de regular todo lo relacionado con la supervisión de los mismos. La Cruz Roja Internacional reconocía que, tanto la Convención de Ginebra de 1864 y la de 1906 en vigor, como los Convenios de La Haya de 1907, eran instrumentos insuficientes para el desarrollo de su cometido. A pesar de ello, al inicio de la guerra, creó la *International Prisoners-of-War Agency* para reunir y transmitir información sobre los prisioneros. Por otra parte, alcanzó acuerdos con los diferentes Estados beligerantes para visitar los campos, comprobar las condiciones de los mismos y elaborar informes encaminados a su mejora que, en ningún momento, tenían carácter vinculante.

Junto a las tareas del Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja, hubo países neutrales que también desarrollaron una gran labor en este ámbito. Entre ellos es preciso destacar la labor de España donde, por deseo expreso de Alfonso XIII, fueron creadas diversas comisiones para la inspección de los campos de prisioneros que dependían del Ministerio de Estado y estaban bajo la supervisión de los respectivos embajadores en cada uno de los países visitados.

Su labor no estuvo exenta de algunas dificultades, como han señalado algunos autores²². Así, por ejemplo, sucedió en Alemania cuando una de las comisiones quiso visitar el frente, siéndoles denegada la autorización al considerar las autoridades que no actuaban como militares españoles, sino como delegados de los gobiernos que tenían prisioneros²³.

Su labor fue muy importante, aunque no ha sido objeto de un estudio pormenorizado, respecto a sus integrantes ni a los campos visitados. Sabemos, a través de Redondo, que el entonces capitán médico D. Mariano Gómez Ulla, actuó como inspector en Francia y Alemania, antes de ser destinado a la misión permanente en París, junto con el farmacéutico de 1ª D. Antonio Moyano Cordón.

En Alemania desempeñaron esta función un número significativo de oficiales, no sólo médicos sino también de las distintas armas. Entre los primeros hay que destacar a D. Antonio Vallejo Nájera que durante su estancia en Berlín tuvo oportunidad de entrar en contacto con destacadas figuras de la Psiquiatría alemana cuyas enseñanzas incidieron de forma decisiva en su definitiva dedicación a esta especialidad²⁴.

En Austria-Hungría la comisión que se encargó de visitar los campos estuvo presidida, entre marzo de 1917 y 1918, por el entonces comandante de Ingenieros D. Ricardo Álvarez-Espejo y González de Castejón. En esta ocasión pudieron visitar diversos centros militares como la Academia Militar de María Teresa o el campo de aviación de Wiener Neustadt, algo en lo que estaba muy interesado el comandante Álvarez-Espejo que, años después, llegaría a ser Jefe del Servicio de Aviación Militar.

²²STIBBE, Matthew. "The Internment of Civilians by Belligerent States during the First World War and the Reponse of the International Committee of the Red Cross". *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 4, nº 1. 2006. Pp. 5-19.

²³REDONDO DÍAZ, Fernando. *Op. cit.* Pág. 200 y ss.

²⁴BANDRÉS, Javier y LLAVONA, Rafael. "La Psicología en los campos de concentración de Franco". *Psicothema*, vol 8, nº 1. 1996. Pp. 1-11.

En total, fueron 4.000 las visitas realizadas a los campos de concentración por estas comisiones, logrando mejoras significativas que, en 1917, fue reconocida por el Presidente de la Conferencia de Cruces Rojas neutrales, a través de un mensaje remitido al rey Alfonso XIII.

La guerra desde la Armada

Al igual que sus compañeros del Ejército, los oficiales de la Armada siguieron con gran interés el desarrollo de la guerra. A partir de septiembre de 1914, fueron apareciendo mensualmente en la *Revista General de Marina*, unos artículos con el título genérico de “La guerra europea” en los que se reseñaban los principales acontecimientos bélicos en el ámbito naval. Es curioso que los únicos trabajos doctrinales publicados en el transcurso del conflicto hicieran referencia a temas sanitarios, siendo su autor el Inspector General del Cuerpo de Sanidad de la Armada D. Federico MontaldoPeró²⁵, aunque hubo algún otro sobre aspectos concretos, como las pérdidas navales²⁶.

También se creó una comisión de observadores que visitó Alemania y las zonas ocupadas, en agosto de 1917, por invitación del Almirantazgo²⁷. Sus miembros fueron recibidos en Brujas por el almirante Schroeder y, tras visitar diversas instalaciones en la Bélgica ocupada, viajaron a Alemania, donde

²⁵ MONTALDO, Federico. Enseñanzas sanitarias de la guerra actual”. *Revista General de Marina*. 1915/08. Pp. 159-182.

_____ “Nuevos medios ofensivos en la guerra actual. Entelequia médico-social”. *Revista General de Marina*. 1915/09. Pp. 321-337.

²⁶UnitedStates Naval InstituteProceeding. “Las pérdidas navales de los beligerantes en la guerra”. *Revista General de Marina*. 1916/03. Pp. 380-387.

²⁷De ella formaron parte los tenientes de navío D. Pedro Cardona Prieto, D. Francisco Moreno Fernández y D. José Cornejo Carvajal. El primero de ellos sería, más tarde, el fundador de la Aviación naval española, muriendo fusilado en Barcelona en 1936, mientras que el segundo fue el jefe de la Flota nacional durante la guerra civil española.

podieron embarcar en los submarinos *U-55* y *S-61* y recorrer diversas instalaciones navales²⁸.

La generalización de la guerra submarina por parte de los imperios centrales no sólo tuvo graves consecuencias para el tráfico marítimo, sino que afectó también a los buques hospitales. Durante el mes de marzo de 1917, fueron hundidos por submarinos alemanes los buques hospitales británicos *Asturias* (21 de marzo) y *Gloucester Castle* (30 de marzo) y el *Georgian*, por el submarino austriaco *UB-47* (8 de marzo). Al mes siguiente y en un mismo día, 17 de abril, dos nuevos buques hospitales británicos sucumbieron a los torpedos alemanes, el *Donegal* y el *Lanfranc*, con la justificación de que eran utilizados para fines distintos de los declarados. Estos hechos provocaron una grave crisis en la que Francia amenazó con embarcar en sus buques a prisioneros alemanes, mientras que Alemania anunció que por cada prisionero alemán embarcado, situaría a tres prisioneros franceses en los lugares más expuestos a los bombardeos aliados. Ante esta situación, el rey Alfonso XIII intervino como mediador, proponiendo la presencia de observadores españoles, a bordo de los mismos, para garantizar el correcto empleo de estas unidades²⁹.

La propuesta fue aceptada por las partes beligerantes y, desde mediados de 1917, marinos españoles embarcaron en los buques hospitales de diversos países. No conocemos todos sus nombres ni las unidades a las que fueron destinados, aunque Bordejé Morencos³⁰ fueron tres Capitanes de Fragata, trece Capitanes de Corbeta y cinco Tenientes de Navío los que desempeñaron este cometido a bordo de buques hospitales franceses, británicos, italianos y griegos,

²⁸ REDONDO DÍAZ, Fernando. *Op. cit.* Pp. 202-203.

²⁹ Tras esta iniciativa disminuyó el número de ataques, aunque no cesó por completo. De hecho, en 1918 fueron hundidos por submarinos alemanes los buques hospitales británicos *Rewa* (4 de enero), el *Kyarra* (26 de mayo) y el *Llandoverly Castle* (27 de junio), mientras que también fue torpedeado el *Guilford Castle* (18 de marzo), aunque no llegó a hundirse. También fueron hundidos el *Koningin Regentes*, de los Países Bajos (6 de junio) y el italiano *Cordova* (4 de julio).

³⁰ BORDEJÉ MORENCOS, Federico Fernando. *Vicisitudes de una política naval*. Editorial San Martín. Madrid, 1978. Pág. 293 y Pp. 321-322.

actuando como delegados del Gobierno español. Sin embargo, estos datos no concuerdan con las de otras fuentes. Así, por ejemplo, el 22 de junio de 1919 fueron condecorados por el embajador británico en Madrid, sir Arthur Hardinge, con las insignias de la Orden del Imperio Británico, “los marinos españoles que, durante el período álgido de la guerra submarina” prestaron servicio “a bordo de los buques hospitales británicos, garantizando así que los buques ingleses no conducían contrabando de guerra”. Fueron 11 Capitanes de Fragata y 3 Tenientes de Navío los que aparecen reseñados en el *Boletín de Medicina Naval*, que se hizo eco de la noticia, con sus nombres³¹.

Por lo que respecta al Cuerpo de Sanidad de la Armada hemos encontrado a tres oficiales médicos que fueron destinados a las órdenes del embajador de España en Berlín y que, por lo tanto, debieron formar parte de las comisiones encargadas de supervisar los campos de prisioneros³². En 1917, lo fue el Médico 2º (Teniente) D. Miguel de Valderrama Miranda³³ y, al año siguiente, los Médicos 1º (Capitanes) D. José Vallo Salgado y D. Miguel Martínez Falero.

Por su parte, el Médico 1º D. Víctor Enríquez Gundín fue comisionado, en julio de 1917, para atender a la dotación del submarino alemán *UB-23*, internado en Ferrol hasta el final de la guerra³⁴.

³¹*Boletín de Medicina Naval*, nº 20. 15 de julio de 1919. Pág. 496. Los condecorados fueron: Capitanes de Fragata: D. José Núñez Quijano, D. Gonzalo de la Puerta y Díaz, D. Antonio Gascón Cubells, D. Lorenzo MiláBattle, D. Roberto López Barril, D. Álvaro de Churruca y Murga, D. Ramón Martínez del Moral, D. Lorenzo Moya y Matanza, D. Tomás Sostoa y Martínez, D. Eugenio Montero y D. Eduardo Vardía y Camba. Con ellos, los Tenientes de Navío D. Adolfo Leria y López, D. José González-Hontoria y D. Ángel Rico.

³² MARTÍNEZ CERRO, Manuel. *La Sanidad Naval en el siglo XX*. Editorial Edítmex. Madrid, 1995.

³³ D. Miguel de Valderrama falleció en Berna, en noviembre de 1918, cuando regresaba a España, a consecuencia de la epidemia de gripe que, en aquellos momentos, causaba estragos. Al sepelio, presidido por el Ministro de Negocios de España en esa ciudad, asistió todo el personal de la Legación y el Capitán Médico Barbero (del Cuerpo de Sanidad Militar) que le acompañaba. La noticia aparece en *Boletín de Medicina Naval*. Nº 5, 1 de diciembre de 1918. Pp. 129-130.

³⁴ MARTÍNEZ CERRO, Manuel. *Op. cit.* Pág. 24.

Sin embargo, el mayor reto al que tuvo que enfrentarse la Armada durante el conflicto fue la atención a los evacuados de la colonia del Camerún, una posesión alemana que limitaba al sur con la Guinea Española. Allí se encontraban destinados unos 1.000 soldados alemanes y algo más de 3.000 soldados indígenas. Tras la ofensiva franco-belga emprendida desde el Chad, soldados alemanes e indígenas, junto a funcionarios de la administración colonial y sus familias atravesaron la frontera. Su número varía según las fuentes consultadas. Bordejé³⁵ afirma que fueron 5.621 oficiales y soldados, acompañados por 11.850 civiles, mientras que el médico de la Armada D. Luis Figueras Ballester³⁶, testigo presencial de los hechos, los reduce a 12.000 personas³⁷.

Inicialmente, los refugiados acamparon en las playas del territorio continental de Guinea, desde donde fueron llevados muy pronto a la isla de Fernando Poo, cuya población se vio duplicada con los recién llegados. Hubo que construir alojamientos improvisados, tarea en la que colaboraron los soldados, pero el estado en el que se encontraban y la falta de alimentos provocaron la aparición de una epidemia de disentería. Se decidió entonces trasladar a la península a todos los europeos, quedando solamente 100 en la isla. Según Jesús Perea³⁸, fueron 900 los alemanes que llegaron a Cádiz el 4 de mayo de 1916, siendo internados en Aranjuez, Pamplona, Alcalá de Henares y Zaragoza.

³⁵ BORDEJÉ MORENCOS, Federico Fernando. *Op. cit.* Muy similar es la cifra que señala CERVERA PERY, José. *La Marina española en Guinea Ecuatorial*. Santa Isabel-Madrid, 1968. Para este autor fueron unas 17.000 personas las que atravesaron la frontera.

³⁶ FIGUERAS BALLESTER, Luis. “La internación alemana en Fernando Poo desde el punto de vista sanitario”. *Revista General de Marina*, 1918/11; 1919/01; 1919/02; 1919/04 y 1919/09.

³⁷ Esta discrepancia pueda deberse al hecho de que la cifra de Ballester haga referencia a los que quedaron en Guinea, tras la rápida evacuación de los europeos.

³⁸ PEREA RUIZ, Jesús. “Guerra submarina en España (1914-1918). *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie V, Historia Contemporánea*. Tomo 16. 2004. Pp. 193-229.

Mientras tanto, las acertadas medidas adoptadas por el gobernador general de la colonia, contribuyeron a superar la crisis planteada en Guinea, donde se levantaron nuevos edificios y un gran hospital de indígenas. En esta tarea colaboró de manera decisiva la Armada que envió a varios médicos para prestar atención sanitaria y realizar varias campañas de vacunación³⁹. Uno de ellos, el Dr. Figueras Ballester señalaba en una serie de artículos publicados en la *Revista General de Marina* “la internación alemana en Fernando Poopuede ser considerada como modelo de actuaciones”.

Esta actuación tuvo imprevistas consecuencias, a raíz de que el Káiser decidiera enviar un mensaje personal de agradecimiento al rey de España, por medio del *U-35* que entró en el puerto de Cartagena, donde fue reaprovisionado, lo que puso en una situación muy delicada al gobierno español, ante la protesta de los embajadores de Francia y el Reino Unido, por lo que, a partir de ese momento no se admitieron nuevas visitas a los puertos españoles.

La actuación personal del rey Alfonso XIII

La actuación personal del rey Alfonso XIII, a lo largo de todo el conflicto, fue especialmente significativa y ha merecido la atención de diversos autores. Especial interésreviste el artículo publicado por el Prof. D. Enrique González Fernández en la revista *Mar Océana*⁴⁰, donde realiza una acertada síntesis del esfuerzo del monarca para de aliviar los sufrimientos de muchas personas.

Al inicio de la guerra, el monarca era un joven de 28 años, amigo de todos los monarcas europeos, que se enfrentaba al dilema personal planteado en

³⁹ Junto al citado Médico 1º D. Luis Figueras Ballester, fueron destinados a este cometido los médicos del Cuerpo de Sanidad de la Armada D. Rufo Sanz e Iriondo, que sería sustituido más tarde por D. Enrique Enciso Gallurt; D. Rodrigo Suárez Zamora que llegaría a ejercer la dirección del hospital de indígenas; D. Horacio Olivares Bel; D. Plácido Huertas Naves y D. Luis Mena Burgos, junto con varios practicantes.

⁴⁰ GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ, Enrique. “La obra humanitaria del Rey Alfonso XIII durante la Primera Guerra Mundial”. *Mar Océana*, nº 2. 1995. Pp. 283-296.

su propia familia por el hecho de que su madre, la reina María Cristina, era austriaca y hermana del archiduque Federico, generalísimo del Ejército de Austria-Hungría, mientras que su esposa, la reina Victoria Eugenia, nacida en Gran Bretaña, tenía a dos de sus hermanos desempeñando altos cometidos en los ejércitos aliados. A pesar de ello, el rey supo mantener la neutralidad española durante todo el conflicto, incluso en los momentos más delicados.

Por otro lado, su compromiso personal con los afectados llegó a alcanzar una dimensión extraordinaria. El desencadenante fue una carta, recibida en palacio, de una sencilla lavandera francesa en la que pedía su intervención para conocer el paradero de su marido, un soldado desaparecido en la batalla de Charleroi el 28 de agosto de 1914. Alfonso XIII puso en marcha todas sus influencias hasta lograr dar con el paradero del soldado, prisionero en Alemania. De esta gestión se hicieron eco, inmediatamente, muchos medios de comunicación europeos que dedicaron grandes elogios al comportamiento del joven monarca.

Como consecuencia de ello, comenzaron a llegar peticiones similares a Madrid y, entonces, el rey decidió crear una oficina en el Palacio Real para atenderlas. Inicialmente, en ella trabajaba únicamente el monarca y su secretario particular D. Emilio María de Torres, pero ante el aluvión de cartas recibidas fue preciso aumentar el personal que llegó a estar integrado por tres diplomáticos y cuarenta empleados que se hicieron cargo de la 10 secciones⁴¹ en las que fue estructurada la oficina, financiada con los fondos privados del propio rey⁴².

⁴¹ Estas Secciones eran: Servicio de desaparecidos; Servicio de información y correspondencia en territorios ocupados; Servicio de prisioneros; Servicio de repatriaciones de militares graves y enfermos; Servicio de repatriaciones de población civil; Servicio de internamiento en Suiza; Indultos; Conmutaciones de pena; Remesa de fondos a individuos o familiar que viven en territorios ocupados y que se hallan incomunicadas hace tiempo con sus familiares; e Informes relativos a las visitas de inspección realizadas por los delegados afectos a la Embajada de Su Majestad en Berlín, Viena y Roma.

⁴² Llegó a gastar en esta tarea más de dos millones de pesetas de la época.

La labor desarrollada por el rey de España fue ingente, pues todos los días dedicaba varias horas a atender los problemas planteados, escribiendo de su propia mano muchos de los comunicados remitidos a diferentes países, contribuyendo de manera decisiva a aliviar la suerte de muchas personas de todo origen y condición.

Según algunas fuentes⁴³, la acción humanitaria de esta oficina facilitó ayuda a 122.000 prisioneros franceses y belgas, 7.950 ingleses, 6.350 italianos, 400 portugueses, 350 americanos y 250 rusos. Por otra parte, logró repatriar a 21.000 prisioneros enfermos y a unos 70.000 civiles.

Entre las personas que se beneficiaron de sus gestiones figuran el gran historiador belga Henry Pirenne y el profesor de la Universidad de Gante Paul Fredericq, detenidos en Alemania, por quienes, a petición del rey Alberto I, abogó ante Guillermo II, logrando que fueran enviados a Suiza. También logró la liberación del actor y cantante francés Maurice Chevalier, que había sido movilizado, resultando herido en las primeras semanas, siendo enviado cautivo a Alemania; la del bailarín Vaslav Nijinski, detenido en Hungría; o el caso especial de Arthur Rubinstein a quien Alfonso XIII le facilitó un pasaporte español en 1916, para que pudiera viajar libremente durante el transcurso de la guerra.

La simpatía que despertaron sus gestiones fue enorme, así como el eco que tuvieron en los medios de comunicación. No es de extrañar, por lo tanto, que en 1917 el jurista y senador vitalicio del reino D. Francisco Lastres y Juiz presentara su candidatura al Premio Nobel de la Paz que, finalmente, recayó en el Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja. Volvió a ser propuesto, de nuevo, en 1933. En esta ocasión la candidatura era suscrita por varios miembros del Instituto de Derecho Internacional, cuando el monarca vivía ya en el exilio, aunque tampoco tuvo éxito.

⁴³ REYES, Luis. “24 de octubre de 1914. Alfonso XIII crea la Oficina Pro Cautivos, que ayudaría a más de 200.000 prisioneros en la Primera Guerra Mundial”. *Tiempo*, 29 de octubre de 2010.

Anteriormente, 9.000 ayuntamiento españoles habían pedido la concesión de la Gran Cruz de Beneficencia, a lo que se negó el rey, afirmando que “No soy yo quien debe lucir esta cruz, sino España”, proponiendo que se le impusiera a la bandera del regimiento de Cazadores a caballo “Alfonso XIII”⁴⁴.

No podemos dejar de recordar la actuación de la reina Victoria Eugenia al frente de la Cruz Roja Española durante aquellos años. Fueron numerosas las cuestaciones organizadas para recaudar fondos y, sobre todo, tuvo una decidida participación en la renovación de esta institución, a la luz de las enseñanzas derivadas del conflicto, al ser consciente del papel que podía desarrollar en situaciones semejantes.

La Comisión de Ayuda a Bélgica

Tras la ocupación alemana de Bélgica se produjo una grave situación sanitaria, agravada por el bloqueo naval inglés. Para paliarla se constituyó una comisión internacional con el nombre de *Commission for Relief in Belgium* (CRB), la mayoría de cuyos miembros fueron norteamericanos y cuyo presidente fue Herbert Hoover que, posteriormente, llegaría a ser Presidente de los Estados Unidos de América.

Inicialmente, trató de resolver el problema de los norteamericanos que habían quedado bloqueados en Bélgica pero, posteriormente, organizó numerosos envíos de alimentos que eran distribuidos por la Cruz Roja Belga. Parte de esos alimentos llegaron también al norte de Francia.

Para ello, se fletaron más de 100 barcos que contaban con el salvoconducto de las autoridades británicas y alemanas. Iban identificados con grandes pancartas en sus costados en las que se podía leer “Relief for Belgium”⁴⁵ y llegaron a transportar 5,7 millones de toneladas de alimentos, lo que contribuyó de manera decisiva a aliviar la situación de muchas personas.

⁴⁴ REYES, Luis. *Op. cit.*

⁴⁵ A pesar de ello, algunos fueron atacados y hundidos por submarinos alemanes.

La Comisión constituyó un caso peculiar dentro del Derecho Internacional ya que, en realidad, se trataba de un organismo privado que, sin embargo, dispuso de bandera propia, suscribió acuerdos con las partes beligerantes y sus buques disfrutaron de privilegios que no se concedieron a otros pabellones.

El problema se suscitó cuando Estados Unidos entró en la guerra. Inmediatamente, los alemanes obligaron a la retirada de los representantes de esta nacionalidad, lo que puso en peligro el esfuerzo realizado hasta entonces.

El embajador español en París, siguiendo las instrucciones de nuestro gobierno ofreció la posibilidad de que España se hiciera cargo de la misma⁴⁶. Al deseo de Alfonso XIII se sumó también la reina Guillermina de los Países Bajos y, tras algunas reticencias se tomó el acuerdo de denominarlo *Comité Hispano-Néerlandais pour la Protection du ravitaillement de la Belgique et du Nord de la France*⁴⁷, quedando bajo el patrocinio honorífico de los reyes de España y Holanda⁴⁸.

⁴⁶Desde su creación estuvo bajo el patrocinio de Estados Unidos, España y los Países Bajos, como estados neutrales, aunque la labor principal corrió a cargo de los Estados Unidos.

⁴⁷ GAY, George I. *Public Relations of the Commission for Relief in Belgium*. Stanford University Press. 1929. 2 volúmenes que contienen amplia información de la historia de la comisión, con numerosa documentación.

⁴⁸Para dirigirlo se nombraron dos presidentes, uno español y otro holandés, y también se designaron representantes de ambos países en Londres, donde tenía su sede la comisión. Como Presidente en Bruselas, fue elegido el diplomático D. Pedro Saura y del Pan, mientras que, como director en Londres, fue designado D. José Eduardo Roura y Vilaret

BG (Ret) César Augusto Nicodemus de Souza (Brazil)

Brazil in World War I

Brazil's participation in World War I is little-known and, in the overall scope of the conflict, had little consequence. However, it happened during a delicate moment in the country's history, when Brazil was trying to become a more active player in world affairs. Therefore, the episode achieved domestic political relevance. More importantly, Brazil's participation in the war was followed by noticeable economic consequences and significant military professionalization.

Brazil's situation on the eve of the conflict was not ideal. Europe shifted its latex acquisition from Brazil to Malaysia. Therefore, the economic boom sustained by the rubber trade, which had partially financed modernization programs for the Navy and Army, was terminated in 1910. By then, the Navy had received two battleships, two cruisers and 10 destroyers, all state the art; and the Army had bought hundreds of machine guns, 212 canons of various calibers, as well as 400,000 Mauser rifles between 1905 and 1910. By 1910, the Brazilian Armed Forces owned a variety of modern equipment, but lacked the means to operate them effectively.

At the time of the conflict, Brazil's social and economic situation was delicate. The national economy was still heavily dependent on coffee exports, which from 1900 to 1910 represented 53% of Brazil's exports, with rubber being responsible for 26% of Brazil's income. For countries at war, coffee was classified as a luxury and not a necessity. Therefore, customs revenues, which accounted for most of the Brazilian government's resources, decreased during the conflict. The immediate blockade imposed by Europe's Central Powers and, later, by the ban on coffee imports by England in 1917, worsened Brazil's economic situation.

Economic problems were also linked to social issues. In order to get more labor for Brazil's agricultural crops, the country implemented policies encouraging immigration. From 1904 to 1913, more than a million immigrants had entered the country – 4% of Brazil's total population of 25 million. This number is meaningful because this immigrant population came to join 200,000 Italians, 56,000 Germans and Austrians, and 42,000 Turk immigrants already residing in Brazil. Together, they represented the most important ethnic groups involved in the conflict. Additionally, these immigrants were concentrated in a restricted region comprised of São Paulo State and, especially, the country's three most Southern States, where these recent immigrants represented about 10% of the total population.

These immigrants did not have a national identity linking them to their new country, and perceived themselves to be Europeans rather than Brazilians. Immigrants spoke their native language in many enclaves, which included printed publications such as local newspapers. Finally, Brazilian cities started to experience the economic crisis caused by the war, which included increased labor issues in manufacturing operations caused by poor working conditions, low wages and high inflation. These factors encouraged anarchists and socialists to take action amongst the workers, leading to the emergence of a labor movement that opposed the European war.

On 1 May 1916, crowds carried posters during a Labor Day celebration in Rio de Janeiro, displaying signs such as "Long live the International [Socialist]," "Down with War," and "We want peace!"

In order to prevent further socio-economic problems, the then President Hermes da Fonseca opted to maintain strict neutrality during the conflict. Nevertheless, Brazil was the only South American country to present a formal protest against the invasion of Belgium by the Germans.

In the process of declaring Brazil's neutrality, the President issued a decree banning the docking of international warships in Brazilian harbors and the

recruitment of personnel to fight abroad. The government also confiscated the armament of corsair ships; and banned the export of war materials and the installation of support stations to nations involved in the war, which including radiotelegraphic stations, among others. Subsequent decrees detailed further measures of neutrality. Following this policy, 45 Central Power merchant ships were interned in Brazil, along with their 1,200 crew members. That included a German gunboat, the SMS *Eber*, which had previously transferred naval officers, ammunition and armaments to the German liner, turned Auxiliary Cruiser, *Cap Trafalgar* at the Island of Trindade.

But the foreign agents continued to operate, especially within immigrant communities, through actions such as the sales of war bonds and the clandestine recruitment of small groups, especially among the Italians “*oriundi*”. The Brazilian Navy simply did not have enough vessels to patrol Brazil’s vast coastline, which extended for almost 8,000 kilometers.

There are plenty of records about the action of surface raiders along Brazil’s coast, showing that Brazil’s patrol missions and other measures were not all ineffective. The establishment of a small Brazilian garrison in the Island of Trindade in 1916, equipped with radio facilities, prevented further incidents such the actions previously taken by the SMS *Eber*. When the German raider SMS *Wolf*, according to the memoirs of her commanding officer, noticed radio traffic coming from Trindade, she stopped using the island as a coal supply base.

It was difficult for Brazil to sell its coffee, because nations at war immediately seized cargo seen in route to an enemy port. However, due to the British naval superiority it was impossible for the Germans to fully enforce their blockades. Therefore, Brazilian ships continued to sail fully illuminated, flying the Brazilian flag and displaying the name “BRAZIL” brightly painted on their hulls, in order to proceed to Allied ports.

Only one Brazilian merchant ship, the *Rio Branco*, was sunk by a German submarine during the early years of the war, on 3 May 1916. However,

this vessel was at the time being operated by the British. Therefore, despite the national commotion, this action could not be regarded as an illegal attack by the Germans.

The situation changed on 1 February 1917. At this stage of the war, German Grand Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, Secretary of State of the German Imperial Navy, authorized its submarines to sink any ship entering areas of naval blockade in an attempt to choke the British war effort. This action neglected legal formalities. For Brazilians, the impact of this news was magnified by media reports, a few days later, stating that a clandestine German radio station had been discovered in Niteroi across the bay from Rio de Janeiro, the nation's capital.

Brazilian Navy vessels were forward deployed to the ports of Santos, Salvador, Recife, Natal and Belem, and were ready to intervene at the first threat against Brazil's neutrality. This redeployment during the first half of 1917 demanded an enormous effort from the Brazilian Navy's resources. The ships of the so-called *Old Fleet*, including armed merchant ships, were obsolete, slow and worn out. Some of the newest ships, acquired during the naval program of 1908, had already gone through their first major hull and engine repairs. Such repairs demanded herculean efforts from the Navy Arsenal in Rio and from private shipyards to make a relevant number of units seaworthy.

The German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arthur Zimmermann, notified his Brazilian counterpart, Foreign Minister Lauro Müller, about the extent of the blockade imposed by his Government:

“The Imperial [German] Government could not assume the responsibility before its own conscience, before the German people, and before History, of not making use of all means necessary to expedite the end of the war. ... [The Imperial Government] sees itself forced, therefore, to terminate the restrictions maintained until now for the employment of naval resources for the fight at sea...”

On the same day of the receipt of the above document, the Brazilian Ambassador to Germany replied stating that the terms of the proclamation were unacceptable because the submarine blockade could not be regarded as legal. The Brazilian protest concluded:

“The Brazilian Government, notwithstanding its honest and firm desire to avoid disagreements with friendly Nations now at war, has the duty to protest against this blockade. Consequently, the Brazilian Government holds the German Government responsible for all losses that may be incurred to our citizens, goods and Brazilian vessels ... ”.

The Brazilian protest fell upon deaf ears. On 5 April 1917, the merchant vessel *Paraná*, one of the largest ships of Brazil’s merchant fleet (4,466 tons), loaded with coffee, was torpedoed 10 miles off Cape Barfleur in France, although it was sailing fully illuminated, it ostensibly flew the Brazilian flag, and had the word "Brazil" painted on the hull. Three Brazilians were killed. Adding to this offense, the German submarine emerged, shot five canon rounds against the survivors, and did not provide any aid to them.

Brazil broke diplomatic relations with Germany on 11 April 1917, under the argument that the German blockade was illegal from the point of view of international law and, therefore, it was not accepted by Brazil. Additionally, Brazil considered the sinking of *Paraná* to be inhumane. In addition to other diplomatic measures, the Brazilian Government took legal possession of German merchant ships docked in Brazil without, however, confiscating them.

While Brazil’s neutrality was maintained, this decision was not well received by many Brazilians. The Brazilian people went to the streets, calling for a stronger reaction from the Government. Nothing, but the entry into the war, would satisfy the nation.

The German submarine campaign against maritime trade continued – and the consequences for Brazil arrived quickly. On 20 May 1917, another Brazilian ship, the vessel *Tijucas*, was sunk off the coast of Brest; followed six days later

by the merchant ship *Lapa*, which was first inspected and then sunk by three canon shots by a German submarine off the coast of Cape Trafalgar.

Brazil's turn came in October 1917. The successive sinking of Brazilian ships due to Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare, in addition to Brazil's serious concern that a German victory could cost Brazil the loss of its Southern territories which were inhabited by a significant number of German immigrants, proved to be more than sufficient to make Brazil enter the war. The Brazilian elites had already understood the danger; and the rest of the country joined their position due to the sinking of Brazilian ships.

Brazil had a population of 25 million, had many military traditions and economic resources, and a century of independence and diplomatic life. A Brazilian declaration of war should acquire even more relevance because it would come during a time that was particularly difficult for the Allies. An expeditionary corps to support the Allies should, therefore, be the immediate response of Brazil's entry into the war, and also the instrument of Brazil's policy was defined by two specific goals: (1) survival, by helping the Allied victory over its opponents who, according to Brazil's perception at the time, could eventually claim a portion of Brazil's Southern territories; and (2) enhanced international status in the new world order which the victors would create after the war.

A governmental confidential study recommended the deployment of a major expeditionary force, utilizing any available resources, including enemy ships already seized in ports and Brazilian waters, to land Brazilian troops in French soil. In France, Brazilian troops would be trained and equipped by the French, all financed by American bank loans.

Due to German attacks, Brazilian President Wenceslau Braz terminated Brazil's neutrality towards the United States (U.S.), allowing the U.S. to use Brazilian ports and providing other minor benefits to U.S. warships. The U.S. immediately took advantage of Brazil's new status, and in mid-June 1917 sent a

fleet of four battleships to a goodwill visit to Brazil. President Braz also authorized the U.S. to use seized German ships that were docked in Brazil. Finally, the benefits given to the U.S. were extended to France, England, Japan and Portugal.

At the time, rumors circulated about the Destroyer *Maranhão*'s discovery of a German submarine base operating in Combari, near the city of Santos; and about fire caused by arson which destroyed the newspaper "O Paiz," allegedly by a German national named Hubner, considered to be an act of sabotage similar to the ones carried out in the U.S. at the time. Under the pretext of giving greater dynamism to the Government, the Foreign Minister Lauro Müller, considered "pro-Germany" by many, was replaced by Epiácio Pessoa.

The situation remained the same. The German submarine campaign continued, and Brazil had to maintain its coffee export trade. Therefore, new clashes were inevitable. The German ships seized in Brazil were part of the Allied "blacklist", which allowed their seizure by the Allies. However, Brazil made a deal with France and leased 30 of them, equipped with Brazilian crews, and used another 15 ships, which were removed from the "blacklist". The ones which were not too damaged by sabotage by their own German crews, later interned in prison camps, were immediately used in foreign trade routes. One of these ships, the vessel *Macau*, formerly known as *Palatia*, was stopped by a German submarine on 18 October, while transporting coffee, 200 miles off Cape Finesterra. The ship's Captain and his assistant were taken aboard the submarine with the freighter's papers. They were taken prisoners, and never seen again. The ship was then torpedoed.

The conflict with Germany existed in fact, and all that was left for the Brazilian Government was to recognize the existence of a "State of War." It is relevant to mention that, until this date, the Republic of Brazil had never declared war on any country. Therefore, President Braz sent a message to Congress on 25 October stating that "...*there is no way to misread the situation or to fail to*

observe the State of War that is imposed on us by Germany". The next day, Congress approved the decree 3,361, which "*recognized and declared the State of War initiated by the German Empire against Brazil.*"

The Destroyers *Piauí* and *Mato Grosso* were sent to the State of Bahia to capture the Gunboat *SMS Eber*, but the German crew managed to burn the ship before being taken prisoners. In addition, as one of the first measures to strengthen a sense of Brazilian nationality, the Brazilian newspapers printed in the German language were banned. But these acts failed to meet the interests of the population and the politicians, who wanted Brazil's more active involvement in the war as a form of revenge, as well as to divert attention from internal problems. Therefore, a Naval Division for War Operations ("**Divisão Naval em Operações de Guerra**" - **D.N.O.G.**) was created; and a "State of Siege" was declared in Brazil's Southern states, home to numerous foreign immigrants, as well as in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo due to civil unrest caused by factory workers.

The Brazilian initiative to create a Naval Division was presented during the Paris Conference in late November 1917, which included the Brazilian offer to operate two light Cruisers (*Bahia* and *Rio Grande do Sul*) and four Destroyers in the Dakar-São Vicente-Gibraltar theater. Once the offer was accepted by the Allies, the DNOG was established on 30 January 1918, consisting of the above Cruisers and the Destroyers *Piauí*, *Rio Grande do Norte*, *Paraíba* and *Santa Catarina*, under the command of Rear Admiral Pedro Max Fernando Frontin. Admiral Frontin requested the transfer of a vessel to serve as Tender, and received the vessel *Belmonte* (formally known as *Valesia*), which was equipped to serve as an Auxiliary Cruiser. Finally, the Towboat *Laurindo Pitta* completed the DNOG, which now had a total of 1,502 men.

From the start, the creation of the Brazilian fleet had to overcome a series of setbacks. The Brazilian ships, launched in 1910, were not equipped for anti-submarine warfare. They had no hydrophones for underwater vessel detection,

and had no equipment to launch depth charges. In addition, the ships were powered by steam engines burning coal, which required a large number of stokers (481!) and the frequent refueling of coal, made more complicated due to the small size of the Brazilian ships. The Destroyers, for example, carried only 600 tons and had a very limited range, which required constant shipments of coal for refueling, and was a very complicated activity to be performed in high seas. Finally, the war itself prevented the resupply of spare parts. For example, whenever the Cruisers' boilers needed repairs, that repairs could not be performed in Brazil.

It should be noted that the Brazilian offer to the Allied war effort was not only symbolic, because the Allies urgently needed ships and crews for the escort service of their convoys. For example, 22 convoys, 19 of them slow and 3 fast, were organized between Rio de Janeiro and England between 1917 and 1918, and required many escort ships. Considering this was a secondary front, the required naval resources were significant.

Despite the odds, DNOG proceeded to the theater of operations on 16 July 1918. The most remarkable incident during the trip was a torpedo attack against the Tender *Belmonte* near Dakar, Senegal, which fortunately was not successful. The German submarine was attacked by artillery fire and depth charges, but its possible sinking was not confirmed at the time. Later, the British Admiralty reported on the disappearance of a German U-boat which operated in the route used by DNOG at the time.

In Dakar, where the Division arrived on 26 August 1918 after successive stops in route, the ships received orders to operate in the Cape Verde area, which was, until then, only patrolled, inappropriately, by two British Gunboats. But major problems were on their way. DNOG personnel contracted the Spanish Flu virus in Freetown, Sierra Leone, resulting in significant casualties. By the end of its mission, DNOG would account for 110 dead and 140 incapacitated by the disease, which represented 17% of its total manpower. The DNOG's

effectiveness was further reduced by technical problems, which put two Cruisers and one of the Destroyers out of commission.

Admiral Frontin was informed to be careful, because the Battleship *Britannia*, assigned to escort the Brazilian fleet, had been sunk by a submarine on its way to the rendezvous area and there was a warning about the presence of others submarines in the area. Therefore, some mistakes were made during this route, perhaps due to the higher state of alert in which the Brazilian fleet proceeded. The most cited incident was an artillery attack initiated by the Brazilian Destroyer *Piauí* against the U.S. Navy Submarine Hunter Ship 190, which had been mistaken for a German Submarine due to its small dimensions. Fortunately, the attack did not cause any damage because the 190 was soon identified.

The DNOG arrived in Gibraltar on 10 November 1918, on the eve of the Armistice, which concluded its mission. During its short deployment, the DNOG's performance did not leave any significant battle records for Brazil's Naval History. However, its short existence was significant for triggering the modernization of the Brazilian Navy.

Apart from the DNOG's participation in World War I, Brazil also sent a Military Medical Mission to France. The Medical Mission consisted of 131 Brazilians, and departed Rio de Janeiro on 16 August 1918 towards Europe aboard a French transport ship. The expedition was headed by Dr. Nabuco de Gouveia, a famous surgeon commissioned Army Medical Colonel. The Medical Mission also incorporated a Brazilian Army Medical Corps detachment, consisting of 5 representatives, a Brazilian Navy detachment consisting of 6 medical officers, and an additional detachment consisting of 31 Army soldiers.

Once in Paris, the Brazilian Medical Mission reported to the French High Command, which split the Mission into smaller units and distributed them through the French provinces. The Brazilian medical personnel immediately initiated actions to prevent the spread of the Spanish Flu epidemics, which was

devastating the civilian population, weakening the front line, and harming the activities of the rear. While some units were scattered throughout the countryside and worked on restoring public health, others worked with the Brazilian Head of Mission setting up the Brazilian Hospital, housed in a building formerly occupied by a Jesuit convent which used to be located at *Rue Vaugirard*.

In the words of French Health Inspector General Fevrier, the Brazilian Hospital was classified as "*First Class*" in its ability to receive wounded personnel, and was considered to be equivalent to the American Hospital in Neuilly. The Brazilian Hospital was soon selected to receive cases considered to be *major injuries* after General Roger, Head of the French Medical Service, made an unannounced visit to the hospital at 6 AM and declared that he "did not find a hospital so well organized."

All medical personnel served with distinction. The Brazilian Military Medical Mission received heartfelt compliments from France's Ministry of Public Health, and the "*Reconnaissance Française*" commendation.

Some Brazilian officers actively participated in the conflict and learned the latest techniques being developed at the time, including aviation techniques learned by eight Brazilian pilots who fought embedded with the British Royal Air Force (RAF) - seven from the Army and one from the Navy - as well as land combat techniques. One Brazilian officer participated in the Battle of Jutland, and others fought on the Western front. One of them, Lieutenant Carlos de Andrade Neves, died victim of disease while serving with the French 8th Regiment of Field Artillery in 1918.

Among the Brazilian officers who fought with the French Army, the most cited was Lieutenant José Pessoa Cavalcânti de Albuquerque, who commanded French Cavalry squadrons in three different Regiments. In at least one occasion, he commanded a small unit of the French 504th Regiment of Dragoons, equipped with Renault FT-17 tanks. The important role these tanks played during the conflict, as well as the experience Brazilians acquired with

these vehicles, triggered the Brazilian Army to acquire its first tanks. The Brazilian Army acquired a Tank Company consisting of 12 Renault FT-17, modified to include improvements requested by Lieutenant José Pessoa Cavalcânti himself, who also became its first commanding officer.

The war, in addition to a new appreciation for the realities of a global conflict, helped the implementation of conscription in Brazil. This was a national campaign that was under development for several years. The old professional armies, consisting of a small numbers of combatants, no longer had a place in the new world order of total war involving much larger contingents. Therefore, Brazil was forced to adopt conscription in 1917. This was a significant change, because the Brazilian Army is made of a large number of conscripts to this day, who receive basic training and form the reserves which can be mobilized in the event of war.

The victors also provided support to the Brazilian Armed Forces by sending representatives and military equipment to Brazil. The French, for example, provided Brazil with thirty airplanes, which served as the basis of Brazil's first military Aviation Corps. Later, Brazil contracted a French Military Mission to train Brazil's officer corps. This decision would have profound consequences, since two generations of military officers were later trained by the French Army between 1921 and 1934.

From the peace process standpoint, Brazil was present at the Versailles Conference, headed by future Brazilian President Epitácio Pessoa, who required no more than reparation for the Brazilian coffee seized in German ports at the time of the war declaration, and reimbursement for the sale of German ships seized in Brazil. Brazil was also one of the League of Nations' founding countries. Brazilian diplomats had high hopes for this organization. However, the United States' decision not to participate in the League of Nations, followed by the organization's weak results, triggered Brazil to leave the organization a few years later.

In conclusion, even though the Brazilian participation in the conflict was limited and of short duration, the First World War left profound and lasting military, social, and economic consequences for Brazil.

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«KEY TO THE PACIFIC» NO MORE.

THE 1914 FALKLANDS BATTLE

AND THE STRATEGIC ROLE OF THE ISLANDS

The struggle for sovereignty over the Falkland Islands goes beyond the Contemporary Age. It has its roots in the Age of Discovery and still remains unsolved today. Actors are partially changed, but claims and frictions are unchanged within the realm of international relations. Recently, Gianluca Pastori has written that the Falklands problem is traditionally a critical point of the international system and a stumbling block whose importance has grown during the decades. The dispute divides since 1833 the United Kingdom and Argentina. Academically the controversy has mostly been analysed from a legal perspective. However as the Italian jurist Giovanni Battaglini has established «the controversy is just about politics». Battaglini wrote this about the 1982 war, but it is a consideration that may well be true for each historical phase of the dispute. The purpose of this paper is to examine the strategic naval relevance of the Islands in history with a particular focus on their nineteenth-century rise and on their twentieth-century fall as choke point between the Atlantic and the Pacific. The First World War was a key moment in the Falklands strategic history.

The Falklands archipelago is formed by two main Islands, the East and the West Falkland. It is situated in the South Atlantic about 700 kilometres off the Argentinian coast of Patagonia and more than 12000 kilometres from Britain. We still do not know exactly who the first man to discover the Islands was. Apart from British and Argentinian claims, we do not have any reliable data that allow us to attribute unquestionably the discovery to one country or to another. But we know that the first colonial settlement was French. It was in 1764 when, after

more than one year following the peace of the Seven Years' War, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville took possession of the eastern Falkland on behalf of the French Crown for strategic naval reasons. As the historian Barry Gough wrote, «the likelihood of a return to a global warfare [was] exceedingly high. [From the French perspective] By occupying unsettled territories [such as the Falklands] a gain could be made on British ambitions and provide a counterweight to the probable enemy's anchors of empire. In these ways, too, new bases would take the place of old ones lost» with the Treaty of Paris. In the context of a eighteenth-century French-British rivalry with global implications, the British government on behalf of King George III – as a coeval source highlighted – «jealous of the enterprises of France, as well as of its own rights of prior discovery in these distant regions, sent out Captain [John] Byron, to explore and occupy the most westerly island». After all, Lord Egmont, the then-First Lord of the Admiralty, was convinced that the archipelago could become «Undoubtedly the key to the whole Pacifick Ocean».

During and immediately after the Napoleonic Wars, the Islands became *res nullius*. The exceptions were the visits of North American whalers. For both the US and British-Canadian sailors the waters around the Falklands were particularly rich of whale products, a source of considerable profit at that time. This caused London and Washington to consider whale hunting as an important interest, economically relevant to compete on the global stage. Above all the Islands, for their geography, provided a point of safe harbour for commercial vessels operating around Cape Horn and for those sailors who needed to round it. The southern passage was particularly important as choke point for merchant ships in route from the Eastern coast of the United States to Asian markets, especially China. One of the main US interests between the 1820s and 1830s was indeed to exploit those markets. In this period, not by chance, the volume of US trade with China grew and exceeded the commercial interchange between China and Britain. From a maritime perspective, the utility of the Falklands as a place

of refuge, repair, recreation, rest and replenishment was evident. Soon, also the strategic naval factor gradually returned to be relevant. This was particularly true for Britain because of her foreign policy orientation in which prosperity and security were two sides of the same coin.

Between 1820 and 1831 the Argentinians created their first settlement at the Falklands. They appointed a Governor and even introduced a specific currency. In London these events captured the attention of the government. In 1829 the Foreign Office sent a formal protest to Argentina affirming that Buenos Aires had «assumed authority incompatible with His Britannick Majesty's rights of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands». However, the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, did not give order to proceed further. The Falklands issue became a topic of hot debate in Whitehall. On one hand the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, and even the Home Office argued the economic and strategic naval importance of the archipelago as the “Gibraltar of the South” and suggested to seize the Islands and replace the Argentinians. On the other hand, the Duke of Wellington's sceptic line won the argument on the basis that British priority was to gain markets in favour of national profit than to aim at territorial conquests. Wellington added also that «It is not clear to me that we have ever possessed the sovereignty of all these Islands [...] I am anxious to avoid exciting the attention and jealousy of other powers by extending our possessions [... However] his Majesty has claims upon the Falkland Islands». The following year, Charles Grey, the second Earl Grey, came to power as Prime Minister. The so-called «Empire Project» started and London proceeded to expand systematically its network of naval bases. The Falklands became a shared strategic priority in Whitehall. In 1832 HMS *Clio* sailed from British coasts towards the South Atlantic under the command of Captain John Onslow. The following year Onslow, almost unnoticed, took possession of the Falklands in the name of the British Crown.

What happened to the Argentinian settlement in the meantime? Almost disappeared. The United States had intervened at the Falklands to pave the way, ironically, to the British Empire despite the fresh proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine. The exclusive economic zone unilaterally announced in 1829 by Buenos Aires around the archipelago undermined indeed the US interests. Washington required Argentina to comply with the principle of Freedom of the Seas. When the Argentinians did not satisfy the American demands, the Eagle visited the Islands. In December 1831 the Commander of the USS *Lexington*, Silas Duncan, solved the problem, in his own words, «with the force [...] for the protection of the Citizens and commerce of The United States engaged in the Fisheries in question». His raid was devastating. The Argentinian troops were quickly defeated. Duncan proclaimed the Islands free from any government. The Falklands returned to be *res nullius*.

When Onslow got ashore at the Falklands, London's strategic naval needs turned out to be even more compelling. Due to the progressive extension of British influence and faced with a possible war in the Western Hemisphere because of recurrent Latin-American crisis, the enlargement of the network of naval and maritime bases in the Atlantic got absolute priority. Many Atlantic Islands such as Ascension, Saint Helena, Gough and Tristan da Cunha were annexed. The Falkands became a fundamental dot on the map.

The archipelago remained under the direct control of the Admiralty until 1842, when London appointed the first Governor. The Falklands officially became a Crown Colony in 1845. The Argentinian public opinion reacted strongly to these events. In Buenos Aires inflammatory placards were posted all over the city reading such things as «Death to all English». The Argentinian Minister Plenipotentiary to Britain, Manuel Moreno, handed a first formal protest to the then-Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston. Buenos Aires sent further official protests to London in 1841, 1842 and 1849. In 1884 Argentina unsuccessfully demanded an international arbitration; subsequently other formal

protests were sent on an occasional basis. After the end of the Second World War – a crucial turning point for the British Empire – the Falklands issue was raised in international *fora* with more vigour by Argentinian diplomacy.

In 1945, however, the Falklands had already lost most of their strategic naval importance. Not so in 1914, when the Islands were the stage of an important battle between the Royal Navy and the *Kaiserliche Marine*. A battle where «None was a match,» according to John Keegan, «The victory of the Falklands [by the Royal Navy] terminated the high seas activity of the German navy [...] After the Falklands, indeed, the oceans belonged to the Allies». What happened then? The main difference between the German and the British fleets is well-known: the first one, even in her high efficiency, had to display her strength mostly in home waters; the second one had to be strong in many other theatres all around the world, including the South Atlantic. Before the outbreak of hostilities, the *Marine Kabinett* in Berlin had already issued a directive, which stated that «In the event of a war against Great Britain, ships abroad are to carry out ‘cruiser warfare’ unless otherwise ordered. [...] The areas of operations are the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. [...] The aim of cruiser warfare is to damage enemy trade; this is to be effected by engaging equal or inferior enemy forces. [...] The conduct of the naval war in home waters is to be assisted by holding down as many of the enemy’s forces as possible in foreign waters».

The Commander of the German naval squadron in Asian waters, Admiral Count Maximilian Graf von Spee, found himself in the open sea at the outbreak of the First World War. In his squadron he had no battlecruisers. Even though his strategic aim was to come back to home waters to strengthen German naval defence, his Admiralty gave him free hand to choose the direction. In secrecy, von Spee decided to make for the southern coasts of America. Meanwhile the British Admiralty, whose a vital interest was still to protect routes through the Drake Passage, suspecting German intentions ordered to his South American squadron to «search the Magellan Straits, being ready to return and cover the

River Plate, or according to information, search north as far as Valparaiso, break up the German trade and destroy the German cruisers». Admiral Cristopher Cradock, Commander of the British South American Station, got the order and collected his ships at the Falklands. As Charles Robert Crutwell wrote in his history of the First World War, Cradock's objective was to prevent «the enemy from slipping round the Horn and attacking the Argentine trade route, so vital for the war-services of the Entente». British ships set sail from the Falklands and circumnavigated Cape Horn. Cradock met von Spee at Coronel in the Pacific Ocean, nearby the Chilean coasts, on November 1st. Mainly thanks to his own tactical skills, von Spee won the battle. Two out of four British ships were sunk and more than 1600 British men including Cradock died. Germans suffered no casualties and their vessels were almost undamaged. That was the first defeat suffered by the Royal Navy in one century.

Von Spee decided to round Cape Horn. Meanwhile, in London, Admiral Baron John Fisher replaced Prince Louis of Battenberg as First Sea Lord. Fisher, promptly informed by the British Embassy in Uruguay about von Spee's intentions, sent two very efficient battle cruisers in the South Atlantic: the *Invincible* and the *Inflexible* at the orders of Vice Admiral Devoton Sturdee. The order was simple: search and destroy the German squadron. Von Spee did not move fast towards Europe and consumed much precious time in pure inactivity in Valparaiso; the British reinforcement, thus, approached. Only at the end of November the Germans resumed their voyage, hoping to inflict another defeat in the Atlantic to the Royal Navy and to British trade routes. Von Spee identified the Falkland Islands as a perfect symbolic target. The destruction of this strategic base, coaling-station and centre of communications would be an incredible blow for the British morale. Not so difficult, von Spee thought, if the archipelago, according to information collected by German embassies in South America, had been left undefended by London. On December 8th the Germans entered the Falklands waters but, with their surprise, they found Sturdee's squadron for

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recoiling. This time von Spee's ability could do nothing against the superiority of the British. The Germans fought with fury, as Cradock's men did at Coronel, but the German squadron was completely destroyed. Von Spee perished with his 2000 men and his ships were sunk (with exception of one, defeated by the British three months later in the Pacific). Sturdee suffered 6 casualties and his squadron was only lightly damaged. «The high seas», Crutwell wrote, «were again in the sovereign grasp of the British navy». According to Winston Churchill, the then-First Lord of Admiralty, «No German ships of war remained on any of the oceans of the world. The result [...] was far reaching and affected simultaneously our position in every part of the globe».

The 1914 Falklands battle represented the very last occasion when the importance of the archipelago within the British naval strategy as the "Key to the Pacific" was evident. Few days after the outbreak of the First World War, the Panama Canal was opened under US sovereignty. The Canal allowed American military and commercial ships to navigate between ports on both coasts and to Asia without having to round Cape Horn. In a climate of friendship, the use of the Canal was freely granted to London through a bilateral agreement. The Panama Canal reduced material costs and distance between the Atlantic and the Pacific. To the detriment of the Falklands, it became very soon the second most important choke point in the world after Suez. The first Governor of the Falklands, Richard Moody, had already said in the XIXth century that «The Falklands political importance derived from their geography», so it is self-evident the reason why during the XXth century London's interest for the archipelago decreased.

Actually in December 1939 the Falklands still played a role in the British victory against the Germans in the naval battle of the River Plate, the only surface engagement of the Second World War fought off the coasts of South America. The British force that engaged the German cruiser – for the irony of fate, named *Graf von Spee* – sailed away from the Falklands under the command

of Commodore Henry Harwood, who was responsible for protecting the South Atlantic sea lanes. However, compared to the 1914 battle, the archipelago was neither crucial in controlling transoceanic routes nor it had a symbolic value for the enemy, but it only served as a minor, though valuable, naval base for British logistics. Not to say that, at the outbreak of the Second World War, European powers, Britain included, had already lost their hegemony in the Western Hemisphere in favour of the United States with the Falklands further deprived of their political value. The battle of the River Plate turned out to be an episode in the whole British wartime naval strategy. In 1942 the then-Prime Minister Winston Churchill feared that the Islands would be invaded by Japan, but in the end this proved to be absolutely unrealistic. Hence it would be illogical to argue that during the Second World War the Falklands were still either the “Key to the Pacific” or the “Gibraltar of the South”.

Since 1945 Argentina started to claim the sovereignty over the Islands on a regular basis. After the events of 1833, the Falklands issue took deep roots in Argentinian national consciousness. In a post-war anti-imperialist atmosphere, the regime of Juan Domingo Peron developed an intense propaganda campaign which showed the Falklands as a part of the national territory. Peron was later widely imitated by his civilian and military successors. Meanwhile also the Argentinian geopolitical literature, mainly published by the *Argentine Institute of Strategic Studies and International Relations* and the geopolitical journal named *Estrategia*, escalated the strategic naval importance of the Islands. At the end of the 1960s, *Estrategia*, as the political scientist Klaus Dodds pointed out, «in complete contrast to British strategists» argued «that the ‘local’ and ‘global’ strategic value of the Falkland Islands was considerable». Locally, «Argentina needed to control the Falklands in order to protect its own harbours as well as reclaim its rightful possession». Globally, «the Falklands and the Drake’s Passage were important in the event of the closure of the Panama Canal, because shipping would then be diverted south». After the 1973 oil crisis, Argentine

literature added that Buenos Aires should recover the Falklands also because the South Atlantic could potentially become a new oil source like the Middle East.

London had followed the opposite path. The British stopped to consider vital the control of the Falklands in the context of an Empire entered its declining phase. Lord Greenhill, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between the 1960s and the 1970s, has recalled indeed that «there was a great need for economy in defence spending. The advice of the chiefs of staff, consistently, [...] was that these Islands were not defensible, and that we have got much more important things to do». The British cost-benefit analysis made by the Ministry of Defence showed that in economic terms a withdrawal from an imperial outpost inherited from the XIXth century, completely fallen into disuse in the Cold War strategic environment, was logical and reasonable. Yet, the colonial legacy bound the Foreign Office to reject the economic perspective alone, taking into consideration other factors, such as the kith and kinship, which linked London to the Falklanders. There were indeed four main elements of Britishness at the Falklands: first, sense of belonging to the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant community; second, direct descendants; third, English language; fourth, loyalty to the Crown. At the end of the 1960s, according to the then-Governor of the Falklands, Cosmo Haskard, «Our links, sentimental and economic, bind us firmly to England. Argentina, seen through Falkland eyes is unknown, foreign, aloof, disdainful, corrupt, feared, a place where taxation is high».

These words overlapped with a prominent interest for British diplomacy: the pursuit of prestige. As the Cabinet Committee on Colonial Policy stated in 1957, if the «protection were [...] withdrawn, the Falkland Islands would be in danger of occupation by Argentina, and the abandonment of a racially British population to such a fate would be discreditable and severely damaging to prestige». London paid attention to the Falklands essentially for the sake of international reputation. It is not a case that the British government was not

incline to show unequivocally its iron will to strengthen the kith and kinship links with the Islanders regardless of the costs. This was proved in 1981, when the Margaret Thatcher's government denied the Falklanders the right to the British citizenship through the British Nationality Act. Nevertheless in a volatile and unstable world where the credibility argument had genuine plausibility, above all for a declining Britain still determined to hold the status of Great Power, London did not find conceivable to abdicate its rights of sovereignty over the Falklands in favour of Argentina in sharp contrast with the Islanders' wishes, who already had sworn allegiance to the Crown and were perceived by the British public opinion as compatriots.

In the early 1980s the bilateral dialogue between Argentina and Great Britain, which began in 1966 and continued on and off over fifteen years, was at a stalemate because of mutual reluctance, intransigence and inability to reconcile the principles of self-determination of peoples and territorial integrity. In a Britain that was overwhelmed by a deep economic crisis, the defence of the Falklands became a topic of debate with a view to a new spending review. The military commitment, although modest in terms of quantity and quality, now proved to be too much expensive. Since the mid-1960s, the only naval force deployed at the Falklands was an icebreaker, HMS *Protector*, then replaced in 1968 by another icebreaker, HMS *Endurance*. In 1965 the British government added 30, then increased to 37 in 1976, Royal Marines shoulder-to-shoulder to 40 volunteers of the Falkland Islands Defence Force. A defence reform drafted during the 1970s assumed the role of the icebreaker as «expensive in money and manpower and inessential to NATO commitments, which had a higher priority». Due to the insistence of the Foreign Office, who emphasized that the complete withdrawal would have «damaging political consequences [...] demoralising the islanders and emboldening the Argentinians», the *Endurance* remained in service to the Islands. In 1981 the economic pressure on British public finances became heavier and heavier, and the then-Minister of Defence, John Nott, proposed

significant defence cuts to save money, which included the final withdrawal of *Endurance*.

During the 1982 war, the strategic naval relevance of the Falklands was raised only once with not so much firm belief by the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. In a phone call with the US President, Ronald Reagan, she said that «If the Panama Canal was closed, it would be important» that the Falklands «should be in the hands of a friendly power», for which she obviously intended the United Kingdom. In her memoirs, Thatcher stated that «The Islands had obvious strategic importance, possessing several good harbours within 500 miles of Cape Horn. In the event that the Panama Canal is ever closed their significance would be considerable. But it must be admitted that the Falklands were always an improbable cause for a twentieth-century war». Before the invasion, also the Argentinian military junta led by General Leopoldo Galtieri underlined in some confidential talks with the United States the strategic naval potential of the Falklands «for the purpose of ensuring the defence of Western shipping lanes in the South Atlantic».

In truth, the 1982 war was fought for prestige, honour and nationalism, not for strategic reasons. As Galtieri said to Reagan in the midst of the crisis, for Buenos Aires there were at stake at the Falklands «reasons of history, culture, and proximity» and, above all, «Argentina's national honor». In an interview with the Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci conducted at the beginning of June, Galtieri justified the invasion along these lines: «No el oro, no el petróleo, no la posición estratégica: el sentimiento de la nación argentina». Thatcher regularly echoed Galtieri in stating that the Falklands war was «essentially an issue of dictatorship versus democracy» and Britain, as a Western democracy, could not be deprived of «her honour and respect».

The 1982 war eventually proved that the role of the Falklands definitively shifted away from that of choke point serving the routes connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to that of symbol of national pride. Today,

memories of the First World War naval battle are largely lost and, on the eve of the opening of the Nicaragua Canal as main alternative to the Panama Canal for transoceanic routes, the Falklands are expected to lose the few remaining crumbs of their strategic naval potential.

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Political constraints and military needs.

The First World War and the role of Italian colonies

Italy entered the First World War on 24 May 1915, after ten months of troublesome neutrality and a difficult political and diplomatic process that led her to break a more-than-thirty-years-long alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany and to side up with the Entente Powers. With the Treaty of London, Italy committed to «take the field at the earliest possible date and within a period not exceeding one month from the signature», using «her entire resources for the purpose of waging war jointly with France, Great Britain and Russia against all their enemies»¹. In exchange, she was promised a long list of territorial gains along her eastern and north-eastern borders and in the Adriatic basin, at the expense of her traditional arch-enemy: Austria-Hungary. The Italian choice was deeply resented in Vienna, where the old Emperor Franz Joseph I issued a manifesto «to my Peoples» (*An meine Völker*) labelling Italy's attitude a «[p]erfidy whose like history does not know» (*Ein Treubruch, dessengleichen die Geschichte nicht kennt*)². On his side, the Italian Prime Minister Antonio Salandra stated in front of the Parliament:

The ultimatum which the Austro-Hungarian Empire addressed last July to Serbia annulled at one blow the effects of a long-sustained effort by violating the pact which bound us to that State, violated the pact, in form, for it omitted to conclude a preliminary agreement with us or even give us notification, and

¹ *Agreement between France, Russia, Great Britain and Italy, Signed at London, April 26, 1915. Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty* (London 1920), Articles 16 and 2.

² For the English translation of Franz Joseph's manifesto, see *The New York Times Current History. The European War*, vol. III, *April-June 1915* (New York 1917), 490-91.

violated it also in substance, for it sought to disturb, to our detriment, the delicate system of territorial possessions and spheres of influence which had been set up in the Balkan Peninsula. But, more than any particular point, it was the whole spirit of the treaty which was wronged, and even suppressed, for by unloosing in the world a most terrible war, in direct contravention of our interests and sentiments, the balance which the Triple Alliance should have helped to assure was destroyed and the problem of Italy's national integrity was virtually [*sic*] and irresistibly revived³.

According to the Italian Supreme Commander, General Luigi Cadorna, a swift advance on Ljubljana and, eventually, from thence to Vienna, had to provide the key for a rapid success, but the failure of this offensive plunged the country into a three-and-a-half-years long trench conflict. The Italian front extended, north-southward, about 400 miles from the Ortler group to the Karst plateau. In 1915-18, on a total population of 35.6 million people, Italy mobilized some 5.6 million men. Military casualties amounted to some 650,000 killed and 950,000 wounded, half of them in the Isonzo (Soča) sector. Many reasons explain this failure. Broadly speaking, the Army was only partially prepared to the conflict, due also to the heavy toll paid during the Turco-Italian War in 1911-12. Mobilization was difficult, with many units forced to redeploy from the western to the eastern border due to the swift change in the alliances. The country lacked the heavy artillery and the ammunitions that Cadorna's sudden blow required, and no advanced positions were prepared to emplace the existing guns. According to some scholars, Cadorna himself was rather ambiguous in his orders, and spread his units too thin, engaging too many targets and contradicting the principle of force concentration⁴.

³ *The New York Times Current History*, vol. III, 492. The Italian version of the speech is in Antonio Salandra, *I discorsi della guerra. Con alcune note* (Milano 1922), 28.

⁴ On the issue, see Piero Pieri, *L'Italia nella prima guerra mondiale (1915-1918)* (Turin 1965), 78-80; remarks on the Italian unpreparedness at the eve of the war are in 303

The colonies and the war effort

Within this framework, the colonies played rather a limited role. They were small, scattered on the fringes of Asia (Tianjin) and Africa (Libya, Somalia, Eritrea), and located at a safe distance from the main enemy possessions. Their strategic role was, thus, limited, although Eritrea – lying near the southern outlet of the Red Sea – commanded a key spot between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and could provide a forward base against the Arabian Peninsula. However, since the battle of Qunfudah Bay (7 January 1912), the presence of the Ottoman Navy in the Red Sea was drastically reduced, and during the war the Royal Navy's Red Sea Patrol exerted an almost uncontested control. On 10 June 1916, British naval units attacked the port of Jidda that surrendered to the Arab pressure on 16 June. By the end of September, Arab forces with British support had taken also the coastal cities of Rabigh, Yanbu, and Qunfudah, allowing the British to send over a force of 700 Ottoman Arab POWs who had decided to join the revolt, and the French to deploy a military mission numbering, at its height, 1,100 men⁵.

On the material side too, despite the opinion of their often-vociferous supporters, the Italian colonies provided only a limited contribution to the country's war effort. Colonial troops were in short supply and badly needed for domestic duties. In Somalia, on the eve of the war, the Italian military presence

Luigi Cadrona, *La guerra alla fronte italiana. Fino all'arresto sulla linea della Piave e del Grappa (24 maggio 1915-9 novembre 1917)* (2 vols., Milan 1921), esp. vol. I, 1-27 and 40-84; in more details, see the Italian official history of the First World War: *L'Esercito Italiano nella Grande Guerra. 1915-1918*, 10 vols., 38 tomes (Rome 1927-1983); vol. 1, tome I, was reprinted in 2013 by Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito - Ufficio Storico.

⁵ Charles L. Parnell, *Lawrence of Arabia's Debt to Seapower*, "United States Naval Institute Proceedings", vol. 195, no. 8/918 (August 1979), 75-83; on the Royal Navy's Red Sea Patrol, see also Conrad Cato, *The Navy Everywhere* (New York 1919), 279 ff. On the French military mission in the Arabian Peninsula, see Christophe Leclerc, *Avec T.E. Lawrence en Arabie: la mission militaire française au Hejaz, 1916-1920* (Paris 1998).

was limited to 3,500 men of the Regio Corpo delle Truppe Coloniali, supported by native Carabinieri (Zaptié) for constabulary duties and a host of irregulars to protect the borders. In the same way, Eritrea kept under the colours between 7,500 and 10,000 Ascari (about 15,000 by 1920⁶) out of a potential basin of 40,000 estimated able-bodied men, but their massive employment in Libya and a more limited presence in Somalia put the local military establishment under heavy strain. Their weapons, training and organization were largely unfit to the needs of the new trench warfare, and made their presence almost useless other than in the African theatre. In August 1915, some 2,700 soldiers shipped from Libya to Sicily did not even enter the front line because many of them died from pneumonia immediately after their arrival, and the remains had to be shipped home again after a short time⁷. Finally, there was the risk that the massive recruitment of young males for military duties could negatively affect the colonial economy, which largely relied on this labour force for both self-sustainment and to fulfil the increasing needs of the motherland⁸.

Finally, from the financial point of view, in 1914, Eritrea – the only colony that, for social and political conditions, could provide her support to the motherland – was still net recipient of Italian funds for a sum between six and seven million lire, almost all devoted to security. During the conflict, Italy made a great effort to reverse this state of things and to place the colonial administration «in such a condition that while the demands upon the mother country were reduced to a minimum, the contributions furnished by the colonies

⁶ Tekeste Negash, *Italian Colonialism in Eritrea, 1882-1941. Policies, Praxis and Impact* (Uppsala 1987), 48.

⁷ The episode is in Christian Koller, *The Recruitment of Colonial Troops in Africa and Asia and their Deployment in Europe during the First World War*, “Immigrants & Minorities”, vol. 26, no. 1/2 (March/July 2008), 111-133 (114).

⁸ Figures come from different sources, esp. Negash, *Italian Colonialism...*, 48 ff; Marco Scardigli, *Il braccio indigeno. Ascari, irregolari e bande nella conquista dell'Eritrea 1885-1911* (Milan 1996), 168 ff; Alessandro Volterra, *Sudditi coloniali. Ascari eritrei 1935-1941* (Milan 2005), 43 ff. On the impact of recruitment on Eritrean economy, see Negash, *Italian Colonialism...*, 49-51.

should be increased to a maximum»⁹. In the long term, this effort proved rather disappointing. «The Eritrean cow did not appear to have been very productive. Exports to Italy as well as imports from the latter comprised less than 1 per cent of the Italian trade volume with the outside world. Neither investment in infrastructures [...] nor the elaborate and overmanned colonial bureaucracy could be justified or supported by the revenues of the colony»¹⁰. However, in the short term, the opinion was quite different. According to the Minister of the Colonies, Gaspare Colosimo, who held the office between 1916 and 1919, Eritrea contributed to the Italian war with meat (12 million cans), leather (for a value of about 18 million lire), palm ivory, cereals and potassium (50,000 quintals)¹¹. Marques Aldobrandino Malvezzi, journalist, civil servant in the Ministry for the Colonies (1913-20) and former member of the scientific expedition in Karnak and Luxor led by Ernesto Schiaparelli, supported his vision.

As a consequence of the new policy the colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland have not only been self-sufficing during the past two years [...] but have been able to contribute to an appreciable extent toward the needs of the home country. In Eritrea the preparation of canned meats for export, to be used in the Italian army, has been quite successfully carried on since 1913, but the output was notably increased after the beginning of the war, and a contract to furnish 8,000,000 cans of meat annually for a three-year period has been made by the packers Torrigiani with the Italian War Department. Other valuable exports are hides to the value of over 17,000,000 lire in the three years, 1915, 1916, and 1917, while the value of the nuts of the ivory-palm, used in button manufacture

⁹ *The American Review of Reviews. An International Magazine. Edited by Albert Shaw*, vol. 57 (January-June 1918), 96-97 (96). The text is an abridged translation of: Aldobrandino Mavezzi, *Il contributo delle colonie italiane all'economia di guerra della metropoli*, "Nuova Antologia di Lettere, Scienze e Arti", vol. 192, no. 1099, 1st November 1917, 81-90.

¹⁰ Negash, *Italian Colonialism...*, 41-42.

¹¹ Gaspare Colosimo, *Interessi coloniali* (Milan 1918), 5-6. More detailed remarks on Eritrea as a source of raw materials are in Negash, *Italian Colonialism*, 37 ff.

[...] was \$140,000 in 1915, \$200,000 in 1916, and reached a still higher figure in 1917. Moreover, the production of cereals has been so much intensified that with the coming year the colony will not only be self-sustaining, but will be able to export grain to Italy in considerable quantity. A still more important contribution of Eritrea to Italy's war needs comes from the rich deposits of chlorate of potash, which is exported not only to the mother country, but also to France, England, and Japan. Considerable exports of grain have also been made from Somaliland, as well as of hides, of which \$200,000 worth were sent in 1916, and the same amount in the first half of the year just ended [1917]¹².

Nonetheless, these goods were only a small part of Italy's war-related import. In 1917, *L'Italia economica* yearbook listed as Italy's main trading partners the Entente Powers and their colonies, as well as Egypt, the United States, Spain, Switzerland, and some South American countries, such as Argentine and Brazil. Italy imported 438,100 tons of durum wheat (167,443 from British India, 251,103 from the United States); 1,477,900 tons of bread wheat (531,641 from British India, 417,813 from the United States, 390,762 from Australia, 136,777 from Argentine); and 1,006,965 quintals of raw meat (718,935 from Argentine, 164,277 from Brazil, 33,132 from the United States). British India also contributed in sustaining Italy's supply of leather, heavily affected by the decline of Eritrea's production of unsalted dried cattle and cow leather¹³. In the same year, Eritrea benefitted of a special allotment (*Assegnazione straordinaria per la difesa della Colonia Eritrea*) of 15,000,000 lire and Libya of extraordinary military expenses for 86,000,000 lire. The conflict imposed the disbursement of 1,250,000 lire to guarantee the Italian citizens under neutral protection (*Spese per la tutela all'estero dei connazionali affidati alla protezione*

¹² *The American Review of Reviews*, 96.

¹³ Riccardo Bachi, *L'Italia economica nell'anno 1917. Annuario della vita commerciale, industriale, agraria, bancaria, finanziaria e della politica economica. Anno IX* (Città di Castello, Milan, Rome and Naples 1918); on wheat: 23; on meat: 25; on leather: 16.

dei neutri) and of 900,000 lire as secret expenditures connected to the international events (*Spese segrete determinate dagli avvenimenti internazionali*). Expenditures related to the maritime traffic accounted for 587,797,000 lire and insurance premiums for the war-risks-subsidised ships (*Premi di assicurazione del naviglio sovvenzionato contro i danni di guerra*) for 2,712,000 lire¹⁴.

Nonetheless, the colonies were a constant source of anxiety for the Italian government. They had to be protected from internal and external threats, and law and order had to be preserved within their borders. Ethnic, social and religious factors made some of them intrinsically prone to destabilization, while in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, despite the signing of the Treaty of Ouchy (18 October 1912), a difficult war of conquest was still underway when hostilities broke out in Europe. Moreover, colonies had gained a very special value in the eyes of the increasingly important nationalistic forces. The “young Italy” saw overseas possessions as the seal of her new “Great Power” status and – from this point of view – the limited (and sometimes ambiguous) provisions of the article 13 of the Treaty of London fell quite short from the expectations¹⁵. During the war, a strong movement surfaced, pivoting around the Ministry of the Colonies and loudly asking for its revision. The list of the Italian grievances included the cessions of Djibouti, Kassala and Kisimayu, the annexation of Jarabub and the redefinition of the Libyan-Egyptian border, the control of Lake Tana and its region, in Northern Ethiopia, and an Anglo-British agreement to preserve the *status quo* of the Arabian Peninsula. Worth noting, almost all these concessions were requested to the allies as compensation of Italy’s military effort, and not to the defeated enemies. Unsurprisingly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (led by the

¹⁴ Bachi, *L'Italia economica...*, 163.

¹⁵ According to the Treaty: «In the event of France and Great Britain increasing their colonial territories in Africa at the expense of Germany, those two Powers agree in principle that Italy may claim some equitable compensation, particularly as regards the settlement in her favour of the questions relative to the frontiers of the Italian colonies of Eritrea, Somaliland and Libya and the neighbouring colonies belonging to France and Great Britain».

pro-British Baron Sidney Sonnino) violently disagreed as to the opportunity of these requests, which both France and Britain deeply resented¹⁶.

The colonies as military problem

From a military point of view, the Italian colonies were a constant drain of resources. Although far from the main war front, most of them had, in fact, to face serious domestic and/or regional problems. These problems were very evident in the African possession. Their scattered nature and composite population made things worse, forcing the authorities to stretch their forces and to multiply the command structures. Until 1916, Eritrea was under the constant menace from Ethiopia, ruled by the young uncrowned Emperor Lij Iyasu (r. 1909-1916, until 1911 under the regency of Ras Tessema Nadew). Lij Iyasu had succeeded the debilitated Emperor Menelik in 1909, opening a power struggle that Italy exploited to consolidate her position after the defeat of Adowa and in the following phase of political and military re-entrenchment under the governorship of Ferdinando Martini (1897-1907). Lij Iyasu's power largely rested on the support of the Galla tribes and of the headmen of the border region of Tigray, first among them his father, Ras Mikael of Wollo. At the outbreak of the European war, his hostility towards Eritrea (based on political and territorial ambitions) was fuelled by the German, Austrian and Ottoman representatives in Addis Ababa (Syburg, Schwimmer and Mazar Bey), aiming at exploiting the country's strategic position vis-à-vis French, British and Italian possession,

¹⁶ In this sense, see (e.g.) Ferdinando Martini, in Sidney Sonnino, *Carteggio 1914-16. A cura di Pietro Pastorelli* (Rome-Bari 1974), 74-75. Martini's vision was supported by his successor, Colosimo. On the rivalries between the Ministry of the Colonies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, see Nicola Labanca. *Oltremare, Storia dell'espansione coloniale italiana* (Bologna, 2002) 123 ff. At the end of the war, Italy's gains were limited to the Trans-Juba region in Somalia and to the rectification of the border between French and Italian possession in North Africa, in the area of Ghadames, Ghat and Tumu. A detailed map is in Ministero della Guerra, Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore - Ufficio Storico, *Manuale di storia politico-militare delle colonie italiane* (Roma 1928), facing p. 474.

especially after Italy had declared war on the Ottoman Empire (21 August 1915). The fact that Lij Iyasu could embrace the same Muslim faith of his father (born Mohammed Ali and converted to Christianity in 1878 after the Council of Boru Meda) strengthened the bonds with Constantinople. On the other hand, the fear that this choice could lead to the disruption of the Solomonic Empire fostered, in the long term, his ousting from power by a coalition led by Menelik's daughter, Empress Zewditu, *Dejazmach* Tafari Makonnen (later Emperor Haile Selassie) and the Coptic clergy¹⁷.

In Somalia, the steady influence of Muhammad Abd Allah Hassan, the "Mad Mullah", was the main reason of concern. After the failure of the political and territorial order embodied in the Illig treaty (5 March 1905), in November 1911 the Mullah had left Italian Somalia and re-entered British Somaliland with some 6,000 followers. At the eve of the First World War, the Dervish movement had reached its main political and military strength, mustering some 10,000 men and reaching, in March 1914, the outskirts of Berbera, the provincial capital. During the first part of the conflict, both British and Italian action aimed, thus, more at containing the Mullah's activism than at repressing it. However, in 1916, the deposition of Lij Iyasu forced Muhammad Hassan to adopt a more defensive posture. In this case, too, German and Ottoman promises failed to materialise, and the Mullah's appointment as Amir of the Somali nation and (virtual) ruler of the country, with a *firman* (decree) signed by the Caliph Mehmet V, did not help in boosting his position. His territorial control steadily declined. In British Somaliland, the movement converged on the strongholds of Taleh (Taleex) and

¹⁷ Harold G. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia* (Berkeley 1994), 104 ff; from a different perspective, see Saheed A. Adejumobi, *The History of Ethiopia* (Westport 2007), 37 ff. On German activities at the court of Lij Iyasu, see Donald M. McKale, *War by Revolution: Germany and Great Britain in the Middle East in the Era of World War I* (Kent 1998), 156 ff. On Lij Iyasu figure, see Éloi Ficquet and Wolbert G.C. Smidt (eds), *The Life and Times of Lij Iyasu of Ethiopia: New Insights* (Zürich-Berlin 2014); on foreign policy, see esp. 103 ff. On the military aftermaths of Lij Iyasu's deposition, see, briefly, *Manuale di storia politico-militare...*, 408-14.

Jid Ali (Jidbaale), in Italian Somalia on Belet Uen (Beledweyne), near the Ogaden and the Somali-Ethiopian border. In this same period, an anti-Mullah front finally coalesced, including Italy, Great Britain, Ethiopia (now under the control of Empress Zewditu and the freshly appointed Ras Makonnen), and the Somali sultanates of Hobyo and the Mijerteen, gravitating in the Italian sphere of influence. Thanks to the Italian support, both sultanates witnessed, in this period, a military build-up, with their forces reaching 7,000 men by 1918. In any case, according to end-1922 estimates, on 16,000 guns existing in Somalia and its protectorates, 3,000 only were in the hands of regular forces¹⁸.

However, from a purely military perspective, the most critical situation was in Libya. In July 1914, at the outbreak of the war, the Italian presence in Libya was about 50,000 men, with a sharp decline compared to the previous years. In October-December 1911, in the early months of the Turco-Italian War, the Italian Special Army Corps (*Corpo d'Armata Speciale*) included seven infantry brigades and one infantry regiment, six Alpini (mountain infantry) battalions, one Bersaglieri regiment, eight cavalry squadrons, twenty-five artillery batteries of different kind, seven garrison artillery companies, plus engineers, sanitary, and support troops. The total strength was 55,000 men and 154 guns of different calibre. Between January and October 1912, four Alpini battalions, seven Ascari (native troops) battalions from Eritrea, and one Meharisti (camel-mounted cavalry) squadron joined the force. On 31 May 1912, the total

¹⁸ The figures are in Gianluca Pastori, *Civili e guerra. Armi, popolazioni e territorio nella repressione della rivolta del "Mad Mullah" in Somalia*, in *Acta del XXXIV Congresso della Commissione Internazionale di Storia Militare, "Conflitti militari e popolazioni civili. Guerre totali, guerre limitate e guerre asimmetriche"*, Trieste, 31 agosto-5 settembre 2008 (Rome 2009), tome II, 527-38. On Somalia during the First World War, see, from the Italian side, Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito - Ufficio Storico, *Somalia*, vol. II, *Dal 1914 al 1934. Con appendice sul corpo di sicurezza italiano nell'ambito dell'A.F.I.S* (Rome 1960). On the "Mad Mullah", see Douglas Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland* (London 1923; repr., New York 1969) and, in a different perspective, Abdi Sheik-Abdi, *Divine Madness. Mohammed Abdulle Hassan (1865-1920)* (London 1993).

strength of the Italian presence in Libya was twenty-three infantry regiments, three Bersaglieri regiments, ten Alpini battalions, ten cavalry squadrons, seven Ascari battalions from Eritrea, forty-four artillery batteries (of whom, eleven mountain artillery batteries), ten garrison artillery companies and eighteen engineer companies, plus the logistic units. On 15 August 1912, the Italian presence numbered 97,000 men, and on 15 November 100,000¹⁹. In 1913, metropolitan troops started to decline, partially replaced by new Ascari units. The main reasons were the financial costs that the deployment of metropolitan troops entailed and the widespread opinion that native soldiers were fitter than Italians to the hardship of the Libyan climate and to the nature of the Libyan warfare. In the same direction pushed the fact that Ascari could be employed «without running the risk of the political backlash that the death of Italian soldiers could have caused»²⁰.

The operational situation too was a source of anxiety. Despite the efforts that followed the end of the war with the Ottoman Empire, in Cyrenaica, at the eve of the First World War, the Italian control was still limited to a strip of land along the coast, pivoting around the five strongholds of Benghazi, Marj (Barce), Cyrene, Derna and Tobruk, where land forces could benefit of the Navy's support. In neighbouring Tripolitania and Fezzan, by August 1914, the occupation had reached Ghat, some 1,300 kilometres from Tripoli, near the Algerian border, *de facto* extending to most of western Libya. However, as some Italian sources later admitted, the occupation had been «a little hasty» and «too easily had been accepted the proposal of peace and submission made by the Senussi leaders and by some great chiefs»²¹. The raids that the local tribes carried out, regularly pilfering the caravan route between Sirte and Sokna, coupled with the overstretching of the lines of communication. Political and administrative

¹⁹ Comando del Corpo di Stato Maggiore, Ufficio Coloniale, *L'azione dell'esercito italiano nella guerra italo-turca (1911-1912)* (Rome 1913), 9 ff.

²⁰ Scardigli, *Il braccio indigeno*, 51.

²¹ *Manuale di storia politico-militare...*, 417.

mistakes (such as the choice to revive the old Ottoman system of military recruitment, based on the compulsory draft of men from the different *mudiriyat*, to reinforce a constantly understrength regular establishment) helped in fuelling discontent. In August 1914, this state of things triggered the first incidents in Bir el-Fatia (26 August), while in September «all Fezzan was manifestly turbulent». At the beginning of November, the colonial government reacted by ordering the concentration of all the scattered garrisons of the region in few selected outposts, leaving to the largely unreliable local forces all the “watch and ward” duties. These outposts too proved, nonetheless, untenable; in the same way, proved untenable the so-called “Gebel line”, stretching on the Nefusa Mountains, along the northern fringes of Fezzan, from Bani Walid to Ghadames via Mizdah, where the troops had to withdraw in the following weeks. At the same time, even most of the previously pro-Italian Libyan headmen defected, either joining the Senussi ranks with their forces or starting riding the caravan routes on their own account.

In late November 1914, redeployment turned into general retreat, due on the one hand to the increasingly aggressive strategy adopted by the Senussi guerrillas, on the other to the inherent limits of the Italian military establishment. Poor coordination, some questionable choices and a growing tension between colonial and domestic authorities, in the turbulent weeks that led to the end of the Italian neutrality, concurred in making the situation worse. On 7 and 29 April 1915, the Italian forces and their local allies suffered two bad reverses at Wadi Marsit and Gasr Bu Hadi respectively; in June 1915, the Gebel Nefusa was evacuated, and on 5 July the colonial government issued the order to fall back to the coast. By August, the Italian presence in Libya was reverted to the same of the last month of 1911 and on 1st January 1916: «occupation was reduced to the coastal bases of Tripoli and Homs. In the latter, we were entrenched within the tight circuit of the barbed wire, while in Tripoli, our defence line stretched from Tagiura to Gargàresc, via the detached outposts of Sidi Abd el-Cherim, Trik

Tarhuna, Ain-Zara, Pastorelli, F. Gurgi and Gargàresc»²². In the following years, until 1922, when the conquest resumed, Senussi pressure was contained mostly by political means, although this did not mean a decline in the military commitment. In Libya too, Italy benefitted from the allied support, with British and French action important in severing the Senussi connections with Egypt and the French Sahara, while the declining presence of metropolitan troops, shipped to Italy to face the more compelling needs of the European theatre, led to a greater presence of colonial units, mostly from Eritrea. In March 1916 the military establishment in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica was about the same as in August 1915, amounting to 34,005 men (27,649 Italians, 3,740 Eritrean Ascari, 529 Somali Ascari, 1,279 Libyan Ascari, and 808 officers) and 122 guns (70, 75 and 149 mm), with 40 Maxim-Vicker machine guns and 8 Farman airplanes.

Quite obviously, the Libyan events had a deep impact on the public opinion and triggered, in the post-war years, a heated debate on the political and military responsibilities of that state of things. General Cadorna – who, during the war, repeatedly resented the burden that Libya and the other colonies were imposing on the metropolitan Army – was largely involved in this debate, devoting a long chapter, in his book *Altre pagine sulla Grande Guerra*, to the reasons of the defeat in Tripolitania²³. Cadorna's vision – blaming the Libyan difficulties to the lack of resolution of the Minister of the Colonies, who favoured the overstretching of the Italian presence and refused to withdraw the troops

²² *Manuale di storia politico-militare...*, 431 [place names as in original]. On the battle of Gasr Bu Hadi, see, rather emphatically, Angelo del Boca, *La disfatta di Gasr Bu Hâdi. 1915: il colonnello Miani e il più grande disastro dell'Italia coloniale* (Milan 2004). More soberly, see Luigi Tùccari, *I governi militari della Libia (1911-1919)*, tome I, *Testo* (Rome 1994), 157 ff. In tome II, *Documenti*, see, among the others, Tassoni [Governor of Tripolitania] to the Ministry of the Colonies, 30 April 1915; Cadorna to Zupelli [Minister of War], 3 May 1915, and Cadorna to Salandra, 5 May 1915, resp. nos 74, 75 and 76, 147-150.

²³ Luigi Cadorna, *Altre pagine sulla Grande Guerra* (Milan 1925), 46-99 (*Gli avvenimenti del 1914-'15 in Tripolitania*); on p. 98, see a detailed split of the troops in Tripoli and Homs on 1st January 1916.

timely as soon as the situation started deteriorating – clearly shows the strained relations existing between political and military authorities, even at the highest levels. Discussing of Martini's policy, Cadorna wrote:

There could be no middle way between the strict application of this principle [of reducing the territorial occupation proportionally to the available troops] and the timely dispatch in Libya of the considerable forces needed to deal with the gravity of the situation that had manifested. Any of those half measures that are so dear to the Italian heart would not have had other effect than to reduce the troops in Italy without saving us from disaster in Libya. It was always the application of the eternal and elementary principle of proportioning the end to the available means when circumstances do not allow proportioning the means to the end [...] it would have been necessary to renounce to the concept of defending at any cost a given area, however important, and resolutely accept the second horn of the dilemma [...] But the minister of the colonies – who, although seeing only the political side of the matter, had the power to take the decision [...] – persisted in his concept: and this was the primary cause of the disaster²⁴

Concluding remarks

To sum up, the Italian colonies proved, in the First World War, more than an asset, a liability. Their retention had a key political relevance. As stated

²⁴ Cadorna, *Altre pagine...*, 57, 62 [Personal translation]. In the original: «Non poteva esserci via di mezzo tra la rigorosa applicazione di questo principio [di ridurre l'occupazione territoriale in proporzione alle truppe disponibili] e l'invio in tempo in Libia delle notevoli forze necessarie a far fronte alla gravità della situazione manifestatasi. Qualunque di quei mezzi termini che sono tanto cari al cuore italiano, non avrebbe avuto altro effetto che di diminuire le forze in Italia senza salvarci dal disastro in Libia. Si trattava sempre dell'eterno ed elementare principio del proporzionare il fine ai mezzi disponibili, quando le circostanze vietano di proporzionare i mezzi al fine ... sarebbe stato necessario di rinunciare al concetto della difesa ad ogni costo di una determinata zona, per quanto importante, e accettare risolutamente il secondo corno del dilemma ... Ma il ministro delle colonie, che pur non vedendo che il lato politico della questione, aveva la facoltà di decidere ... persistette nel suo concetto: e questa fu la causa prima del disastro»).

above, they were the seal of Italy's "Great Power" status and were pivotal in supporting the country's ambitions to contribute in shaping the post-war order. Moreover, their possession legitimized the requests that Rome had advanced in negotiating the Treaty of London and provided a basis to pursue the "politics of compensations" that the government had embraced at the time of choosing its new allies. On the other hand, the sheer dimension of the conflict in which the country was involved made any colonial problem negligible. This state of things perfectly fitted in Cadorna's general attitude. In July 1914, for example, when Italy's posture was still (formally) bind by the provisions of the Triple Alliance, he said to Marques Salvago Raggi, Governor of Eritrea: «Don't try to persuade me, because I am persuaded yet [...] You are right in asking me what you are asking for, but I am equally right in denying you white troops. It is a matter of life or death for our country, and the life or death of Eritrea comes second»²⁵. When, in the following days, Italy proclaimed her neutrality (3 August 1914), the relevance of colonial security in the eyes of the Supreme Command further declined. Both Eritrea and Libya started, thus, resting almost only on the shoulders of the colonial troops, which, by 1915, accounted for some 10,000 men in Eritrea and some 15,000 in Libya, compared to an Italian presence, in the previous years, in Libya only, of about 100,000 men.

From this point of view, the First World War posed to Italy an unexpected dilemma. Not only the country was largely unready for the European conflict; it had also to deal – politically and militarily – with a troublesome and almost neglected "colonial front". The limited resources, the poor control exerted on its possessions, that fact that these same possessions were not framed – as that

²⁵ Giuseppe Salvago Raggi, *La guerra e la pace come le ho viste io*, unpublished manuscript, quoted in Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa orientale*, vol. I, *Dall'Unità alla marcia su Roma* (Milano 1992), 844 [Personal translation]. In the original: «Non cerchi di persuadermi perché sono già persuaso ... Lei ha ragione a chiedere quanto chiede, ma io ho ragione a negarle truppa bianca. Qui si tratta di vita o di morte per il nostro Paese, e la vita o la morte dell'Eritrea passa in seconda linea».

of other Powers – into a coherent imperial system are some of the elements that defined the terms of the problem. In 1915, the choice to side with France and Britain (Italy's most powerful colonial neighbours) neutralized the external menace, although did not really affected its domestic component. In any case, on the military side, the concentration of forces on the European theatre led to a loss of control in the extra-European domain. Events in Libya provided a paradigmatic example of this process. This while, on the political side, the unwritten rules of power politics forced Italy to promote the status of colonial power. Not surprisingly, in 1918 the clash between the two dimensions resurfaced, fuelling acrimony and misunderstandings between Italy and her former allies. This is one of the reasons of the poor performance of the Italian diplomacy at the Paris peace conference. This is also one of reasons of the success, in post-war Italy, of the myth of the “maimed victory” (*vittoria mutilata*), deemed soon to become a battle horse of the then emerging Fascist movement.

Dr. P.E. (Erwin) van Loo (The Netherlands)

The buildup of a Dutch Air Defense-organization 1914-1918

Preface

During the First World War military aviation took a high flight. At the beginning of the Great War in 1914 countries like the United Kingdom, France and Germany operated a relative small number of slow and underpowered aircraft and possessed even less anti-aircraft batteries to defend their ground forces and populated areas against air attacks. As the war progressed, the belligerents expanded their air forces notably with increasingly faster, bigger and stronger aircraft. Simultaneously the number of specially manufactured anti-aircraft guns mounted considerably. As a small neutral country with hardly any industrial resources, Holland was obliged to build up an air defense-organization almost from scratch. This article examines what actions the Dutch took to follow in the footsteps of the other European countries and to what extent Holland succeeded or failed in building up a modern, integrated and sizable air defense-organization during the Great War. I'll first give a short overview of the general developments in air warfare on both the ground and in the air during the First World War. Subsequently a picture of the developments in this field in the Netherlands will be sketched. The article will be completed with some conclusions.

Aviation and anti-aircraft artillery

“Aviation is a useless and expensive fad advocated by a few individuals whose ideas are unworthy of attention”. This firm statement was done by none other than General William Nicholson, who in 1908 became Chief of the

Imperial Staff of the British Forces.¹ Although Nicholson was certainly not the only military authority who foresaw no military future for aircraft and airships, he couldn't have been more wrong. In the following years the reliability and performance of aircraft increased to the point where they became effective scouting instruments. At the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914, the strength of the aviation arms on the Western Front varied considerably. The Germans had around 250 aircraft, while France fielded almost 150 planes. The British *Royal Flying Corps* (RFC) was comparatively weak with only 60 aircraft.² Although still fragile and unarmed, the aircraft of the belligerents almost immediately proved their value at the battlefield. In September 1914 for example, a scouting aircraft piloted by the French air pioneer Louis Blériot, provided vital information for his commander in chief, general Joseph Joffre, about German troop movements in Northern France. Partly thanks to the data gathered by Blériot from the air, Joffre was able to regroup his retreating army, halt the German advance, and defeat the Germans at the strategically decisive First Battle of the Marne in 1914.

At the end of 1914 the front came to a standstill and developed into a bloody trench war from the Belgian coast to the German-Swiss-border. Until the summer of 1918 this frontline – despite several heavy battles with thousands of casualties on both sides – would remain practically unchanged. Aircraft were delegated to other tasks like ‘spotting’ for the artillery and bombing the enemy lines and supply routes. Later on, when bigger aircraft with sufficient engine power became available, attacks on strategic targets like populated and industrial areas in the hinterland became a reality. This was not all. Due to the growing number of aircraft on both sides, the dominance of the air space over the battlefield soon became of strategic importance. Before long aircraft began to

¹ D. Cove and I. Westwell, *History of World War I. Volume 1, War and Response 1914-1916*, New York 2002, 131.

² C. Bowyer, *History of the RAF*, London 1977, 19.

fight each other, first with pistols and rifles, but after a while with mounted machine guns on their aircraft. In the course of the war military aviation became so increasingly important on the battlefield. This was not only the result of the increasing performance of aircraft and the growing number of tasks they carried out, but also thanks to the immense rise in production numbers. It's significant in this view that, when the war drew to a close, the belligerents had produced no less than 150.000 aircraft.

The permanent modernizing and expanding Air Forces of Germany, France and Britain, also resulted in the further development of anti-aircraft artillery. At the outbreak of the war there were hardly any sufficient anti-aircraft guns available. The German Army went to war with only 18 anti-aircraft guns, while the British forces had no more than 26 'pom-poms' in service.³ The French anti-aircraft organization – the *Défense contre Aéronefs* – did not even have a single anti-aircraft gun available in 1914. Besides this, most of the guns in use were still ordinary artillery pieces, modified to elevate higher and traverse through a wider arc than the standard artillery guns. Soon however, the need for specially designed anti-aircraft guns was felt, particularly when the fighting became static and trench-bound and the number of aircraft that operated over the trenches grew gradually. The hastily improvised equipment – modified field guns – gave way to specially designed canons and the introduction of additional equipment like sound-detection systems, searchlights and optical range-finders. Furthermore, it was quickly realized that working in a coordinated way with other guns improved the chances of hitting an aircraft.⁴ Despite the technical developments and the vastly increasing number of guns, the deployment of anti-aircraft artillery could never really keep up with the galloping development of

³ E.B. Westermann, *Flak. German Anti-Aircraft Defenses 1914-1945*, Kansas 2001, 16 and J.D. Crabtree, *On Air Defense*, Westport 1994, 11-20.

⁴ In the German Army for example fell from 11.600 in 1915 to 5.000 in 1918. In the French army the number of rounds per claim decreased from 11.000 in 1916 to 7.000 in 1918 and in the British Forces from 8.000 in 1917 to 4.550 in 1918.

military aviation. Due to the lack of proximity fuses, the efficacy of the anti-aircraft artillery was the whole war at best variable and rather unpredictable.

Defending neutral territory

So, air warfare literally took a high flight during the First World War. But did these developments also reach a small country like the Netherlands which was positioned at the sideline of the war? After the separation of Belgium in 1839, the Dutch – partly for economic interests and partly to preserve its colonial imperium – pursued a policy of neutrality. From the summer of 1914 the Netherlands tried desperately to maintain impartiality between the Central Powers and the Entente.⁵ This policy of aloofness forbade the belligerent countries to enter Dutch territory, including the territorial waters and airspace. Whenever foreign aircraft or airships crossed the border they would be fired upon. The enforcement of this strategy rested on two pillars: diplomacy and deterrence. The Dutch Armed Forces, however, were not only small in size but also lacked modern weaponry and equipment, while most of the units were hardly trained for war duty. Nonetheless, from August 1914 to November 1918, 500.000 men were mobilized. This didn't prevent the neutrality to be violated many times during this period. In the summer of 1914 the German forces occupied most of Belgium, with the exception of the southwestern part. Along the coast the Germans constructed submarine pens for U-boats. During the rest of the war the German submarines based here posed a serious threat to British shipping in the Channel. This also applied for the several airfields in Flanders from which zeppelins and bombers frequently attacked London and other British cities and caused many casualties and heavy damage. In particular the *Royal Flying Corps* and *Royal Naval Air Service* tried everything in their power to

⁵ W. Klinkert, *Defending neutrality: the Netherlands prepares for war, 1900-1925*, Leiden 2013.

harass the German activities by launching continuous attacks on their submarine bases and airfields in Flanders.

The safest way for the British aircraft to reach Flanders was through the skies of neutral Holland. More than once disorientated aircraft bombed Dutch villages, towns or harbors by accident. This happened for the first time on 22 September 1914 when a British aircraft dropped its bombs on the town of Maastricht. Several other incidents followed and when the armistice was signed in November 1918 Dutch targets had been hit more than twenty times. Aircraft of the belligerents also regularly ended up in Dutch airspace during dogfights. Especially the province of Zeeland in the southwestern part of Holland was confronted with a large number of violations.⁶ In October 1917 the Dutch Queen was even recommended not to visit this area by the Dutch Commander-in-Chief, General Cornelis Snijders, because of the “intense air traffic of aircraft of the belligerent parties” in this area. During the preceding two and a half months no less than 92 aircraft and one Zeppelin had violated the airspace in the province. “It happens”, General Snijders wrote to Queen Wilhelmina, “that numerous aircraft from both parties at the same time, sometimes several dozens, fly in different directions through our airspace.” End of quote.⁷

In hindsight faced with so many violations of its airspace, it's obvious that the Dutch Armed Forces needed a strong centralized air defense-organization to underline their policy of nonalignment. But did the Netherlands have the tools to enforce this? Already before the war, in July 1913, the Dutch government decided to set up an small air service, the *Luchtvaart Afdeeling* (LVA), which was based at the airfield of Soesterberg in the center of Holland. When war broke out the LVA was still only a small air arm with 10 officers, 1 engineer and 31 non-commissioned officers, corporals and soldiers and five aircraft for

⁶ J. Zwemer and A. Barth, *Zeeland tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Goes 2014, 82-95.

⁷ National Archives of the Netherlands (The Hague), 2.13.70, inv.nr. 4, Letter of General C.J. Snijders to Queen Wilhelmina, 10 October 1917.

reconnaissance-tasks. Immediately after the announcement of the mobilization, General Snijders ordered the LVA to start monitoring the Dutch airspace and to shoot at any foreign aircraft that crossed the border. Detachements of the Dutch air arm operated from small satellite airfields along the border near Venlo, Arnhem, Flushing and Gilze-Rijen. The aircraft, mostly vulnerable and slow Farmans, were incapable to intercept foreign aircraft though. Therefore, the need was soon felt to expand the small air fleet.⁸

This was no easy task. The Netherlands lacked arms factories and natural resources, while its best aircraft constructors, Anthony Fokker and Frits Koolhoven, worked for the German and British governments respectively. As a result hardly any new aircraft were built in the Netherlands during the Great War. Only a car factory in Amsterdam constructed 17 French Farman-aircraft in license. The purchase of new, modern aircraft abroad wasn't very successful, because of an export ban on military goods in many countries. Before the end of the war the Dutch Air Service could therefore only obtain a small number of fighters: among these ten used, unarmed and outdated Fokker D.III's in October 1917 and five Nieuports in June 1918.⁹ In the end, the biggest reinforcement came from aircraft of the belligerent air forces that were forced to make an emergency landing on Dutch soil. When an aircraft was only slightly damaged, it was repaired and taken into service by the LVA. Through diplomatic channels the owner received a financial compensation. During the war no less than 132 aircraft of the belligerents ended up in Holland of which 67 were taken into service by the LVA. While the purchase of new equipment and material abroad was an extremely lengthy and often unsuccessful process, the internment of modern flying material of the belligerents paid off. Thanks to the internment of

⁸ R. De Winter, *Hendrik Walaardt Sacré 1873-1949. Leven voor de luchtvaart*, Den Haag 1992, 61-92.

⁹ M. de Haan, 'Brieven uit Berlijn. Het belang van buitenlandse kennis voor de ontwikkeling van de Nederlandse Luchtvaartafdeeling tussen 1914 en 1918' in: *Mars et Historia* XLVII (2013) 2, 12-19.

foreign aircraft, the LVA was able to adopt the latest military-technical developments. On the other hand it created many problems. For example, many of the interned aircraft could hardly be used due to a shortage of spare parts and mechanical problems.¹⁰

Hence, the small Dutch air service was unable to play a significant role against the neutrality violations. But what about the other branch, the anti-aircraft artillery? At the beginning of the war the Netherlands didn't possess any anti-aircraft guns. In addition, as for aircraft, war conditions made it extremely difficult to purchase anti-aircraft weapons abroad. At the same time Holland lacked the manufacturing capabilities and knowledge to produce anti-aircraft guns on her own. In December 1916, after 29 months of mobilization, General Snijders therefore, sketched a very bleak picture. "Anti-aircraft guns are still missing in our inventory, except for some old-fashioned 3,7 cm canons and some other old guns on carriages. The number of machine guns is far below the number required for modern warfare", he wrote.¹¹ It's therefore not surprising that the Dutch anti-artillery guns didn't manage to shoot down even a single aircraft during the war. Even in the province of Zeeland, where in the closing months of the war foreign aircraft entered Dutch airspace almost daily, no successes could be achieved. Not only the small number of old and often malfunctioning guns accounted for this. No less important was the fact that the Dutch gun crews had to comply to strict regulations before they were allowed to open fire. They needed to have, for instance, absolute certainty that the aircraft in sight belonged to one of the belligerent countries. If it was in difficulties they had to hold their fire. Furthermore they could only open fire when the target flew over an unoccupied area. Finally the effectiveness was hampered by the long reaction times. The preparation time of an anti-aircraft battery close to the town

¹⁰ R. de Winter, *Een eeuw militaire luchtvaart in Nederland 1913-1923. Bakermat Soesterberg*, Den Haag 2013, 85-88.

¹¹ National Archives of the Netherlands (The Hague), 2.13.70, inv.nr. 4, Report of General C.J. Snijders, December 1916.

of Breda for example, varied from between ten and eighteen minutes after the first sighting of an aircraft. “I consider this rather long”, the commander of the Dutch Field Army commented ironically in September 1917. The reason for this long reaction time was even more remarkable: because the gun officer, who had to give the order to open fire, was not housed in the immediate vicinity of the canon, he first had to be alarmed and then jump on his bicycle and hurry himself to the battery.¹²

Conclusion

So to what extent Holland succeeded or failed in building up an air defense-organisation? It's crystal-clear that aerial warfare developed in a high pace during the First World War. From 1914 onwards, aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery could no longer be ignored and played an important, if not decisive tactical role on the battlefield. In Holland, like in the belligerent countries, an air defense-organisation had to be build up almost from scratch. But in contrary to countries like France, Britain and Germany, this nation lacked industrial resources and the knowledge to do so independently. Besides, export bans prevented the neutral country from buying modern aircraft and anti-aircraft guns abroad. Nonetheless, the Dutch Armed Forces managed to keep up technically with the belligerents, although always one or two steps behind the latest developments. Of course this wasn't sufficient to make a stand against the many violations of Dutch airspace. There simply were not enough modern fighter aircraft and sophisticated anti-aircraft guns available, to enforce foreign pilots to avoid the Dutch skies. So the answer to the question posed here must be negative. Despite all efforts, the Netherlands didn't succeed in setting up a modern, centralised air defense-organisation with a sufficient number of modern anti-

¹² National Archives of the Netherlands (The Hague), 2.13.16, inv.nr. 225, Afweergeschut tegen luchtvaartuigen.

aircraft guns and fighter-aircraft. The efforts made weren't all for nothing though. It at least ensured that the Netherlands in 1918 was not hopelessly behind in this field and could further build upon the small foundation laid during the war. In that respect it was at least worth something.

Amb. Dr. Dumitru Preda (Romania)
Romanian Neutrality (August 1914-August 1916)
The Economic and Military Preparedness

On 3 August 1914, the Crown Council met at Sinaïa, the summer royal residence in the Southern Carpathian Mountains, near the old border with the Habsburg Monarchy. The major political forces in the country were represented and it was decided, at a very explosive time, to adopt a position of armed neutrality in the form of “*expectation with defence of the frontiers*”.

Both belligerent camps had recognized Romanian’s state of neutrality, although their reactions to the position of the government in Bucharest differed.

The Romanian Prime-Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu knew that to drag his country into the bloody conflict going near its borders was to endanger the very existence of entire nation and independent State. Still, it was obvious that Romania could no longer preserve the neutral status declared in the Privy Council on 3 August 1914. Anyway, the neutral position these two years of active neutrality (August 1914-August 1916) could not be regarded as a too long term secure strategy. Brătianu was deeply concerned with increasing the national defence and military combat capacity. The Romanian leadership tried to entry in the big fight when it was better prepared for a long and uncertain course, and when favourable political, diplomatic, economic, psychological and military circumstances allowed such a decisive step to be taken.

For a period of two years, till August 1916, both the Entente and the Central Powers made efforts to obtain her support, these efforts ranged from promises of territory to threats of direct military occupation. Under these circumstances, conscious of the role the Romanian army could play in the balance of power in South-Eastern Europe, the Brătianu government made efforts to follow a path of prudence and diplomacy supported by a realistic vision on the political and military events taking place on the continent. Added to these were energetic and

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courageous efforts to prepare itself politically and militarily for a possible participation in the war.

Our contribution for the present Congress is a part of a synthesis which conclusions represents the result of more than three decades of intensive research in Romanian as well as foreign archives and libraries, a time when we published a significant number of studies concerning this subject.

From the beginning, we were conscious of the Western degree of ignorance on Romania's participation to WWI, so great that we thought that is necessary to give – at the centennial anniversary of the Great War – a synthesis which could offer a more accurate story, a valuable reference capable also to stimulate the interest to develop researches on this topic.

The outbreak of the war and the execution of the military operations in the immediate vicinity of the nation's frontiers created exceptionally complex problems for the national economy, problems with which it had hitherto never been encountered. Numerous industrial enterprises which depended on the import of raw and semi-processed material from the warring nations – which had been forced to limit their exports – were obliged to curtail their activity. The execution of all public works was suspended. Banking operations were considerably reduced as much of the capital had been withdrawn by foreign banks (especially the German and Austro-Hungarian banks). The National Bank of Romania increased its withdrawal tax to 7-8% and the "Savings Banks" were assailed by demands for the return of monies in their care. The costs of industrial goods increased substantially, agricultural products doubled in price bringing about inflation as well as speculation. The closure of the Straits through which 97% of exports and 60% of imports were carried out adversely affected economic life, while the volume and value of external commerce fell substantially. Some of the traditional markets in the West were closed; external commerce was directed towards the Central Powers in greater proportions.

In this critical situation when it was not possible to draw up the 1914-1915 budget, Romania took serious measures to reorganize the national economy, satisfy

internal needs as well as slow down inflation and speculation. From July 1914, prohibitive measures regarding animal exports as well as the means of transporting wheat and other cereals were put into effect. These were also extended to vegetables, oil producing plants, furs, leather and shoes, crude oil and other combustibles, telecommunications equipment, metallic objects as well as gold and silver coins. Goods trains leaving the country were forbidden and foreign partners were obliged to transport them with their own means of transportation. New customs taxes were introduced and they were payable in gold (1915).

In order to meet the increasing financial demands, especially those related to the war effort, Romania took four loans valuing 400 million lei at an interest rate of 2.54%. When the National Bank was required to pay back a part of the loan, it resorted to massive internal borrowing through public subscription at 5% interest. The populace responded and in three days (4-6 May) an amount of 408 million lei – exceeding all expectations – was raised. Also, many external loans which were significant in themselves for the orientation of Romanian foreign policy were taken. Thus, in December 1914, Romania took a secret loan from the “Italian Bank” to the tune of 10,012,500 Italian Lire at an interest rate of 6.5% per year in order to pay for the orders for arms and ammunition made from its factories. Another secret loan from the “Bank of England” to the tune of 5 million pounds sterling at an interest rate of 5% was made in January 1915 in order to pay for weapons ordered from Great Britain, France and Italy. In October 1915, another line of credit of 7 million also from the same Bank, and also at an interest rate of 5% per year was opened. The British hoped to draw the Romanians to the side of the Entente through giving these loans.

Romanian politics in the area of national defence in these years was dedicated to the supreme objective: to achieve the national State unity. In view of Romania’s resources at that time, the material and financial efforts which she was able to muster were remarkable by their very magnitude. Thus, taken account the budgetary allocation for the military, there was a significant increase as compared to

pre-war levels: for 1914/1915 – 98,112,472 lei, representing 16.3% of the total budget; for 1915/1916 – 97, 800, 000 lei (16%) and for 1916/1917 – 115,000,000 lei (17, 8%). To these must be extended the numerous credits which she received totalling, by 14 August 1916, 838,841,215 lei. It will be appreciated that the total spending for the military was, at the beginning of May 1916, 918530,173 lei.

The Romanian government, through the War Ministry headed by Ion I.C. Brătianu, and the General Staff went on to lay the plans for the training and equipping of the army. This they did through the mobilization and utilization of all the resources and entire productive potential of the nation.

The measures taken to increase peacetime and wartime capabilities was aimed at the numerical increase in size of the Romanian army through the incorporation of some categories of youths who, at the time, were exempted from military service; to this end, the law on military recruitment and the organization of the military was revised and as a result 416,242 men were recruited. Special attention was given to the hierarchy through the increase in the number of officers' schools and the intensification of the training of future commanders. In totality, in the years 1914-1916, 1,167 active second lieutenants and 2,643 reserve junior lieutenants were trained. The limits to the age of doctors in military service were increased and medical graduates were called to arms. By setting up new commands, large units, units and subunits, in August 1916, the Romanian peace troops' structure was:

Arms and Services	Organizational structures	Total by category	Total
Infantry	Divisions	10	10
	Regiments	40 Active 40 Reserve	80
	Battalions	120 Active 10 Chasseurs 120 Reserve	250
Frontier Guards	Brigades	1	1
	Regiments	2	2
	Battalions	6	6

Cavalry	Divisions	2	
	Regiments	12 Roşiori 10 Călăraşi	22
	Squadrons	48 Permanent 40 Substitutes	88
Artillery	Brigades	10 Field 2 Heavy	12
	Regiments	25 Field 4 Heavy 5 Light Mortars 1 ^{1/2} Mountain Mortars 1 Siege Mortar 1 Mounted Artillery 1 Fortress artillery*	38 ^{1/2} * plus 3 fortress artillery battalions each with 14 Cp. for FNG defensive line
	Batteries	150 Field 32 Heavy 30 Light cannons 10 Mountain 7 Siege 7 Mounted artillery	236
Engineers	Regiments	1 Train 1 Pioneer	2
	Battalions	1 Specialized 5 Pioneers	6
Navy	Danube Division	4 Monitors 8 Gunboats 4 Torpedo boats 33 Naval Services	49
	Sea Division	5 Battleships	5
Aeronautical Forces	Aviation Corps	4 Flight Squadrons	4
	Air force Bases	4 Companies	4
Health Services	Health Companies	5 Companies	5
Subsistence Services	Services Companies	5 companies	5
Train crews	Train Squadron	5 Train Squadrons	5

Within the *Plan for the completion, transformation and reformation of weapons, munitions and war materials* as well as the *Plan for the completion of*

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equipment, one of the first measures taken was the reorganization of the national industry from peacetime production to wartime production. The Romanian government took responsibility for investments and orders as well as for their control. The restructuring of industry for military production was a complex matter. None of the Powers, with the exception of Germany, had taken such a step, partly due to their prognosis of a short military conflict. But, even from the earliest military operations, the weapons consumption was so huge that it determined the turning to these “industrial armies”, as the politician David Lloyd-George labelled them. Taking into consideration the resources existing in the country, as well as the drastic reduction of the import possibilities in this field, and those military establishments had a reduced production capacity, the efforts made to satisfy the needs of the army by both the public and private sectors were notable.

To this end, detailed studies on the industrial units which could be used to assure the necessary stocks of materials in view of a long term conflict were made by the Technical Industries Commission (TIC), set up on 1 April 1915 and assigned to the Ministry of War in order to evaluate the internal resources available. The TIC, headed by Engineer Grigore Stratilescu, has integrated eminent personalities in this field. Its main task was to coordinate and to control the management of the military industry. To this end, the country was split into 7 industrial regions, the production capacity was increased and new factories were planned. A number of industrial units in Bucharest, such as “Wolf”, “Vulcan”, and “Lemaître”, and the “Fernic” naval dockyard in Galați and other manufacturing works in the Prahova Valley etc. were readjusted for the war production. About 22,000 workers, technical experts and engineers were employed in these state and private units while another 1,000 workers were being trained in special schools for the weapons production.

Military establishments such as the Army Arsenal in Bucharest, the Pyrotechnical Industry of Cotroceni and the Gun Powder Factory of Dudești (both near Bucharest) were reorganized and modernized. Many kinds of missiles were made in the workshops at Constanța port, through the initiative of Engineer Mihai

Cioc, at the end of 1914. At the same time, in 1915, a leading body to coordinate services – the Section of Stages and the Rear Services – was also created, including, for example, the Military Bakeries.

Under the leadership of the Chief of the Administration Directorate, General Constantin Zaharia, measures to increase the production of food and clothing for the military were taken. Military bakeries were improved and several warehouses were also built in various parts of the country.

A Central Sanitary Council was created. Also, the Directorate of the Military Sanitary Service proceeded to stock materials, drugs and pharmaceutical products, required for the military troops and, with the cooperation of Dr Constantin I. Angelescu, Minister of Public Works, fully equipped sanitary trains were organized.

The Army Cartographic Service prepared maps of the country and of the neighbouring war theatres. On 23 November 1915, the General Directorate of Munitions was created in place of the Technical Industries Commission as an executive body within the Ministry of War, under the leadership of Engineer Anghel Saligny, the famous builder of the “Carol I” bridge at Cernavodă (on the Danube). This Directorate coordinated the activities of many other bodies in the public and private sectors as well as military establishments; it was also a special department for supplies from foreign countries and a service for the industrial mobilization.

Due to the intense activities of the engineers, technicians and workers, of the officers and soldiers, the defence industry was reorganized into 11 public industrial units and 59 private factories and workshops.

Between July 1914 and August 1916 about 400,000 missiles, 250,000 fuses, 1,500 ammunition wagons and tracks, 332 carriages for 53 mm and 57 mm cannons, 45 million cartridges, 110 million triggers and 70 million bullets for the infantry; 12 million chargers, 40,000 tubes and 112,000 artillery fuses 22,000 missiles and luminous signals, 450,000 kg of gunpowder 100,000 “Savopol” grenades; 137 million infantry cases, 740,000 pistols and revolver cases, 320,000 artillery projectiles were all manufactured; 3,000 carriages and tracks were repaired, and

35,000 guns, 300 canisters and 160 gun-carriages were made. Three factories for the production of phenol, picric acid and trinitrotoluene were under construction, in order to produce 1,500 kg of explosives daily.

In order to satisfy the requirements of the army and to compensate for the short falls of Romanian industry, significant imports of ammunition, weapons and equipment were made. Special commissions of officers were created to visit Italy, France, Spain, Great Britain, Switzerland, USA and Russia to launch orders for weapons and equipment to be sending home. Aside from the deliveries from the members of the Entente, or from the neutral states (USA and Switzerland) Romania also sought to assure its war requirements from the Central Powers. It is known that military hardware necessary for the equipping of the Romanian army was mainly imported from Germany, especially in the decades following the conquering of independence. But now, when the Romanians showed their obvious siding with the Entente, German and Austro-Hungarian exports were restricted and Romania received fewer and fewer weapons and ammunitions.

In order to continue the delivery fighting means, Germany imposed conditions which compromised Romania's neutral stand. For example, it demanded passage for 25 wagons loaded with weapons and 14 aircraft to the Ottoman Empire as well as the tacit acceptance of passage of war materials towards Bulgaria and passage for the transportation of cereals and foddors to Germany. The Romanian Government was required to ensure – on the railroads – the transport of 150 wagons with mineral oil. For political reasons, some of the German demands were accepted and in turn the Germans allowed the delivery of war materials to Romania. Nonetheless, in 1915, Germany and the Austria-Hungary ceased to supply the Brătianu government with any kind of materials that could be used in equipping the Romanian army.

At the end of 1914, Colonel Vasile Rudeanu, Head of the Superior Department of Armaments in the Ministry of War, signed several contracts in Italy which produced 4 “Déport” antiaircraft cannons, 50 million shells for the

“Mannlicher” infantry gun, model 1893, with a calibre of 6.5 mm, over 100,000 shrapnels and over 100,000 kg of dynamite, 140 tons of potassium nitrate etc. Later he was sent to France, in February 1915, in order to sign new contracts. The first transaction was signed on 8 March 1915 to the tune of 5,123,000 lei as well as commissions of 1,024,780 lei approved of by the Liberal cabinet in Bucharest on 18 April. The second arrangement was signed as we mentioned on 20 January 1916.

Other contracts were also signed with some enterprises in Switzerland, Great Britain, and the United States for the acquisition of modern war equipment and other materials. Thus, from Great Britain, 300 motorcycles, 42,000 pairs of boots and significant amounts of medicines; from Switzerland, 100,000 Saint-Chamond fuses, 10,000 kg of potassium chlorate and 12 trucks; 40,000 revolvers and swords from Spain for the officers of the cavalry; 500 tons of brass destined for the munitions factories was obtained from Portugal as well as 3 million cases for 11 mm revolvers, various forms of equipment and tents from the USA. For the transport of those materials, the Thessalonica-Niš-Turnu Severin route was used until October 1915, when Serbia was invaded by the Bulgarian, German and Austro-Hungarian armies. After this, the only other route was through Northern Russia via the ports of Archangelsk and Murmansk which were difficult and very long. Under these circumstances, the supply of military hardware from Western Nations became very difficult and, in addition, some material destined for Romania was withheld by the Russians. This explains why from France only 9,982 “Lebel” fusils 8 mm had been received as well as 266 machine guns, 82,000 revolvers, 24 long and short cannons of 120 mm and two anti-aircraft cannons, 100 mortars (58 mm) all with their ammunition, 42,000 missiles for 105 mm mortars, 168,000 missiles of 75 mm, 10,000 missiles for 150 mm mortars 1912 model, 80 aircrafts of different kinds, three work trucks with electric transmission, 40 electric motors, 15 cameras, aviation lights, sanitary materials etc. Of the entire quantity of ammunition ordered from various foreign companies, between 1914 and 1916, only 72% was arriving; by category, 80% of infantry materials were delivered and of the artillery shells only

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1.8%. The non-fulfilment of contractual agreements as well as their tortuous transportation through Russia was a cause for the Romanian leadership's concern at the highest levels. All these questions were discussed with their allies in an effort to find solutions.

At the onset of 1914 summer, measures for the reinforcement of border crossings were taken. Under permanent threat of a possible Central Powers' attack, in the Western and Southern Carpathians, as well as on the Danube and in the South of Dobrogea, Romania proceeded to a partial call-up and concentration of her troops, a measure to enforce the country's neutrality as well as to instruct different categories of combat units and services.

Thus, the period of neutrality, which was intended for training was more active than anticipated. At the same time, the 1912 contingent, which should had been put in reserve in October 1914, was effectively kept under the flag until the declaration of war in August 1916; and from 1915 there were no more transfers from one segment of the army to another. In November 1915, the War Ministry endorsed a plan to mobilize three army commands of the General Headquarters, to which 5 army corps, 16 infantry divisions, 5 mixed territorial brigades, a border guard brigade, two cavalry brigades, three heavy artillery regiments, 8 mountain batteries, river pontoons, as well as the Aviation Corps were subordinated. In April 1916, it was decided that, aside from these commands and units, the number of units to be mobilized would be increased and the destination of some units with specific missions as well as the terrain they were to occupy would be made clear.

The General Staff continued to give special attention to the consolidation of the defence lines in Dobrogea. From August 1914, fortification works were started for the zones of Turtucaia and Silistra and the renovations of fortified zones in Cernavodă and Bazargic were also carried out. Taking into account the possibility of the abandonment of the above-mentioned defence works, the General Staff decided in 1916 to build three more successive lines of defence namely: **a.** Hairanchioi (Dumbrăveni), Caraomer (Negru Vodă), Sarighiol (Albești), Mangalia; **b.** the Baci

marsh and Mulciova (Abrud), Cocargea (Pietreni), Cobadin, Topraisar, Tekirghiol, all connected among them to the Danube, between Mulciova and Hairanchioi; c. the third position was 5-6 km South of the railway line from Cernavodă to Constanța, between Cochirleni (on the Danube) and Murfatlar. The defensive structure of these lines were formed from the centres of resistance with firing trenches, various shelters and commanding points, munitions depots, protected firing positions for the artillery and networks of barbed wire. These positions covered the dominant heights of the terrain, intercepting possible enemy advance directions and supporting its flanks on strategic obstacles (the Danube, the Cernavodă fortifications, the Black Sea). At the time Romania entered the war, the Hârșova alignment were still being organized and fortified. A fixed barrier of 90 “Hertz” mines was too built for the defence of Constanța. The fortifications in Dobrogea in contrast to those at Turtucaia and Silistra were operational in July 1916.

In the spring of 1916, in the Eastern part of Bulgaria, there were signs of massive troop movements in an area previously occupied by the Bulgarian Third Army. In May 1916, the Romanian General Staff, in anticipation of a powerful concentration of Bulgarian and German forces, which would be a threat to the Capital, ordered measures to complete the fortification lines on the entire Danube front, especially over an area of about 40 km North of Giurgiu, in the direction of the Capital, between Neajlov, Argeș and Sabar rivers.

At the same time, measures to build barrages on the main routes across the Carpathians were made at Uz, Oituz, Putna, Buzău, the Tătaru Pass, Bratocea, Predeluș, Predeal, Bran, the Olt Valley, the Jiu Valley and the Vârciorova Pass. A system of defence positions was set up along the border line to Bucovina, between the Someș, Siret and Moldova valleys, ensuring the stability of the Romanian resistance against an enemy advancement.

In the years 1914-1916, the General Staff improved upon the existing rules and regulations and created some new others for the categories of weapons and fighting means recently introduced into the Romanian army (aircraft, automobiles,

wireless telegraph etc.). Among these were the *Provisional Instructions for the Use of Aircraft in the Time of War*; *Instructions for the Automobiles types to serve the Army during the Mobilization*; *Instructions on Telephony, Telegraphy (wire or wireless) and of the Optical Telegraphy for the Field Army*; *Instructions on the Mail and Telegraph Services during Campaigns*. Together with the perfection of new regulations, instructions and other normative acts translations – adapted to the Romanian situation – were made into Romanian from foreign military literature. Colonel Gheorghe Scărlătescu presented, at the Superior School of War, the volume *Tactical Drills and Movements for Companies, Battalions and Regiments*, an adaptation of Colonel R. von Breisen' book: *Problèmes tactiques de déploiement pour la compagnie, le bataillon, le régiment et la brigade*. His version was a distinct application to “the area and geographical surroundings of Bucharest” and “according to the provisions of our rules already in force”.

In the same time, the officers of the Romanian army also studied regulations in force of other armies – generally those of the possible enemies – considering that “a good preparation for war required a close knowledge of the forces and means at the disposal of the neighbours in a future armed conflict”. And the Romanians gave special attention to the regulations of the Austro-Hungarian army. Among all these, some changes on the strategic and tactical preparations of units and troops were made. This was also done in the area of principles and rules of organization and carrying out of armed conflict. Rules concerning the cooperation of the main categories of troops in the Romanian army – Infantry, Artillery and Cavalry – were given a definite shape. The provisional instructions for the divisions, during war, stipulated that “*the Infantry cannot act effectively without the efficient assistance of the Artillery*”.

The role of the different field armies was also partly revised. The infantry was to remain even under the new regulations the principal operational entity of the Romanian army. The large number of rules and regulations dedicated to the cavalry were due to its mobility which made it a unit useful for shock actions carried out

through “*surprise lightning blows*”.

There was also a considerable effort to define the scope and competence of the tactical units. The provisional instructions concerning the leadership of the great units (1914) established “*a unity of control in the methods and means of conducting*” these *elements* (armies, army corps and divisions), which by “*their very structure are capable to execute a variety of combinations*” and carried out long-term missions, requiring a large measure of initiative.

The new rules from this period brought important corrections regarding the role of the attack which was considered the best military method of fulfilling of Romania’s political aims. Bearing in mind the progress registered by the artillery, as well as the role played by automatic weapons in positional warfare, the schedule of the execution of the offensive was: the engagement of the avant-garde, the distribution out of large columns in battle formations, the distribution of divisions in deep arrangements etc. As a form of battle, the use of bayonets continued to play a role in the ensemble of the war.

As a result of all these as well as of the attempt to adapt to the complex demands of the battle field resulting from the last military confrontations which introduced new elements on the technical and tactical planes, the training of the Romanian army acquired a predominantly practical character. The measures introduced to gain a better knowledge and use of the new weapons and arms available had a positive effect on the morals of the troops.

The years of neutrality (1914-1916) were years of intense military preparation so that at the right moment, the army could contribute to the national goal to bring together all Romanians.

During this period, efforts were made to equip, organize and train the army to the standards of the military forces of the Central Powers. Surmounting numerous internal and external difficulties through sustained effort, a military entity capable of adapting itself to the peculiarities of the nations to be combated was created. This process was characterized, as in other wars of liberation and national unity, by a

mobilization of the entire human and material potential of the nation. In January 1916, General Grigore Crăiniceanu stated: “*Today, it has been fully proven that war can no longer be fought with armies alone, but with the entire force of the population. First it must mobilize not only the armed men including the army, but also involve the civilian population. All the mental and material resources of each citizen in part and of the entire population as a whole must help in the war. If not, war can no longer be made nor can victory be obtained and one can no longer live in freedom and independence*”.

Without playing down the older deficiencies persisting in the equipping and instruction of our troops, the army which Romania had trained for the war of national unity was well structured, homogenous, possessed of an average capacity for battle and raised morals resulting from the objective of liberation.

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La Question Polonaise Pendant La Première Guerre Mondiale

La Pologne a-t-elle vraiment participé à la première guerre mondiale ? Elle n'exista en tant qu'Etat indépendant qu'à partir du 11 novembre 1918 ; avant cette date elle été divisée entre trois empires : l'Allemagne, la Russie et l'Autriche-Hongrie. C'était le résultat du trois partages dont le troisième avait lieu en 1795. Pendant cette longue période durant plus que 120 ans la nation polonaise vivait dans trois pays différents. Les Polonais comme citoyens allemand, russe et autrichien ont été obligés de faire la service militaire dans les armées envahisseurs. En résultat au début de la guerre les jeunes Polonais ont été mobilisés et ont participé au combat faisant partie des armées ennemi. Pendant la période 1914-1918 plus que 4,5 millions Polonais ont participé à la guerre dont 450 milles ont trouvé la mort.

Dès août 1914, les occupants de la Pologne avaient fait assaut de flatteries et de promesses pour se concilier les Polonais et disposer d'eux. Le 9 août 1914, c'est l'état-major autrichien qui promettait « la libération du jong moscovite et justice »¹ Le même jour l'état-major allemand proclamait « par des efforts réunis, nous chasserons des frontières de la Pologne les hordes asiatiques ; nous vous apporterons la liberté et l'indépendance »² Une semaine plus tard, le 15 août (fête catholique de l'Assomption !) le grand-duc Nicolas adressait aux Polonais une proclamation écrite étonnante où on peut trouver les mots suivants : « Les troupes russes vous portent la nouvelle solennelle de la réconciliation. Que le peuple polonais s'unifie sous le sceptre du tsar russe. Sous le sceptre renaitra la Pologne libre dans sa religion, sa langue et dans son autonomie »³. Cependant,

¹ M. Eckert, *Historia Polski 1914-1939*. Warszawa 1990, p.17

² H. Zieliński, *Historia Polski 1914-1939*, Wrocław 1983, p. 25

³ J. Pajewski, *Historia powszechna 1871-1918*. Warszawa 1978, p. 416

les évènements ont démontré rapidement l'hypocrisie de cet appel. Dès l'avance de l'armée russe, l'occupation de la Galicie orientale et prise de Lwow, l'administration russe s'est livrée à la russification à outrance avec la déportation en Sibérie de nombreux intellectuels et des prêtres catholiques et uniates, remplacés par les popes orthodoxes.

Après la grande offensive austro-allemande dans le front de l'Est en 1915, quand la partie russe du territoire de la Pologne a été prise par les Allemands, Berlin et Vienne ont décidé de refaire une tentative envers les Polonais. Le 5 novembre 1916, parut « le Manifeste des deux empereurs » qui propose à la Pologne de lui permettre de créer un état indépendant, mais seulement avec les territoires reconquis sur la Russie !

Quelle était la position de politiciens polonais vis-à-vis de trois puissances envahisseurs et la perspective de la récupération de l'indépendance ? En 1914 les forces politiques polonaises pouvaient se classer en deux catégories. Les partis et organisations qui ne voyaient le salut de la Pologne que dans l'Entente et ceux qui ne l'envisageaient que par l'alliance autrichien.

Les partis de la droite polonaise étaient les plus représentatifs des ententophiles. Ils disposaient d'un véritable corpus doctrinal grâce aux écrits de Roman Dmowski. Ils jouaient la carte de l'Entente prenant en compte l'incompatibilité des intérêts vitaux entre l'Allemagne et la Pologne luttant pour l'appropriation des mêmes territoires. Durant tout le conflit, ils adoptèrent une attitude passive face à toutes les tentatives de règlement de la question polonaise par les puissances centrales.

Les ententophiles recherchaient l'alliance russe considérant que la Prusse et a fortiori l'empire allemand représentaient l'ennemi mortel de la Pologne du fait du « Drang nach Osten ». Les partisans de l'Entente fondèrent Varsovie le Comité National Polonais (Komitet Narodowy Polski - KNP). Les membres du

Comité remirent au généralissime Nicolas un projet d'organisation d'une ligue militaire polonaise et une légion sur le front russo-allemand⁴.

Les partis de gauche représentaient par Józef Piłsudski appuyaient l'Autriche sur la route pour l'indépendance. Piłsudski a créé pendant la période d'avant-guerre en Galicie, où la tolérance des autorités autonomes polonaises se doublait d'un intérêt autrichien de la part de Vienne, une société paramilitaire plus ou moins secrète.

Le 6 août 1914, jour de la déclaration de guerre de l'Autriche à la Russie, J. Piłsudski et trois bataillons de ses chasseurs franchirent sans ordre la frontière russe et s'emparèrent le 11 août de la ville de Kielce prévue pour être le point de concentration des forces autrichiennes et allemandes⁵. Quelques jours plus tard, sous la pression des troupes russes, il dut retraiter et franchir de nouveau la frontière en Galicie. L'action de Piłsudski était un événement plus politique que militaire, elle présentait la volonté de la lutte contre la Russie à côté de l'Autriche.

Les Autrichiens goûtèrent peu la présence d'éléments incontrôlables sur leurs avant-gardes. Vienne et les activistes de Galicie créèrent alors le 16 août un organe de contrôle des forces polonaises. Ce Comité Suprême Polonais (Naczelny Komitet Narodowy – NKN) fut fondé comme suprême instance pour les questions d'organisation militaire, financière et politique des forces polonaises commandées par le brigadier J. Piłsudski. Son département militaire chargé d'assurer l'interface des troupes de Piłsudski fut dirigé jusqu'en 1916 par Władysław Sikorski.

Le Comité a obtenu des autorités autrichiennes la création de deux Légions, chacune devait comprendre 8 bataillons d'infanterie à 1000 baïonnettes, 3 escadrons de cavalerie de 150 hommes et 2 bataillons d'artillerie. Le Comité a exprimé sa volonté que la langue polonaise soit la langue du service et du

⁴ J. Molenda, *Piłsudczycy a Narodowi Demokraci*. Warszawa 1980, p.137

⁵ M. Eckert, *op. cit.* p. 19

commandement, que les Légions disposent de leurs propres insignes et étendards, que la nomination des officiers se fasse sur la proposition du Comité par le commandement en chef des Légions, enfin que le serment des Légions comprenne la notion « combattre pour la liberté de la Pologne ».

Les autorités militaires autrichiennes ont acquis sur la question de la langue et des uniformes mais pas des insignes nationaux. Les Légions furent considérées comme faisant partie intégrante de l'armée autrichienne. Elles furent assimilées au Landsturm (levée de masse) et rattaché organiquement au ministère de la Landwehr. En conséquence, le serment à prononcer par les troupes fut celui du Landsturm. Il ne comprenait pas l'assertion « combattre pour la liberté de la Pologne ».

Les Polonais réunis dans les Légions comptants trois brigades combattaient sur tous les fronts. Malgré ses ambiguïtés politiques et ses distorsions avec le commandement austro-allemand les Polonais ont livré bataille en Galicie, dans les Carpates et en Volhynie. Le 25 juillet 1916 le brigadier J. Piłsudski a présenté sa démission du commandement de la 1- ère brigade pour manifester son mécontentement contre l'inertie des occupants sur la question polonaise au regard des pertes et des sacrifices endurés par les Légions. En conséquence de la crise vis-à-vis de la question polonaise le 20 septembre 1916 l'état- major autrichien a transformé les Légions en Corps Auxiliaires Polonais (Polnische Hilfskorps). La seule différence notable fut l'octroi d'étendards polonais⁶.

Après le manifeste de deux empereurs du 5 novembre 1916 toute l'attention de Centraux a porté sur la création de l'armée polonaise. Quatre jours après la publication du rescrit un appel aux armes fut lancé par les deux Gouverneurs-Généraux de Lublin et Varsovie pour promouvoir la défense par les Polonais de leur nouvel Etat. Et de fait, le Conseil d'Etat polonais ne se réunit

⁶ J. Cisek, M. Cisek, *Do niepodległości*. Warszawa 2008, p. 265.

pour la première fois qu'en janvier 1917 alors que la Diète prévue ne fut jamais convoquée.

Malgré l'étroitesse des concessions austro-allemandes (les Allemands ont proposé d'organiser la Polnische Wehrmacht), ses derniers en tirèrent avantage face à l'Entente. La Russie, engoncée dans son principe d'indivisibilité ne pouvait proposer mieux. La France et la Grande Bretagne ne pouvaient faire de propositions sous prétexte de mécontenter Moscou. Le 26 février 1917, Aristide Briand a signé avec l'ambassadeur russe à Paris un accord laissant toute latitude à la France pour la définition de ses frontières orientales (Alsace-Lorraine, Sarre) contre une même latitude laissée à la Russie dans l'élaboration de ses frontières occidentales.

Après la première révolution russe la France put développer sa propre politique vis-à-vis la question polonaise. Elle s'est engagée dans la création d'une armée polonaise combattant sur le théâtre français. Son érection lui permit de se montrer en pointe sur la question polonaise, l'armée étant un instrument de souveraineté. Par un décret du 4 juin 1917 signé par le président de la République, une armée polonaise autonome, sous le drapeau polonais et placée sous « le haut commandement français » fut créée⁷. Elle fut constituée de Polonais vivant en France non concernés par la conscription, mais aussi de volontaires des Etats-Unis ou bien des pays de l'Entente ou neutres ainsi que des prisonniers militaires polonais en détention. Le 20 mai 1917, par décret, une mission militaire franco-polonaise fut constituée pour assurer la question humaine et matérielle de cette construction. L'armée polonaise en France dit « l'armée bleu » comptait 17000 hommes quand le général Józef Haller prit son commandement à son arrivée en France de la Russie en juillet 1918.

Finalement à la fin de la guerre « l'armée bleu » représentait le potentiel de 50000 hommes : trois divisions d'infanterie, quelques chars et une force

⁷ W. Trawiński, *Odyseja Polskiej Armii Błękitnej*. Wrocław 1989, p.31

aérienne de sept escadres de reconnaissance, d'observation et de chasse. C'était l'armée polonaise du général J. Haller, qui l'avait amenée en France du front russe après la paix séparée germano-soviétique, et qui la ramènera en Pologne en 1919. Puis, cette armée a participé à la guerre polono-bolcheviste de 1919 à 1921.

La création d'une armée nationale polonaise posait pour les autorités françaises le problème de la reconnaissance d'une autorité politique contrôlant cette armée. La seule organisation qui aurait été légitime était le Conseil d'Etat de Varsovie. Fort heureusement pour elles, le 15 août 1917 fut créé à Lausanne en Suisse un Comité National Polonais (Komitet Narodowy Polski- KNP) rassemblant de nombreux partis politiques polonais ententophiles⁸. Il fut transféré à Paris quelques jours après. Les deux principaux fondateurs étaient Roman Dmowski sur place et le pianiste Ignacy Jan Paderewski aux Etats-Unis. La France a reconnu le Comité comme organisation représentant la Pologne et comme autorité politique de l'armée polonaise, dit « l'armée bleue ». Cette armée était traitée comme une armée « autonome, alliée et belligérante sous un commandement polonais unique ».

Cependant en Pologne occupée par les Allemands et les Autrichiens on peut observer beaucoup de changements. Sentant le vent tourner définitivement en faveur des thèses ententophiles, Piłsudski a organisé la rupture avec l'Alliance en donnant sa démission du Conseil d'Etat. Le Conseil a adopté une déclaration de serment allant dans ce sens qu'il fut distribué au Corps Auxiliaires Polonais. Elle n'était destinée qu'aux troupes ressortissantes du l'ancien Royaume de Pologne, les Galiciens relevant du contrôle de l'armée autrichienne. Le serment fut très mal accueilli par les troupes. Quatre régiments d'infanterie ont refusé de le prononcer ainsi que trois régiments de lanciers et les deux régiments d'artillerie. Les troupes frondeuses furent internées et leurs officiers dégradés par les autorités militaires austro-allemands qui n'ont apprécié ni l'initiative du

⁸ R. Dmowski, *Polityka polska i odbudowanie państwa*. Warszawa 1988, p.200.

Conseil ni la fronde des troupes. Piłsudski fut, en outre arrêté et emprisonné dans la forteresse de Magdebourg dans la nuit du 21 au 22 juillet 1917⁹.

L'effet de ces décisions fut désastreux sur les Polonais. Les Austro-Allemands essayèrent de regagner leur sympathie par une création du Conseil de Régence (Rada Regencyjna) composé de trois membres qui seraient nommés par les monarques des puissances d'occupation en attendant la mise en place d'une monarchie constitutionnelle.

Envisageant la question polonaise à la fin de la guerre il faut souligner la position des Etats Unis. Le 8 janvier 1918 le président Woodrow Wilson avait adressé un message officiel en quatorze points au Senat. Dans le point XIII, Wilson déclarait : »Un Etat polonais devra être établi. Il devra comprendre les territoires habités par des population incontestablement polonaises, auxquelles on devra assurer un libre accès a la mer et dont l'indépendance économique et politique, ainsi que l'intégrité territoriale, devront être garanties par un accord international »¹⁰. Apres cette déclaration il fallut attendre cinq mois, jusqu'au 3 juin 1918, pour que la France, l'Angleterre et l'Italie confirment le XIIIème point de Wilson par une déclaration commune : « La création d'un Etat polonais uni et indépendant, avec libre accès a la mer, constitue une des conditions d'une paix solide et juste et d'un régime de droit en Europe ».

Le président Raymond Poincarécélèbre ce retour de la Pologne parmi les puissances en rendant hommage à l'héroïsme des combattants polonais en France et en leur remettant les drapeaux offerts par les municipalités de Paris, Nancy, Verdun et Belfort¹¹.

Quelques mois plus tard, l'Armistice est signé le 11 novembre sur la base des quatorze points de Wilson. La veille, J. Piłsudski a été libéré de la forteresse de Magdebourg. Le 11 novembre Piłsudski est nommé Commandant en chef de

⁹ A. Garlicki, Józef Piłsudski 1867-1935. Warszawa 1980, p.121

¹⁰J. Pajewski, Historia powszechna 1871-1918. Warszawa 1978, p. 251

¹¹ M. Zgórnjak, Armia Polska we Francji 1917-1918. Kraków, p.120

l'Armée Polonaise, et le Conseil de Régence de la Pologne indépendante lui remettre le pouvoir le 14 novembre. En décembre 1918, arrive en Pologne I. Paderewski, compositeur, pianiste et homme politique polonais éminent. Il avait usé de son influence personnelle sur le président Wilson pour le gagner à la cause de la Pologne. Piłsudski lui confie la mission de constituer un gouvernement de large coalition. Paderewski devient Premier ministre et ministre des Affaires étrangères. Une coopération s'établit entre le gouvernement de Varsovie et le Comité National Polonais de Paris, dont R. Dmowski est la personnalité marquante. Piłsudski comme Chef d'Etat délègue Paderewski et Dmowski à la Conférence de Versailles. C'est le Traité de Versailles qui proclame officiellement, en juin 1919 la restauration de la Pologne avec restitution immédiate de la plupart des territoires annexés par la Prusse, la Russie et l'Autriche-Hongrie il y a 123 ans. Mais, il faudra des plébiscites locaux pour fixer le sort de certaines régions occidentales ainsi que des insurrections en Silésie et en Grande Pologne (Posnanie). Rien n'est décidé concernant la frontière de l'Est. C'est seulement la guerre polono-bolcheviste, quand la Russie bolcheviste voulait faire déferler sa révolution vers l'Ouest, et le Traité de Riga de 18 mars 1921 établiront définitivement la forme territoriale de l'Etat Polonais.

Commander Todor Dimitrov (Bulgaria)

Defence of the Bulgarian sea coast during the First World War

Before the Balkan Wars military and political views in Bulgaria regarding sea coast defence were controversial and there was a major debate if the state needed a Navy. The dominant position was that the outcome of a future conflict will be resolved only by ground force. In the early twentieth century Bulgarian Navy was an insignificant fighting force, as the national political and military establishment did not consider it especially important in the armed forces structure. The possibility for an amphibious invasion from neighboring maritime country was underestimated, as well as its potential influence on the inland warfare. The virtually unhindered naval support to the Turkish ground forces during the First Balkan War, radically altered perceptions of the future role of the Bulgarian Navy. Public attitudes and print media stood behind the idea of the necessity of building a modern sea power.

Considering the desire of the Bulgarian political leadership for unification of the Bulgarian nation and military reprisal for the national catastrophe in 1913, the military and political situation suggested creating a strong and balanced maritime force. In 1913 approximately 17,2 million leva were allocated for buying ships and in 1914 the sum was doubled to 35 million leva for planned buying of nine torpedo-boats, five submarines and six hydroplanes. A campaign for raising a voluntary contributions started¹.

Due to lack of funding pre-war building programs of the Navy remained unfulfilled. Combat training was conducted with the available platforms. Present

¹ Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001, с. 33-48 [Kozuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW, p.33-48].

vessels on Black Sea component included six torpedo-boats² and an old training cruiser³. In service were 197 naval barrage mines type "Saute-Arles", all used 2-3 times⁴. Coastal artillery also remained unchanged from the Balkan wars and consisted of the following pieces: 2x240-mm, 2x100-mm, 1x76-mm and -mm⁵. In September 1914 Burgas and Varna Bays were mined.

Command of the Third Army designated coastal defence to Varna fortified point (VFP) and Burgas garrison, assigning to them the 14th and 15th border battalions respectively. VFP was ordered to resist against sea landings and to observe and defend the Balchik and Dobrich directions. Measures were taken for rapid fortification of the Burgas garrison and after 30 November 1915 Burgas was considered a second degree fortified point and was included into the composition of the army. The Third Army was augmented by 105-th German division, which acted as manoeuvrable formation with main objective to defend the Black Sea coast and repulse amphibious operations around Varna and Burgas⁶.

In 1915 the Bulgarian Navy consisted of three military territorial units: the Danube fleet, Black Sea and Aegean Sea components. At the start of World War I (WW1) the Black Sea component based in Varna, Aegean Sea component

² Displacement 97 tons, maximum speed 26 knots, armament: 2x47-mm artillery units, 3x470-mm torpedo apparatus.

³ Displacement 720 tons, maximum speed 18 knots, armament: 2x100mm, 2x65mm, 2x47mm artillery units, 2x380mm torpedo apparatus.

⁴ Павлов, В. Българският Военноморски флот в Първата световна война 1915 – 1918 г., Военноисторически сборник, №2, 1971, с.60 [Pavlov, Bulgarian Navy during the 1WW 1915 – 1918, p.60].

⁵ Лудогоров, Спомени за дейността на флота и гарнизона на Варненския укрепен пункт през войната 1912-1913 г., Военно-исторически сборник, кн. 5 и 6, 1927 г., с.10 [Ludogorov, Memories of the activities of the fleet and the garrison of Varna fortified point in the war 1912-1913, p.10]

⁶ Прокопиев, А. Отбрана на морското крайбрежие от Българската армия през войните за национално обединение на България 1912 – 1918 г. – Дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор”, с.110 [Prokopiev, Defense of sea coast from Bulgarian army during the wars for national unification of Bulgaria, p.110].

- in Dedeagach (today Alexandroupoli), Training unit and the Arsenal of Varna fell under the oversight of the Navy headquarters. Varna was designated a fortified point under the command of Col (Eng.) Atanas Yankov. The Black Sea component of the Navy⁷ was included in VFP . The defence of the maritime sector of VFP was performed by fixed and mobile naval forces. Fixed defence included shore installations, e.g. coastal artillery batteries, trenches and mining enclosures. Mobile defence consisted of Navy surface units reinforced with two German submarines - U-7 and U-8⁸ . On October 1915 the personnel of the Navy comprised 59 officers, 33 technicians and clerks, 3167 non-commissioned officers and sailors⁹ .

Available forces and resources of VFP didn't meet the estimates made for its defence. However, it had deeply echeloned and well engineered fortifications, including counter-landing, front, intermediate and main defensive positions. Considering the inadequacy of forces and resources, the Command of the Third Army assigned 105th German Division to repel landings on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast by redeploying from its main area to the threatened zone¹⁰ . Besides the artillery defense of VUP was reinforced by three quick-firing batteries and a slow-firing 8.7 cm battery from Shumen fortress battalion, a 6-inches (15 cm) battery from Vidin, a 57 mm cupola and a 47 mm batteries also from Shumen¹¹ .

⁷ Антонов, Г. и др. История на българския военноморски флот, С., ВИ, 1989 [Antonov, History of the Bulgarian Navy].

⁸ For base of submarines was selected Varna, because their goal was to oppose the actions of the Russian fleet on the northern Bulgarian coast, as well as to undertake raids against Russian shores.

⁹ Скутунов, К. Морската война. С., Печатница на армейския военно-издателски фонд, 1926, с.19 [Skutunov, Naval war, p.19]

¹⁰ Прокопиев, А. Организиране отбраната на морското крайбрежие от Варненския укрепен пункт в началото на Първата световна война (1915 – 1918), Велико Търново, ВНФ, 2000, с.439 [Prokopiev, Organizing the defense of the sea coast of Varna fortified point at the beginning of the First World War (1915-1918), p.439]

¹¹ Прокопиев, А. Отбрана на морското крайбрежие от Българската армия през войните за национално обединение на България 1912 – 1918 г. – Дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор”, с.115 [Prokopiev, Defense 351]

During the 1WW the Black Sea theatre faced significant concentration of forces. Bulgaria was included in the course of the war after the large army groupings had already been deployed, including in the Black Sea area. The relatively small forces of the Bulgarian Navy were placed under the oversight of the combined German-Turkish-Bulgarian fleet commanded by Admiral Souchon. In September 1915 a plan for cooperation between the Bulgarian Navy and the German-Turkish fleet was drafted. In operational terms, the Bulgarian fleet was subordinated to Admiral Souchon, whose headquarters were based in Istanbul. German and Turkish warships had the right to enter the Bulgarian ports without prior authorization ¹².

Joining the Central Powers, at the beginning of October 1915 Bulgaria began offensive operation against Serbia. Demonstrating allied solidarity England, France and Russia retaliated along the Bulgarian coast. On 8 October 1915 at 13 hrs an Entente shipping group of 10 warships bombed Dedeagatch. Bulgarian batteries didn't return fire and didn't reveal their positions. They were ordered to shoot only when the actual landing was carried out. The same day at 14 hrs second squadron of 12 warships delivered artillery attack against Porto Lagos. Bombing of ship groups and hydroplanes continued almost daily from 8 to 19 October 1915 over Dedeagatch, Porto Lagos, Badoma and other points along the Aegean Sea. Aegean coast shelling continued in 1916. In early 1916 after an intense five-hour bombardment the town of Dedeagatch was destroyed completely by the English-French group which included an Italian ship.

On 14 October 1915 a Russian squadron of 22 ships shelled Varna after an aerial bombardment from 3 hydroplanes. Coastal artillery didn't open fire because the Russian ships were outside its shooting distance. Protection of the

of sea coast from Bulgarian army during the wars for national unification of Bulgaria, p.115].

¹²Павлов, В. Българският Военноморски флот в Първата световна война 1915 – 1918 г., Военноисторически сборник, №2, 1971, с.62 [Pavlov, Bulgarian Navy during the 1WW 1915 – 1918, p.62].

city from greater destruction and casualties was due to two German submarines UB-7 and UB-8 which countered the Russian ships¹³. On 7 December 1915 another raid was carried out by two Russian destroyers type "Bistriy" which passed through the northern passage of the minefield and moved to Varna. Near St. Konstantin they were intercepted by the "Drazki" torpedo-boat on duty and an artillery skirmish ensued. After inclusion in the crossfire of 240-mm and 100-mm shore batteries Russian ships withdrew to the North under the cover of fog.

Russian raid operations remained incomplete, but affected the posture of the Third Bulgarian army with a plan to enhance counter-landing defence of VFP¹⁴. Measures were also taken to enhance the protection by strengthening the coastal artillery installations, improving the density of minefields¹⁵, and composition of the Bulgarian Navy was increased. Most significant were the acquired resources on the Black Sea, where for the first time the Navy created two type of forces - underwater forces and naval aviation. In May 1916 "Instruction for diversion landings on the Black Sea coast" was introduced¹⁶. One new battery was deployed in Burgas and two - in Varna¹⁷. In July 1916 for the first time in the naval area of responsibility a four-barrel 87-mm air defence battery was placed. German shore batteries were delivered, although almost unusable. 560 type "Carbonite" and "E-large" mines were delivered also from

¹³ Канавров, Д. Морският бой при Балчик декември 1916 г.С, ВИ, 2010 [Kanavrov, Sea battle near Balchik December 1916].

¹⁴ Антонов, Г. и др. История на българския военноморски флот. С., ВИ, 1989 [Antonov, History of the Bulgarian Navy].

¹⁵ Скутунов, К. Морската война, с.196 [Skutunov, Naval war, p.196].

¹⁶ Прокопиев, А. Отбрана на морското крайбрежие от Българската армия през войните за национално обединение на България 1912 – 1918 г. – Дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор”, с.158 [Prokopiev, Defense of sea coast from Bulgarian army during the wars for national unification of Bulgaria, p.158].

¹⁷ In the area "Trakata" (in the North from Varna) was deployed a German 150 mm battery with two guns (D-45); north of Cape Galata were mounted four 9-inch guns. In total Defense of Varna Bay used 10 large coastal guns with range from 7.8 to 11.5 km.

Germany, with which were layed off the cities of Varna and Burgas ¹⁸. Merchantman "Boris" was refitted in mine layer and on 19 January 1916 it completed the existing minefields with 224 mines ¹⁹.

On 25 May 1916 the first Bulgarian submarine with tactical number 18 was commissioned to the Black Sea Component . On 1 May 1917 the first Bulgarian hydro air base was established in Varna lake. Initially it had four hydroplanes but gradually their number increased to ten. Before that the submarine and hydroplane crews had undergone training and education ²⁰. On 15 October 1915, the crew by Bulgarian sailors was formed and they practiced for a few months on German submarines UB-7 and UB-8. In June 1916 9 Bulgarian students and cadets from the Navy were posted at the shipyard in Kiel (Germany) for specialization in maintenance of submarines.

After the creation of hydro air base on Varna lake in November 1915 group of 26 Bulgarian sailors, led by Ensign 1 rank Preslav Lyapchev and Ensign 1 rank Sava Ivanov participated in the handling of aircraft together with German specialists. On 20 May 1916 13 sailors from this command, mostly students from the Engineering School were sent for specialization in German hydroplanes schools in Kiel and also on Norderney and Liszt islands.

Measures taken to improve the coastline defence yielded results. On 25 February 1916 near the river of Kamchiya on Bulgarian minefield came Russian destroyer "Lieutenant Pushtin" which struck a mine and sank.

After the transfer of the command of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea from Admiral Eberhard to Admiral Kolchak the nature of the activities of the

¹⁸ Антонов, Г. и др. История на българския военноморски флот. С., ВИ, 1989 [Antonov, History of the Bulgarian Navy].

¹⁹ Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

²⁰ Павлов, В. Българският Военноморски флот в Първата световна война 1915 – 1918 г., Военноисторически сборник, №2, 1971, с.67-68 [Pavlov, Bulgarian Navy during the 1WW 1915 – 1918, p.67-68].

theatre of operations changed. Russian forces began to lay mines in Bulgarian territorial sea. During the period July 1916 to July 1917 Russian forces set 1150 mines of different types ²¹. Some were placed underwater from the submarine mine layer "Crab". Lost to these offensive mining enclosures were the "Shumni" torpedo-boat, a coastal minesweeper ²², the "Varna" tugboat and the German submarine U-45.

In 1917, in order to enhance the antisubmarine defence of VFP, three coastal minesweepers were delivered from Germany, which later cleared ²³. passages in mining barrages.

After the entry of Romania into the war²⁴, Bulgarian Black Sea component assisted the advance of Third Army in Dobroudja by supporting its coastal flank, coastal installations and defending transportations in Varna Bay from opponent artillery shelling. Furthermore in collaboration with the German naval aviation launched joint attacks on enemy transportation vessels in the Danube delta ²⁵.

On 1 and 4 September 1916 Bulgarian torpedo boats conducted combat reconnaissance to Balchik where located coastal targets were bombarded by ship artillery. Submarine №18 also carried out recon activities. On 4 September 1916 naval aviation delivered 70 aviation bombs on enemy positions in Balchik and conducted reconnaissance. These actions were pre-fire preparation for the

²¹ Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

²² With Commanding officer Lieutenant (Navy) Minkov.

²³ Before that (On 18 November 1916) in Varna arrived Germany squadron, consisting of six minesweepers for cleaning of Bulgarian coast from active Russian mining enclosures.

²⁴ On 17 August 1916 Romania joined the Entente and on 01 September 1916 Bulgaria began the offence in Dobrudja.

²⁵ Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

planned tactical landing to Balchik, Kavarna and Cape Kaliakra of Port protection group - a Marine detachment.

On 5 September 1916 a landing convoy of five torpedo boats and three towed large boats headed from Varna. Units debarked in Balchik, Kavarna and Cape Kaliakra. The initially planned tactical landing transformed into administrative embarkation with total number of transported people 235 who didn't face resistance ashore and at entry into the towns because the enemy had withdrawn from the area ²⁶. Overall in the coming days on the North shore of Varna bay 745 people, 300 spare rifles and 600,000 cartridges were transported. After landing port protection companies organized commandant and semaphore service along the coast line ²⁷. All deployments were conducted at night and until 6 September they were covered by Bulgarian and German submarines. Subsequently port protection group continued its advance in Dobroudja along with the Third Army ²⁸.

On 6 September 1916 coastal defence was reorganised, thus creating Varna fortified region (VFR), divided into four sections. Initially coastal defence of Balchik and Kavarna was unsufficiently arranged and the adversary took advantage. Strike forces were deployed from Kustendja (Constanta) naval base . On 7 September destroyers "Bistriy" and "Gromkiy" stroke with artillery Balchik and Kavarna. Three Bulgarian hydroplanes detected and attacked the retreating destroyers with 30 aviation bombs. On 9 September 1916 a second attack on Balchik followed. On 11 September 1916, semaphore positions reported for a naval squadron and 4 hydroplanes on route to Varna. The lights in the city and the port were doused as 3 torpedo-boats and forces from the German hydro

²⁶ Скутунов, К. Морската война, с.199 [Skutunov, Naval war, p.199].

²⁷ Дървингов, П. Влияние на морската мощ върху историята на България, С, Печатница „Художник“, 1935, с.132 [Darvingov, Influence of sea power on the history of Bulgaria, p.132].

²⁸ Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

airbase were sent to meet the Russian force. When approaching over Varna the enemy hydroplanes were illuminated by ground floodlights and strafed by two anti-aircraft batteries. As result two machines were damaged and fell into the sea near Cape Kaliakra and Mangalia ²⁹.

Offensive actions of Russian ships and aircrafts in Balchik and Kavarna led to continued efforts in organising surface and air defence of the Bulgarian coast. Near Balchik a 100-mm battery, commanded by Captain Radkov, was deployed. Mine laying was performed also near the Romanian coast.

Once on 22 October 1916 Third Army captured Constanta, the Bulgarian Navy was given the task to defend around 400 km of coastline as far as the Romanian city. On 4 November a Russian squadron including the "Pamyat Merkur" cruiser and counter torpedo-boats bombarded oil tanks in Constanta. Aviation and artillery answered the attack, but it destroyed 15 oil reservoirs ³⁰.

On 13 December 1916 Russian surface strike group composed of the "Pamyat Merkur" and destroyers "Gromkiy" and "Schasliviyiy" approached Bulgarian coast with task to shell the port and warehouses of Balchik. The "Pamyat Merkur" gave her first salvo and Bulgarian 100-mm coast battery answered fire. Russian ships held fire and retreated out of the reach of the coastal artillery and proceeded to the east. In response naval aviation and submarine forces were activated. In total two Bulgarian and three German aircraft took off and the targets were attacked by one Bulgarian and two German bombers with 30 aviation bombs. Submarine №18 was also deployed to the Cape Kaliakra, to engage but after losing the target, proceeded on the opposite course to Varna. After a few minutes "Pamyat Merkur" resumed artillery duel with 100-mm coast

²⁹ Скутунов, К. Морската война, с.200 [Skutunov, Naval war, p.200].

³⁰ Прокопиев, А. Отбрана на морското крайбрежие от Българската армия през войните за национално обединение на България 1912 – 1918 г. – Дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор”, с.139 [Prokopiev, Defense of sea coast from Bulgarian army during the wars for national unification of Bulgaria, p.139].

battery for half an hour, and after receiving 5-6 hits without heavy damage, withdrew from Bulgarian coast³¹.

Command in VFP concluded that anti-surface defence of Balchik was weak and on 15 December 1916 under the cover of naval aviation torpedo-boats "Druzki", "Smeli", "Hrabri" and "Strogi" laid total of 24 mines in three emplacements in the southeast of the coastal battery. In January 1917 206 more mines were laid in the minefield between Balchik and Kaliakra, and four batteries were deployed from the River Batovska to Cape Shabla .

To provide logistic transportations at the beginning of 1917 the command of the fleet enhanced coastal defences with 5 more batteries and the "Boris" mine layer set tactical minefield 3 miles East of Cape Kaliakra to thwart enemy approach to Varna³².

The six torpedo-boats available in the Black sea component were used universally. Their first anti-aircraft fight took place on 9 September 1916 between torpedo-boat "Letiashti" and Russian hydroplane. The torpedo-boat detachment guarded the Bulgarian logistical transport for Third Army. For antisubmarine defence they were armed with anti-submarine bombs. Torpedo-boats also carried out reconnaissance, protection of Minesweeping groups and performed mine laying activities, patrolling in the Burgas Bay. Their main task at the end of the war was convoy escort. Light surface forces ceased to be striking unit of the Navy and were used much more universally, including as minesweepers, mine layers, military transports and ships on convoy duties. They were the first antisubmarine ships in the Bulgarian Navy, provided support to naval aviation and submarines forces accumulating combat experience.

³¹ Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

³² Антонов, Г. и др. История на българския военноморски флот. С., ВИ, 1989 [Antonov, History of the Bulgarian Navy].

In 1WW Bulgarian Navy not only established submarine forces, but used them in military activities. Submarine №18 supported coastal flank of the Third Army in Dobrudja. During that period the submarine was used for patrolling in limited areas³³. From 1 to 6 September 1916 she conducted reconnaissance and covered troop transportation in Varna Bay. On 10 October 1916 the submarine №18 patrolling in the region between Constanta and Mangalia launched unsuccessful torpedo attack on the Russian destroyer "Captain-Lieutenant Baranov"³⁴. Until 1918 the submarine carried out 13 campaigns for execution of reconnaissance and strike tasks, and supported the anti-surface defence of VFR.

During the war the Bulgarian Navy lead also offensive actions with its naval aviation and executed strikes on enemy transportation in the Danube Delta in cooperation with the German forces from hydro airbase in Varna lake³⁵.

After the entry of Bulgaria in 1WW Burgas garrison comprised two volunteer and one infantry regiments³⁶. In addition to these forces the following resources for defense were deployed to the Burgas fortified point: semaphore stations³⁷, border posts³⁸, the hydroplane service with a German hydroplane; two

³³Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

³⁴ Вълканов, В. Първата българска подводница, Военноисторически сборник №3, 1999 [Vulkanov, The first Bulgarian submarine].

³⁵Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

³⁶ 2-nd and 3-rd volunteer regiments and 5-th infantry regiment. On 23 September 1916 from the composition of BFR dropped out one volunteer regiment. After 7 November 1915 the infantry regiment was limited to an combined infantry company and on 15 August 1917 went out of the composition of BFR. For a short time, mainly as maneuvering forces acted 4-th volunteer and 25th Dragoman regiments.

³⁷ At Vasiliko (today Carevo), Sozopol, island "St. Ivan", St. Nicola (today Chernomoretz), Burgas, Anchialo (today Pomorie), Messemvria (today Nessebar), Cape Emine.

³⁸ United by frontier posts in Enikyoi (today Rezovo), Ahtopol, Kyupria, Sozopol, Messemvria and Gyozeken (today Obzor).

coastal artillery batteries³⁹, 6-8 fortress batteries and platoons⁴⁰, field artillery - variable composition during the war; Horse department - a platoon; engineering troops⁴¹, heavy spotlight unit with one 60 cm and a 90 cm spotlights⁴².

On 30 November 1915 Burgas was declared a Burgas fortified region (BFR) and designated under the operational command of 105-th German division. BFR was given the task to counter any amphibious attempt and to defend the city. During the war BFR did not see almost any hostile naval activity. The only attack was launched on 12 December 1915, when a squadron of six Russian destroyers demolished with artillery fire the border post at Cape Zehtin Burun⁴³. At the beginning of the war, especially after the start of military activities against Romania BFR experienced shortage of troops and resources for anti-landing defence. This affected its character and construct. The main efforts and resources were focused on threatened areas by building anti-landing, front and main defensive positions. There were contingency planning for active defensive missions. Counterattack was recommended as a main method of action, and retreating on consecutive fortified lines. Wide defensive area and available weak forces of the BFR led to the construction of relatively shallow defense compared with VFR, stretched along a large front with separate clusters of fortified positions. Due to insufficient numbers of reserve troops command relies on the transfer of units from one sector to another, including by sea. For this purpose three merchant ships and several small crafts were prepared. From late 1914 to August 1916 10 mine strips were layed in order to deny the entrance of

³⁹ 710-th Prussian and 21 cm D-45.

⁴⁰ From heavy artillery regiments of Sofia, Shumen and Vidin.

⁴¹ 3rd and 5th volunteer pioneer companies.

⁴² Прокопиев, А. Отбрана на морското крайбрежие от Българската армия през войните за национално обединение на България 1912 – 1918 г. – Дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор”, с.155 [Prokopiev, Defense of sea coast from Bulgarian army during the wars for national unification of Bulgaria, p. 155].

⁴³ Скутунов, К. Морската война, с.197 [Skutunov, Naval war, p. 197]

the Burgas Bay, 5 of them blocked main direction Sozopol – Anchialo (today Aheloi) with 100 mines ⁴⁴.

The Aegean component of the Navy had 7 officers, 237 non-commissioned officers and sailors and had only one cutter and five rowing boats. Monitoring was carried out by four posts, united in semaphore service. The first mine laying with about 10 mines on the approaches to the Dedeagatch was made on the night of 8 October 1915, immediately after the shelling of the town. Frequent bombing on Bulgarian coast provoked enhancing security and surveillance of the beach.

Besides Aegean component of the Navy 10-th infantry division was deployed in the rear in West Thrakia . Defence was organised after assessment of the possible actions of the enemy; separation of relatively wide coast area on four sections; concentration of power and resources in most likely landing areas; detachment of strong reserve and creating conditions for its rapid removal of endangered areas. In the first section from Mesta River to Porto Lagos were 39-th infantry regiment, four cavalry squadrons from 8-th cavalry regiment and an artillery battery from 10-th artillery regiment. Surveillance was executed from 1-st company of 9-th border battalion. Second section was defended from 2-nd and 4-th companies of 8-th volunteers regiment and an artillery battery. Surveillance was appointed to the 1-st company from 10-th border battalion. Between Flora River and village of Makri 1-st and 3-rd battalions from 8-th volunteers regiment, an artillery battery and a company for surveillance were dispatched. The main forces were deployed in the fourth section between Makri and Maritza River –

⁴⁴ Прокопиев, А. Отбрана на морското крайбрежие от Българската армия през войните за национално обединение на България 1912 – 1918 г. – Дисертация за присъждане на образователна и научна степен „доктор”, с.156 [Prokopiev, Defense of sea coast from Bulgarian army during the wars for national unification of Bulgaria, p.156].

40-th Eagean regiment, two companies of 10-th volunteers regiment and 10-th border battalion for surveillance ⁴⁵.

In facsimile Captain (Navy) Assen Toshev reported for a sunk enemy ship after detonating in Bulgarian minefield on 4 May 1917 at 13:50 hrs 13 km Southeast of Dedeagatch. It is hypothesised that this ship was mobilized for mine lead-through of British trawler “Lord Salisbury”, which came across a mine in Bulgarian Mining enclosure №1 on the mouth of the Maritza River and sank. These conjectures have value only as part of a hypothesis and could be confirmed only by specifying the exact location of the sinking by reliable documentary sources.

Particularly important for sea transportation of the Entente was the port of Thessaloniki, which supplied the Macedonian front with troops and materiel. They had not been taken in consideration by the Bulgarian command even after the conclusion of the armistice with Russia in 1917. Considering that the Macedonian front was the main burden for Bulgaria in the war, which should be evaluated as an important omission of the Bulgarian General Staff and Command of the Navy, they neither planned nor conducted any manoeuvre from Black to Aegean Sea.

Bulgarian Navy entered the war unprepared with significant gaps in pre-war building. Attempts to eliminate these issues during the period 1913 - 1915, were unsuccessful. They again show that the building of the Navy is an ongoing process that does not tolerate unprofessionalism and improvisation. Gaps in the first decade of the Century, due to short-sightedness of Bulgarian governments, lead to negative long-term consequences.

The main theatre of operations for Bulgarian Navy was in the Black Sea. The main points of warfare were the defence of fortified coastal positions, inland

⁴⁵ Прокопиев, А. Организиране отбраната на Беломорското крайбрежие в началото на Първата световна война, Военен научен форум 2000, Велико Търново, 2000, с.429-437 [Prokopiev, Organizing the defence of the Aegean sea coast at the beginning of the First World War, p.429-437].

transport communications in the Varna Bay and also the coastal flank of the Third Army ⁴⁶.

Bombardments of unprotected towns, villages or buildings were a violation of the imperative ban of the Hague Convention of 1907 and in the 2WW such actions were already treated as war crimes. In this sense, the destruction of the town of Dedeagatch was a serious violation of the international legal norms. The shelling of Bulgarian coastal towns had international response and caused public protests and reactions in society.

Artillery strikes of British-French and Russian Navy caused enhancing of coastal defence. During the war Bulgarian Navy established two new types of forces - underwater forces and naval aviation. Despite the relatively modest capabilities they have been cleverly and actively used in military operations against a considerably superior opponent. By its aviation, the Bulgarian Navy engaged for the first time in offensive missions in foreign territorial sea. For the first time Bulgarian Marines participated in Army offensive operation. In parallel, the mine laying forces received significant development and the Navy acquired specially built minesweepers. Light surface forces ceased to be a striking unit of the Navy and were used much more universally, including as minesweepers, mine layers, military transports and for convoy protection. They were the first antisubmarine ships in Bulgarian Navy, supported naval aviation and deployment of submarine forces.

Along with the improvement of coastal artillery, the monitoring the sea surface and the communication system of the fleet became contributed for the development of combat employment of Bulgarian Navy, namely the construction of minefields and artillery installations for the defences of Varna and Burgas Bay, and on the Aegean coast. Although the pre-war plans did not expect counter

⁴⁶ Кожухаров, А. Участието на българските военноморски сили в Първата световна война, Военноисторически сборник, №2, 2001 [Kozhuharov, Participation of Bulgarian Navy in 1WW].

landing defence of the sea coast, the Bulgarian command performed a thorough, planned training, which prepared the forces on the sea coast of Bulgaria for successful counter-amphibious defence. Due to insufficient forces and resources the defence was of the group type, but manoeuvrable with very well organised interaction in different variants.

Lukas Mayrhuber (Austria)

Crossing Isonzo by racecar – Alfred Jansa experiencing the First World War

I studied history and geography and finished my studies in June 2011. Two years ago I tidied up my desk and threw away lots of transcripts, because I thought I would never need them again. During this process I had a brief look into a couple of scripts and remembered the lectures at university. I could not exactly recall the syllabus of certain courses, but I kept in my mind very well the different stories lecturers told during breaks or between two chapters. These were little stories about everyday-history, funny episodes in political history or even jokes.

For instance: I know that the negotiations between chancellor Schuschnigg and Adolf Hitler 1936 were tough for Schuschnigg. They were hard for Austria because the German empire was much more powerful – but they were also tough because the heavy smoker Schuschnigg was uneasy due to nicotine deprivation. Schuschnigg waited for Adolf Hitler a couple of hours, without cigarettes and in front of an SS-platoon. Then the negotiations started and Schuschnigg compromised a lot. That's how I recall the 1936 negotiations between Austria and the German empire.

I work as a teacher and try to explain History and Geography to my pupils as accurate and easy to understand as possible. I realized, that – just like I do – students do not always remember learning targets. As a matter of fact, they sometimes forget what we read together 30 minutes ago. But if I tell them a story, fictional or non-fictional, they are mostly able to retell the story in all details.

In some courses I tell the pupils stories about History and Geography in order to teach them a certain topic.

It is quite difficult to tell an eloquent historical story. That's why I started to read biographies and memoirs of important (Austrian) persons of the past – It supports me to answer the pupil's questions like: "How did she/he feel when he/she did this or that? Why did he/she do something like that". These memoirs are full of long and short stories and some of them are worth to be told. Stories in class help to create an understanding in different educational objectives.

Now I will give you a brief overview about Alfred Jansa's experiences during the Great War.

Alfred Jansa was born in Stanislaw in 1884 and started his military career 1898 in Vienna. A couple of years later he attended the *Kriegsschule* in Vienna to continue his career as a general staff officer. He completed the course as the best participant. After the "*Kriegsschule*" he was promoted to captain and from 1910 to 1914 he served in Sarajevo.

On the 28th of July in 1914 Jansa rode on his horse back from a manoeuvre to his barracks in Sarajevo. A few minutes past nine in the morning he had to stop at a railway crossing and saw a fancy railway wagon passing by. He recognised archduke Franz Ferdinand in the wagon, saluted and the archduke friendly waved back. Jansa continued his ride to Sarajevo. When Jansa arrived in Sarajevo some officers ran straight to him and asked about Jansa's troops because they feared riots. Jansa could not believe why suddenly riots should occur and so his fellow officers told him: "Didn't you hear, the archduke was shot!". That's how Jansa experienced the trigger for World War One.

During the following weeks Jansa served at the command of the 6th Austro-Hungarian army. As a general staff officer he had to draw the general map, with a scale of 1 : 200 000. Jansa served directly under Marshall Oskar Potiorek and experienced for the first time, that in war personal feelings influenced decisions on the battlefield. Jansa described his superiors and even his fellow officers very detailed and pointed out, that several officers and even generals avoided to speak with each other. Marshall Potiorek and his Chief of

general staff for example communicated only with little “Yes” or “No”-sheets. The 6th Army received the order for the mobilization of their troops on the 26th of July in 1914, approximately a month after the assassination of Franz Ferdinand. Jansa remembered that the spontaneous patriotism after the killing of the crown prince was already vanished. Marshall Potiorek finally attacked the Serbian forces on the 12th of August in 1914 – this was later called the battle of Cer. Despite the continuous newspaper stories about victory in Serbia he had to retreat a few days later. The attacks against the Serbian forces surprisingly failed, namely because Marshall Potiorek underestimated the distances between his own troops. That’s why Jansa had to change the scale of the map to 1 : 75 000 – to help Marshall Potiorek’s spatial orientation!

In December 1914 Jansa was sent to the 5th Austro-Hungarian army, which was also engaged in the Balkans, and met German officers for the first time. In May 1915 Jansa did not believe anymore that Italy would keep its neutral status during the whole war – even the newspapers were already naming Italy an enemy. In order to defend the south-western border of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Jansa, now assigned to the “Command of the South-Western-Front”, and was sent to Marburg. On the 23rd of May 1915, Italy finally declared war against the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The hostilities began and cumulated in the area around the river Isonzo. Jansa wrote about the first and the second Isonzo-battle from a very distant perspective. He did not write about fear, barrages or the enemy, but just about drawing maps. As a matter of fact Jansa has never been at the front yet, he “just” did his work at higher commands. Jansa was not really happy about that, especially because he had already received two decorations. From 1914 to 1918 Jansa keeps on writing about these two topics: He definitely wanted to get combat experience and he felt embarrassed when he received decorations without having spent any time at the front.

In September 1915 Jansa was sent back to the Balkans to serve General Mackensen as liaison officer. On the one hand Jansa was curious about his new

task, as he the did not know how a German higher command worked. On the other Hand he was also slightly depressed, because liaison officer was far away from getting combat experience.

On his trip to Mackensen's command he went via Vienna and visited his family. He was happy to leave Vienna the next day, because the people argued about the Austro-Hungarian generals and praised the German generals. Jansa drew the conclusion, that the people overlooked the fact, that the Austro-Hungarian army was not as well equipped as the German forces. But Jansa kept these thoughts for himself, he thought that an Austro-Hungarian officer should not participate in rumours like that.

On the 24th of September in 1915 Jansa reached Temesvar and Mackensen's command post. Mackensen, a Prussian General, fought at the eastern front before his time at the Balkans. He had participated in the famous battle of Tannenberg and in the Battle of Gorlice. After the latter battle he was promoted to Marshall. During the battle of Gorlice, Mackensen commanded German forces as well as Austro-Hungarian troops. These troops were combined in a so called "Heeresgruppe Macksensen" and were later sent to the Balkans to finally beat Serbia. So Jansa knew what this famous new General was like. Arriving at the command post, Jansa was impressed, as two soldiers stood at the doors of the command post and saluted when Jansa entered the building. He had not experienced anything like that at Austro-Hungarian commands.

Other Austro-Hungarian officers told Jansa to be careful with the Germans, because they sometimes acted kind of arrogant. The behaviour was sometimes different indeed, what Jansa soon experienced. While having dinner the Germans had music and singers, drafted reserve officers that worked as opera singers in civilian life, and lots of officers attended the meal. Jansa was stunned, because German officers executed a certain manner to drink with each other. If, for example, a general raised his glass to a captain, the captain had to stand up, stand at the position of attention, raise his glass to his chest, take a bow in

direction of the general, drink his glass empty, raise the glass to his chest again, take a bow again and then the captain was allowed to sit down. Jansa felt that this behaviour during dinner was kind of disruptive, because all the time someone had to stand up, drink and sit down again. Conversation, so Jansa, was very difficult. This was one of the differences between Austro-Hungarian and German troops that Jansa described as such. Jansa explained in the same chapter of his memories that in the Austro-Hungarian forces it was forbidden to call for attention in the stables, in order not to disturb the feeding of the horses.

Jansa listed up several differences between Austro-Hungarian and German troops. For example he observed that the German commanders did not wear the same uniform as the troop officers – in the Austro-Hungarian army the uniform was the same for everyone. Especially the Prussian modesty, Germans and Austrians were talking about it, was not noticed by Jansa. Once Jansa and his senior von Seeckt had to drive to the front. On the one hand Jansa prepared – as usual - his field uniform, packed his small bag, containing his shaving kit and gave his servant a day off, on the other hand Hans Von Seeckt, Mackensen's chief of staff wore his fanciest uniform, took all his servants with him and ordered a train with a salon wagon and a sleeper. Despite of the so called Prussian modesty Jansa was really impressed by the German generals, because for example Mackensen always followed his front troops and did not stay behind. The German command post – so Jansa – was nearly constantly on the move and changed its position quite often.

The tie between the Austro-Hungarian and the German forces was not always a good one. On several occasions Germans or Austrians expressed their discomfort with the ally. Even Mackensen, remembered Jansa, criticised the performance of the Austro-Hungarian troops at the eastern front. Mackensen remembered the years 1914 and 1915 and criticized the massive losses of the Austro-Hungarian forces on the eastern front. Jansa thought that war brought victory and defeat to all involved parties. The Germans talked about their own

victories and the losses of their ally. But Jansa knew that even the Germans did not win every battle. He thought of the terrible battle of Marne – but kept his thoughts for himself. He wrote: “Should I answer him: “Fieldmarschall, the battle on the Marne had been lost by the German troops all alone!” Should I answer this to the general, who was admired by our emperor and plastered with decorations?”

In January 1916 the Bulgarian King Ferdinand visited Mackensen’s command post. King Ferdinand joined the central powers in 1915 in order to be able to conquer the territories, namely Macedonia, that Bulgaria had lost a few years ago. Mackensen ordered a formal dinner. King Ferdinand, German and Austro-Hungarian officers attended the dinner and listened to Mackensen’s toasting to Ferdinand. In his toast Mackensen praised the German and Bulgarian troops and battles, but did not mention the Austro-Hungarian forces and their successes on the battlefield at all. If the Bulgarian king also ignored the Austro-Hungarian army, the Austro-Hungarian officers would leave the table. As a matter of fact Ferdinand lauded just the German and Bulgarian forces. The Austro-Hungarian officers left the table and caused a little disturbance. Mackensen himself did not understand the reason why Jansa and his fellows had left, since King Ferdinand – so Mackensen – visited a German command post. Jansa replied that German and Austro-Hungarian forces fought in unity and therefore the victories should be shared. After this incident Jansa wanted to leave Mackensen’s command post and to be sent to the front. This wish was not granted, he had to remain liaison officer.

Jansa was transferred to Bulgaria and served as a liaison officer at the first Bulgarian army. Jansa carried out different tasks and was often sent to care about important persons. Prince Boris of Bulgaria visited the First Bulgarian Army and Jansa had to escort the Prince to a Bulgarian division. The Prince arrived in an elegant car but Jansa urged the Prince to change into Jansa’s ordinary grey car. The Prince complied. At sundown Jansa suddenly ordered his

driver: “Get away from the street and turn the car!”. Serbian soldiers patrolled the very street Jansa and the Prince drove down. Since Jansa had no flags on his car and the Serbian soldiers were really surprised – they did not even shoot – Jansa would escape and bring the Prince by using a different street to the Bulgarian division. This was one of the few occasions Jansa pointed out having contact with the enemy.

Later in 1916 Jansa was assigned to the German supreme command of Otto von Below, German commander in Macedonia. Jansa was glad that von Below did not care very much about the drinking habits like Macksensen.

In Macedonia Jansa had a dispute with a local Austro-Hungarian command, when German engineers used a shed, belonging to the Austro-Hungarian forces, for one night. The local Austro-Hungarian command telegraphed Jansa, that he should care about the monarchs interests and not the German ones. Jansa himself rose a complaint to the supreme army command, because he felt mistreated. The Supreme army command answered, that he would be reassigned to the eastern front. Just before he left he received the Iron Cross from Otto von Below – Jansa’s only selfesteemed decoration.

The eastern front brought Jansa finally some real experience at the front. Jansa attended a storm course and was literally spoken the first time in the dirt in the third year of war. Jansa wrote that he had to shoot all infantry weapons, throw hand grenades and storm trenches. He remembered, that he “had to be at the trench a moment after the last artillery shell”. Von Seeckt, Mackensen’s chief of general staff, saw Jansa while he was visiting the storm course. Von Seeckt laughed as he saw Jansa full of dirt and heavily armed with grenades. Jansa wore his Iron Cross and von Seeckt congratulated Jansa – because von Below did not decorate everyone with an iron cross. Since the German forces held the storm course there was lots of ammunition. Jansa remembered, that the Austro-Hungarian forces spared as many shells as possible, because the supply was low. The German forces seemed to have unlimited reserves. At the end of the storm

course the participants held a small manoeuvre to show von Seekt what they had learned. After the manoeuvre the Austro-Hungarian General Rohr said, that this was the most impressive display of firepower he had ever seen. Again, Jansa was embarrassed, because he thought that Austro-Hungarian officers and generals – after already three years of war – should not blame themselves in front of the German allies.

After three and a half months on the front Jansa was sent to the XXVI Corps. He did not know where the Corps was or what he should do there. Just somewhere around the area of Lemberg. So he drove to Lemberg and heard that the XXVI Corps had been hit hard by Russian troops. The Russian forces attacked, like the year before, in early summer weeks. The so called Kerenski offensive hit the Austro-Hungarian troops from the 1st until the 19th of July hard. On the 19th of July the central powers started a counterattack. Jansa arrived in Lemberg on the 18th of July and no one had an idea where the Corps was at the moment. So Jansa continued his journey and headed for the 3rd Army command. They did not know either where the Corps was. Jansa should look out for them. He drove to Sokolow and continued his search by foot. He did not find his Corps but General Litzmann, who was looking for his troops – just like Jansa. So neither Jansa nor General Litzmann had an idea where their troops were. Jansa continued his search and already saw the first Russian outposts. Jansa reflected what to do now when he heard folk music in the distance. He followed the sounds and was at a farmhouse, where the folk music came from. He asked a soldier what this was supposed to be. The guard answered, that this was the command post of the XXVI Corps. Jansa entered and looked for the executing officer, colonel Stromfeld. Jansa told Stromfeld that Russian troops were 1500 meters away from the farmhouse and Stromfeld answered, that he already knew that, but he had no troops anymore and since there were no troops left he allowed the command post to hold a feast. One night later the Corps was removed from the eastern front.

The 33-year old Jansa was finally promoted to major. On the one hand he wrote that he did not care about the promotion at all, but on the other hand he was glad to receive the *Kronenorden*, because a major should have at least the *Kronenorden*.

General von Below, now commanding troops at the Isonzo area, requested Jansa as a liaison officer. So Jansa left the eastern front and drove back to the south-eastern front. He found von Below commanding the 14th Army, partly Austro-Hungarian and partly Bavarian. Jansa and von Below still had a good relationship. In order to provide von Below good information about the Austro-Hungarian troops Jansa drove around from Corps to Corps and inspected at the tactical columns. The troops were already preparing the 12th Isonzobattle. It took Jansa a long time, because riding between the troops was exhausting and driving by car difficult, because the narrow streets were full of moving personnel, ammunition and other equipment. That's why Jansa asked for a smaller and faster car, including a driver and a map. Surprisingly Jansa really got a new vehicle. It was a small race car with narrow axes and two seats. The seats were behind each other, so that the passenger sat behind the driver. The driver knew how to drive difficult streets because he was a drafted professional Hungarian race car driver. The driver must have caught Jansa's interests, because we wrote quite often about him – His servant and his stable boy are hardly mentioned at all. So Jansa drove in the proceedings of the 12th Isonzo-Battle with his race car on the small grid between moving troops and the roadside in order to gather as much information as possible for von Below.

The 12th Isonzo battle was a massive victory for von Below. The battle was also called the battle of Caporetto. Troops reached the Tagliamento and defeated and captured thousands of Italian soldiers. Jansa saw those soldiers, still carrying their weapons because there was no time to disarm so many people at once. Jansa watched them thoroughly and saw that they were well fed and quite happily singing: "Eviva Germania, eviva Austria, abasso la guerra". Jansa

thought that they would stop chanting “Eviva Austria” if they once found out that the Austro-Hungarian empire was starving and the war prisoners would therefore soon be starving too.

After the 12th Isonzo Battle the command post of von Below was located in Udine, a city full of bread, meat, cheese and Chianti. One day Jansa had to drive to the Austro-Hungarian troops under General Krauss. When Jansa came back to the command post he heard that emperor Karl had just visited von Below and wanted to continue his journey to General Krauss. General Krauss commanded the 1st Austro-Hungarian Corps and was part of the mixed 14th army, commanded by von Below. Since the emperor did not know where exactly Krauss was located, Jansa was chosen to lead the emperor to the command post of Krauss. Jansa had no time to prepare himself, because a few moments after Jansa got this information the door opened and the emperor told Jansa to get into the car. They drove to the command post of General Krauss. The General told the emperor about the attack at the Tagliamento and the capture of two Italian divisions. Despite his anticipation he did not receive the *Theresienkreuz* but a newly created decoration. The emperors adjutant told Jansa that the donation of decorations would be handled more restrictive from now on. General Krauss and the German von Krafft were disappointed.

Just a few days after the visit of the emperor, General von Below asked Jansa to drive back to the command post of the south-western-front. Archduke Eugen was commander of the south-western front. Von Below received his orders from this command and got the impression, that the command of the south-western-front did not know what the situation was. Von Below suggested that the command post, which was located in Marburg, should proceed at least to Udine. It was not really clear why the command post of the south-western front stayed behind, despite massive successes of their troops,. Jansa remembered the first day of the war, when Potiorek stuck to this command post and therefore lost the overview over his troops. This should not happen again, at least not now,

after the successful battle of Caporetto. Jansa reached Marburg before midday, found the command post and started to ask around. During his brief talk with the German liaison officer, the German officer said that he had to go to lunch now, otherwise his wife would be angry. Jansa was stunned, because he did not know that the German liaison officer was garrisoned in Marburg. He was not, answered the German, but like all other officers of the command post he had moved with his whole family to Marburg. The German liaison officer left and Jansa went to the mess to get his lunch. The mess was quite empty, but Jansa met an officer he knew from Sarajevo. This officer said, that he had to eat in the mess, as it was the wife's washday. Jansa drew the conclusion that the command post did not want to proceed to Udine, because their wives liked Marburg. It was not possible to tell von Below this information without embarrassing the whole Austro-Hungarian command post. Jansa thought about different ways to motivate the command post to move to Udine. He finally told the officers, that Udine was full of good Italian food and the shops had stored goods that were not available in the Austro-Hungarian empire anymore. Despite the military efforts also the wives of the officers would live better in Udine than in Marburg. Jansa arranged the transport and the preparation of an appropriate accommodation in Udine and asked the command post to leave Marburg the next day. They really did and Jansa completed his order without embarrassing anyone.

Later Jansa spent some time in the *Armeeoberkommando* and was finally assigned as chief of general staff of the 10th Cavallerydivision in Budapest. Jansa searched for his Division in October 1918, but he did not find the Division anymore, because Hungary was already a republic. Jansa managed to get onto a ship and headed back to Vienna. On the 10th of November in 1918 Jansa arrived in Vienna and went straight to the *Hofburg* and asked what he should do now. A colonel told Jansa that the Emperor had given the order that all officers should choose one of the newly founded states they thought they belonged to. The troth

was already null. Jansa sold his horses, gave his horseboy half of the return on sales. That's how the great war ended for major Jansa.

The pupils now know about the First World War:

- Unexpected assassination of Franz Ferdinand
 - Unlucky war against Serbia
 - Alliance between the Austro-Hungarian empire and the German empire
 - Italy's abolition of neutrality in 1915
 - Differences between Austro-Hungarian and German officers
 - Russian offensive in 1917
 - Austro-Hungarian victory in Isonzo 1917
 - Bewildering end of war in Vienna 1918
- Quite enough for one story!

Ecem İnceođlu (Turkey)

Speculation on Food Prices in Turkey during the First World War

Introduction

Nowadays, there is a heated debate over how First World War affected countries from socio-economic and cultural aspects. The War was a total disaster; unfortunately, millions of civilians and soldiers lost their lives throughout the war. The war changed political maps so the first global war left a deep mark in the history of all countries. In spite of the fact that the apparent reason was the assassination of the heir of Austria-Hungary, the main cause was economic competition between European powers. The assassination of the heir of Austria-Hungary was only an excuse for the trigger of the war because the European countries had separated into opposite groups before the war. As a consequence, European countries joined the war in a short span of time by consisting two opposite groups, the Allies and the Central Powers.

The Ottoman Empire, an important figure of the First World War, was not ready to enter such a big war since it was war-weary of Balkan War which had ended shortly before. In addition, the party called the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Fırkası*) seized control of the government and the leaders of the party made an effort to secure the Empire. When the Party realized that there was no other way to join the War to keep The Ottoman Empire alive, took the side of Germany.

Though the war lasted four years it had a significant negative effect in the Turkish history. The problems faced by Ottoman government during the war can be observed in the materials such as newspapers, handouts, books and official archival materials. This paper focuses on food crises in Turkey between 1914 and 1918. I tried to determine, step by step, how the problems of food provision came into existence during the First World War. My main argument is

that the problems in food provision stemmed from the underdeveloped transportation and logistics opportunities rather than insufficient food production.

The Young Turk Revolution

The Ottoman Empire which was composed of various different nationalities until the nineteenth century could not keep pace with contemporary developments and thereby experienced political fragmentation. In addition, as emphasized in the political history literature, nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of nationalist movement which also influenced the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman intellectuals called Young Turks, came into the power in 1908. 23 July of 1908, was an important step for Young Turks Revolution in terms of the involvement of politics because these people were not members of upper class in the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, they did not have enough experience, social status and education to manage the government.¹ This step enabled them to have a voice in a ten-year period between 1908 and 1918 in the Ottoman Government. This period is divided into two stages in which the first term was between 1908-1913 and second term between 1914 and 1918.

In this paper, I will go over the second term of Young Turks in Turkey. The first part on the paper is a brief description of the Ottoman economy during the War. The second part is on the problem of food provision and how the party tried to solve this issue during the First World War. The third part is about what was behind the reality of price increases during the war. In each section, I will rely on newspapers, books, journals and archive materials which were the mirrors this period.

¹Feroz Ahmad, *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme*, translation Fatmagül Berktaş, Kaynak, İstanbul, 2011, pp. 8-10

The Ottoman Economy during the War

Young Turks constituted of the party called Committee of Union and Progress, preferred economic state than financial state. They wanted to improve economic quality and to foster entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Government so they tried to bring all the segments of Ottoman society under the umbrella of ‘‘Ottoman Identity’’. As I mentioned before, that nineteenth century was a national state creation period. ‘‘Sub-Identity’’ came out on top ‘‘Ottoman Identity’’ during the nineteenth century.² Therefore, creating Ottoman identity ended up with a failure.

Ottoman government announced neutrality warnings in the Britain and Germany War on 6 August 1914 because of lack of financial and military equipment.³ However the government did not want to join the war, official declaration of war by Ottoman Empire was in 18 November 1914.⁴ At this point, when the CUP began to get prepared to the war declared general mobilization and tried to take measures against food shortages in İstanbul by setting prices for food, especially for bread. According to a document, Committee of Union and Progress decided to establish three commissions at certain districts which included Beyoğlu, Üsküdar and İstanbul (*Tekalif-i Harbiye*) due to control of domestic and foreign food trade for İstanbul.⁵ They tried to keep the foodstuff prices under control.

² Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye’de Milli İktisat 1908-1918*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2012, pp.33-38

³**The First World War in Ottoman Documents**, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı No:130, İstanbul, 2013, pp.30-31: **DH. EUM, 5.şb/1-7.**

⁴**The First World War in Ottoman Documents**, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı No:130, İstanbul, 2013, pp.90-92: **İ. MMS, 191/2_1-2**

⁵**The First World War in Ottoman Documents**, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı No:130, İstanbul, 2013, pp.34-37: **HR. MA, 1105/38_1-3**

According to Zafer Toprak, confiscation played a significant role during the war. Consumption increased day by day with no rising in the production in these years. Although we know that there was a balance between demand and supply, all balance of economy violated immediately in the war condition. Needless to say that war has had major influences on countries' economies so some economist such as François Perroux and Werner Sombart described that war is an external impact in the economy.⁶

The problem of foods provision during the War

The interventionist government used the confiscation method to collect food for the military needs. Provisioning foodstuff appeared to be the priority of the governments primarily for the purpose of keeping the military forces alive. Mobilization made the trade irrational during the war condition. The merchants did not want to introduce their nurture into market owing to the fact that price level would increase in future. Besides lot of people believed that there was food shortage in the beginning of the war. Meanwhile, people raided the bakery and grocery to victual. Furthermore, production level was expected to decrease in as much as male labor force joined the army. As a consequence, all these reasons created chaos and scarcity. For instance, bread has been the most important foodstuff in Turkey. During the war, the population faced serious problems in bread procurement.

Feeding of Istanbul became a major problem in the Ottoman Empire because Istanbul was a consumption center in the Empire; thereby its subsistence depended on import before the war. Nutrition of Istanbul was maintained by the pre-war stock during the war condition. However food stock of Istanbul was enough to continue for a length of time, some group of sellers believed that war was an opportunity to be rich so they choice the stockpile. There were few crops

⁶Toprak, *Türkiye'de Milli İktisat 1908-1918*, pp.50-53

on the market due to the profiteers.⁷ People queued up at the bakery to buy bread. Meanwhile, policy makers said that fourteen thousand sacks of flour was bought for İstanbul's bread provision.⁸ However, they believe that scarcity should not continue after adding a lot of sacks of flour, bread issue could not be solved by the CUP.

The table shows a family's average living cost which include a husband, a wife and two children*						
Year 1330 (1914-1915)				Year 1337 (1918-1919)		
Kinds of needs	Amount	Average Price	AP / Amount	Amount	Average Price	AP / Amount
Provisionalism	Kıyye**	piaster		Kıyye	piaster	
bread	60	1,25	0,02	11,23	674,1	60,02
flour	2	2,5	1,25	22,85	45,7	2
beef	5	8	1,6	81	405	5
oil	2	9	4,5	93,06	186,12	2
Olive oil	2	7	3,5	71,56	143,12	2
sugar	3	3	1	41,09	123,27	3
rice	4	2,5	0,62	24,84	99,36	4
White cheese	1	4	4	103,24	103,21	0,99
vegetable	15	1,5	0,1	13,51	202,65	15
Raw vegetable	15	1,5	0,1	15,64	234,6	15
coffee	0,5	10	20	63,75	31,87	0,49
*BOA, T. İTK, 446/115, Lef.2, 1 Ramadan 1340, 28 April 1922.						
** Kıyye equals 1300 gram						

⁷Feroz Ahmad, *İttihatçılıktan Kemalizme*, translation Fatmagül Berktaş, Kaynak, İstanbul, 2011, pp. 59

⁸The First World War in Ottoman Documents, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı No:130, İstanbul, 2013, pp.34-37: HR. MA, 1105/38_1-3

The table shows a family's average living costs which include a husband, a wife and two children. The table shows the increase significantly in price level between 1914 and 1919 in Turkey. These years were important because of starting and ending the First World War period. When we compare these two years, we can understand clearly that, as a result of a high inflation wave the food price level raise significantly in spite of constant family income so people's purchasing power decreased day by day. According to the table, we can observe how the war raised the prices of food in Istanbul. For instance, price of bread which was the most basic needs of people went up from 0,02 piasters to 60,02 piasters between 1914 and 1918. I select an example of bread price because the price of bread increased relatively much in comparison to that of other goods. This was a huge increase that gave birth to negative effects on purchasing power. I argue that profiteering contributed to this bubble due to the fact that profiteers want to gain more money. In addition, lack of transportation influenced the increasing of price level over the normal value because some regions' agricultural products were abundant but transporting the products was very costly in these years. Furthermore, the food resources cannot be distributed efficiently due to insufficiency of wagons in Turkey. For instance there were approximately 72 wagons of foods on the rail station in Konya, which was a city in the middle of Turkey but people were not able to transfer these goods because of deficiency of railway.⁹

It seems that some city's products spoiled during waiting in the stations. The Major of Sapanca, Mustafa, for example wanted construction of new railway lines, to transfer their fruits from Sapanca to İstanbul. In addition, he dispatched that the government officer promised to give wagons while their product were

⁹DH. İ. UM. EK. 24/40, 29 M 1335

waiting 15 days on the station and then their fresh fruit began to spoil.¹⁰ I argue that underdevelopment of transportation influenced the price levels negatively.

In my opinion, in the beginning of the national economy, the CUP government tried to establish national companies which would be the tools of the state in the trade and business. Stockbrokers became more important than production. Meanwhile, people could earn money immediately scarcity condition.

Party members tried to take precaution to restrain food crises. In the first place, they established a commission which was called *Havayic-i Zaruriye Komisyonu*, but it did not succeed. CUP searched a different solution for the shortage of food owing to the fact that they could not rely on ethical character of the merchants. In the second place, they set up a community called *Heyet-i Mahsusa-i Ticariye*, under the leader of Kemal Bey who played key role about the allocation of foods.¹¹ His duty was to get domestic and foreign trade in Turkey under control. They published price of foods in the newspapers and official documents¹². But they failed to keep the prices stable.

İktisadiyat Mecmuası was a weekly journal with a short life which included 69 issues and thereby included a lot of news about Turkey's economic conditions. *İktisadiyat Mecmuası* provides useful materials on the Ottoman economy because it reflected CUP'S opinion. Tekin Alp who was a member of the CUP said that agricultural product was a life-blood for Turkey because of nonexistent industries and international logistics. His ideas were supported by CPU. In the light of the Tekin Alp's views, first of all, they tried to improve their agricultural production. In addition, they established some companies in order to

¹⁰DH. İ. UM. EK. 45/11, 18 Ra 1336

¹¹Toprak, *Türkiye'de Milli İktisat 1908-1918*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul, 2012, pp.470

¹²For instance this situation, the price of food in Aydın which is a city in the Turkey were published in journal how much money the dealers should sell their crops: *İktisadiyat Mecmuası*, **İktisadi Haberler**, no:21, pp.7-8

develop trade activities. Lastly, as Alp praised Turkish women's contribution to the production women were encouraged by the CUP government to work.

There is lots of economy news in this journal. They predicated prices of some growing crops in the news because they tried to increase the price of knowledge in order to avoid profiteering. Many examples showing how the prices of certain crops like rice, wheat and beans were tried to be kept stable can be traced in the journal. Still they failed.

What was behind the reality of price increases during the war?

In an article about the economy of war time, it is stated that interventional government wanted to control all items but it was not possible. War would create chaos situation and thereby some groups of people prefer to behave as self-seekers than rational individuals. Merchants took off after their profiteering so they did not put on the market their crops.

We can observe that a balance between demand and supply did not exist during the war condition. In addition, Ottoman Empire had a lack of communication network and transportation network.

Their production techniques were so primitive to mass production due to the fact that it depended only on agricultural products. However both of production level and amount of import decreased hugely, this did not meet the demand of population during the war.¹³

Conclusion

To begin with, the assassination of the heir of Austria-Hungary influenced all countries which joined the war and then the war area was propagated. The World was divided into two opposite groups on the purpose of

¹³ Şevket Pamuk, *Türkiye'nin 200 yıllık İktisadi Tarihi*, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2014, pp.168-170

the economic competition. A lot of people lost their lives and the war's effects continued through long ages.

Young Turks wanted to improve economic quality and create entrepreneurship in the Ottoman Government so they tried to come together under the "Ottoman Identity". But they failed because of the fact that nineteenth century was a national state creation period. "Sub-Identity" came out on top "Ottoman Identity" during the nineteenth century. In the end they built national economic system.

However, the members of CUP tried to take control of the market prices by using some methods, yet merchants in Turkey preferred to make speculation than being rational. In addition, lack of logistics and profiteering made life more difficult for society. Furthermore, people faced scarcity because of increasing crops' price, decreasing purchasing power, acting such as a sordid seller, falling the male workforce.

İktisadiyat Mecmuası is a critical journal to understand war-time comprehensively. The most significant conclusion for resources that I have searched is that some groups of people gained economic favor during the war by using their political power. As a consequence, I argue that profiteering and underdevelopment of transportation increased the problems regarding food shortage in Turkey and the Party's policies were not enough to solve the problem.

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Lea Moliterni Eberle (Switzerland)

Asking for grace during World War I. Swiss court-martial convicted and their letters for mercy”

Around midnight on December 22nd 1914 a lieutenant of the Swiss Army is going on patrol in the barracks. He is controlling if all guard posts are on duty. The depot of the ammunition though is vacant. The lieutenant finds the missing guard corporal, his name is Rudolf Urech, in a nearby restaurant. According other soldiers the missing guard corporal was spending his time there since 7 o'clock in the evening with playing cards and drinking schnapps. The lieutenant commands Rudolf Urech to back on duty to the guard post immediately. The next evening though the guard corporal is missing again. This time he has chosen two others restaurants. While the lieutenant is informed about this second missing, a soldier comes to run and reports: last night somebody has stolen his money out of his trousers while he was sleeping. The guilty one has been found quickly: Rudolf Urech, who owed money to other soldiers and restaurant-owners had paid back all his drinking and playing debts on the very same morning. And, according the ticket seller from the railway station, Rudolf had bought a train ticket to Lucerne, where he his fiancée Emma is living. On Christmas Day morning Rudolf Urech was remanded in custody, accused for theft from comrades and for insubordination.

Three weeks later, on January 13th he was charged for these two crimes with 9 months prison, 25 francs penalty and the lost of his civil rights for 2 years.

Rudolf Urech starts to write a great amount of letters from the prison. The letters are very long and full of details. In most letters he states very

personal information. He complains about his unlucky life, his childhood in misery and about the pains of this mother. He tells the addressee as well that he regrets from bottom of the heart what has happened and that he is weeping tears during night and day. The addressee of Rudolfs letters is receiving in the meantime letters from a young woman. She is begging the «highly honoured» mister to give her back her «most precious thing». She writes: «on Christmas eve, my fiancée has been stolen out of my world» and «please, dear and estimated General, please have mercy with to young hearts»

Why does the General Ulrich Wille, the supreme commander of the Swiss Armed forces, receive such letters? And in particular why do Rudolf Urech and his fiancée Emma write such *emotional* letters to General Ulrich Wille, who was known as a Prussian friendly «hardliner»?

And: Rudolf and Emma where not the only ones. General Ulrich Wille received thousands of such letters from all over Switzerland. It is because the general was during World War the only authority who could grant amnesty, who coul fulfil a condemned men's request for mercy. General Ulrich Wille was therefore not only the supreme commander of the Swiss Armed forces, but as well «master of mercy».

But: Ulrich Wille was not the only master of mercy for more than 250'000 soldiers, who served Switzerland during World War I, but as a matter of fact for all Swiss civilians from 1914 up to 1918. How come? This very unusual situation goes back to the decision of the parliament in August 2014 to give the Federal Counsel full power to release emergency regulations. The validity of the martial law could therefore be stretched during war times over civilians. But the martial law dated from the very early 19th century and was originally written for soldiers, who hired in foreign legions (such as the troops of Napoleon). The judges were therefore forced to use this old law, even though it did not correspond anymore to

the social, political or military reality of the beginning 20th century. The consequences emerged soon: overloaded tribunals, draconic penalties and scandals in the public opinion.

The only chance to avoid this was asking for grace. So very often the judges advised the condemned men to ask for mercy in the very same moment they punished them. My research has shown that nearly half of all condemned prisoners during World War I asked General Ulrich Wille for amnesty. This means that the general had to decide over more than 3 requests for mercy on every day of war. In these letters of mercy very often the prisoners, but also their parents, wives and other relatives, talked not about the social stigma, but also about their lives, about their poverty, their personal situation.

These records of court-martial law are therefore an unique and unexplored source for study into military, cultural and social history.

These letters of mercy made me – 8 years after I graduated – writing a PHD and following the question: «How did martial court condemned men asked for grace during World War I.» In my study I concentrate on different areas.

- o **the context of crime**
- o **law and justice**
- o **socio--economical factors**
- o **narratology**
- o **and further more (such as religion, health usw ...)**

Emotions are though a very important component in my study. How I analyse them and what a first conclusion of my research is, shall be shown in this presentation.

I want to start the very important question “what are

emotions?” with a very important statement «Everyone knows what emotions are, until you are asked to give a definition»! These two psychologists are pointing out to the main challenge when working with emotions: the difficulties of defining what emotions are. This has of course an enormous impact upon historians, who are researching with and about emotions. As I cannot recall the different approaches of what emotions might be, I focus on 3 premises, that help to understand emotions.

Emotions are not the opposite of rationality. Since about 25 years we know that emotion and cognition are somehow linked. It is not clear yet, how they interact, but that they do interact. This means: emotions have something to do with our thinking. Emotions can therefore be used to achieve a goal. People can calculate and manipulate with them. This is a very important premise when analysing letters of mercy.

Emotions have to do something with «being involved». That means emotions have something to do with our actions, with our experiences, our behaving. Emotions are actually seen as our guiding structures of our thinking, feeling and acting.

Emotions are socially formed, that means that they depend from time and «room», Emotions are therefore historically and socially situated. This understanding is key for historians, and for my study, as you will see.

This means that emotions, but also their function, their expression and their constitution can change over the time. Historians must therefore get an «access» to past emotions. We have to undertake a reconstruction process if we want to understand them.

One of the key tool to reconstruct past emotions in texts is the «potential of emotion». With the aid of some letters I will show this reconstruction process.

But in order to understand, what emotions «do» with us when reading a text, I first have to explain what a text is – an in particular –

how important the reader for the comprehension of a text is.

In linguistics we talk about a text, if he is composed by more than one sentences and if the reader understands it as an «entity». Reading is basically not a passive action, but an active one. Because when we read we do always on the same time involve our knowledge – that's how the human brain works. Thanks to our common knowledge we «understand» text and construct our own text comprehension.

But a reader can much more. He can as well fill a gap. That means a recipient can understand something, even though it is not written there!

The two sentences: “John sees a spider. John is running away” do have – on a first view– no connection. Nevertheless we understand what the connection is, even though it not written. By our common knowledge — many persons fear spiders and run away when they seen one – we understand the connection, we fill the gap.

The process of understanding a text by knowledge is called «interference». Therefore every text has a «potential of interference» - something that is in the text and that we can understand by our knowledge.

These explications are very important for the process of the emotional text comprehension. **Then as a reader can understand a text by his cognition, he can understand feelings by this emotion.**

This process of «understanding» or «sharing» emotions when reading a text (or listening to a piece of music, or watching a movie that makes us understand which emotions were meant) is called emotionalizing.

That «thing» in a text that triggers the emotionalizing (amazement, astonishment, curiosity, disgust) is therefore the «potential of emotion»

Going back to General Wille, we can ask: can we find, can we extract and analyse this «potential» in the letters of grace, which shall involve him emotionally?

The answer is yes! On the basis of some letters I would like to show this process. There are some areas of life that are ideal to trigger emotions. Such an area concerns the family. In case of Rudolf Urech his family, in particular the description of the misery of this childhood and the narration about his mother belongs to one of his key arguments when he is asking for mercy.

«I have an old, sick mother who is praying for me. I owe her to act as a right man. She does not know that I am in prison, and I do not want to tell her yet, in order not to break her heart. (...) But, let's get back to the matter: Please tell me how long I have to sigh in this state of uncertainty.»

The emotional perspective of this section is quite simple: He appears, or wants to appear, as a smart son that cares about his old and faithful mother (« I owe her to act as a right man»). Contemporary he appears as sensible son, who wants to prevent his mother from sorrows («in order not to break her heart»).

Both sections include a «potential of emotion» that give the reader the impression or the feeling, that Rudolf Urech is or wants to be a devoted and caring son.

Another passage comes from the letter of Emma, Rudolf Urech's fiancée. She writes:

«Now I feel free and allow myself to ask you, dearest and highest honoured General, to give me back as a bride my most precious thing. (...) On holy Christmas, on this beautiful celebration, my beloved bridegroom has been stolen out of my world (...) Since then a long time has passed to be alone on God's earth. He is extremely sensitive, that is why he suffers so much, so I am full of fears that he might get sick very badly. Please dearest mister General, please full fill our wish, (...) as I suffer with him and I feel his pain, oh please dear General, please take pity

on two young hearts»

Emma is pressing every button of emotionality to reach her goal getting back her «most precious thing»

The dominant emotion in this section is the suffering. Namely, the suffering of both. When Emma writes to the general: «I suffer with him and I feel his pain» we can identify potential of emotion quite simply: She does not only describe the pain and the suffer from her fiancée, but also her own emotional condition. By this way general Wille does not only learn about the emotional state of Rudolf Urech, but also about hers, who is identifying herself with the suffer and pain of her fiancée.

The same thing can happen know to any reader: Thanks to our empathy (means by the ability of human beings to empathize with others) we can feel emotions from others as if they were ours. Even though when we read.

I have described the former section as an example of simple potential. There are others sections, where the potential though is more complex:

«he is suffering more from soul than from body & he will think about it his whole life; he will for sure act in future correctly as a citizen, as soldier, as man.»

This section shows very clear how deep the linking of our common knowledge with our emotional knowledge is. The deconstruction is this time therefore very complex, why I lead you through the reconstruction step by step and stare. First a simple abstract:

Emma told the general that her fiancé was not doing well. We heard some sentences ago as well, that she feared he might get seriously ill, because he was so sensitive.

She wrote as well, that he was suffering more psychologically than physically. And she made a promise to the general: That her finance will act

correctly again in future as citizen, soldier and as a man.

In a second step we analyse now the emotional context. But due to the missing time I focus only on the manhood-picture that is drawn in the text. It seems that Rudolf Urech is moving away from the figure of a «right man», otherwise Emma would not have written that later he will act again as a man. Does this mean that right now, being in prison, he is acting not like a «right man»? How come? Because – and here we are in the middle of the process of reconstruction – he is very sensitive, and he is suffering more «from his soul, than from body». So we could state: suffering physically is adequate for a man, but suffering psychologically does not really cope with the ideal figure of a man in these days.

Well, these remarks point out to a very important factor when analysing past emotions: In order to decode and reconstruct emotions we need specific knowledge. Namely as many roles – such as the role of a soldier or a man – are linked to social expectations and are based upon social conventions.

To these backgrounds we cannot draw back automatically with our common and emotional knowledge. We need the specific contextual knowledge of the past. We can assume that general Wille and Emma knew the contemporary role of citizens, of soldiers or men, meanwhile we historians have to decode first the past conventions and roles – in order to understand them, and, in order to understand cognitively and emotionally this passage from a letter for mercy.

But there we stand in front of a next challenge: Emotions do not only vary **over** the time, but also **within** the time. An example of this variability of emotions within the same time shall be explained with the next and last example:

«I always loved to serve & I am sure that I always received best qualifications from every military service. I always got assigned the

most difficult duties when defending the borders. I have furthermore always been known as especially brave and coldblooded, not only in the field, but also as a guard. (...) I regret deeply what I have done. Very often I am weeping tears in secret over my actions.»

This section of Rudolf Urech has to be embedded first within the entire letter. Before this this Rudolf complained over 4 (!) pages about the circumstances he grew up, about his life as a half orphan during childhood, and he complained as well about the circumstances in the casern and about the bad commander. Let's describe it as a very large lamento about everything and everybody. And – this seems to be a specialty of Rudolf Urech, guilty or responsible for every misery is always somebody else.

Then with this section Rudolf makes an u-turn: for the first time he is not complaining , but appears virtuously and powerful. He actually refers on this cold-bloodedness as a sign of his braveness. Did he remember that the addressee is the supreme commander? Does he want therefore appear as somebody, who is able to control his emotions and be considered as somebody responsible and reliable? Well this section gives – as the former ones – again an insight in to a role. An officer, who cannot hold back his feelings is probably not corresponding to the ideal of a disciplined and decisive type of leader. In particular not for general Wille, who was known for this Prussian-friendly thinking of discipline and obedience. This might explain why Rudolf is only weeping tears in secret and not in public.

That means: emotions are – appropriate to the situation – fundamental components of social expected acting and can act as the sides of one coin. Means: being emotional for an officer is very appropriate if it concerns the passion and devoutness for the country, but outbreaks like weakness and sensitivity are not adequate emotions when it is about the leadership skills of an officer.

What conclusions can I draw so for my study?

First of all: In order to understand the «inner state» of historical subjects I have to know the past pattern of emotion. As a historian I do not have to share the «emotional world» of 1914. But I have to decode the context, in order to access and understand past emotions. Reading past emotions requests though specific contextual knowledge.

Secondly: Emotions are never linear, they can appear full of contrasts or contradictory, as the metaphor of the two-sided coin showed us. Thus as they are bound to social conventions and behaviour patterns.

— Thirdly: The interaction of individual and “typical of the time” emotion is fundamental when analysing emotions. Unfortunately I cannot state much to it due to missing time. Let me explain therefore just the most important: our own experience is key when we read emotions. That means that our emotional reaction is never based only on “typical of time” emotions, but as well on our personal, individual ones. This duality can be seen in the many passages where Rudolf Urech writes about this early fatherlessness. If we, as readers grew ourselves without a father we have a different emotional approach as a reader, who did not lose his father while being a child. So a personal experience can influence more towards a specific emotion as a “social” situated one.

You might say, that is conclusion is very trivial. It is not, on a contrary: it is very fundamental when analysing past emotions and their historical and social impact.

What kinds of functions have then emotions in the letters of mercy?

Well in particular in the case of Rudolf Urech we can see that emotions can be used very much as strategic instruments to reach a goal.

Although in the case of Rudolf Urech this strategy has not worked out: General Wille refused every request of mercy.

What ever the case may be: For the reconstruction process of past

emotions the letters of mercy are source and key in one.

Piotr Popławski (Poland)

Narew-Biebrza line fortifications in 1915 and 1939 campaigns

Introduction

This paper will describe and compare various fortifications along the line of rivers Narew and Biebrza, nowadays located in central and north-eastern Poland. This line was heavily fortified by Russians in the late XIX and early XX century, and then reinforced by Poles in the interbellum period. The main goal is to show major changes in creating of the defence systems in the first half of the XX century in a case study focusing on their operational role. Another important topic is how the Polish army tried to adapt the already out-of-date forts to their defense plans and finding out if the Russian fortification had any influences on Polish fortification. The paper is based on combined data from terrain studies done by the author, archival-based sources and accounts or diaries of soldiers fighting on the Narew-Biebrza line in 1915 and 1939.

During both world wars rivers Narew and Biebrza were considered as an obstacle of great operational importance. This was mainly because of the shape of borders between Germany and Russia in the outbreak of I world war, and later between Germany and Poland in the interbellum period and 1939 campaign. The rivers flown just several dozen kilometers behind the borderline in Russian (1915) or Polish (1939) territory, being the first major obstacle for troops advancing from East Prussia. In the Great War the river line was assaulted only once, in 1915, but with very big efforts. During the II World War it was the scene of major battles for 3 times: in 1939, 1941 and 1944/45. In this paper author focuses only on 1915 and 1939 campaigns and only on particular, most representative fortifications.

Russian fortress line in 1915 campaign

The meaning of this natural obstacle was well known to its owners before both world wars broke out. Russians already started reinforcing it with strong fortifications in the late XIX century, when the Holy Alliance started to crumble and the threat of war with Germany rose, especially in 1880's when Germany and Austro-Hungary forged their alliance. Russians even prepared some bridgehead positions as bases for their planned offensive in East Prussia. This resulted in creating one of the longest and strongest fortification lines in central Europe in the beginning of XX century. Almost every river crossing was blocked by polygonal objects of various dimensions, strength and construction, ranging from several light infantry forts to powerful fortresses. Starting from the north, the crossings over Biebrza in Osowiec, and over Narew in Łomża, Ostrołęka, Różan, Pułtusk, Zegrze and finally Modlin were all fortified, which can be seen on the map. The end of XIX century in Russian fortification was a period of standarization, which led to creating projects of forts. One of the most important figure in this process was Nestor Bujnicki, author of theoretical studies and projects of various objects (e.g. Osowiec Fortress, Różan bridgehead and modernization of Modlin fortress). The first fortifications in Narew-Biebrza line were created in 1882 (not counting the early forts of Modlin) and the last just in the eve of I World War. Three fortresses were built: in Zegrze, Modlin and Osowiec, on flanks of the line. The Modlin fortress in 1914 was the biggest in whole Russian Empire, consisting the citadel and two rings of polygonal forts of various construction. However it was captured in less than 20 days of August during the German 1915 campaign. On the other hand a smaller, but well prepared and commanded fortress in Osowiec was succesfully defended by Russians for over half an year and is considered as the only Russian fortress that was never conquered by a siege (defenders retreated) and often called the Eastern Front's Small Verdun. It was also the scene of a huge German gas attack on 6 August 1915, which brought severe losses to the Russian defenders. The rest of

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crossings were defended by smaller forts and in less important sectors field fortifications were constructed to fill the remaining gaps. An interesting set of informations about the 1915 campaign is brought by general Gallwitz in his diaries. The paper will focus on showing the main types of objects in each group – fortresses, forts and some field works.

Fortress Osowiec, comprising of four various forts, was designed as the right flank of Narew-Biebrza line, blocking the Ełk-Białystok direction. The construction begin in 1882, when the barrage fort (Fort nr I) was built on the southern bank of Biebrza river. Later Fort nr II was added on the opposite, northern bank to deepen the defense. After finishing this, the next two forts were planned and built: Fort nr III and the most modern Fort IV with concrete objects.

During the I World War Osowiec Fortress twice repulsed sieges. In the middle of September Russian troops after losing the Tannenberg battle retreated to the Narew-Biebrza and Niemen lines. German troops, pursuing the Russians, in mid-September reached Osowiec Fortress' far foreground and on 17 September 1914 gen. Paul von Hindenburg ordered the Landwehr-Division to attack the fortress and four days later first fights started. On 25 September Germans began heavy bombardment of the fortress, using also 21 cm guns from Königsberg. Thanks to the aeronautic (balloon) company the defenders could return with counter-battery fire. The actual infantry assault began on 28 September, repulsed with barrage of fortress artillery fire. Due to the attack of Russian 10 Army in the nearby Augustow sector, Germans withdrew their siege starting on 29 September. For 12 days Germans couldn't break the defences and in the end of 1914 Osowiec was still in Russian hands, like the whole Narew-Biebrza line.

The next German siege lasted for six months, between 30 January and 8 August 1915, with the first serious assault in February 1915, after their success in the Masurian Lakes battle, when attackers tried to assault Osowiec and Łomża at once. Despite repeated assaults and artillery barrages supported with heavy

artillery between 9 and 17 February Osowiec Fortress withstood again, forcing the Germans to bypass it, while still keeping a considerable force blocking Osowiec. During the German summer offensive in August 1915 the fortress was assaulted for the last time on 6 August. This last attempt was supported with a huge gas attack of 30 gas-batteries, inflicting severe casualties to the defenders. But German troops didn't exploit the shock effect and were repulsed by Russians thanks to fortress artillery gunners shooting from open positions suffering from the gas, but also halting German advance. Eventually the fortress was abandoned between 18-23 August 1915 and Russians withdrew only due to the overall situation on the frontline. The fortress withstood for 6 months completely fulfilling operational orders and expectations of Russian supreme command and covering to the last moment the flank of troops retreating from the Narew-Biebrza line. It was considered as a perfect example of combining terrain with fixed and field fortifications.

Łomża was a gubernial city, biggest of all towns along Narew-Biebrza line, and important crossing on Narew river. It was sheltered by the bend of Narew river and to attack it, enemy should approach from the northeast. Due to this Russians built here a strong bridgehead sometimes called a small ring fortress. First works were started in 1889 r. on the left river bank, when two small redoubts were built (Fort IV and Fort V). After 1896 next three forts were built, this time on the opposite side of the river. They were standard Russian infantry forts of gen. Wieliczko's project, modernized in 1900 with adding concrete layers. The forts were connected with an embankment and ditch, creating a continuous fortification surrounding the bridgehead in 1,5 km radius.

After war broke out, Łomża wasn't a scene of fights in the first year of the campaign. It was the HQ of VI Corps, and garrison for three regiments. It was the initial point of the right flank of Russian 2. Army advancing on Tannenberg. After losing the battle Russian troops retreated behind the Narew-Biebrza line fortifications which halted the German counter-offensive.

In February 1915 German 8. Army's advance reached the area 20 km from Łomża and later in the same month Russians launched a big counterattack, but it soon ended without major effects. The Łomża bridgehead was covering the concentration before this counterattack. In August 1915 Germans broke the Narew-Biebrza line during general offensive and the Łomża garrison abandoned the bridgehead due to losses taken since war broke out and threatened with an attack from the slightly protected left riverbank.

The bridgehead in Różan (small town located on a hill halfway between Modlin and Łomża) was one of the last projects of reinforcing the Narew-Biebrza line. It was initially planned already in 1892, but the construction started not until 1905 and lasted five years. Three concrete and earthwork infantry forts of Bujnicki project were built in a half-ring shape around the bridgehead and only 1,5 km close to the crossing.

The first fights here started on 22 July 1915. Defenders (IV Siberian Corps) repulsed several attacks of German XIII Corps supported by 40 batteries of artillery, including heavy siege guns and mortars (305 and 420 mm caliber). Germans moved their main emphasis on bypassing the fortifications with an assault against field positions along Narew between Różan and Ostrołęka. This succeeded near Kamionka, where an assault bridgehead was captured but for the next 10 days Germans could not break out from it due to extremely stiff and determined Russian defences supported by field fortification. However, Russians feared the Różan garrison could be cut and ordered abandoning the fortified bridgehead already in the night 23/24 July. The well defended fortifications only partially fulfilled the given orders, but this was an effect of the early retreat of the garrison.

Despite serious efforts and pre-war preparations, the fortifications couldn't prevent the collapse of Russian defences in 1915 campaign. In 1915 the German command decided to make its main effort on the Eastern Front, and accordingly transferred considerable forces there. After the Second Battle of the

Masurian Lakes, the German and Austro-Hungarian troops in the Eastern Front functioned under a unified command. Their offensive soon turned into a general advance and then a strategic retreat by the Russian army. The cause of the reverses suffered by the Russian army was not so much errors in the tactical sphere, as the deficiency in technical equipment, particularly in artillery and ammunition as well as the corruption and incompetence of the Russian officers. Before surrendering or retreating the Russian garrison troops destroyed as much as they could in the Modlin and Osowiec fortresses but left other forts almost intact. This allowed later usage of all these fortifications by Poles in the interwar period and 1939 campaign.

Polish „Narew-Biebrza line” in 1939 campaign

After the Great War Poland regained independence and tried to make use of the old Russian forts by adapting them for modern purposes. The lack of money and time led to only partial solutions, but still it is very interesting that both big fortresses – Modlin and Osowiec – were most important proving grounds for the new born Polish school of fortification. Various objects were built there not only to upgrade the old forts but to prepare new, independent fortification objects, that could be constructed outside of the forts. This may lead to an answer about the influence of Russian constructions on Polish military engineering. It is quite hard to recognize the similarities and differences. This is because cadre of the Polish army was using their experiences from the former Czar Russian army. In the interbellum, when the influences were cut due to regaining independence by Poland, a completely new system of dispersed fortification was created, only loosely basing on the earlier polygonal fort system. Polish army developed its own system of constructing and placing this kind of fortification objects, based mainly on French and later Czech experiences. Meanwhile the new, Soviet Red Army developed its own fortifying school. Having the same root, both systems were almost completely

different, mainly in the theoretical matters but also due to smaller budget of Polish army.

Operational importance of this line was crucial in the preparations for defence war against German invasion. The border with East Prussia was quite similar in 1914 and in 1939, and in the shortest line it was only 150 km from Warsaw. For Russians it was an important town, but for Poles it was the capital that could not be lost. The main difference between situation in 1915 and 1939 campaigns was that the Russians could retreat from this line losing only small part of their territory, while for Poles this was the first and the last line defending inner part of the state and its capital. Poles treated the line of Narew and Biebrza rivers as the right wing of their main defence position. We can perfectly see it on the map. The Polish staff started making some preparations for reinforcing this line in the early 30's, beginning from its both edges in Modlin and Osowiec. Those two were also the strongest Russian fortifications, so the work was a little easier. Both fortresses were first used as proving grounds for our own fortification school. In the same time the rest of the line was left without modernization until summer of 1939, when it was too late for serious strengthening.

Modlin fortress, as the main proving ground of Polish fortification, was the first modernized object in the Narew-Biebrza line. First, in the 1920's the forts were slightly refreshed. It also was the place, where first Polish casemate made from reinforced concrete was constructed. This small object was built in 1929 only for experimental purposes and looked very similar to the project of 1939 light field casemate for MG. In 1933 some old Russian forts received armoured observation domes in trapezium shape. The next added object was designed in 1935 and built in the next year's spring in the fort group XV. It was a two level gasproof object, with two independent MG embrasures, a special mortar embrasure in the lower level, an two armoured domes for MG on the ceiling. Reassuring, the object had quite good armament of 4 MG's and 2

mortars. After finishing its construction, the casemate was used as a target for artillery testing, giving feedback both to the constructors and Polish heavy artillery officers. Additionally, 5 light field casemates were constructed in Modlin in 1939 to reinforce the weakest points of the fortress. Comparing to Osowiec, Modlin was only slightly reinforced with modern fortification during the interwar period. The fortress was the command post of 8. Infantry Division, also the garrison of 32. Infantry Regiment and mobilization point for 1. Heavy Artillery Regiment and rear echelon units. The complete Polish effort in this fortress, made during the interwar period is shown on the scheme.

Poles were predicting that the main German thrust from East Prussia, after breaking border defences will take the shortest road on Warsaw. According to this, Modlin would be a key position to defend the capital city from the northern threat. It should also tie advancing German forces, while a counterattack was prepared and launched from the east, from bridgeheads across Narew in Różan and Pułtusk. In fact, Germans had different plans. They wanted to avoid direct assaulting Modlin and Zegrze fortresses, and after breaking border positions near Mława on 3 September 1939, they unexpectedly turned eastwards on the next day. The new direction of German advance headed straight against Polish reserve forces gathering for the counterattack. This caused serious chaos in Polish forces and eventually allowed Germans to break the Narew line on 6 September 1939 near Różan. On sixth day of the campaign this serious mistake in predictions made by Poles led to a catastrophe and collapse of the northern wing of the defence. Paradoxically, at the same time this situation gave the defenders of Modlin fortress a long time for preparations. The garrison was reinforced by the forces retreating from Mława and until 13 September it reached 15 000 soldiers, far more than the initial German forces around the fortress and was still growing finally reaching 40 000 soldiers in the end of third week of campaign. But also Germans eventually focused on capturing the fortress and their forces were gathering around. The first assault of gen. Strauss' II Army

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Corps took place on 18 September 1939, but failed. When battle of Bzura came to an end, on 22 September forces of gen. Hoth's XV Corps cut the link between Modlin and Warsaw. The following days brought mainly reconnaissance fights and heavy bombing as Germans were preparing the general assault, meanwhile bringing new forces of X Army Corps. On 27 September another attack of the German II Army Corps was repulsed. The general assault was scheduled on 29 September, but one day earlier Poles, running out of ammunition, provisions, fresh water and medicines asked for a cease-fire. On the following day the fortress' commander, gen. Thomme signed the act of capitulation. As one of the last points of Polish resistance in 1939, the fortress played its role well, but during the preparations and in the first phase of the campaign Polish supreme command mistook the role of Modlin fortress in German plans, which led to the Różan catastrophe. Moreover, there are no major accounts about the role of new objects built in the interbellum period, so we don't know if they played any role in the 1939 campaign.

In Osowiec the first reinforcing took place in 1931-1932, when 5 large objects were built in fort nr II. They were the first high-value and genuine Polish casemates. One of them had an armoured dome, another one – kind of a turret with MG. Later, in 1939 in the eve of war several objects were added outside the forts:

- two huge artillery traditors, each for two 76,2 mm guns, one of which was a converted Russian object, (the second one was destroyed by Germans in 1944 with a spectacular effect shown on the photo – extremely heavy concrete object was blown up and fallen upside down on its roof)

- one heavy casemate for MG with an armoured dome;
- and 6 standard light casemates for MG.

The fortress was also the mobilisation point and garrison for an reinforced infantry regiment (135 IR), artillery battalion and fortress MG battalion. The total Polish effort is shown in the scheme, but it's effectiveness is

not fully measurable as the fortress was not directly attacked by Germans in 1939. Only the German Brigade „Goldap” was securing and tying Polish units in Osowiec until 13 September 1939, when the Polish garrison was ordered to retreat under the threat of encirclement. Poles wasted their forces in Osowiec, as they kept a strongly reinforced regiment in the fortress having no serious enemy, while the nearby sector in Wizna defended by a weak mixed battalion was attacked by overwhelming German assault. Forces of gen. von Kuechler's 3rd Army didn't even try a direct assault on Osowiec – as it was a secondary object, they tried to bypass it from the south. However, this resulted in a massive traffic jam of Guderian's XIX Army Corps in the Wizna sector on 9-10 September, south of Osowiec. So the fortress played only an indirect role, forcing Germans to choose another route of advance and jamming that route with a too large force.

Also the smaller, minor forts in Zegrze, Pułtusk, Różan, Ostrołęka and Łomża were slightly upgraded in the eve of war in 1939, mainly by field fortifications – light casemates for MG. The number of objects built in sectors is shown by the table:

- Zegrze – 3
- Pułtusk – 5
- Różan – 2
- Ostrołęka – 6
- Łomża – 12 + 9 with additional trenches, barbed wire obstacles and other.

All of those points were defended in the Polish Campaign of 1939, but the paper will focus on Łomża and Różan sectors, due to the most important and fierce fights there.

Różan sector, with its four light infantry forts was in 1915 campaign one of the main points of German assault on the Narew river line. It also became the key to breaking Narew-Biebrza line in 1939. Poles recognized Russian experiences of 1915 campaign (described in articles in Polish military reviews in

the 1930's), but did not use them in proper way, as Rózan bridgehead was almost completely left without modernization. A small part of reserve infantry officers academy was using those objects in the interbellum period. Only in the eve of the war two light field casemates for MG were built on one fort, but started so late, that the concrete was bond very poorly and the endurance of those objects was insufficient for surviving any type of artillery fire. Instead of reinforcing the defence, Poles placed large part of their northern front's operational reserve in this sector and planned to use it for a counterattack on the flank of German forces advancing towards Modlin and Warsaw. This prediction was a serious mistake, while Germans turned eastwards, directly on Rózan and Pułusk. Meanwhile Poles had not yet finished their mobilization here and only one weak reserve regiment (115.) was in positions, in the last moment reinforced by the rest of 41. Reserve Division. However, initial German direct attacks on 5 September 1939 were repulsed and the attacker was forced to try bypassing the position from north (by 12. Infantry Division) and south (1. Cavalry Brigade). Meanwhile Poles started deploying large force for a counterattack still believing that this was only the flank of main German thrust on Warsaw. The forces planned for the counterattack consisted of two reserve divisions (33. and 41.) and 1/3 of 18. Infantry Division. As the German force strenght in this sector was unknown, the Polish supreme command changed the orders for all operational commanders, cancelling the counterattack in the last moment in the evening of 5 September 1939 and changing subordination of local units. Moreover, due to this changing orders and subordination the commander of the 41. Division ordered a retreat from the bridgehead, while his forces could defend it for at least one more day. During the retreat, engineers failed to destroy the bridge, which fallen in German hands almost intact (like in 1915!). In this culmination point those mistakes caused a kind of a chain reaction leading to total chaos and eventually a defeat. Anyway, the German breakthrough was achieved not directly in Rózan (still defended from the eastern riverbank), but south of the town by the 1. Cavalry

Brigade. This resulted in breaking the whole Narew-Biebrza line in the night on 6/7 September 1939. The old Russian fortifications played an important role here, but only in the initial phase of the battle. Then, due to the chaos they were abandoned too early. The influence of two small Polish casemates was insignificant. The German victory here was achieved not by breaking the fortifications but by bypassing them just like in 1915, which means that Poles should focus on reinforcing the wings of this position.

Łomża was the largest of Russian fortified bridgeheads along Narew, with biggest forts and best terrain conditions. Poles placed a large garrison in the town, with an engineer unit. This allowed keeping the old forts in good condition, and eventually reinforcing them in the eve of war. Sappers constructed 21 new objects here – standard light casemates for MG and artillery observation posts, moreover deployed in two lines on both sides of the river. This was the biggest number of combat shelters built in the minor Narew crossings sectors. The old forts were also reinforced by barbed wire infantry obstacles, anti-tank obstacles and trenches. The planned garrison for this sector was one reinforced battalion of the local 33. Infantry Regiment. The soldiers knew their positions very well. This resulted in an surprisingly long and effective defence. The first attack took place on 7 September 1939 and was carried out by spearhead of the 10. Panzer-Division. The stiff defence was a surprise for Germans, who lost several armoured vehicles and retreated. On the second day larger combined unit repeated the attack, but also was repulsed with considerable losses. This forced Germans to move their tanks and motorized units towards Wizna, where Polish defence was lighter. But the attack on Łomża was continued for the following two days, this time by Brigade „Loetzen” supported by heavy artillery and bombers. The defenders repulsed also those attacks inflicting losses, but finally Poles were ordered to retreat by divisional command in the night 10/11 September 1939, as all other positions were abandoned and the local Polish forces were retreating southwards. Łomża was the last defended point of the

Narew-Biebrza line. Polish forces retreated in total order, and not because they were defeated, but by the given order, threatened by encirclement. This case shows, that a properly prepared position with sufficient troops could stand against stronger enemy long enough to cause troubles for the attacker.

Conclusions

Answering the main goal of this paper it is important to remind about different conditions for the two states using Narew and Biebrza rivers as a defence line. Both Russians and Poles had ca. 20 years to prepare the positions. But Russian Empire could spend lots of money creating a system of fortress and bridgeheads with large garrisons, while Poles only slightly reinforced the existing objects and added two heavy casemate sectors from the scratch in Nowogród and Wizna. This was due to the small military budget of the young country. Moreover, Russians could man and defend the gaps between fortresses while Poles could barely screen them.

The most important operational conclusion is, that in both campaigns operational breakthroughs of Narew-Biebrza line were achieved by Germans without capturing any of the line's fortresses or bridgeheads in a direct assault. Moreover, twice German broken the line near Różan, which shows that Poles did not recognize the importance of this sector. The difference between both campaigns in fortification topic was, that in 1915 the front withdrew pivoting eastwards around Osowiec while in 1939 the pivot was moving southwards and around Modlin. Moreover, Russians in 1915 had larger forces in this part of front than Poles in 1939, which led to more effective defending of the river line. It lasted for an year, until July 1915, when Germans finally broke through the line between Różan and Ostrołęka (in Osowiec and Łomża Russians withstood even until mid-August 1915). The biggest disappointment was the short defence of Modlin fortress, which fallen after 20 days releasing a big portion of besieging German forces used next to support other directions of advance.

In September 1939 both fortresses, Modlin and Osowiec were not used effectively. Polish forces focused on defending them, keeping strong forces inside, while the nearby sectors were only weakly defended, like in Wizna near Osowiec. Germans made use of this weakness and broke the Narew-Biebrza line in those weak spots (Różan and Wizna) leaving the fortresses behind. Poles should deploy their forces in a more efficient way, reinforcing the minor crossings' defences or keeping reserves at the cost of weakening the fortresses garrisons. The insufficient force of Różan bridgehead combined with mistakes of operational and supreme commanders led to breaking the whole Narew-Biebrza line in the first week of campaign. The only minor bridgehead sector appropriately prepared for the 1939 campaign was in Łomża and it succeeded in the defence for 4 days, but without any operational consequences.

Getting back to the links between Polish and Russian fortification schools, those were very slight. Only in Osowiec Russian objects were upgraded according to the Polish fortification school. Łomża sector also was a good example of reinforcing the defence capability. Rest of the objects along Narew-Biebrza river were still Russian polygonal forts, out-of-date in 1939. However, there occurs a very interesting observation. Besides the differences in various matters, both Polish and Soviet pre-World War II systems eventually earned one point connecting them. When Soviets annexed eastern Poland in 1939, they've started to build on the new territory a new fortified line, so-called „Molotov's Line”. And they used almost all surviving Polish casemates including them into the line and considering as valuable reinforcement.

Giacomo Innocenti (Italy)

**ENRICO CAVIGLIA: THE FORGOTTEN ITALIAN. A LIFE AS
SOLDIER, WRITER, SERVING HIS COUNTRY**

BEFORE THE IWW

Early life, Eritrea, Asia and Libya

Enrico Caviglia was born on 4 March 1862 in Finalmarina (Savona). He was member of a medium class sailor and fishermen's family. In all the history of his family the "Caviglias" were in a certain way connected with the sea, and his father was sure that his son would become a sailor, maybe a captain of a merchant ship. Enrico loved the sea and he will maintain this love and good relationship with the sailors of his hometown for all his life, but still the very start he has only one dream: *«Io voglio farmi soldato»* (I want to be a soldier).

At the age of fifteen he left his family and entered in the Military College in Milano, then he was cadet at the Military Academy in Turin. In the 19 July 1883 he got the rank of sub lieutenant of artillery. The 25 August 1885 he was promoted lieutenant.

In October 1888 he asked to join the Royal Italian Colonial Army in Eritrea. In Africa, as commander of a gun battery, he took part in different expeditions. He came back to Italy to study in the School of War and then he was selected to enter the General Staff School. In this occasion he took the decision to leave the artillery and to become a staff officer. Even so he actually was send again in Africa where, the 1 March 1896, he was present at the battle of Adwa, the greatest Italian defeat in Africa.

For his involvement, like all the others officers present in the battle, he was inquired by the military tribunal, but he was not found guilty because he was too

far away from the centre of the battle and, by the point of view of the other officers, he made all his duty.

On 16 April 1903 he was promoted to the rank of major. The 1904 was a watershed year for Caviglia. The Chief Staff selected him for an important mission. This was the order: «Get ready to leave to Japan with the first steamer. By there you will follow the Japanese operations against the Russians. (...) Bon voyage».

This mission was really important for the future Italian general, not only because he could travel, which was one of his desires, but also because, watching and studying the Russo-Japanese War (8 February 1904 – 5 September 1905) he could understand some of the tactics used by the Japanese in the Battle of Yalu River, to cross the river under the enemy fire. Those teachings came in very useful in the battles of Bainsizza and the Piave.

The mission in Asia was over in the spring of 1911. He decided to come back to Italy by horse travelling alone following the old Silk Road from Turkestan to the Crimean Peninsula.

In the 1912 the major Caviglia went to Libya. The year before there was the Italo-Turkish War (29 September 1911 – 18 October 1912) for the control of that African region. He did not have time to fight against the Ottoman Army, but for a while he fought the rebel tribes and he mediated the Turkish troop's departure.

After the conclusion of the period in Africa, he worked in Italy for a short period in the Geographical Military Institute, but the 1 February 1914 he was promoted colonel. Some months later, on 28 July 1914, began the First World War.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Bainsizza, Caporetto, Piave

As it is well known, Italy, at the beginning of the war, took the decision to remain neutral even though it had a pact of alliance with Berlin and Wien, but using an article of the treaty, Rome could maintain its neutrality.

When it became clear that the conflict could not be closed in months the two parts, on one side Germany and Austro-Hungarian Empire, on the other side France, United Kingdom and Russia, tried to persuade Italy to join them or, in the case of Germany (without asking the opinion to their Austrian allies) they proposed that Italy remained neutral, giving as reward some Italian regions under the control of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Of course the Austrian Government opposed to this proposal and declared itself ready only to a discussion about small changes in boundary.

In Italy a lot of important politicians (the most important neutralist was the former Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti), were agreed with the neutrality, but the King Vittorio Emanuele III and some conservative and nationalist politicians were having contacts with the British, French and Russian Governments. These Governments were agree to discuss about the Italian seeks about the Italian sovereignty over Trento, Trieste and Dalmatia.

On 26 April 1915 was signed the secret Treaty of London. With this pact Italy undertook to enter in one-month time in war against the Austrian-Hungarian and German Empires.

Italy declared war to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire on 24 May 1915. The Italian declaration of war (only against Wien, because the Italian Prime Minister Antonio Salandra hoped to maintain good relationship with Germany) was a shock for its former allies, in particular for Austria, which was already in a really difficult war with Serbia and Russia.

At the beginning of the operations Italy had a strong superiority in its sector, but were made two big mistakes: the Italian General Staff was sure that the Austrian defensive structures were strong in Trentino and that there were enough Austrian troops in Friuli to stop with heavy losses the *Regio Esercito* (Italian Royal Army), so that the advance was too slow.

In Trentino the Italian troops did not make the strongest advance because there was one of the most relevant railway junctions between Austria and Germany and the Italian Government was afraid of a German reaction (actually was sent a German mountain unit). So the military operations were concentrated along the Isonzo line, following part of the Allies' advices (they were worried that if Italy achieved its military aims against Austria, the Italian Government could stop the war in that sector).

For this waste of time, Italy lost the occasion to conquer a large part of its military goals and gave time to the Austro-Hungarian Army to arrange a really good defensive system, which stopped the first strong Italian thrust.

Enrico Caviglia was sent to the front line and, almost immediately promoted *Generale di brigata* (Brigadier general) and he was in command over the *Bari* brigade, which was almost destroyed in the first *spallata* (Italian word for shove stroke, as were called the twelve battles on the Isonzo front) against the Isonzo river. The sector assigned to this division was one of the most difficult and bloody of all the Great War: Karts Plateau.

General Caviglia had a great sensitivity with his men and he understood that it was absolutely essential to reorganize the brigade and to try to give a better life to his troops and boost morale, because soldiers were terrorised by the idea of a new assault to the mountain San Michele. He said to his men: «You have done honour to the San Michele. Now it comes to occupy some trenches. Trust me and in my common sense. I don't want to do anything frenzy».

The war in Italy, even if it is not well known abroad, was extremely hard, and it was made even harder by the geographical context. Actually a lot of battles

were fought up to the mountains (sometimes in place higher than 2000 above the sea level) and the Karts Plateau has a rocky soil, so that many times it was impossible dig trenches to protect soldiers. He was extremely critic to the tactics and the strategy of Luigi Cadorna (4 September 1850 – 21 December), the Commander in Chief of the Italian Royal Army, and he expressed all his ideas to his commanders, but he was a soldier so, trying to limit the casualties, he obeyed the orders that obliged troops to attack the trenches frontally.

The 15 May 1916 began the so-called *Strafexpedition* in Trentino. This operation, made after the first five Italian campaigns, had one goal: to ward off and to destroy the Italian Army. Using a huge number of gas grenades, the Austrian offensive was really close to crash the Italians' resistance. Doing this, the Austrians were helped by the general Cadorna, who was sure that this offensive was just a feint, because he trusted that the real offensive was along the Isonzo river, not in the North. Only on 18 Cadorna send the reserve from the Isonzo to Trentino. Caviglia, with his brigade, contributed to stop the enemy's advance and, when he reached Sette Comuni, was promoted Major General and had the command of the 29° division.

The battle continued till the 27 June, when the Marshall Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf took the decision to retreat. The Royal Italian Army (or better said: the Italian soldiers) fought well against the numerically superior *Kaiserliche und Königliche Armee* (Austro-Hungarian Army).

During the *Strafexpedition* Italian Army's defence was helped by the Russian offensive in Galicia. This Russian operation combined with the Italian resistance arrested the Austrian offensive. On 15 June Caviglia, with his 29° division, without any authorization from the General Staff, took the decision to attack the enemy sector in front of his position and conquered Gallio.

Two months later, on 9 August 1916, the 3° Italian Army conquered the city of Gorizia and during the same operation happened one of the most important and successful Italian operation: the outlet of the Sabotino. By the

Italian official bulletin this operation was cleverly led by Pietro Badoglio (28 September 1871 – 1 November 1956), who was promoted Major General. From this moment on there was a hard rivalry between the two Generals and usually Badoglio was the winner. In all his books Caviglia expressed clearly his hate to Badoglio, sometime without using his name (just saying “the commander of the Division, etc.) sometime telling directly his opinion. They hated each other and that was a huge problem for the army, and surely for Caviglia’s career, because he had not contacts with politicians, but Badoglio. By the way Caviglia wrote in his *Diary* that the offensive’s project creator and the true conqueror of Sabotino was General Luca Montuori who was really offended to be not mentioned.

General Caviglia was commended with the Cross of the Military order of Savoy for his lead in Karts Plateau, where he fought till June ’17. He took part in the bloody Battle of Ortigara, where Cadorna used all the time the same tactic: the frontal attack. The previous battles showed that with a small number of well-trained units was possible to break up the enemy defence, but the Head of Staff did not change his mind.

Caviglia was upset for the Cadorna’s strategy, but even if he expressed his point of view nothing changed. In his memoir Caviglia wrote that all the Italian tactics in that period were so predictable that the Austrians knew each time with adequate notice when (with the strong and capable help by the Austro-Hungarian intelligence) and where would be the enemy offensive, being ready to repel it.

1917. In that year there were two of the most important battles for Italy and for Caviglia too: the Eleventh Isonzo’s battle and the battle of Caporetto. In July Caviglia was promoted Lieutenant General to the merits of war. He was the head of XXIV Corps (part of the 2° Army, under the command of Luigi Capello).

The Eleventh Isonzo’s Battle was, as the previous battles, badly led by Cadorna, who gave the general dispositions but he did not check and control the operational levels, leaving this to the different commanders and, as a matter of

fact there were three targets, Tolmino, Karst Plateau and Bainsizza, but these attacks were managed independently. Actually there was no coordination.

Caviglia had an aim in the battle: Bainsizza (today Banijska Planina). He had only one obsession: that time he wanted the manoeuvre. He understood that the frontal attacks were useless and he took the decision to change the plan. Remembering what he saw in the Japanese-Russian War, he used pontoons and floating bridges to cross the river Isonzo. Those boats were carried up to the front line during the night and hidden, so until the last moment the Austrian scouts could not see them. Effectively when the Austrian-Hungarians saw what was going to happen, it was too late.

The battle began on 17 August in the Tolmino sector, on 18 along the Isonzo. Crossing the river was a really dangerous manoeuvre, but with a good artillery concentration everything was made precisely. Caviglia gave the order to General Fava to circumvent Canale and so was made with Jelenik. His troops reached the mountain Oscendrik. During the battle Caviglia met the King, who was really pleased for those achievements. Cadorna was impressed, but when Caviglia told him that with his manoeuvre he was going to open the door to all the rest of the Army, Cadorna answered: «Good times those of the manoeuvre!». In this answer we can see why the Italian offensive failed: nobody trusted in the success of the XXIV Corp. Caviglia opened – with high losses – a door large 15 km, the entire Austrian sector was close to be smashed, but his troops were tired and there were not either reserves or food, water and munitions. When he asked for them, Capello and Cadorna answered negatively, because they constantly tried the frontal attacks in the others sectors.

On 29 August Cadorna ordered to pull back for the too high number of casualties, and the Italian Army amounted to defensive positions. On 30 August the XXIV Corp was another time on the west side of the Isonzo River taking the new defensive strategy; the last occasion to break the Austrian-Hungarian Army was lost. The K.u.K. High Command understood that the Austro-Hungarian

Army had no more the possibility to stop another future Italian offensive. The war against Russia in the east was almost over, so there were enough troops to prepare an offensive but they took another important decision: they asked the help of the German Army for a combined attack against Italy.

24 October 1917, Caporetto; even today this name in Italy means not only defeat, means humiliation. The Italians had all the information, they knew the day and the aim of the German and Austro-Hungarian Armies, but Cadorna was sure that all the enemy's preparation was a diversion.

Instead, the Central Empires Armies, following the plan conceived by General Konrad Krafft von Dellmensingen and led by the German General Otto von Below (18 January 1857 – 15 March 1944) and the Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Svetozar Boroević (13 December 1856 – 23 May 1920) attacked the Italians.

The Royal Italian Army was defeated at Caporetto not only for the presence of the *Sturmtruppen* and the application of the new infiltration tactic and the massive use of poison gas, but also for a wrong strategic approach. The Italian General Staff was sure of the impossibility for the K.u.K. to attack. So all Italian deployment was offensive, so the defences were not ready to stand off a strong attack. As Caviglia said in his book *Caporetto*: «In that military context, strategically false, we suffered a strategic surprise that clearly explain our retreat down to the Piave. (...) Any troop in that situation could spare it».

The German offensive was almost perfect and was led by high professional officers in the field (one was Erwin Rommel). Surely the surprise had a great effect, but the inefficiency of the Italian Generals helped a lot the enemy. One over the others: the XXVII Corp, commanded by Badoglio. Caviglia understood which was the enemy strategy and responded, instead Badoglio did not recognise the attack's intensity. In his memory Caviglia spends a lot of pages to explain Badoglio's bad behaviour. Almost each time he heard the name "Badoglio", he wrote in his diary a comment about the General or about the battle of Caporetto.

The entire Italian 2^o Army was en route and there were thousand prisoners. The only Corp that resisted was Caviglia's one. This at the very end was a problem, because the Austrians left it back, focusing on the others, which could not resist anymore. So he ordered the retreat.

His retreat was a masterpiece and during it he organised the retreat of the divisions, which were without orders or abandoned by their leaders, one for all the hated Badoglio.

Cadorna asked Allies for help. The French and the British send artillery and infantry divisions, but they did not trust Italian capacity to maintain the new defensive line: the river Piave. They took their troops back the Mincio-Adige. Nevertheless this permitted to all the Italians reserves to be sent to the Piave and in this way the Imperial offensive that was suffering the overstretching of the Austrian logistic system, was halted. In this battle the Austrians had the possibility to annihilate the whole Italian Army but, as we said before, the decision to stop for a few days the advance permitted to almost each Corps to reach the Tagliamento and then the Piave. Caviglia, for his almost perfect retreat, was commended with the Silver Medal of Military Valour.

The battle of Caporetto cost 40 thousands casualties, 280 thousands prisoners, 3150 guns, 3000 machine guns. It was too much, the Italian Government took the decision to substitute Cadorna. The new Chief of Staff was Armando Diaz (5 December, 1861 – 28 February, 1928). Who were the new two Deputies Chief of Staff? Carlo Porro (3 October 1854 – 19 April 1939) and Pietro Badoglio. Why one of the most inefficient soldier of the Caporetto defeat? Diaz wanted him and the King agreed. There was a court-martial, which was going to inquire Badoglio, but the conquer of Sabotino was protected by the new Chief of Staff and the Court. By Caviglia's point of view, there was an involvement of the freemasonry, because it was said that Diaz, Badoglio and his protector Capello were all freemasons.

In the book *Piave* Caviglia wrote his opinion about the Chief of Staff's substitution: «He completely believed in himself (...) but he did not believe in his troops to which he was unfair. After the Tagliamento and Cornino's breakthrough, while he was giving disposition for the masterpiece army's array on Piave, he doubted that the troops would not have held firm on that river. So he proposed to the Government to sign a separate peace. That was his biggest mistake that justified and still justifies his removal from the Supreme Command».

But there was no time to think about those plots. The Austro-Hungarian Army was pushing to the Piave and Caviglia, leading first the VIII Corp then the X, between the 10 November and the 1st December 1917 over the Montello, stopped the enemy three times. During the last of those he fought in coordination with British Corps led by General Rudolph Lambart, 10th Earl of Cavan, earning his trust for his calm and perfect knowledge of the situation, saving the British line in Ghelpac.

Between 15 and 22 June 1918 there was the last Austro-Hungarian offensive. For his strategic skills, his men ascend and his good relations with the British, on 19 June Diaz gave to Caviglia the command of the 8^o Army. The Austrian offensive, that at the beginning crossed the Piave in some areas, caused too many casualties for the K.u.K. Army and was rejected.

The Royal Italian Army at that point was ready to cross again the Piave and defeat definitively the K.u.K. Army. As Caviglia said, in that moment the Austrian Empire was close to implode, the different nations inside it wanted the independence. Only one institution was holding together the Habsburg state: the Army; if Italy defeated it, the war would be over. Diaz, following Badoglio's plan, gave to Caviglia the most important mission: to plan and to conduct the main attack.

Caviglia, as we said before, wanted the manoeuvre and in this battle he had it. The so called Battle of Vittorio Veneto (24 October 1918 – 4 November

1918) was characterized by fast movements of the division. Caviglia, extremely concerned about the level of the river (each October the Piave has an overflow), followed the same tactic used in the Biansizza, as he said in his memory: «The XVIII Corp's manoeuvre had to repeat, broadly, that used twice in the battle of Bainsizza» but this time in a larger scale: again were used pontoons and floating bridges, covered by an extremely intense artillery fire. The Corp that would pass the river as first had the order not only to move frontally, but at the same time, on his right and on his left, in this way it would help the others. The offensive's aims that time were Conegliano and Saint Salvatore hills, tearing apart the Austrian troops in the mountains from the ones in the valley. The Italian soldiers did not have to stop in the enemy trenches but to attack the artillery. On their right flank, the first to cross the river was the 10° Army (two Italian divisions and two British and the U.S. 332° Infantry Regiment) led by Lord Cavan.

When the attack began almost everything worked. The only problem was that some divisions, having passed the river and reached the first objectives stopped. Indeed the XVIII Corp started to strengthen the new positions. Caviglia was really disappointed for this, he said harshly: «Do not fortify! (...) Austrians retire, in pursuit!». This was the result of three years of trench warfare: the lack of initiative. Nevertheless the strong leadership of Caviglia moved fast his troops and, of course with the coordination with the others Armies, on 3rd November the Italians entered in Trento and Trieste. The Austro-Hungarian Army was definitively broken. On the same day there was the signature of the armistice of Villa Giulia and the day after all the military operations were suspended. The war was over.

In Italy Enrico Caviglia was considered one of the architects of victory, with Diaz, Badoglio and Gaetano Giardino (24 January 1864 – 21 November 1935), Guglielmo Pecori Giraldi (18 May 1856 – 15 January 1941) and Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia-Aosta (13 January 1869 – 4 July 1931). Anyhow during the last weeks of fight he protested strongly against the Italian High Command,

which said that the plan was designed by the General Staff and then by Lord Cavan.

In the United Kingdom too his leadership was exalted, but immediately in Italy there were contrasts about that. Badoglio in particular started to claim credits for victory and the ancient hate did not end.

FIUME, THE PEACE AND ROME

After the war, Caviglia received different honours and title, in particular he was appointed Senator – title to life – by the king. From that moment onwards he was a permanent Member of Parliament.

We had seen that Caviglia was the man to be used in difficult situation, not only because he was extremely competent but also because he did not care if his actions would put him in a bad light, if that was the duty it had to be done.

Actually there was a huge problem in Italy after the war: the demobilization. In Italy there were 3.760.000 soldiers (not counting officers). The problem was how to organize the back home of these men, in fact some riots began. The Minister of War Vittorio Italico Zupelli was not able to manage the situation, so Caviglia was commissioned to this ministry. As Minister of War (18 January 1919 – 23 June 1919) he well organized the demobilization and tried to stop the struggles between the socialists and the ex soldiers, who were close to the new movements, which would converge to the future Fascist party.

As said earlier the rivalry between Badoglio and Caviglia continued during the period after the war.

In 1920 without the Government's authorization Gabriele D'Annunzio, dissatisfied with the Peace Treaty, with some volunteers (some of them effective Italian soldiers) occupied the city of Fiume. This military occupation was out of the territorial concessions made by the Peace Treaty. To avoid an international crisis the Army was commissioned to free the city. The sector commander was

Badoglio, but he knew that D'Annunzio was supported by the Italian public opinion, so he suggested giving the command to Caviglia, who was well known to not be politically involved. It was true, but at the same time Badoglio knew that who would have defeated D'Annunzio and his *legionari* would have been hated by all Italian veterans and a good part of the Italian people. Indeed that is what happened. But Caviglia was a soldier so he made it, without considering the consequences.

When Mussolini took power, Caviglia was extremely critical of the new politics and of the new Army's structure. For this he was removed from every effective command. He was against the Italian entry into the war, but he could not do anything to stop that.

Maybe the most glorious moment of his life was close to the end, again in one of the most tragic moments of Italian history.

In the 1943 Italy was partially invaded by the Allies forces, it was clear that there were no possibilities to resist and secretly the Government led by Pietro Badoglio, after the Mussolini fall, took contacts with Americans and British for a conclusion of the conflict. The Italian surrender (8 September 1943) was badly done, because the orders to the troops were contradictory and there were many German divisions in the country. So on the same day of the declaration of surrender the King and his family, different generals, ministers and Badoglio left Rome, leaving the troops without orders and commanders. But the 9 September Caviglia, the retired General, was in Rome.

In his *Diary* he wrote that he was there for «personal business», probably he had a meeting with the king, who had already escaped. Finding the capital without leadership, already attacked by Kesselring's divisions and with few shocked generals, who did not know what they had to do, the old Caviglia (at that time he was 81) naturally began to give orders for the defence. He knew that for the lack of troops it was impossible to arrest the Germans without seriously

damaging the city and great losses in the civil population; therefore he took the decision to negotiate with the Germans, saving the city from a hard air raid.

After that, without any thanks by the city or the king or Badoglio, he took the train and came back to his home at Finalmarina. For the last two years he spent the time in his hometown, hated but not touched by the fascists, who however mistreated his family. He died the 22 March 1945.

Why was he forgotten in the period between the two wars? Why was he not helped when he was in Rome and why is he still nowadays almost unknown in Italy? In a general point of view we can say that after the defeat in the IIWW in Italy there was and there is a constant endeavour to erase our military history, not only the IIWW but almost everything, even our only real victory. This was a political choice that maybe helped in the period immediately after the last war but that surely contributed to the lack of identity that we can notice in Italy. In the particular case of Caviglia we have to add this: Caviglia was the opposite of what generally was the Italian ruling class. He is the example of what has to do a real servant of the institutions. Honest, without interests, but loyal to the country. His example could obscure even the new ruling class born after the war.

Only by this point of view we can interpret the reason why Caviglia was forgotten. Surely it is a pity that this example is not taken in high consideration in his country, especially considering the contemporary situation.

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The tanks as a decisive weapon of WWI

"Staff officers sent from G.H.Q. report that the reasons for the defeat of the Second Army are as follows : ' The fact that the troops were surprised by the massed attack of tanks, and lost their heads when the tanks suddenly appeared behind them, having broken through under cover of natural and artificial fog , . . , the fact that the artillery allotted to reserve infantry units . . . was wholly insufficient to establish fresh resistance . . . against the enemy who had broken through and against his tanks.

MEMORANDUM by General Eric Ludendorff, 11 August 1918.¹

Introduction

A common version of the German propaganda, the defeat in WW1, was a result of "a stab-in-the-back" that the politicians had inflicted on the nation. The truth was German troops still occupied a great deal of French territory when the war ended. This fact was used as an evident argument to prove the thesis. Most of the historians, who nevertheless, described the overall German defeat - as a result of the defeat of the German Army on the battlefield, related to the arrival of the American troops who changed radically the balance of power in the favor of the Allies and enabled the victory. According to the British Official History, although the First World War was the event which demonstrated the emergence of the Tanks as a weapon - they appeared too late, and as they were limited both by actual numbers and by their technical limitations – the effect had not been decisive At most, they were one more infantry support weapon system.

¹ J. F. C. Fuller, **Tanks in the Great War 1914-1918**, New York, 1920, p. 238.

The view this paper wishes to establish, is that from the very first battle in which tanks were employed, they marked their impact, demonstrating the "Armored Shock" effect in the most evident manner. Since the battle of the Somme (1916), the tanks became an influential factor on the battlefield and after the battle of Cambrai (Nov-Dec 1917); they become a major factor on the battlefield, as well as in the British military establishment.

After the battle of Hamel, (July 1918), the tanks have become a decisive factor on the battlefield. At the end of 1918, the tanks have possibly become the most influential factor contributing to the victory of the Allies over Imperial Germany.

More than that, most historians of WWI discuss British tanks. Very few realize that the majority of the tanks employed during the war have actually been constructed by the French, about 4,000 compared to around 2,500 produced in the UK. In addition, the French Renault FT-17 light tank, the first to have its armament within a fully rotating turret, became the model for future tanks until today, rendering as obsolete the design of all other contemporary models.

Swinton's Rules for Deployment of Tanks:

On the 13th June 1900 Major General Sir Ernest Swinton was serving with the British Forces in the English-Boer War. On that date, he visualised the need for an armored fighting vehicle to defeat the destructive power of the machine gun. The tank, a revolutionary new weapon system, born of General Swinton's vision, was to break the stalemate of trench warfare and the dominance of the machine gun of the battlefields of World War 1, sixteen years later.

After the production of the first battle-tank, Mark 1 (Crew: 8; Combat Weight: Male: 28 tons, Female: 27 tons. Armor: 6–12 mm. Armament: Male: two 6 pounder, three 8 mm Hotchkiss Machine Guns, Female: four .303 Vickers Machine Guns, one 8 mm Hotchkiss Machine Gun). Tanks were first used at **Flers** in September 1916 during the **Battle of the Somme** in World War I. At

that time the six tank companies were grouped as the **Heavy Branch** of the **Machine Gun Corps** (MGC).² Before that battle, Lt. Colonel Swinton, wrote already, the basics of the doctrine:

- In order to secure surprise- the Tanks are never to attack peace-meal.
- The distance between individual tanks should be 90 – 135 m.
- Joint operation with the infantry is essential.
- The main use of tanks is achievement of break-through and deep penetration.

'Tank mania' at home

The laughter and disbelief that followed the tank through its first actions in France were taken in different directions back in Britain. At home, people first learned of the tanks through the censored reports in their newspapers.

Unable to describe the new weapon in practical terms that might have been useful to the enemy, war correspondents greatly exaggerated the tank's capabilities and resorted to the most far-fetched imagery, describing them as 'waddling toads', 'dragons', 'prehistoric monsters' and the 'Jabberwocky' of Lewis Carroll's imagination.

Thanks to the intense public interest provoked by these poetic and propagandising descriptions, the tank was soon the star of cartoons, popular songs and musical shows.

By November 1916, it had even taken to the stage at the Gaiety Theatre in London. At the Palace Theatre, a provocative song and dance routine named

² Major David P. Cavaleri **The Premature Debut: The Introduction of Armored Fighting Vehicles and Tactics By the British Army During the September 1916 Somme Offensive, ARMOR — November-December 1995.**

the ‘Tanko’ was performed by the sixteen ‘Palace Girls’ under the leadership of the notoriously suggestive young French singer Regine Flory.³

Arriving to the Middle East

Company “E” of eight Mark I tanks from the Tank Corps (also known as Heavy Section, Machine Gun Corps) reached the front in Palestine. Tanks had been in use in France since September 1916 and Palestine was to be the only other theatre of the war they were employed. The tanks which were sent to Egypt in December 1916 and arrived in Palestine in January 1917 had been used for instruction and were not of the latest type. However, during a trial - they proved themselves in the sandy conditions. The unit’s manpower included of 22 officers and 222 soldiers. The tanks were to be deployed along the front and advanced across open country where they could defend infantry following them. As the tanks became targeted, the infantry also suffered losses, and only two tanks succeeded in reaching their objectives. The Tanks were sent to the front and allocated to the 3 infantry divisions which were planned to participate in the first wave of attack (2 Cavalry divisions behind them).

- 2 tanks were allocated to Division 54.
- 4 tanks were allocated to Division 52, in the center of the line.
- 2 tanks were allocated to Division 53, on the coast.

The first attack on Gaza, April 17, 1917

The operation begun with an early attack by Division 54. At 0700 the division accomplished its mission and occupied Sheikh Abbas. **The two tanks** attacks with Brigade 163 – in contrast with the original plan. One of the two tanks neutralized by the German-Turkish artillery, the other one performed well. The early employment of tanks was a major mistake, the surprise element disappeared and the enemy understood that the new weapon is not invincible, the

³ Patrick Wright, **Tank – the Progress of a Monstrous War Machine**, London, 2001, Chapter 4.

tanks were deployed over a 12 km front and were to attack with infantry inexperienced in joint operations.

The tanks on the Offensive of April 19, 1917.

The tank nicknamed “Tiger” breaks through the Turkish defenses at Samson’s Ridge and leads the attack of Brigade 160 (Division 53). Another tank, a “female”, leads an adjacent brigade. Brigade 155 (Division 52) attacks with two tanks Ali-el-Muntar ridge (one of them broke down right at the beginning of the attack). The leading tank overran a Turkish stronghold and inflicted many casualties until it was disabled after being hit three times by artillery shells. Brigade 163 (Division 54) attacks with a tank which destroyed a Turkish stronghold. A Turkish counter-attack recaptured the area and the tank remained disabled in a ditch.

On the night of April 19/20, after suffering 7,000 casualties the British decided to stop the offensive.

The tanks at the Third Battle of Gaza.

3 mark 4 tanks arrived as replacements. The Mark 4 was a greatly improved version of the first British tank, the Mark I. It was better protected and the fuel tank’s location was changed. (It was, numerically, the most important tank of the First World War, with 1220 made).

All 8 tanks were concentrated on the coast, 6 tanks were deployed to attack in the first wave, and two in reserve. The tanks were allocated 29 different missions. The tanks were committed at the second phase of the offensive, on November 2, 1917. The tanks broke through all of the allocated targets and although some were hit or broke down, they contributed immensely to the success in that section of the offensive.⁴

⁴ C. Falls and A.F. Becke, Military Operations: Egypt and Palestine, from June 1917 to the End of the War. London, 1930.

Banking on the tank

In November 1917, the Tank Corps achieved its first concentrated breakthrough at Cambrai, more than a year after tanks were first used in the Battle of the Somme. News of this success increased public desire to see the charismatic new war machine, thereby creating a fundraising opportunity for the National War Savings Committee.

Charged with raising money for the war, the Committee initiated a 'Tank Bank' campaign which, though carried out at home, would become one of the most successful tank operations of the entire war.

The first Tank Bank was established shortly after the Battle of Cambrai. A battered tank named 'Egbert' was recovered from the battlefield, shipped to London and installed in Trafalgar Square. People were then invited to buy war bonds and certificates, and to queue up outside this unlikely 'new god' so that their bonds could be specially stamped by young women seated inside the tank.

Having proved successful in Trafalgar Square, the campaign was soon extended elsewhere. A collection of tanks was brought back from France and toured around the country, under the guidance of the National War Savings Committee's 'tank organisers', spending a week at a time in scores of cities and towns.

As in London, politicians, churchmen, war heroes and theatrical celebrities were invited to perform and address the crowds from the top of the tank. A competitive league was established to see which town could raise most per head of population, and the atmosphere that built up around the visiting tanks at the end of their week-long visit was likened to a pre-war football cup final.

The Tank Banks were reported to have raised prodigious sums of money as they travelled from one place to the next. Large employers invested through the tanks, but they were also said to be particularly effective in attracting investment from the working class and people without bank accounts.

But fundraising was not their only role. The Committee's tanks were taken to exert their 'moral effect' in areas troubled by political militancy.

In South Wales, the Tank Banks were used not just to sell war bonds, but to stir up a 'tank patriotism' that could be turned against miners who opposed the war and were taking their lead from the peace proposals made by Leon Trotsky and Vladimir Lenin following the Bolshevik takeover of Russia in November 1917.⁵

The Battle of Hamel, July 4 1918.

The town of Hamel and its surrounding areas thought to be an important objective for the Allies. Hamel was a key position in to the defense of Amiens. Unless control of this area achieved, Allied movements would be blocked between Villers-Bretonneux and the Somme, and mounting an offensive would become much more difficult.

The operation of Hamel was under the command of Lieutenant General John Monash (first mission as a corps commander). The attack would primarily take the form of an infantry assault, but with **significant tank** and artillery support. Monash wanted to attack as early as possible, in low visibility conditions which hamper the enemy's firepower. Planning conducted in strict secrecy. Dummy installations were created to throw the Germans off, harassing fire was maintained while troops were getting into positions, and no movement of troops was allowed during daylight – giving no warning to the enemy that an attack was about to take place.

Monash asked for 18 planes to bomb Hamel, **to distract attention from the noise of the tanks**' whereabouts and movements. Different types of units were coordinated through the detailed and organized planning of Monash and his senior officers, achieving perfect Combined Arms cooperation. All planning was

⁵ Wright, **Ibid**, Chapter 6.

outlined, worked out and refined in extensive staff work.

On July 4, operations by the Australian Corps against Hamel and surrounding areas launched. For the first time in the war, American troops deployed as a part of the offensive. Four companies attached to the Australians, in an effort to enable the American troops to gain some first-hand battle experience.

The battle of Hamel described as a brilliant success. In two hours, all objectives achieved, and 1,400 German prisoners captured, as well as a lot of equipment.

The Australian troops suffered 1,062 casualties, 800 out of which killed.

Although Hamel was a great success for Australian troops, they had important preliminary advantages:

By July, the German offensives stopped. New techniques and weapons, such as **the experience of successful use of tanks** at Cambrai in 1917, more effective artillery, with improved accuracy, and more Lewis guns (light machine-guns), had significantly improved allied forces performance by 1918.

Better communications were also an integral part of the success. Aerial Reconnaissance also contributed greatly. Movement of German as well as Australian troops were marked on maps identical to those held by all level of command, and disseminated by motor bikes to the relevant section area. Consequently, Monash and his battalion commanders were able to follow closely the battle in real time, compared with the earlier laborious systems of communications.

Planes used to drop ammunition and supplies to troops on the battlefield by parachute - the first time on the Western Front aircraft used for this purpose.

Use of the Mark V tank pioneered at Hamel, and would continue to play a prominent role in 1918 battles.

Sixty Mark V tanks and four supply tanks were used.

In preparation, Monash mixed the tank crews and the infantry to form

unit cohesion. Each infantry Battalion had its insignia painted on a tank. As well as fostering camaraderie, this made it easier to plan movements, as each tank and battalion were color-coded and would advance together. During the battle, **only three tanks were disabled, and many German troops surrendered upon being attacked by them.** Infantry, artillery, tanks and planes cooperated and achieved a 2 km gain, with relatively few losses and the Germans couldn't take it back.⁶

From HAMEL onwards, the war became a tank war.⁷

French Tanks

By the time the war drew to a close the British, the first to use them, had produced some 2,636 tanks. The French produced rather more, 3,870. The Germans, never convinced of its merits, and despite their record for technological innovation, produced just 20.

With the French tanks proving more serviceable than their British equivalents they continued to be used beyond wartime.

The French Renault F.T. tank continued to grow in popularity as the concept of the tank as a close aid to advancing infantry prospered.

Both the U.S. and Italy produced their own tank designs which were based on the French Renault model, a testament to its design strengths. The Italians produced the Fiat 3000 and the U.S. the M1917.

Tank design continued to improve beyond the war and the tank, which helped to make trench warfare redundant, restored movement to the battlefield.

⁶ Benny Michelsohn, the Battle of HAMEL. SHIRION No. 9, Yad Lashirion, Latrun, 2000.

⁷ Fuller, **Ibid**, p. 305.

Country	year	production	MODELL
UK	1916	150	MARK 1
	1917	50	MARK 2
		50	MARK 3
		1015	MARK 4
		400	Mark 5
		200	WIPET
France	1918	632	MARK 5
	1916	165	St. Shamond
	1917	235	St. Shamond
	1918	3,346	Renault FT-17
	1917	400	Schneider
Germany	1917	20	A7V

8

The Lessons learned

The Germans that refuse to product and use tanks during First World War, but suffered the "Armor Shock", especially at the last year of the war, reach the conclusion about that new model of warfare. No more masses of soldiers and material but armor corps who need less Manpower and by "BLITZKRIEG" will decide the campaigns of the war after overcome enemy defenses and penetrating deep into its territory. They build their armor corps and the results shown at the beginning of World War 2.

The allies (Great Britain France and US) thought that WW1 scenario with trenches, barbed wire and machine-guns will not repeated. So they abandoned their tank corps, neglect their achievements and focused on defense means and strategies like MAJINO Line. The outcome demonstrated at 1940.

⁸ Smithers A. J. **A NEW EXCALIBUR, The Development of the Tank 1909-1939**, London, 1986.

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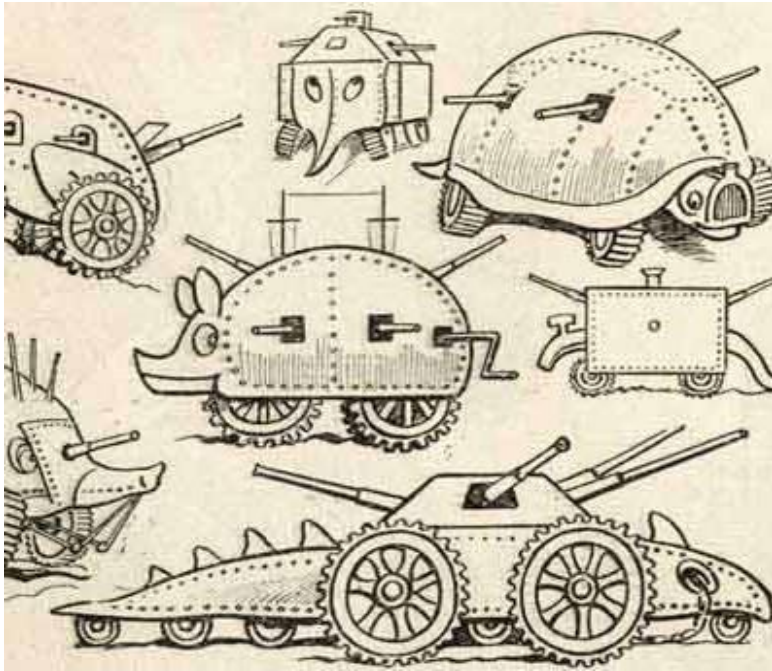
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Captain (N) ret. José María Blanco Núñez (Spain)

Perdidas de la Marina Mercante Española durante la I Guerra Mundial

Introducción

La situación política de España en la primera década del Siglo XX estuvo marcada por el “regeneracionismo”, corriente nacional que pretendía sanear la administración española recién salida del “desastre” que supuso la guerra con los EE.UU. de América y el ocaso del antiguo imperio ultramarino. El sistema de partidos turnantes impuesto tras la restauración monárquica (Alfonso XII-1874) tuvo que sobreponerse a las calamidades de un Siglo en el que el aludido desastre no fue más que el final de una especie de guerra eterna comenzada cuando la invasión napoleónica, continuada con las guerras de emancipación americanas, alimentada con tres guerras civiles que llamamos “carlistas”, con tres más en Cuba, con otra en Filipinas y, por si fuese poco, con otras coloniales en África, comenzada en 1860, Santo Domingo 1864 y una naval en el Pacífico en 1866...Puede comprenderse que lo fácil, en esa primera década del nuevo Siglo XX, era adormecerse en brazos del pacifismo, aunque el Norte de África volverá enseguida a requerir los esfuerzos bélicos de España (1909), esta vez “apoyada” por las naciones de la “Entente”...

En lo que a política naval se refiere, ese regeneracionismo, profundamente activista en este campo, llevó a la consecución de la Ley Maura/Ferrándiz de 1908, que supuso una catarsis para la Marina de Guerra española, en todos sus dominios, y que, en lo que a material se refiere, se centró en conseguir un plan naval totalmente “a la inglesa”, que consiguió los tres “Dreadnoughts” más chicos del mundo (15.000 Tons.), 24 torpederos (en clara concesión al “jeuneecolisme”), 3 destructores y 4 cañoneros, aunque la virtud esencial de este Programa fue la creación de un tejido industrial consistente y en la apertura de nuevas vías administrativas que hicieron muy fáciles los programas

que continuaron a este. De los tres mencionados acorazados, uno de ellos el “Jaime I” no se pudo entregar a la Armada hasta septiembre de 1921, precisamente a causa de la Gran Guerra.

A la famosa Ley de Maura-Ferrándiz, siguieron las del Ministro almirante D. Augusto Miranda que tuvieron la virtud de incorporar las primeras lecciones aprendidas de las campañas navales de la Gran Guerra y, por ello, supusieron el nacimiento del Arma Submarina de la Armada española.

Por tanto, hallándose España inmersa en un clima de recuperación, industrial y financiera, lo lógico fue la opción por la neutralidad, lo que no fue óbice para que su tráfico mercante se viese atacado por los submarinos alemanes, o sufriese pérdida por minas a la deriva o fondeadas. Bien es verdad que estamos también de acuerdo con lo escrito por García Sanz: “*La neutralidad esa vieja capa de pobre vergonzante en la que solía arrebujarse España, se demostraría un cuento chino. A medias entre la voluntad y lo inevitable, España no fue neutra (...) en parte porque no quería y en parte porque no le dejaron serlo.*”¹

Difícil juzgar los distintos posicionamientos de la sociedad española, y las divisiones entre aliadófilos, germanófilos, neutrales a ultranza o belicistas destacados. Si creemos poder afirmar que en la Armada, los que sufrieron el desastre de Santiago y Cavite, los que se quedaron en Port Said, a bordo de la escuadra Cámara, los que profesaban un lógico anti-yanquismo feroz, estaban de corazón a favor de los alemanes. Sin embargo la guerra submarina indiscriminada estuvo a punto de hacer entrar a España en el bando aliado en los primeros meses del año 1918.

El día 21 de junio de 1916 el submarino alemán U-35 entró en Cartagena portando un mensaje del Káiser Guillermo II para el rey D. Alfonso XIII, donde se le agradecía el tratamiento recibido por los alemanes internados en Guinea y procedentes del Camerún. Esa visita provocó un gran revuelo, no sólo en España

¹GARCÍA SANZ, Fernando: *España en la Gran Guerra*. Madrid, 2014, Pág. 32.

sino en toda Europa. Durante la guerra otros submarinos alemanes quedaron internados en puertos españoles más los que de ellos se escaparon violando las leyes internacionales causaron profundas crisis en la opinión pública española.

Drama visible de la división de las simpatías españolas por uno u otro bando y que sirve de ejemplo a toda la sociedad hispana, es el que se vivió en la propia Casa Real, donde la Reina madre, Doña Maria Cristina de Habsburgo Lorena, era alemana, y la Reina, Doña María Victoria Eugenia de Battemberg era inglesa...La exquisita educación y discreción de ambas, procuró no se visualizasen las indudables tensiones provocadas por el desarrollo bélico.

Perdidas en la Marina Mercante Española

Según las últimas investigaciones del citado García Sanz, la inmensa mayoría de las pérdidas de buques mercantes españoles se debieron a los submarinos alemanes que están, en su mayoría, identificados. También se sufrieron bajas por minas y existen dudas sobre pérdidas por una u otra causa, en una pequeña proporción de los buques hundidos. Conocemos las bajas humanas de casi todas esas pérdidas, la situación geográfica donde ocurrió el ataque y, por supuesto, los nombres de los buques y las navieras a las que pertenecían así como la declaración de la carga que transportaban. Todos esos datos los resumimos en las tablas estadísticas que mostraremos.

Una pérdida irreparable

El día 24 de marzo de 1916, el vapor “Sussex” de bandera francesa, que seguía la derrota de Folkstone a Dieppe, fue torpedeado por un submarino alemán que le provocó gravísimas averías y entre 80 y 100 muertos. Entre estos últimos se encontraba el matrimonio español compuesto por el genial compositor español Enrique Granados y Amparo Gal.

Granados regresaba de Nueva York donde había estrenado su ópera “Goyescas”, cuyo éxito indujo al Presidente Wilson a invitarlo a la Casa Blanca

por lo que tuvo que cambiar los billetes de regreso y eso le condujo a la fatal tragedia.

Algún español más viajaba en ese mismo buque, como el ingeniero Sr. Cortázar, que presenció la caída al mar del matrimonio Granados, y que relató lo ocurrido al llegar a Bilbao.

Insólito apresamiento, el *Igotz-Mendi*

También conocemos la aventura experimentada en el buque de la Compañía Sota y Aznar *Igotz-Mendi* que, en 10 de noviembre de 1917, fue apresado en el Índico por el crucero auxiliar alemán *Wolf* y conducido con dotación de presa abordo (para así asegurarse el *Wolf* carbón para su consumo) al archipiélago de Nazareth (NO de Isla Mauricio) donde le transbordaron 900 Tons. de carbón y recibió 21 prisioneros de las anteriores presas del corsario. En su regreso a Europa y debido a la entrada en guerra del Brasil, el comandante del *Wolf* ejecutó un carboneo en alta mar tras abarloarse al *Igotz-Mendi*, recibiendo con mucha dificultad, por los peligrosos bandazos provocados por la mar de fondo, otras 600 Tons. de carbón. El 10 de enero del 1918 repitieron la operación en aguas de Islandia, 700 Tons., tras lo cual le fijaron un *RendezVous* (R/V) previo a la entrada por el Skagerrat.

Las relaciones con la dotación de presa fueron difíciles y la habitabilidad a bordo, debido a haber prestado los oficiales sus camarotes a los matrimonios británicos prisioneros y al racionamiento de agua y víveres de la tan aumentada tripulación, complicada.

El primer oficial del buque español se jugó el tipo lanzando al agua los explosivos que los alemanes habían dispuesto en la estación de la TSH. Fue encerrado permanentemente en un camarote, se le impuso una multa de 2.000 marcos y una pena de reclusión en Alemania de tres años, que no llegará a cumplir.

El *Wolf* arribó felizmente y victorioso a Kiel el 24.02.18, pero sin poder

mostrar su presa que había faltado al R/V. ¿Cómo? Pues bien, confundiendo la dotación de presa, en tiempo de niebla cerrada, la sirena de un faro danés con la de un barco-faro de aquellas difíciles aguas, el *Igotz-Mendivaró* a 1600H del mismo día en que su captor entraba en Kiel. Los daneses efectuaron un impecable salvamento, repatriaron a los prisioneros y encarcelaron a la dotación de presa. Un remolcador de la SvintzerSalvage Co., previo pago en especias (140 Tons. carbón) por parte española, sacó al *Igotz-Mendide* la varada, siendo reparado entre el 02.04.18 y el 11.05.18 Enseguida continuó libremente viaje a Newcastle donde cargó carbón de nuevo y entro, por fin, en Bilbao el día 21 de junio de 1918, recibiendo una emocionada y emocionante, bienvenida. Su capitán era D. Quintín Uralde y el primer oficial D. Gervasio Susaeta². Este buque tuvo larga vida en la Compañía hasta que fue vendido a otra en 1953, terminaría en el desguace en 1971.

Reparaciones de guerra

España recibió siete buques mercantes en reparación de las pérdidas sufridas, pero esto dio lugar a fuertes tensiones con Francia que, como en política internacional no se pagan los favores, se resistió decididamente a dicha reparación.

De esos buques, el *Neuenfels* (alemán de 5.514 Tm) que estaba refugiado en el puerto de Vigo y era propiedad de la Compañía Hansa de Bremen, fue incautado por el Gobierno español al finalizar la guerra y navegó con el nombre de *España n° 6*. En septiembre de 1921 fue adscrito al Ministerio de Marina que lo remodeló en los talleres *Vulcano* de Barcelona, convirtiéndolo en el primer portaaviones de la Marina española, el *Dédalo*, con un desplazamiento de

² VALDILASO, José María y TORRES GOIRI, Manuel: *Ciento cincuenta aniversario 1861 A 2011*.

Págs. 57/65, abundante documentación gráfica.

9.900 Tm y capacidad para transportar 18 hidroaviones y 4 globos cautivos. En septiembre de 1936 el Gobierno de la República ordenó su desguace.

Por otro lado, finalizada la guerra, los submarinos alemanes U-39, U-56, UB-23 y UC-74³, internados en diversos puertos españoles, fueron entregados a Francia en este concepto de reparaciones de guerra.

Punto final

A pesar de su neutralidad, combatida ardientemente desde dentro y desde fuera, España participó en la primera mundial en tierra como lugar de actuación de espías de los dos bandos y en sus mares por mor de la actividad corsaria submarina, ambas modalidades de lucha estuvieron a punto de terminar con dicha neutralidad.

ESTADISTICAS

	Numero I SS y fecha	Buque y su Tonelaje (Tm)	Carga	Hundi- do	Muer- tos	Lugar
1.	UC 48 (22.10.1 917)	AIZCORRI MENDI. 2.272	Carbón	X		Newcastle-Bilbao- Barcelona. A 15' NW Brehat Island.
2.	U 53 (28.01.1 917)	ALGORTA . 3.239	Hierro, naranja s.	X	2	Sagunto-Stockton 30' WSW Ouessant
3.	UC 65 (28.04.1 917)	ALU MENDI. 3.260	Hierro	X	4	Sagunto-Glasgow. 12' SE faro Tuskar.
4.	UB 21 (10.05. 1918)	AMBOTO MENDI. 2.115	Hierro	X ¿mina ?		Sagunto- Middlesbrouge. en Ensenada río Tees
5.	¿U? (4.12.19	ANITA. 1.073	Pinos	X		Villagarcía-Cardiff. 90' de Swansea,

³BORDEJE MORENCOS, Fernando: *Vicisitudes de una política naval*. Editorial San Martín. Madrid, 1978.

	16)					
6.	UC 75 (12.03.1 918)	ARNO MENDI. 2.827, cobre.	Cobre	X	16	Bilbao-Ayr 7' Este de Skerries (Irlanda)
7.	U 157 (20.03. 1918)	ARPILLA O. 4.000	Lastre	X		Barcelona-Tenerife. Aguas Canarias. En ruta a EEUU, orden Gobierno italiano.
8.	UB 38 (17.12.1 916)	ASON. 3.500	Cobre	X		Santander-Glasgow. 27' Islas Scilly
9.	UB 125 (27.08.1 918)	ATXERI- MENDI. 2.424	Carbón	X		Glasgow-Barcelona 6' faro Tuskar (SE Irlanda).
10.	U 39 (24.05.1 916)	AURRERÁ . 2.845	Carbón	X		Glasgow-Livorno. Aguas Córcega
11.	UB 80 (7.06.19 18)	AXPE MENDI. 2.900	Carbón	X	1	Middlesbrough- Bilbao. Aguas Canal Mancha
12.	U 84 (01.07.1 917)	BACHI. 2.220 Tm.	Carbón	X		Newport-Bilbao 5' W Les Sables d'Olonne
13.	U-20 (30.04.1 916)	BAKIO. 1.906 Tm. de la Cia. Naviera Sota y Aznar	Hierro	X	25	Sagunto-Newport. Se desconoce situación hundimiento aunque pasó por Peniche 29.04
14.	Buque corsario alemán <i>MÖWE</i> fondeó mina. (13.01.1 916)	BAYO. 2.776 Tm.	Pirita de hierro	X con mina	25	Huelva-La Pallice, 40'SW La Pallice
15.	UC 70 (23.05.1 917)	BEGOÑA III. 2.699 Tm.	Hierro	X	7	Almería-Barrow 29'N Ouessant(48°55'N/05 °04'W)
16.	U 35	BEGOÑA	Gener	X		Barcelona-Pireo a

	(07.03.1 918)	IV. 1.850 Tm-	al			60' NW Isola di Marettimo (Sicilia),
17.	¿U? (11.07.1 917)	BEGOÑA V. 1160 Tm.	Mader a	X		Bergen (Noruega)- Santander. N Escocia
18.	Se atribuye al corsario alemán <i>MÖWE</i> la colocaci ón de la mina. (15.01.1 916)	BÉLGICA. 2.668 Tm.	Carbó n	Choqu e con una mina	2	Glasgow-Burdeos 36' de la Couvre
19.	U 63 (15.01.1 918)	BONANO VA. 933 Tm (Netas)		Averia por torped o	1	Argel-St. Louis du Rhône, 19' SSWFaraman (Golfo de León). Localizado por unidad militar francesa y remolcado a Marsella.
20.	UB 39 (07.12.1 916)	BRAVO. 1.512	Carbó n	X		Cardiff-Bayona 7' millas de Ouessant
21.	U 39 (15.11.1 917)	BUENAVE N-TURA. Velero es 257 Tm	¿?	X		Aguas Cabo Spartivento Náufragos acogidos en Cagliari.
22.	U 67 (01.02.1 917)	BUTRÓN. 2.434	Miner al de hierro	X	2	Bilbao-Cardiff 90' Punta Gálea
23.	U 61 (05.08.1 917)	CAMPO LIBRE. Pesquero, 50 Tm		X	3	40' Bilbao
24.	UB 92 (25.08.1 918)	CARASA. 3.790 Tm	Miner al de hierro	X	8	Bilbao a Cardiff Canal de Bristol, a 2,5' Trevose-Head

						(50°29'N/05°07'W).
25.	(25.05.1 917)	CARLOS DE EIZAGUIR RE. Transatlánti co 4.623 Tm	Carga genera l y pasaje	Por mina	134 y 25 náufra gos	Barcelona-Manila 20' Isla Robbins (Ciudad del Cabo)
26.	U 34 (10.05.1 917)	CARMEN. 550 Tm	Vino e higos secos	X		Valencia-Cete. 15' desembocadura Llobregat.
27.	U 152 (09.02.1 918)	CEFERIN O. 3.647	Gener al y sal	X		Barcelona- Torrevieja-Manila. Aguas de Canarias
28.	U151 (09.12.1 917)	CLAUDIO ¿Tm?	¿?	A cañona zos	9	Océano Atlántico (fuera de la zona de exclusión) 50' costas españolas
29.	U 55 (10.03.1 918)	CRISTINA . 2.083 Tm	Carbó n	Torpe do	4	Port Talbot-Bilbao. 3' Isla de St. Agnes
30.	¿ ? (02.02.1 917)	DOS DE NOVIEMB RE. Velero 1.000 T				¿ ?
31.	UB 105 (19.06.1 918)	EGUZKIA. 1.181 Tm (conocido formalment e como PUEBLA),	Algod ón	X	Nº indeter - minad o	Alejandría- Barcelona. 70' N Bardia
32.	UC 72 (02.06.1 917)	EREAGA. 2.333 Tm	Carbó n y pintura	X		Glasgow-Bilbao. N Bayona, frente aMimizam
33.	UC 53 (16.06.1 917)	ESPERAN ZA. Velero 98 Tm	¿?	X		Cerca de Argel
34.	UC 53 (16.06.1 917)	F.7.SB. Velero 50 Tm	¿?	X		Cerca de Orán
35.	U-35 (09.08. 1916)	GANEKO GORTA MENDI.	Carbó n	X		Newcastle a Savona. 10' millas NE de Port Vendrés

		3.061 Tm				
36.	¿U? (28.12.1 916)	GENERAL GORDON. Pesquero coruñés de 200 Tm		Cañon a-zos		Aguas Coruña
37.	UC 21 (06.12.1 916)	GERONA. 1.328 Tm	Pinos	X		Oporto-Cardiff
38.	U 152 (25.01.1 918)	GIRALDA. 4.400 Tm	Piritas de hierro	X		Huelva-Pasajes. Aguas Galicia
39.	U 53 (11.03.1 917)	GRACIA. 3.129 Tm	Gener al	X		Liverpool-Habana. 5' S Ballycotton
40.	U 154 (17.03.1 918)	GUADAL QUIVIR 2.132 Tm	Algod ón y acero	X		Nueva York-Génova. Aguas Gibraltar. Carga para Gobierno italiano
41.	U 33 (09.08.1 917)	INDUSTRI A 51 Tm	¿?	X		Golfo de León
42.	U 66 (09.07.1 917)	IPARRAG UIRRE 1.161 Tm	Mader a	X		Hacia Santander W Orkneys.
43.	U 38 (17.08.1 915)	ISIDORO. 2.044 Tm	Hierro			Bilbao-Glasgow. Cerca Canal San Jorge.
44.	¿U? (17.05.1 918)	ITURRI- BERRI. 582 Tm	Brea	X		Maryport-Avilés. Holyhead en aguas británicas
45.	U 156 (30.12.1 917)	JOAQUÍN MUMBRÚ. 2.703 Tm	Gener al	X		Barcelona-Nueva York. 300' Las Palmas y 70' S Madeira
46.	UC 27. (19.09.1 917)	JOAQUIN A. Velero 69 Tm	Cebo- llas	X		Valencia-Cette. 8' Cadaqués UC 27 enarbolaba bandera francesa hasta la cambió por la enseña alemana.
47.	U 155	JOAQUIN		X		E Azores

	(15.03.1 918)	A. Velero 450 Tm				
48.	UB 29 (07.12.1 916)	JULIAN BENITO. 1.200 Tm		X		40' SO costas británicas
49.	UC 22 (14.08.1 917)	JULITA. Velero 45 Tm		X	5	Aguas Alejandría
50.	UB 56 (17.11.1 917)	LALEN MENDI. 2.200 Tm	Carbón	X	5	Middlesbrough- Bilbao-Barcelona. Canal de la Mancha (frente a Beachy Head)
51.	UB 18 (28.11.1 916)	LUCIENN E. 1.320 Tm	Mineral de hierro	X		Bilbao-Cardiff. 25' NNW Ouessant.
52.	UB 18 (11.09.1 916)	LUIS VIVES, 2.160 Tm	Cebollas y fruta	X		Valencia y Almería a Liverpool. Aguas Isla Scilly
53.	UB 74 (12.04.1 918)	LUISA 3.603 Tm	General	X	3	Barcelona-Liverpool Canal de Bristol
54.	UC 72 (04.05.1 917)	MAMELE NA nº 9. Velero de pesca. 115 Tm		A cañonazos	6	SW Contis
55.	UC 72 (04.05.1 917)	MAMELE NA nº 12. Velero de pesca 111 Tm		A cañonazos	3	SW Contis
56.	UB 38 (16.01.1 917)	MANUEL. 2.419 Tm	Mineral cobre	X		Bilbao-Glasgow 70' Ouessant
57.	UC 21 (14.02.1 917)	MAR ADRIÁTICO 3.410 Tm	General	X		Lisboa-Burdeos Golfo Vizcaya
58.	UB 55 (23.03.1 918)	MAR BÁLTICO 2.023 Tm	Carbón	X	4	Port Talbot-Bilbao Canal de la Mancha (49°20'N/5°O)

59.	U 152 (16.02.1 918)	MAR CASPIO. 2.724 Tm	Corcho	X		Palamós-Nueva York. 300' millas Canarias
60.	UC 23 (14.10.1 918)	MARÍA. 2.165 Tm		X	7 Supertes. llegaron Valencia 10.11 tras larga odisea	Barcelona a Grecia 14' W Punta Kassandri.
61.	UC 21 (31.08.1 917)	MARQUÉ S DE MUDELA. 2.000 Tm	2.600 Tm mineral hierro	X	20, 4 supervivientes	Bilbao-Newport Golfo de Vizcaya, frente a Burdeos
62.	U 46 (23.12.1 916)	MARQUÉ S DE URQUIJO. 3.575 Tm	Mineral hierro	X		Bilbao- Middlesbrough 50' N Bilbao
63.	UB 23 (08.09. 1916)	MAYO II. 3.044 Tm	Carbón			Newport-Burdeos, cerca de Ushant.
64.	Atribuido a UC 1 (18.06.1 916)	MENDIVI L MENDI. 4.501 Tm	Carbón	Mina		New Castle-Bilbao, frente a Great Yarmouth
65.	U 91 (04.10.1 918)	MERCEDE S. 2.184 Tm		X	26 y 3 supertes.	Bilbao-Cardiff, 2,5' de San Sebastián
66.	U 152 (16.02.1 918)	NEGURI. 1.859 Tm	General	X		Charleston-Marsella 200' W Canarias
67.	U 102 (13.12.1 917)	NOVIEMBRE. 3.655 Tm	General			Nueva York-Bilbao- La Pallice. 16' La Couvre, La Rochelle
68.	(16.04.1 918)	Nª Sª CARMEN. Velero 53		Mina	Los 13	Entre Orio y Guetaria

		Tm				
69.	U 53 (28.01.1 917)	NUEVA MONTAÑ A 2.039 Tm	Miner al hierro	X	2	Santander-Tyne Dock
70.	¿U? (12.02.1 917)	NUEVA VIZCAYA, 3.842 Tm		X		
71.	UC 17 (14.11.1 916)	OIZ MENDI. 2.104 Tm	Miner al hierro	X		Agua Amarga- Middlesbrough. 54' SW Lizard
72.	UB 39 (08.09.1 916)	OLAZARR I. 2.585 Tm	Miner al hierro	X		Bilbao-Glasgow 20' SW Ouessant
73.	¿U? (25.06.1 917)	ORINÓN. 2.571 Tm	Miner al hierro	X		Bilbao-Pavillac. Golfo Vizcaya
74.	U 35 (11- 08.1916)	PAGASAR RI. 5.600 Tm	4.000 Tm de carbón	A cañona zos	Náufra gos 26 h a Tolón	Cardiff –Génova, 65' SW Tolón
75.	U 34. (16.05.1 917)	PATRICIO . 2.164 Tm		X	1	Newport-Barcelona 2,5' Denia
76.	¿U? (11.01.1 917)	PELAYO. 1.648 Tm			5	Aguas de Canarias
77.	¿U 27? (1908.1 915)	PEÑA CASTILL O. 1.718 Tm	Miner al de hierro	Mina o ¿U 27?	23	Santander Glasgow 33' N Wolf Rock Canal de Bristol
78.	U 67 (29.01.1 917)	PUNTA TENÓ. 1.300 Tm	Banan as y ceboll as			Sta. Cruz Tenerife- Burdeos Aguas Cabo Ortegá
79.	U 92 (13.07.1 918)	RAMÓN DE LARRINA GA, 3.058 Tm	Petróle o (14.81 9 barrica s)	X	8, odisea superv ivi- entes	180' cabo Finisterre
80.	UC 74	ROBERTO				Pireo-Barcelona

	(11.07.1 918)	. 910 Tm.				60' N Alejandría.
81.	UC 71 (05.04.1 917)	SAN FULGENC IO. 1.558 Tm	Carbón	X	Conta ba con salvoc on- ducto alemán	Newcastle-on- Tyne/Barcelona
82.	U 70 (02.01.1 917)	SAN LEANDRO . 1.616 Tm	Naranjas y limones	X		Cartagena-Málaga- Londres Aguas Ouessant
83.	U 34 (06.05.1 917)	SAN PATRICIO . 3.500 Tm	Carbón	X	1	Newport-Barcelona 6' Cabo San Antonio
84.	U 152. (05.02.1 918)	SAN SEBASTIÁN N 2.563 Tm	Sal			Torre vieja-Nueva York. NW Canarias
85.	U 66 (08.04.1 916)	SANTAND ERINO 3.346 Tm	General	X	4	Liverpool-La Habana. 18' Ouessant
86.	U 155 (23.02.1 918)	SARDINE RO 2.300 Tm	Trigo y harina	X		Nueva York-Cette 54' N Casablanca
87.	U 152 (05.02.1 917)	SEBASTIÁN N 2.600 Tm	Sal.	X		Torre vieja-Nueva York. 75' Santa Cruz de La Palma
88.	U 65 (27.06.1 918)	SOTOLON GO. 3.009 Tm.	General	X		Barcelona-Manila 35' Isla Marittimo
89.	¿U? (02.06.1 917)	TELESFO RA 4.069 Tm	Cobre, acero, dinamita, aeroplanos, granadas y maquinaria.	X		Nueva York-El Havre. 50' El Havre

90.	UC 26 (14.04.1 917)	TOM. 2.413 Tm.	Mineral de hierro	¿O mina?	17 y 7 superv ivi- entes	Bilbao-Cardiff. 17' W Burdeos
91.	U 35 (24.04.1 917)	TRIANA 784 Tm	Cemen to y ladrill os	Al cañón Se recupe ró y reparó	1 y 2 herido s.	Gijón-Cádiz. Aguas C ^a S. Vicente, 0,5' Sagres
92.	UC 21 (02.12.1 916)	URIBITAR TE. 1.780 Tm	Mineral de hierro.			Bilbao-Cardiff. Aguas Ouessant
93.	U 90 (22.01.1 918)	VÍCTOR DE CHÁVAR RI 2.957 Tm.	Carbón	X	3	Newcastle-Bilbao. Canal de la Mancha
94.	U 28 (31.03.1 916)	VIGO ⁴ 3.252 Tm	Pinos	X		Bilbao Cardiff. 100' Ushant
95.	UC 35 (15.05.1 918)	VILLA DE SOLLER. 450 Tm	Cáñam o	X	12	Génova Barcelona, aguas del Cabo Draimont
96.	UC 21 (13.03.1 917)	VIVINA 3.034 Tm	Carbón	X		Newport-Horta Golfo de Vizcaya
97.	(03.05.1 916)	WINIFRE DA. 2.300 Tm	General, frutas y vino	Por mina		Valencia-Liverpool
T	TOTAL	204.609			378 ,	

⁴Considerado el primer mercante español hundido por un submarino, ya que los precedentes, *Isidoro* y *Peña Castillo*, *Bayo* y *Bélgica* pudo demostrarse que habían ido a pique o por el choque con una mina y por accidente de mar como el segundo de los citados. Al *Vigo* le sucedió con pocos días de diferencia, el *Santanderino*, torpedeado sin previo aviso según las propias declaraciones del capitán del buque, en las cercanías de Ouessant.

O T A L		Tm. Tonelaje medio Por buque: 2131 Tm. Entre 45 y 5.600 Tm. 20% de la flota española.			además 2 heridos y 72 náufragos salvados	
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Cuadro nº1

Cuadro nº 1.- Mayor buque hundido el *PAGASARRI* 5.600 Tm y el menor el velero *JULITA* de 45 Tm. La pérdida más lamentable (134 muertos y 25 náufragos) fue la del trasatlántico *CARLOS DE EIZAGUIRRE*, pérdida completamente “atípica” pues fue la única en el Atlántico Sur y por mina a la deriva.

Tipo de carga Principal declarada	Nº de barcos	%
Carbón	20	20,6
Hierro	19	19,6
Desconocida	19	19,6
General	11	11,3
Cobre	5	5,15
Fruta	5	5,15
Madera	5	5,15
Sal	2	2,06
Pesca	2	2,06
Brea	1	1,03
Vino	1	1,03
Trigo	1	1,03
Cemento	1	1,03
Petróleo	1	1,03
Lastre	1	1,03
Algodón	1	1,03
Cáñamo	1	1,03

Corcho	1	1,03
TOTAL	97	100,00

Cuadro nº2

Cuadro nº 2.- Algunos de los barcos, además de esa carga principal, transportaban: 1 vino, 2 fruta, 1 pintura y 1 acero. Se deduce de este cuadro que los materiales que más sufrieron fueron el carbón ingles de importación (altos hornos, locomoción...) y la exportación de hierro, el resto de mercancías no son tan significativas.

ZONA HUNDIMIENTO	Nº de barcos	%
Atlántico Norte	68	70,1
Mediterráneo	18	18,5
Canarias	8	8,3
Atlántico Sur	1	1,0
Indeterminada	2	2,1
TOTAL	97	100%

Cuadro nº 3

Cuadro nº 3.- Se puede afirmar, a la vista de este cuadro que las pérdidas españolas se produjeron en el Atlántico Norte (78,4 %) y el tráfico más afectado fue el del Golfo de Vizcaya entre Bilbao y los Canales de la Mancha y San Jorge.

Numerales	Numerales	Numerales	Por	Desconocidos
U	UB	UC	Mina	¿?
20	18 (2)	1	9	10
21	21	17		
26	23	21 (3)		
27	29	22		
28	38 (2)	23		
33	39 (2)	26		
34 (3)	55	27		
35 (4)	56	35		

38	74	48		
39 (2)	80	53 (2)		
46	92	65		
53 (3)	105	70		
55	125	71		
61		72 (3)		
63		74		
65		75		
66 (2)				
67 (2)				
70				
84				
90				
91				
92				
102				
151				
152				
154				
155(2)				
156				
157				
Total 41	16	21	9	10 TOTAL:97

Cuadro nº 4

Cuadro nº 4.- Numerales de los Submarinos atacantes, varios de ellos produjeron más de un hundimiento español, el que lidera la cifra es el U-35 con 4 hundimientos. Hay algún dato confuso o atribuido tanto a mina como a torpedo o cañón.

Comentarios sobre las compañías de navegación afectadas

La Cía. Sota y Aznar (los *MENDI*, que significa monte en vascuence) perdió 11 buques. Esta Compañía celebró en Bilbao, el día veintiocho de junio de 1918, un solemne funeral en la basílica de Begoña por las víctimas sufridas en esta primera guerra mundial, por lo cual conocemos los nombres y los cargos a

bordo, de todas las víctimas habidas en los once buques que perdió⁵.

La compañía de José Tayá 6, la Compañía Marítima del Nervión 5, la compañía Echevarrieta y Larrinaga 4, la Vascongada de Navegación y la Compañía de Navegación Begoña de JM Urquijo, perdieron 3 cada una. Perdieron dos buques cada una de las siguientes: Izarra, Olazarri, Bachi, A. Menchaca, Marítima Vizcaína, Naviera de Tenerife (uno, el *Punta Anaga*, se perdió por temporal, el 30.11. 1916, frente al Puerto de la Cruz), Bilbaína de Navegación y Cartagenera de Navegación, el resto de compañías solamente perdieron un buque. La mayoría de estas compañías armadoras eran de capital vizcaíno y el puerto de matrícula más repetido fue Bilbao.

Ya finalizada la guerra (1919) el *Manuel Calvo* de la Compañía Trasatlántica Española, armadora del desdichado *C. de Eizaguirre*, sufrió en los Dardanelos la explosión de una mina por lo que tuvo que varar y después del salvamento, someterse a importantes reparaciones. Este buque desplazaba 5.617 Tons y fue vendido por la Compañía en 1952⁶.

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THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2014

JEUDI, LE 3 SEPTEMBER

Général de Brigade Omar EL Ouadoudi (Maroc)
Les origines des Spahis marocains de la grande guerre

L'évocation de l'origine des Spahis marocains et de leur filiation permet, tout en sacrifiant au devoir de mémoire, de rappeler qu'avant de participer avec panache et sacrifice à la Grande Guerre, ils furent d'abord les combattants ardents et valeureux de l'Armée régulière marocaine.

Le 28 avril 1912, après la signature du traité du protectorat français du Maroc, l'Armée chérifienne est déclarée « dissoute » par les autorités d'occupation et remplacée par les Troupes Auxiliaires Marocaines (TAM). Etrange dissolution quand on revisite l'histoire à travers les archives !

Prélevées directement sur les anciens Tabors chérifiens et restructurées en escadrons dans leur composante cavalerie, ces troupes sont très vite jugées opérationnelles par le général Lyautey et donneront naissance en août 1914 au Régiment de marche de chasseurs Indigènes rebaptisé Régiment de Marche des Spahis Marocains (RMSM) après l'entrée officielle du Maroc dans la guerre aux côtés de la France et de ses alliés, en janvier 1915.

Il s'agit selon Daniel Rivet d'une « métamorphose » de l'armée chérifienne dont les spahis participeront aux combats, aussitôt débarqués sur le sol français, le 26 août 1914. Ils seront engagés sur le front de l'ouest de septembre 1914 à janvier 1917, période durant laquelle la cavalerie française sera vite démontée, obligeant ainsi les spahis à abandonner leurs chevaux au printemps 1915 pour combattre dans les tranchées.

Partout où ils seront engagés, à la bataille de la Marne, de la champagne aux Flandres, à la bataille de l'Yser, aux Eparges en Artois, ils seront remarqués pour leur courage, leur ténacité et leur habileté et s'illustreront davantage dans l'armée d'orient pour remporter, à Uskub, la plus belle et peut être la dernière victoire de la cavalerie connue dans l'histoire.

Comment cette « métamorphose » avait-elle été rendue possible en si peu de temps ? Comment cette renaissance des unités de la cavalerie marocaine avait-elle émergé après 1912 ? Est-ce que l'Armée Chérifienne avait été réellement dissoute en février 1910 par le Commandant Mangin dont les erreurs avaient été cruellement sanctionnées par les événements de Fez de 1912 ?

L'intérêt de cette communication est de démontrer que le Général Lyautey, au moment où il avait décidé de l'engagement des Spahis malgré les réticences de l'Etat-major français, il était convaincu de l'efficacité de ces troupes à cheval de l'armée régulière marocaine léguée par le Sultan Moulay Hassan 1^{er}.

En optant pour un amalgame des cavaliers de la Garde du Sultan avec ceux de l'armée Guich^(*), le Général Lyautey faisant échouer une fusion des Troupes Auxiliaires Marocaines dans l'armée française, a très vite levé des escadrons déjà instruits, bien encadrés par leurs propres officiers, aptes à la manœuvre et déterminés, à l'image de leurs ancêtres, à se battre sous drapeau chérifien avec leur uniforme traditionnel distinct.

Voici une des rares photos où l'on remarque l'évolution d'un escadron de cavalerie marocaine à l'entraînement en 1903 dans la forêt de Témara pas très loin de Rabat.

Dans ces 20 mn, il convient d'abord de présenter la singularité du Spahi de l'Armée marocaine, puis d'aborder ensuite la refonte de la cavalerie des Mehallas avant de livrer à votre réflexion les facteurs essentiels qui ont assuré la réussite de la contribution des Spahis marocains à l'effort de la Grande Guerre.

(*) Guich s'applique aux contingents des tribus ou groupements dont l'attachement personnel au Sultan du Maroc s'appuie sur des avantages d'ordre matériel et/ou des concessions de terres exemptes d'impôts. Institution créée par les Saâdiens et améliorée par le Sultan Moulay Ismail.

1. Le « Spahi » de l'armée marocaine :

Les Spahis marocains ne se raccrochent pas à leurs cousins algériens ou tunisiens qui ne sont devenus cavalerie régulière qu'après le commencement de la conquête de l'Algérie en 1830 et plus exactement par l'ordonnance du Roi Philippe de 1841 créant le corps unique de cavalerie Indigène spahis donnant naissance 4 ans plus tard à 3 régiments à base de cavaliers mercenaires turcs et semi-turcs au profit de l'Armée française.

La filiation des Spahis marocains ne s'établit pas non plus dans les avatars de l'empire turc qui n'a jamais étendu son emprise sur le Maroc indépendant.

Les Spahis marocains sont avant tout les héritiers directs des Cavaliers Marocains qu'il s'agisse de cavaliers réguliers du Sultan ou de cavaliers des mehallas levées à l'occasion des déplacements du Sultan.

Relativement à l'appellation « Spahi » qui donnera « Sbaïs » en arabe dialectal, il convient de reconnaître qu'elle a été adoptée pour la première fois sous la dynastie Saadienne et précisément avec l'avènement de la première utilisation de l'arme à feu par le cavalier marocain.

C'est seulement vers le milieu du 16^e siècle que l'armée marocaine montée a commencé à se transformer en Infanterie pendant les sièges. La prépondérance numérique de la cavalerie et la prévalence de l'emploi des chevaux pour l'Infanterie lui avaient toujours conféré auparavant la mobilité et la facilité de manœuvre nécessaire.

En effet, le Sultan Abdelmalek vainqueur de la bataille des 3 Rois, qui avant son accession au trône avait vécu en exil en Turquie et suivi sa formation d'officier, blessé à la bataille de Lépante, avait entrepris « l'ottomanisation » de l'armée marocaine. Dans sa réorganisation de l'armée régulière Guich et Makhzen, il a appliqué la division en formations distinctes copiée sur l'armée turque avec adoption d'une terminologie turque : les canonniers « Al madfaïya » sont devenus « Tobjyas », les détachements de la garde du Sultan appelée

jusqu'alors par les marocains « AL Makhzania » sont devenus selon leur spécialité : bondokdar, belebedrouch, boyyak, sollak etc... les célèbres arquebusiers à cheval connus par leur manœuvre d'enveloppement qui a décimé l'armée du Portugal seront désignés sous le nom de « Spahis » à la place de « Ahl Rikab » (hommes de l'étrier).

Au 17^e siècle, le Sultan Alaouite Moulay Ismail (1672-1727) conserva l'institution du Guich avec une grande extension aux contingents Oudayas dont sa mère est originaire, ainsi qu'aux contingents du Tadla placés aux côtés de l'armée du Sous et du Sahara héritée du puissant Sultan Saâdien Moulay El Mansour rebaptisée Bouakher. Son armée comptait plus de 15.000 cavaliers formés de père en fils dans le grand centre d'instruction de R'mila non loin de Meknès, capitale du Sultan abritant son immense écurie de 12000 chevaux avec autonomie de 4 saisons de ravitaillement et mis au service d'un réseau de 70 Kasbahs disséminées à travers le territoire.

Cette même organisation de la cavalerie a été conservée et améliorée par le Sultan Moulay Hassan 1^{er} petit fils de Moulay Ismail qui a régné à partir de 1873 au moment où se confirmait l'expansion européenne en Afrique du Nord, au moment où l'Égypte, la Tunisie, l'Algérie succombaient à la colonisation...

Le Royaume n'était pas en mesure de repousser les offres de service des puissances coloniales dont l'influence ne faisait que s'étendre après la défaite d'Isly de 1844 face à la France et l'occupation de Tétouan en 1860 par l'Espagne, situation aggravée par les lourdes indemnités de guerre imposées.

Moulay Hassan 1^{er} passa donc toute la période de son règne à cheval parcourant son pays, défendant la paix et la sécurité et repoussant les convoitises extérieures. La devise de son règne aurait pu être « je maintiendrai ». Il ne ménagera pas ses efforts pour défendre le Royaume hérité de ses ancêtres et pour le conserver tel qu'il l'avait reçu en héritage, un Royaume fondé sur les relations directes entre le Sultan et ses sujets, un Royaume qui s'étendait de Tanger à

Tombouctou, de l'Atlantique au Sahara central aux oasis du Touat du Gourara et du Tidikelt.

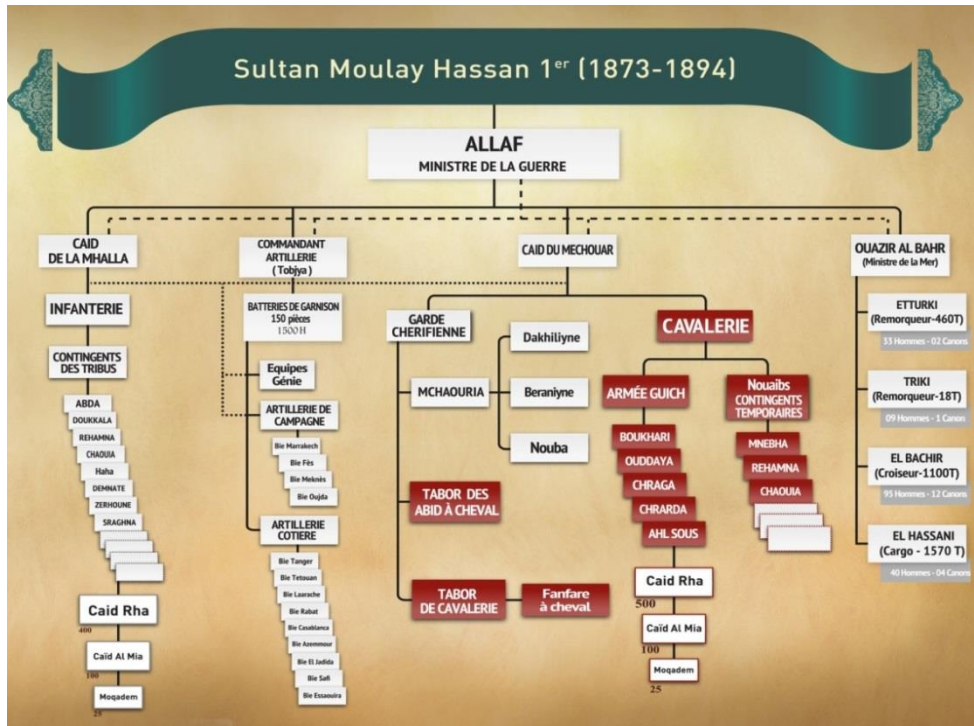
Pour le Souverain, les réformes pour mieux résister aux pressions européennes, et celles pour accroître les ressources de l'Etat passaient nécessairement par la réorganisation et la modernisation de l'outil militaire. Moulay Hassan 1^{er}, poursuivant l'œuvre inaugurée par son père, s'attela à cette tâche tentant même de mettre sur pied dans ses capitales une industrie moderne de l'armement.

Nous mesurons l'importance du pouvoir itinérant de ce grand Sultan dont le trône fût le haut de sa monture même, conduisant à son actif 19 Mehallas (19 expéditions) dont la dernière au Tafilalet pour repousser les incursions françaises.

Qu'en est-il de sa cavalerie ? qu'est ce qu'elle est devenue après sa mort en 1894 ?...

2. LES CAVALIERS DES MEHALLAS :

Voici l'organigramme de l'Armée du Sultan Moulay Hassan 1^{er} :



Avec Moulay Hassan 1^{er}, nous sommes dans la cavalerie moderne tant sur le plan de l'organisation que celui de l'emploi.

Après la mort du Sultan Moulay Hassan 1^{er}, survint au Maroc une crise de succession mettant en opposition ses 2 fils Moulay Abdelaziz et Moulay Hafid. Les puissances européennes tentent la mainmise sur le Maroc.

En 1907, quand la France à qui le traité d'Alger de 1906 permettait d'intervenir au Maroc pour restaurer la sécurité, le Général d'Amade va renforcer son corps d'intervention, par le recrutement dans les tribus locales des formations « Goums » et « Goums mixtes » servant dans l'infanterie ou dans la cavalerie, composés de 100 cavaliers chacun chargés des opérations de police intérieure

encadrée par des officiers et sous-officiers français et espagnols. Nous retrouvons l'appellation arabe « Sbaïss » désignant ces « gendarmes » en quelque sorte.

Estimant qu'ils obtiendraient de bons résultats pour la « pacification », le Général Lyautey prépara leur incorporation dans l'armée française et chaque « Goum » va comprendre 147 fantassins et 41 cavaliers commandés par 2 officiers et 3 sous-officiers français.

On forma d'abord les Unités auxiliaires marocaines à partir des Tabors d'Infanterie et des Tabors de cavalerie qui changeront d'appellation pour devenir le 1^{er} janvier 1913 les Troupes auxiliaires marocaines absorbant les tabors de police des ports, excepté celui de Tanger.

A la déclaration de la guerre le 2 août 1914, ces unités comprenaient :

- 5 bataillons à 4 compagnies.

- 11 escadrons de cavalerie.

A la garde Chérifienne, on maintient une compagnie d'infanterie à 320 fusils et un escadron de cavalerie de 120 sabres.

S'agissant des 5 premiers escadrons auxiliaires marocains de cavalerie embryons des futurs « Spahis », il convient de souligner que l'amalgame qui avait été opéré n'avait privilégié que la qualité guerrière du cavalier accompli, indépendamment de son origine et de ses antécédents.

Ainsi, nombreux cavaliers ont été recrutés parmi ceux qui ont porté les armes contre l'occupation en particulier dans les montagnes de l'Atlas et qui ont réintégré les rangs soit à la demande de leurs Caïds Mia ou Caïd Rha, soit par, ce qui est convenu d'appeler dans la littérature coloniale, « la soumission des tribus dissidentes ».

Changeant encore une fois de noms, ces formations s'appelleront ensuite pour l'infanterie « bataillons de chasseurs indigènes » et pour la cavalerie « Spahis indigènes ». Ils seront organisés et dénommés Régiments le 1^{er} janvier 1915 c'est-à-dire dès que la France a commencé à secouer ses épaules du joug de l'acte d'Algésiras et feront encore l'objet de dissolution, de refonte et de

recomplètement d'effectifs après les lourdes pertes subies à la bataille de la Marne et à Soissons.

LES FACTEURS DE REUSSITE :

Je ne sortirais pas du cadre de mon étude si je livrais à votre réflexion une appréciation des principaux facteurs qui plaident en faveur de la réussite de la contribution des Spahis marocains à l'effort de guerre aux côtés de leurs alliés. J'en retiendrais trois :

1. La politique musulmane de Lyautey :

Lyautey n'a jamais pensé à « algériser » le Maroc. Contre le processus de l'assimilationnisme et l'annexionnisme, il a réduit le régime du protectorat au Maroc à l'application d'une politique musulmane consistant à respecter l'intégrité des hommes et l'inaliénabilité des Institutions, brandissant même à ses détracteurs, la reconnaissance explicite de la plénitude de la souveraineté du Maroc en matière de politique et de relations internationales.

Aussi lorsqu'on évoqua à Paris la création d'un Secrétariat d'Etat aux Affaires musulmanes, il s'opposa furieusement à ce projet, je cite : **« je n'ai tenu le Maroc jusqu'ici que par ma politique musulmane, je suis sûr qu'elle est la bonne et je demande instamment que personne ne vienne gâcher mon jeu ».**

Pour lui, le Maroc ne doit pas être confondu avec l'Algérie où la France a rencontré je cite **« une véritable poussière, pas d'Etat constitué, nulle organisation sociale sur laquelle nous puissions nous appuyer sauf à l'état fragmentaire »** bien au contraire poursuit Lyautey **« le Maroc était un empire historique et indépendant, jaloux à l'extrême de son indépendance rebelle à toute servitude ».**

Ceux parmi les officiers français qui devaient commander les Spahis Marocains et les conduire au combat étaient parfaitement imprégnés de la vision

de Lyautey et de ses convictions : les Colonels Dupertuis, Guespereau, Massiet, ... aucun d'entre eux n'a démérité. Ils ne pouvaient recevoir en retour que le loyalisme et la détermination de leurs combattants.

2. Le rôle du Sultan Moulay Youssef :

Monarchiste par conviction et tempérament comme tous les marocains, Lyautey ne pouvait concevoir l'édifice marocain depuis la crise dynastique de 1912 que comme une pyramide dont le Sultan seul constitue le faite. Le Sultan cumule à la fois pouvoir politique et pouvoir religieux puisqu'il est simultanément Khalifa et Imam couronné. C'est en son nom que se dit la prière et pour tous les musulmans du Maghreb et même au-delà jusqu'à Oran et même à Tambouctou, il est le vicaire légitime de l'Islam. Le pouvoir du Sultan, c'est le rayonnement d'un homme dans la croyance de ses sujets, si bien que honorer l'émir des croyants, c'est honorer tous les marocains et les rassurer chacun sur l'intangibilité de leur statut de musulmans et leur qualité de marocains.

Les Spahis tout comme leurs compagnons d'armes tirailleurs, volontaires à l'engagement ou anciens militaires des Mehallas, ou encore soldats de la Garde Chérifienne tel ce spahi blessé à la Marne en 1914 représenté par le peintre aux armées Orange (remarquez la tenue) , se sont mobilisés pour la guerre à la demande de leur Sultan. Son appel avait été lu et commenté dans les mosquées du Royaume.

Enflammés par les encouragements de leur Sultan les exhortant à persévérer dans l'abnégation et à agir à l'image de leurs ancêtres comme attesté dans les nombreuses lettres de félicitations parvenues au front, à l'instar de celle adressée aux spahis au lendemain de la victoire de la Marne, ils ont pu lire ou se faire lire, je donne la traduction d'un extrait :

« A nos fidèles sujets qui combattent en soldats valeureux sur le sol de la France [...] A nos serviteurs intègres, les vaillants cavaliers du tabor n°1 [...] Vous avez justifié Notre confiance dans la vaillance que vous avez héritée

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de vos ancêtres en déployant un courage qui ne connaît pas de défaillance. Vos belles actions les honorent et ils sont fiers de l'éclat qui en rejait sur eux ...».

Nous remarquons tout de suite que le Sultan désigne le RMSM par son ancienne appellation d'origine d'avant la « métamorphose » : Premier TABOR.

Lyautey précisera aussi au sujet de ces lettres :

« Ce furent d'autres lettres qui, pendant toutes la guerre, vinrent encourager les soldats marocains ; et il fallait voir, comme je l'ai vu, dans les hôpitaux du front, nos soldats les lire, les repasser et les baiser, et avec quelle émotion ! » fin de citation.

Les Spahis marocains ne pouvaient dès lors témoigner en retour que de leur dévouement à leur Sultan, à travers le respect de leur engagement et de l'image de leur pays et pourquoi pas de leur région de provenance quand on sait le prix attaché par les Spahis à leurs tribus natales et où chacun considère que la sienne est une terre d'élection des meilleurs coursiers et des meilleurs juments et que pour lui, la guerre est l'occasion idoine de lui rendre hommage.

3. facteur : le cheval :

(Il faut bien rendre hommage à cette belle conquête de l'homme).

La différence entre les cavaleries vient très peu des hommes mais surtout des chevaux. La cavalerie de la métropole et celle d'Afrique, on le sait, fonctionnaient avec des principes nettement différents par rapport aux haras et remotes. La première avait conduit à l'impasse pendant la Grande Guerre, la seconde a eu bien des mérites. Lyautey le savait.

Les chevaux barbes du Maghreb avaient bien servi la France en particulier à Sedan en 1870 et partout dans le monde d'ailleurs.

Paradoxalement, la cavalerie métropolitaine s'est vu interdire l'importation de ces chevaux (peut être pour mieux servir les intérêts des lobby

des éleveurs de la Métropole) si bien que l'impulsion donnée à l'élevage du cheval n'a pas été menée dans le sens des besoins de l'Armée et comme il fallait augmenter la production, on avait opté pour la race intermédiaire dite de demi-sang que l'on produisait en France : L'anglo-normand trotteur et ses juments viandeuses.

En 1907, Maurice de Gasté, éleveur de chevaux, assène la vérité la plus dure, la guerre approche. Il publie « la faillite du trotteur normand » comme cheval de selle. Pour pallier cette insuffisance de potentiel équin pour la cavalerie, l'armée procède à l'achat de 3965 chevaux anglo-arabes qui représentent à peine 26% des chevaux achetés. Cette acquisition tardive ne permettra que la remonte de quelques régiments de cavalerie légère de reconnaissance si bien qu'au cours de la retraite qui précéda la bataille de la Marne, ils ne pouvaient assurer que la couverture des mouvements de l'Infanterie. On est loin de l'exploitation et de la poursuite envisagée par les tacticiens.

C'est le cheval qui fait le cavalier, Lyautey en était convaincu pour les Spahis marocains. Ils en donneront la preuve à la bataille d'Uskub en 1918 avec leurs chevaux barbes et leurs mulets.

Et je peux dire en conclusion que la palme du prestige et de la réussite revient incontestablement au Sultan Moulay Hassan 1^{er} qui a fondé la cavalerie marocaine moderne dont sont issus directement les spahis marocains et leurs chevaux barbes.

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Prof. Dr. Mor Ndao (Sénégal)

***La Première Guerre Mondiale dans la Colonie du Sénégal :
Enrôlement, Effort de Guerre et Conséquences Socioéconomiques***

Parmi les événements qui ont sillonné l'histoire du XXe siècle, il en est un qui revêt une dimension particulière au regard des mutations structurelles, politiques et sociales qu'il a générées ainsi que des transformations économiques auxquelles il a donné lieu : la Grande Guerre. Par son ampleur, sa durée, son rythme et son extension, la Grande Guerre s'inscrit dans une rupture majeure par rapport aux conflits du XIX^e siècle. En effet, l'une des nouveautés de ce conflit majeur constitue la naissance et l'émergence de « l'arrière ». En effet, jusqu'ici les implications des conflits se limitaient, grosso modo, au niveau des théâtres d'opération. Mais avec la Grande Guerre, les implications dépassent et débordent largement les théâtres d'opérations. Aux innovations techniques, scientifiques, militaires, répondent des restructurations au niveau des économies (économie de guerre, économie dirigée), du travail, des services sociaux et sanitaires.

Mais la Grande Guerre se singularise aussi par l'Appel¹ aux empires coloniaux pour suppléer aux carences des métropoles (effort de guerre, mobilisation des troupes coloniales (tirailleurs, armées). C'est dans ce contexte d'enlisement, de raréfaction des ressources, d'épuisement des troupes que l'Afrique (l'AOF) fut sollicitée. Le Sénégal, fleuron des colonies françaises sur la côte occidentale d'Afrique, fut grandement mis à contribution par la France et son apport a été multiforme² : humain, économique (effort de guerre) et militaire

¹ Michel M., *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre. L'appel à l'Afrique (1914-1918)*, Paris, Karthala, 2003.

² Thiam I.D *Le Sénégal pendant la Guerre 14-18 ou le prix du combat pour l'égalité*, Dakar, NEAS, 2009.

avec une levée de troupes, notamment les tirailleurs sénégalais qui participèrent aux différentes opérations³.

La Grande Guerre eut des répercussions fâcheuses dans les colonies liées par le pacte colonial à la métropole. L'insécurité des océans du fait de la guerre sous-marine, les difficultés de transport créèrent les conditions d'un marasme dans le commerce, d'un renchérissement et d'une pénurie des denrées. Le système d'une véritable économie de guerre se met en place⁴. Dès 1916, la France créa un Service d'Utilisation des Produits Coloniaux avant de mettre en place un Ministère du Ravitaillement chargé de collecter la production dans les colonies et qui, en 1917, décida de réquisitionner toute la production agricole de l'AOF. Ainsi, le dirigisme et l'interventionnisme de l'État colonial qui relayèrent le libéralisme d'avant, se matérialisent par le contrôle des prix, les réquisitions de produits agricoles, la spécialisation agricole forcée, le renforcement des maisons d'import-export ainsi que le recrutement de la main d'œuvre.

La présente communication explore la participation de la colonie du Sénégal dans la Grande Guerre en insistant sur l'enrôlement et l'utilisation des tirailleurs. Ensuite il s'agira, dans une seconde phase, d'analyser les conséquences économiques et sociales en mettant en exergue l'effort de guerre et la modernisation de la colonie sans pour autant occulter le rôle du mouvement nationaliste de plus en plus exigeant pour la prise en compte du sort des colonisés.

³ Myron Echenberg, *Les tirailleurs sénégalais en Afrique occidentale (1857-1960)*, CREPOS-Karthala, 2009, p.57-92.

⁴ Ndao M., *Le ravitaillement de Dakar de 1914 à 1945*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2009, p. 21-28.

I. L'enrôlement

a) Historique des tirailleurs

Dès la restitution du Sénégal aux Français après le Congrès de Vienne, la France entame la structuration d'une armée à partir de 1817. Ainsi, le Bataillon d'Afrique (1817-1822)⁵ est renforcé par les Compagnies Noires⁶ et, à partir de 1822, furent érigés le Bataillon de Gorée et le Bataillon du Sénégal (1822-1823)⁷. Pour sécuriser la liberté du commerce mise à rude épreuve par les incursions des tribus maures de la rive gauche, fut créé le corps des spahis sénégalais⁸ en 1843 par le gouverneur Bouët-Willaumetz. Ces unités participèrent à la Guerre de Crimée.

Au début de la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle, face aux impératifs de la conquête et de la pacification, fut créé le bataillon des tirailleurs sénégalais⁹ le 21 juillet 1857 sous le gouverneur Faidherbe par décret signé par Napoléon III à Plombières¹⁰. En son article 1, le décret stipule : « Il sera formé au Sénégal un corps d'infanterie indigène sous la dénomination de tirailleurs sénégalais. Ce corps, composé de quatre compagnies ayant chacune trois officiers, sera commandé par un chef de bataillon »¹¹. L'objectif assigné aux tirailleurs était d'assurer la conquête et la pacification de l'Empire français grâce à l'utilisation d'un effectif adapté au milieu.

⁵ Maillat M., *Les garnisons de Gorée*, Éditions du Musée Historique du Sénégal (Gorée), 2013, p. 78-83.

⁶ *Idem*, p. 84-87.

⁷ *Id.*, p.89-91.

⁸ Thilmans G., Rosière P., *Les spahis sénégalais. Une cavalerie africaine aux origines de l'expansion coloniale 1843-1880*, Éditions du Musée Historique du Sénégal (Gorée), 2013, p.14-36.

⁹ Voir à ce propos Touré Mamadou Lamdou *Les tirailleurs sénégalais*, Les trois Orangers, 2005, préfacé par Abdoulaye Wade.

¹⁰ *Moniteur du Sénégal*, 8 septembre 1857.

¹¹ Voir : Thilmans G., Rosière P., *Les tirailleurs sénégalais. Aux origines de la Force Noire 1857-1880*, Éditions du Musée Historique du Sénégal (Gorée), 2008, p. 26
Moniteur du Sénégal, 8 septembre 1857

Le projet de constitution d'armées noires, émis en 1902 en France, se consolide à partir des années 1910 suite à la montée des périls dans le continent européen. Pour le colonel Mangin, la Force Noire¹² représentait une réponse à la dénatalité et à la chute des effectifs militaires. Surtout que les militaires « Sénégalais » ont été des piliers de la formation de l'Empire par leur implication dans la conquête et la pacification.

b) L' enrôlement et ses conséquences.

La France dut puiser dans l'Empire, notamment en AOF pour faire face à la situation de belligérance. A la veille du conflit, l'AOF était constituée de 5 colonies civiles et de 2 territoires militaires (Sénégal, Guinée, Côte d'Ivoire, Dahomey, le Haut-Sénégal et le Niger, la Mauritanie). Parmi les colonies sollicitées figurent en premier lieu le Sénégal, le Soudan et la Guinée.

Avant le déclenchement des hostilités, la France réussit à mobiliser, bon an mal an, 16.000 hommes renforcés par 50.000 autres entre 1915-1916 après l'éclatement de la guerre. Pour augmenter les effectifs, la ponction démographique¹³ se renforça après la nomination de Blaise Diagne comme Commissaire de la République en charge du recrutement de troupes en Afrique noire¹⁴. Il réussit à dépasser le quota des 40.000 soldats et parvient à mobiliser dans les faits 63.000 Africains.

Croissance de l'effectif militaire français, 1895-1929

Années	Nombre
1895	5 987
1900	8 400
1902	8 639
1904	9 000

¹² Mangin Colonel Charles, *La Force Noire*, Paris, Hachette, 1910.
¹³ Thiam I.D *Le Sénégal pendant la Guerre 14-18 ou le prix du combat pour l'égalité*, Dakar, NEAS, 2009.
¹⁴ Dieng A.A., *Blaise Diagne, premier député noir africain*, Afrique contemporaine, Editions Chaka, 1990

1911	11 980
1912	12 920
1913	14 790
1914	17 356
1920-1929	48 000

Source : Myron Echenberg, *Les tirailleurs sénégalais en Afrique occidentale (1857-1960)*, CREPOS-Karthala, 2009, p. 30.

Au total, « l'impôt du sang »¹⁵ se matérialise par 200.000 « Sénégalais » qui furent mobilisés pour servir la France. Sur les 135. 000 soldats déployés en Europe au service de la France, 30000 furent tués. A l'échelle du continent, plus d'un million d'Africains furent recrutés. La France émerge du lot, même si elle accusait l'Allemagne de militariser ses colonies. Au bilan, 1% de la population africaine, soit 2,5 millions d'hommes participèrent de façon directe ou indirecte au conflit.

Les bases juridiques du recrutement trouvent leur fondement dans le décret du 7 février 1912 instituant le recrutement par voie de réquisition. Le décret du 9 octobre 1915, en ordonnant la mobilisation des Africains de plus de 18 ans, mais offrant surtout 200 francs aux volontaires, occasionna un afflux massif.

Le recrutement ne se limita pas essentiellement aux soldats (tirailleurs par exemple) déployés dans le théâtre des opérations mais concernait aussi un personnel utilisé pour des tâches diverses (logistique, porteurs pour le transport des armes et munitions, travaux d'utilité publique). Ainsi, en AOF, les effectifs recrutés furent scindés en deux entités. Alors que la première est déployée dans les opérations militaires, la seconde, dénommée deuxième portion du contingent, est utilisée dans les travaux divers : construction de routes, chantiers, portage, travaux agricoles pour ravitailler l'armée, etc.).

¹⁵ Roger Little, Lucie Cousturier, *les tirailleurs sénégalais et la question coloniale*, Éditions L'Harmattan, 2009, p. 95

En AOF, les élites (chefs coutumiers et religieux, intellectuels) font preuve d'un loyalisme exemplaire, adhèrent aux recrutements (soutien, participation, contributions diverses). Trois méthodes de recrutement étaient utilisées. La première a trait au volontariat (engouement libre sans pression extérieure). Entre dans ce cadre l'engouement des ressortissants des Quatre Communes dont le loyalisme fut sans faille pour recouvrer la citoyenneté française. Le volontariat devrait être relativisé dans la mesure où les recrutements revêtaient un caractère souvent forcé du fait de la contrainte exercée.

Le deuxième mode de recrutement avait recours aux chefs indigènes (coutumiers et religieux) chargés de livrer les effectifs exigés par l'administration.

La troisième méthode, beaucoup plus importante, concernait la conscription. En AOF, un décret de 1912 rendait obligatoire le service militaire pour tout Africains âgé de 20 à 28 ans sous la recommandation du général Mangin afin de constituer une réserve de force noire inépuisable. Selon le Gouverneur général Angoulvant, la conscription fut assimilée à un déclenchement d'une « véritable chasse à l'homme ».

Pour parer aux oppositions, révoltes et soulèvements des populations, les autorités durent recourir à Blaise Diagne¹⁶. La conscription occasionna la fuite et l'exode massif d'Africains d'AOF (62000) pour échapper au recrutement (conduites d'évitement). A la disparition de villages, s'ajoutent des mutilations de jeunes pour échapper à la conscription.

¹⁶ Thiam I.D *Le Sénégal pendant la Guerre 14-18 ou le prix du combat pour l'égalité*, Dakar, NEAS, 2009, p. 119, p. 154.

II. L'utilisation des tirailleurs dans les différentes opérations militaires

a) Le contexte de l'Appel

Si la mobilisation et enrôlement furent entamés dès 1910 surtout avec Mangin, il faut attendre l'année 1914, face à la nécessité de remplacer les masses de soldats tués dans les premiers mois du conflit, pour voir la métropole recourir aux tirailleurs sénégalais. La France engagea ainsi sur le front environ 134.000 combattants d'Afrique noire (tirailleurs sénégalais). Si un appel massif est lancé après le déclenchement des hostilités, c'est surtout en 1915-1916 (avec 50.000 recrues) qu'un recrutement massif fut opéré dans des conditions effroyables (fuites, évasions, villages incendiés, révoltes).

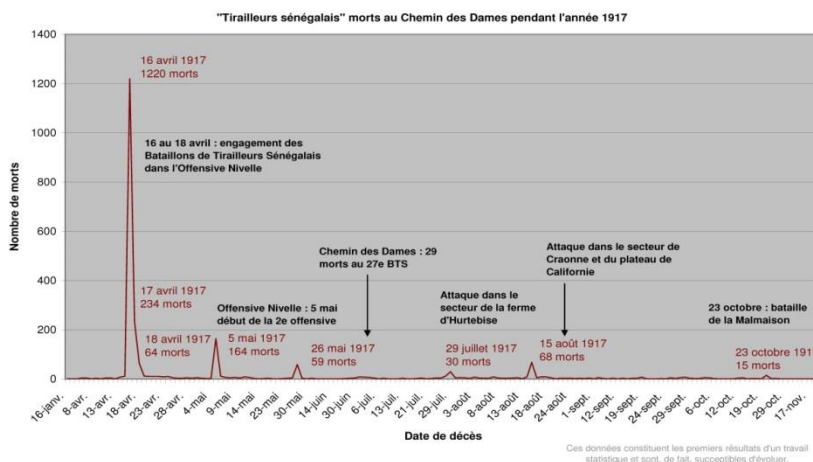
Toutefois, l'année 1917 constitue une étape cruciale avec un engagement massif aux fins de suppléer aux pertes massives des troupes françaises depuis 1914. La guerre de tranchées et de position eut des conséquences fâcheuses sur les troupes : pertes, épuisement, démoralisation, mutinerie, désertion, procès et condamnations, etc. C'est dans ce contexte des moins reluisants que s'opéra un appel massif en direction des troupes africaines. Elles sont engagées massivement, pour la première fois, durant l'offensive de Nivelle d'avril 1917. Sous l'autorité du général Mangin, la VI^e armée devait dans des conditions difficiles, effectuer la mission principale du plan Nivelle sur le Chemin des Dames. Les tirailleurs, peu habitués au froid, à la bataille des tranchées, durent subir de lourdes pertes.

b) Les opérations militaires

Les tirailleurs furent utilisés dans les différents théâtres d'opération (Verdun, Ardennes, batailles de la Somme, de La Marne, Chemin des Dames) non seulement en France mais aussi en dehors de la métropole (bataille des Dardanelles). En France, leur engagement fut massif en 1917 du fait des pertes massives subies depuis 1914.

A la fin de l'année 1914, les tirailleurs sénégalais participèrent activement dans les combats meurtriers d'Ypres et de Dixmude. Durant presque la même période (l'hiver 1914-1915), dans la Marne, le 1^{er} Corps d'armée coloniale a pu défendre le secteur de Beauséjour-Main de Massiges au prix d'immenses sacrifices. Durant l'offensive du 25 septembre 1915, 10 Bataillons de tirailleurs sénégalais et 13 régiments de zouaves, engagés en Champagne, permirent la reprise du fort de Douaumont en 1916.

La bataille du Chemin des Dames pour la conquête du Mont des Singes, constitue l'une des grandes épopées des tirailleurs sénégalais de la Grande Guerre. Les opérations militaires, furent entamées le matin du 16 avril 1917 lorsque 15.000 tirailleurs rassemblés en première ligne, s'élancent à l'assaut des crêtes du Chemin des Dames occupées par les Allemands. Ce fut l'hécatombe au sein des tirailleurs sénégalais car 7.000 d'entre eux sont tués sur les 15.000 engagés, dont près de 2.000 les deux premiers jours de l'offensive¹⁷.



Pendant la période du 6 avril au 31 octobre, soit 208 jours, seuls 54 jours se passeront sans le décès de "tirailleurs sénégalais".

21/09/2007

¹⁷ Jean-Yves Le Naour, *Dictionnaire de la Grande Guerre*, Larousse, 2008, p.

En 1918, les tirailleurs sénégalais se distinguent particulièrement lors de la bataille de Reims pour la libération et la défense de la ville¹⁸. En effet, durant l'offensive allemande de juillet-août 1918 (seconde bataille de la Marne), la ville de Reims défendue âprement, fut sauvée grâce au 1^{er} Corps d'Armée coloniale comprenant 9 bataillons de tirailleurs sénégalais.



Tirailleurs sénégalais assurant la garde dans la tranchée dans le secteur de Prosnes de La Marne. Source Verger M., Histoire du corps des tirailleurs, de 1857 à nos jours. Cercle National des Combattants, 12 avril 2012, p.7. (réf. SPA 27 L 1531d – 4 septembre 1916).

¹⁸ Michel M., *Les Africains et la Grande Guerre. L'appel à l'Afrique (1914-1918)*, Paris, Karthala, 2003, p. 237.



Les fronts français

Parmi les 72 000 combattants de l'ex-Empire français morts entre 1914 et 1918 à la bataille de Verdun, l'une des plus terribles de la Grande Guerre, figurent plusieurs tirailleurs. En effet, troupes de choc, les tirailleurs algériens et sénégalais figurent aux premières lignes durant la bataille de Verdun ou les offensives de la Somme (1916) et du Chemin des Dames (1917). En 1918, les troupes coloniales sont largement utilisées lors de la contre-offensive alliée qui allait être décisive à la victoire.

Par ailleurs, plusieurs régiments indigènes furent également engagés sur d'autres théâtres d'opération, notamment aux Dardanelles. Parmi les opérations militaires en dehors du territoire français, figure le front d'Asie Mineure, avec notamment la bataille des Dardanelles. Pour rétablir les communications directes avec la Russie, les forces de l'Entente adoptent la « stratégie périphérique » en

s'attaquant à l'empire turc ottoman, allié des empires centraux¹⁹. La flotte alliée, appuyée par le débarquement d'un corps expéditionnaire, tente de forcer le détroit des Dardanelles en Février 1915. Après des mois d'assauts répétés et quelques succès non décisifs sur la presqu'île de Gallipoli, d'avril à août 1915, la malheureuse expédition dut rembarquer avant d'ouvrir un nouveau front dans les Balkans²⁰. Acculés par les Allemands sur le front occidental en 1916, les Alliés basés aux Dardanelles se replient vers Salonique pour former l'Armée d'Orient face aux Allemands, Autrichiens et Bulgares.

Dès 1916, après un débarquement à Salonique, établissement de sa grande base logistique, l'armée d'Orient se déploya dans les Balkans, en direction du nord. À partir de juillet 1917, 14 bataillons africains prirent part aux combats intenses au sein des trois divisions d'infanterie coloniale²¹. L'opération, improvisée, s'enlise pendant un an dans le borbier balkanique et se solde par un échec avec 145000 soldats alliés qui tombèrent aux Dardanelles où ils s'étaient repliés après avoir été assiégés par leurs ennemis. Déployés dans un environnement difficile (rigueur climatique, relief montagneux, ils participent activement aux combats décisifs qui se soldent par la chute de la ville stratégique d'Uskub, en septembre 1918. La prise d'Uskub constitue une étape décisive dans le front balkanique en ce qu'elle marque la dislocation précipitée « du front austro-bulgare suivi, un mois plus tard, du délitement de l'alliance austro-allemande »²².

Une partie des rescapés de l'opération est dirigée vers la Salonique²³, en Grèce. L'opération, à laquelle participèrent beaucoup de tirailleurs sénégalais, se

¹⁹ Renouvin P., *Histoire des relations internationales. Les crises du XX^e siècle. I. De 1914 à 1929*, Hachette, 1969, p. 38-39..

²⁰ Verger Michel, « Histoire du corps des tirailleurs, de 1857 à nos jours ». *Cercle National des Combattants*, Edition du 12 avril 2012, p.7.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Renouvin P., *Histoire des relations internationales. Les crises du XX^e siècle. I. De 1914 à 1929*, Hachette, 1969, p.45.

solda par plusieurs pertes au sein des troupes sénégalaises (certains sont enterrés à Salonique).



Les fronts balkaniques

c) Les tirailleurs dans les théâtres d'opération: controverse autour de la « chair à canons »

De vifs débats ont divisé des historiens sur l'utilisation des tirailleurs, leur position sur les fronts (première ligne), la controverse autour de la « chair à canons ». Sont-ils utilisés comme chair à canons ? Le général Mangin accusé par des Français (Chemin des Dames) et le député Blaise Diagne d'utiliser les tirailleurs comme « chair à canons », fut relevé et remplacé par Nivelles. Leurs positions aux fronts, pour certains historiens faisaient de ces tirailleurs, « chairs à canon » et serait à l'origine du nombre important de victimes dans leurs rangs. Il

est admis qu'utilisées dans les batailles meurtrières, les troupes de l'Empire ont parfois été présentées comme de la "chair à canons". D'ailleurs, 78 000 soldats des troupes coloniales moururent durant la Grande Guerre.

L'hécatombe des tirailleurs durant la bataille du Chemin des Dames pourrait, à bon droit, conforter cette thèse. D'autant plus que dans une correspondance en date du 21 janvier 1917, le général Nivelles estime qu'« Il faut « y aller avec tous moyens » et ne pas ménager le sang noir pour conserver un peu de blanc »²⁴. Sous le commandement de Mangin, les tirailleurs sénégalais, déployés sur les deux ailes, attaquent simultanément autour de Vauxaillon-Laffaux et Paissy-Hurtebise. Déployés en première ligne les 16 et 17 avril 1917, les 15.000 tirailleurs représentant 20 bataillons sont réduits aux 3/4 face aux forces allemandes. D'ailleurs dans la région, le général Mangin a la fameuse réputation de « boucher » ou de « broyeur de Noirs »²⁵.

Dans le contexte de la bataille du Chemin des Dames, on peut supposer, à bon droit, que cette thèse semble plausible. D'autant plus qu'une note de l'Etat-major du 21 janvier 1917 sur l'utilisation des troupes noires conforte largement cette thèse. Dans cette correspondance, le général Nivelles soutient qu'il faut « y aller avec tous moyens et ne pas ménager le sang noir pour conserver un peu de blanc »²⁶.

²⁴ Dossier : les « tirailleurs sénégalais » en 1917 Note du 3e Bureau de l'Etat-major du 21 janvier 1917 sur l'utilisation des troupes noirs pour la prochaine offensive. Correspondance Robert Nivelles.

Site : www.memorial-chemindesdames.fr

²⁵ Même référence que ci-dessus.

²⁶ www.memorial-chemindesdames.fr Note du 3e Bureau de l'Etat-major du 21 janvier 1917 sur l'utilisation des troupes noirs pour la prochaine offensive. *Avis du Général MANGIN qui a fait preuve qu'il savait se servir des noirs, même avec des troupes métropolitaines. Le 3^e Bureau ne croit d'ailleurs pas que dans la bataille de 1917, il faille « faire (des expériences :) un essai » comme le dit le Général MICHELER. Il faut « y aller avec tous moyens » et ne pas ménager le sang noir pour conserver un peu de blanc.* R.N. (Robert Nivelles).

**Pays d'origine des "tirailleurs sénégalais" morts le 16 avril 1917 au Chemin
des Dames**

Pays de Naissance		%*
Soudan (Mali)	477	39
Sénégal	200	16
Guinée	180	15
Côte d'Ivoire	136	11
Haute-Volta (Burkina-Faso)	134	11
Dahomey (Bénin)	54	4
Niger	29	2
Mauritanie	9	1
Inconnue	5	1
	1224	100

D'autres facteurs devraient être pris en compte, notamment les conditions de vie des tirailleurs (précarité, alimentation, vêture, dépaysement et rigueur du climat malgré les séjours d'acclimatation à Fréjus). Dès juin 1916, le taux de mortalité au sein des tirailleurs est suffisamment important pour attirer l'attention des autorités des plus avisées. Ces facteurs expliquent l'importance des « morts à l'arrière ». Jean-Pierre Caule, Jean-Michel Mormone et Patrick Boyer²⁷ montrent, avec un luxe de détails, le rôle et l'impact des conditions de leur vie dans le bilan général de la mortalité. Plusieurs sont morts de maladies du fait des conditions d'habitation et d'hygiène inadaptées à leur physiologie et à leur mode de vie. Les taux de mortalité élevés devraient donc être mis en relation avec les mauvaises

²⁷ Jean-Pierre CAULE, Patrick BOYER, Jean-Michel MORMONE, *1914-1918 Le Bassin d'Arcachon*, Société historique et archéologique d'Arcachon et du Pays de Buch, novembre 2008.

conditions d'habitation et d'hygiène dans leur camp d'accueil. Ce qui, certainement, explique l'importance de la mortalité par affections pulmonaires.

Par ailleurs, les tirailleurs eurent du mal à s'adapter à la guerre de tranchées et à ses conditions de vie souvent difficiles. Exposés au froid, vulnérables aux intempéries, les tirailleurs sénégalais durent souvent être retirés du front à plusieurs reprises lors de l'approche de l'hiver.

En outre, il faudrait nuancer certaines affirmations consistant à exposer les tirailleurs seuls aux dangers. En fait, fut mise en place la réforme consécutive au système de l'amalgame et de la mixité (Européens et Indigènes ensemble), au niveau du bataillon de la compagnie dans toutes les unités. En effet, pour des raisons d'efficacité militaire, plusieurs unités étaient parfois mixtes. Aussi, voit-on, dès la contre-offensive de la Malmaison en octobre 1917, des bataillons blancs d'Afrique du Nord et tirailleurs indigènes, mêlés, dans les régiments. Tel fut, également, le cas, pendant la 2ème Bataille de la Marne et de l'essentiel des autres batailles jusqu'à l'armistice de 1918.

III Les conséquences de la Grande Guerre

La Grande Guerre eut des répercussions fâcheuses dans les colonies dont la vie économique dépendait grandement de leurs relations avec la métropole. L'insécurité des océans du fait de la guerre sous-marine, les difficultés de transport, l'état de guerre conjuguèrent leurs effets et créèrent les conditions d'un marasme dans le commerce, d'un renchérissement et d'une pénurie des denrées. Au total, à l'échelle du continent africain, plus de 150.000 soldats et porteurs africains perdirent la vie durant la Grande Guerre²⁸.

a) Les conséquences économiques

La conséquence majeure de la guerre fut la perturbation de l'économie africaine, notamment la chute des cours des produits de base et l'inflation au

²⁸ Crowder M, La première guerre mondiale et ses conséquences. Histoire Générale de l'Afrique, Tome VII, UNESCO NEA, 1987, p. 307-337, p.307

niveau des produits d'importation. A l'échelle du continent, le blocus et l'occupation des colonies allemandes eurent comme conséquence la montée en puissance de la Grande Bretagne et l'élimination de l'Allemagne par les Alliés dans les échanges africains alors qu'elle représentait avant la guerre le premier partenaire commercial de l'Afrique tropicale.

Le système d'une véritable économie de guerre se met en place. Ainsi, le dirigisme et l'interventionnisme de l'État colonial qui relayèrent le libéralisme d'avant, se matérialisent par le contrôle des prix, les réquisitions de produits agricoles, la spécialisation agricole, le renforcement des maisons d'import-export ainsi que le recrutement de la main d'œuvre. Dans les colonies françaises, la métropole, en proie à un déficit céréalier chronique (30 millions de quintaux de blé) dut recourir à l'effort de guerre par une contribution en nature, argent) et à une exploitation excessive des colonies pour ravitailler les troupes. L'effort de guerre porta sur la fourniture de céréales, peaux, denrées alimentaires et contributions diverses pour le compte de l'Armée. Au déficit chronique des finances publiques, répond l'arrêt de tous les grands projets.

Dès 1916, la France créa un Service d'Utilisation des Produits Coloniaux avant de mettre en place un Ministère du Ravitaillement chargé de collecter la production dans les colonies et qui, en 1917, décida de réquisitionner toute la production agricole de l'AOF.²⁹

Au Sénégal, l'usine de Lyndiane, créée à la veille de la guerre, en vertu de l'accord passé avec les autorités, doit assurer la livraison de viandes congelées ou en conserves³⁰.

²⁹ Mbokolo E, *Afrique Noire. Histoire et Civilisations*. Tome II, Hatier-AUPELF 1994, p.340.

³⁰ Ndao M., *Le ravitaillement de Dakar de 1914 à 1945*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2009, p. 26.

Pour développer les échanges, les puissances coloniales procédèrent à la construction de routes carrossables et l'introduction de moteurs à combustion interne.

La conscription occasionna une pénurie de main d'œuvre qui eut des répercussions fâcheuses sur la production agricole et ouvre la porte à la famine et aux épidémies. La guerre, à peine terminée, fut relayée par la grippe espagnole qui fit des ravages spectaculaires.

En AOF, la mobilisation de 75% des cadres et agents des entreprises commerciales perturba sérieusement l'activité économique de la fédération³¹.

b) Les conséquences sociales et politiques

Le recrutement et les opérations militaires ont provoqué d'énormes conséquences sociales (maladies, disettes, épidémies). Dans certaines régions, la période de la Grande Guerre fut dénommée « le temps de la mort ». A la ponction démographique, s'ajoutent les calamités : famine, pauvreté, épidémies. La peste devint endémique au Sénégal au moment où la maladie du sommeil gagna du terrain alors que la grippe espagnole se propagea dans le continent à partir de 1918. Des régions entières furent désertées alors que dans d'autres, des révoltes éclatent (Haut- Sénégal Niger, ouest Volta, nord Dahomey, Touaregs de la bande saharienne, Bélé Dougou au Soudan et une partie de la Côte d'Ivoire).

Les soldats qui espéraient une reconnaissance de leurs nouveaux droits, rémunération consistante, honneurs et distinction, durent vite déchanter. Le retour des tirailleurs, dont l'attitude fut de plus en plus critique face au colonialisme, eut des répercussions sur l'histoire de l'Afrique noire. Le retour des soldats, comme en Guinée s'accompagne de grèves, émeutes et de contestations à l'autorité des chefs.³² Au Sénégal, dans les Quatre Communes, les ressortissants revendiquent l'égalité et luttent pour l'accès à la citoyenneté française. L'élite politique en essor réclame plus de responsabilité dans

³¹ Ibid.

³² Crowder M, *op cit*, p.331.

l'administration et accélère l'éveil du mouvement nationaliste marqué par les 14 points de Wilson dont l'un affirmait « le droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes ». Le système colonial sérieusement ébranlé fut contesté et remis en question lors de la Conférence de Versailles.

En AOF, la France prend conscience de plus en plus de l'impact économique et démographique des colonies. Le plan de mise en valeur d'Albert Sarraut est mis en branle. Pour protéger la main d'œuvre indigène, le processus de médicalisation des sociétés africaines s'accélère surtout la mise en place de l'École de Médecine de Dakar et de la médecine de masse, préventive et sociale.

A la Grande Guerre, succède une période d'accalmie, de paix séparant les deux conflits mondiaux. Si elle marque la fin de la pacification et des tentatives d'indépendance agitées par les mouvements religieux, elle fut aussi le prélude au panafricanisme et le début d'un nationalisme qui sera déterminant dans le processus d'émancipation après le second conflit mondial. Un nouveau discours de rupture prôné par des intellectuels à l'image de Lamine Senghor, René Maran émerge et conteste l'élite politique locale et la voie tracée par Blaise Diagne considéré comme dignitaire inféodé à la puissance coloniale.

Par ailleurs, un débat mémoriel se met en place et la date du 11 novembre qui marque la signature de l'Armistice, intègre le calendrier festif et la mémoire officielle (édification de lieux de mémoire, célébration du souvenir). Alors que Dakar dispose de sa rue de Reims, à Thiès, l'une des plus grandes avenues de la ville est baptisée Verdun tandis qu'à Mbour, un quartier est baptisé 11 novembre en souvenir de la date de l'armistice et de la victoire de la métropole.

A Reims, un monument aux héros de l'armée noire fut érigé en 1924 en hommage aux tirailleurs qui ont libéré la ville.

CONCLUSION

La Grande Guerre se singularise par son ampleur, sa durée, mais aussi la naissance et émergence de « l'arrière » avec des implications dépassant les théâtres d'opérations. Mais c'est aussi l'Appel aux empires coloniaux pour suppléer aux carences des métropoles (effort de guerre, mobilisation des troupes). C'est dans un contexte d'enlèvement, de raréfaction des ressources, d'épuisement des troupes en Europe que l'Afrique fut sollicitée. Le Sénégal fut mis à contribution et son apport a été multiforme.

Engagés massivement en 1917 du fait des pertes massives subies depuis 1914, les tirailleurs furent utilisés massivement dans les différents théâtres d'opération (Verdun, Ardennes, batailles de la Somme, de La Marne, Chemin des Dames) non seulement en France mais aussi en dehors de la métropole (bataille des Dardanelles). Engagées dans les batailles meurtrières, les troupes de l'Empire ont parfois été présentées comme de la "chair à canon". D'ailleurs, 78 000 soldats des troupes coloniales moururent durant la Grande Guerre. Pour l'AOF, 30.000 tirailleurs sénégalais moururent pour la France. Pourtant, dans le bilan de la mortalité, d'autres facteurs devraient être pris en compte comme les conditions de vie des tirailleurs (précarité, alimentation, vêture, dépaysement et rigueur du climat malgré les séjours d'acclimatation à Fréjus). Dans les faits, les taux de mortalité élevés peuvent découler des mauvaises conditions d'habitation et d'hygiène dans leur camp d'accueil.

La première guerre mondiale a eu des conséquences dans la colonie du Sénégal liée la métropole par le pacte colonial. L'insécurité des océans, les aléas de transport, l'état de guerre occasionnèrent un marasme dans le commerce, un renchérissement et une pénurie des denrées dans toute la colonie. Elle inaugure par ailleurs une phase de rupture caractérisée par l'émergence d'un mouvement nationaliste de plus en plus critique à l'égard du système colonial.

En outre, la Grande Guerre marque le calendrier festif et mémoriel de la colonie. Ainsi, la date du 11 novembre qui marque la signature de l'Armistice,

intègre la mémoire officielle, de même que plusieurs villes et lieux, symboles de grandes batailles (Reims, Verdun) font partie du paysage de certaines grandes villes sénégalaises (rue de Reims, rue de Verdun, etc.).

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A European War in Southern Africa:

South Africa's Conquest of German South-West Africa, 1914-1915

1. INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this paper to provide a review and analysis of the first-ever campaign outside the borders of South Africa in which the country's armed forces were involved; namely, the campaign in German South-West Africa, a territory that was later known as South-West Africa (i.e. when it was under South African administration), and since 1990, when it became independent and known as Namibia.

South Africa as a unitary state was established on 31 May 1910, with Louis Botha the country's first prime minister. Botha, of course, was a former Boer general, who rose to fame during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 to 1902. He appointed another Boer general, Jan Smuts, as his Minister of Defence but for the first few years of its existence, the Union of South Africa had no defence force of its own and consequently, had to rely on Great Britain for its defence.

In his capacity as Minister of Defence, Smuts drafted the South African Defence Act (Act No 12) of 1912, which was accepted by the South African parliament on 13 June 1912. The Defence Act made provision for the establishment of the Union Defence Forces (UDF), which would consist of a small permanent force, a coast garrison force, a Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve force, a number of active citizen force units, a reserve force, and rifle associations. Although the UDF was officially established on 1 July 1912, the permanent force was, in practice, established only on 1 April 1913, and the active citizen force units, coast garrison force, rifle associations and reserves on 1 July 1913. The South African Medical Service was established in December 1913, but its official date of recognition was back-dated to 1 April 1913. In the course

of 1913, a start was made on the training of pilots for the active citizen force's flying corps, a forerunner of the South African Air Force, which was established in 1920. Although there were efforts to amalgamate the republican/Boer and British military traditions in the UDF, the UDF's structure, command culture and soldiers' code were more British/English than Afrikaans/Dutch.

When a mine-worker strike broke out on the Witwatersrand in May 1913, which lasted until July 1913 and in due course became violent, the UDF was a force only in name and consequently could not assist the police in their (unsuccessful) efforts to end the strike. As a consequence, British troops (which were in South Africa as part of the imperial garrison) had to be called in. However, when a general railway-workers' and gold- and coal-miner strike broke out in January 1914, Smuts was in a position to call up UDF units, and the violent strike was soon ended.

Nonetheless, when the Great War began in July 1914, the UDF was still ill-prepared for war. The permanent force had only approximately 2 500 (mounted) troops, while in times of war the active citizen force could mobilise some 25 000 men; and the rifle associations had about 8 000 (mainly Afrikaans-speaking) members. The UDF had no proper overall command structure, with Smuts the de facto commander-in-chief. There were also no contingency plans, in case South Africa was invaded by a foreign power and/or if South Africa declared war.

2. THE OUTBREAK OF A WAR IN EUROPE AND REBELLION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Gavrilo Princip's pistol shots fired at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, echoed all the way down to the southern tip of Africa, because when Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, South Africa (as a British dominion) was also automatically involved in the conflict, albeit the country could decide to what extent it wished to actively take part. The South African government

immediately accepted full responsibility for the defence of the Union (8 August), so that the British troops who were stationed in the country, could be deployed elsewhere in defence of the British Empire. On 7 August, the British government requested their South African counterpart to put out of action the radio stations in German South-West Africa, so as to ensure that Berlin could not communicate with its warships that had been deployed to the Atlantic Ocean. Louis Botha discussed with his cabinet the possibility of getting the UDF involved in German South-West Africa, because he and Smuts regarded it as their duty towards Britain to actively assist the British Empire in its struggle against Germany. The matter was taken to the South African parliament, where – after an intense debate in the second week of September 1914 – the House of Assembly voted by 91 to 12, and the Senate by 24 votes to 5, in favour of South Africa's active participation in the conflict, although volunteers would be deployed only outside the borders of the country. On 14 September, South Africa declared war against Germany. Although Botha and Smuts were able to win the support of most of the South African politicians (i.e. in parliament), the outcome of the vote in parliament did not reflect the views of many ordinary Afrikaans-speaking citizens.

In protest against the decision to invade German South-West Africa, the commandant-general of the UDF's active citizen force (and former Boer general), Brig.-Gen. Christiaan Beyers, resigned on 15 September 1915, and in due course joined the Afrikaners who rebelled against their lawful government. This rebellion was led by former Boer generals, such as Christiaan de Wet, Manie Maritz and Jan Kemp. But other prominent Boer officers from the Anglo-Boer War, such as Jaap van Deventer, Andries Brink, Coen Brits en Georg Brand, stood by Botha and Smuts and in due course, played an important role in the UDF's campaigns beyond South Africa's borders.

Maritz resigned his UDF commission and on 9 October openly rebelled, taking at least 600 men (former UDF soldiers) with him across the border to

German South-West Africa. In reaction to Maritz's rebellion, Smuts proclaimed martial law across the whole of South Africa (12 October 1914). Soon rebel commandos were roaming in the veld in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. While Smuts remained in Pretoria to plan the campaign to be waged in German South-West Africa, Botha led the main UDF units in the field, defeating De Wet (12 November 1914) and scattering several other rebel commandos. Kemp and his rebel force trekked across the Kalahari Desert to join Maritz in German South-West Africa. These rebels, supported by German troops and members of the South African Free Corps (Freikorps), consisting of 69 South Africans who had settled in German South-West Africa, invaded South Africa and defeated UDF units on several occasions, but their attack on Upington (24 January 1915) was repulsed, and by 3 February 1915 more than 1 200 rebels had surrendered at Upington. By that stage, all other rebel units had been defeated and rounded up or had simply drifted back home.

The Afrikaner rebellion of 1914 to 1915 was an ill-conceived and ill-fated revolt by people who allowed themselves to be led by their heart and emotions, rather than by reason. The 11 372 Afrikaners that rebelled formed only about 1% of the total white population. Their losses amounted to 190 killed and approximately 325 wounded. The UDF pushed back some 32 000 men in the field (including approximately 20 000 Afrikaners), of whom 132 were killed and 242 wounded. Only rebel officers were brought to trial, and they received light jail sentences and fines. By the end of 1916 however, most of these rebel officers were set free under parole conditions. Only one rebel, Jopie Fourie (who had not resigned his UDF commission) was sentenced to death and executed.

3. 1914: TENTATIVE OPERATIONS

The Smuts-Botha strategy entailed a four-pronged invasion of German South-West Africa: a southern force (9 000 men) would invade from Upington and advance to Warmbad and Keetmanshoop; an eastern force (2 000 men)

would cross the border from Kuruman and also advance to Keetmanshoop; a central force (11 000 men) would land at Lüderitzbucht (the present-day Lüderitz) and advance along the railway line to Aus; and a northern force (21 000 men) would land at Walvis Bay (then still a South African enclave) and then advance via Swakopmund and Karibib to Windhuk (the colonial seat of government).

In the light of the rebellion that threatened stability in South Africa, the UDF had to postpone its invasion of German South-West Africa. However, a number of events did take place that deserve mention. Early in September 1914, some 2 500 UDF soldiers landed at Port Nolloth, not far from the German colony's southern border. On 14 September, the British auxiliary cruiser *Armada Castle*, shelled the wireless station at Swakopmund. As early as 18 September 1914, a UDF force of 1 824 men, under the command of Col P.S. Beves, landed unopposed at Lüderitzbucht and destroyed the local radio station. The UDF force commanded by Brig-Gen H.T. Lukin at Port Nolloth, moved closer to the German colonial border. Lukin sent a force of some 300 men, commanded by Lt-Col R.C. Grant, via Ramansdrif to Sandfontein, just north of the Orange River in German South-West Africa. On 26 September 1914, this UDF force was attacked, surrounded and forced to surrender by a German force of approximately 1 200 men. Sources differ as far as exactly how many casualties were suffered, but it seems as if at least sixteen South Africans were killed, while amongst the nearly 300 prisoners there were also 51 wounded; while the Germans lost fourteen killed and 46 wounded.

On Christmas Day, 25 December 1914, the first UDF members of the northern force arrived at Walvis Bay. They were commanded by Col P.C.B. Skinner. He took his force northwards in the direction of Swakopmund, and on 12 January 1915, after a brief clash, they occupied the town. But, until the rebellion in South Africa was crushed, the South African government put any further operations in the neighbouring German territory on hold.

4. 1915: THE FIRST PHASE – THE UDF CONVERGES ON WINDHUK

Owing to the vastness of the territory, the desert conditions, scarce water resources and not much of a railway infrastructure, German South-West Africa was not a territory that could be easily conquered. However, to defend their sprawling colony, the Germans had only some 2 000 Schutztruppe in German South-West Africa, initially commanded by Col Joachim von Heydebreck, but he was killed when a rifle grenade accidentally exploded (12 November 1914) and he was replaced by Lt-Col Viktor Franke. From the white community of approximately 15 000 all told, some 4 000 males could be mobilised to assist with the defence of the territory. The colony's black population was at least 200 000 strong, but unlike in East Africa, the Germans in South-West Africa did not mobilise black troops as Askaris, albeit a few 'coloureds' did serve on the side of the Germans. The German artillery component in German South-West Africa consisted of 66 guns, including eleven pom-poms.

As soon as the Afrikaner rebels were defeated on the home front, Botha and Smuts were able to start the conquest of German South-West Africa in earnest. On 11 February 1915 the main (i.e. northern) South African force, commanded by the prime minister, General Louis Botha, went ashore at Swakopmund and there Botha built up his forces, before starting his advance eastwards. He attacked a German force at Pforteberg, Rietberg and Jakkalswater and drove them off. Botha's force then captured Otjimbingwe and reached Karibib on 5 May. From there the South Africans continued eastwards and took Friedrichsfelde, Wilhemsthal and Okahandja, and occupied Windhuk, unopposed, on 12 May.

The southern UDF force, commanded by Col Jaap van Deventer, crossed into German South-West Africa at the beginning of March 1915. This force advanced rapidly northwards, and occupied Ukamas. The South Africans then moved on, and on 5 April took possession of Kalkfontein (today Karasburg). In

the meantime, the South Africans had extended the railway line from Prieska which soon reached Kalkfontein, thus making it much easier to supply the UDF. The southern force was supported by a smaller (eastern) force of some 2 000 men, under the command of Col C.A.L. Berrangé who had marched and/or travelled by motor vehicles, all the way from Kimberley and had entered the German colony (on 31 March) from the direction of Kuruman, at Rietfontein. Berrangé captured Hasur and Kieris West. Here, before the end of March, these two forces linked up. They then advanced northwards in the direction of Keetmanshoop, defeating the German garrison at Kabus. Berrangé met stiff resistance at Garuchas, 64 km east of Keetmanshoop. Although the German force was eventually driven off, their action allowed the German garrisons at Aus and Keetmanshoop to escape.

The central force, under Brig.-Gen. Duncan Mackenzie, commenced its advance from Lüderitzbucht on 30 March, and occupied an abandoned Aus on 1 April. From there, Mackenzie continued his advance on 16 April. In the meantime, the desk-bound Smuts, who stayed behind in Pretoria to plan the invasion and to organise logistical and other support for the UDF troops in the war zone, was keen to take to the field once more, as during the Anglo-Boer War, and to command soldiers in a campaign. Consequently, he travelled to Lüderitzbucht at the beginning of April 1915. On 14 April he arrived at Kalkfontein and took over the command of all the UDF forces in the southern part of German South-West Africa – some 8 000 men, with eighteen pieces of artillery. On 20 April, Smuts's forces occupied Keetmanshoop without encountering any opposition. Smuts henceforth advanced all along the railway line to Berseba. The German forces retreated northwards. At Gibeon, the Schutztruppe made a stand, but they were defeated on 27 April. UDF casualties amounted to at least 24 killed and 108 wounded. The Germans lost at least 11 killed, 30 wounded and 188 taken prisoner. The southern, eastern and central forces continued occupying the whole of the southern part of the German colony,

ensuring that no German forces were left or would turn back to continue the struggle south of Windhuk. In mid-May, with the whole of the southern half of German South-West Africa under UDF control, a satisfied Smuts returned to Pretoria.

Thus, by mid-May 1915, the South African forces had occupied about 50% of German South-West Africa, but the German forces continued to fall back northwards, keeping their forces more or less intact, and consequently the UDF was not able to defeat the Schutztruppe in the field. Although the main phase of the German South-West Africa campaign had been successfully concluded by the UDF, the UDF had to prepare for a second phase.

5. 1915: THE SECOND PHASE – FROM WINDHUK TO KHORAB

On 20 May 1915, Louis Botha met the governor of German South-West Africa, Dr Theodor Seitz, as well as the commander of the territory's defence forces, Lt-Col Viktor Franke. No agreement could be reached with regard to the cessation of hostilities and consequently, Botha continued his advance on 18 June. His force (some 10 000 men in total) consisted of four columns, commanded by Brig.-Gen. Coen Brits, Brig.-Gen. H.T. Lukin, Brig.-Gen. Manie Botha and Brig.-Gen. M.W. Myburgh. Brits went north to Otjiwarongo, Outjo, and the Etosha Pan, while Lukin led his column all along the railway line running from Swakopmund to Tsumeb. To the west of Lukin, Myburgh took his column to Otavi, while Manie Botha advanced to Tsumeb via Grootfontein.

Once again the Germans fell back without offering much resistance. The Germans took up defensive positions at and near Otavi. Botha avoided any frontal attack and its concomitant losses, but rather opted to outflank the German positions with large turning movements, in the process taking many prisoners. The Germans now concentrated their remaining forces at Khorab, north of Otavi,

on the main railway line to Tsumeb. The UDF used aircraft to do reconnaissance work and to keep track of the German troop movements.

Franke then asked for a cease-fire, and on 9 July 1915, the German governor, Dr Theodor Seitz, surrendered his remaining forces (4 740 soldiers all told) at Khorab. The total German campaign casualties numbered 1 188, including 103 killed in action, 205 wounded and 890 captured, plus the 4 740 men who surrendered at Khorab. The UDF also captured 37 pieces of artillery and 22 machine-guns. The UDF's losses during the campaign in German South-West Africa were 88 killed in action, 25 died of wounds, 56 killed in accidents, 97 died from disease (i.e. total number of deaths 266); 311 others wounded, and 660 captured (including 46 of the wounded).

The total number of German and South African casualties (dead plus wounded) in the whole of the campaign in German South-West Africa (namely 885) was fewer than the casualties inflicted in most of the hundreds of skirmishes that took place on the Western Front in the course of the war. See in this regard, for example, the approximately 750 dead and 1 500 wounded suffered by the UDF at Delville Wood (15-20 July 1916) during the devastating battle of the Somme, where of course, on the very first day alone (1 July 1916), the British Army suffered some 19 000 killed and 38 000 wounded.

In the meantime, in the far north of German South-West Africa, and in the south of Angola, German and Portuguese troops clashed on several occasions. A state of war existed only between Germany and Portugal from March 1916, but that did not prevent a mini undeclared war between the two countries in their southern Africa colonies. The German forces were victorious in most of these clashes, and they occupied the Humbe region in the south of Angola. Shortly before the German surrender to the UDF, the Portuguese restored control over the areas that had been occupied by the Germans.

6. EVALUATION

The outnumbered German forces of eventually not more than 6 000 soldiers, fought bravely in German South-West Africa against the UDF, which deployed a total of approximately 67 000 white men in German South-West Africa (about just as many Afrikaans- as English-speaking troops). The UDF also used the services of approximately 33 000 black and coloured support troops during the campaign, plus a few Asians. Most of the fighting on both sides was carried out by mounted riflemen. Since the campaign started in earnest in February 1915, the UDF had conquered an area of more than 800 000 square kilometres. Relative to many events at other war fronts, the German South-West Africa campaign might have been regarded as a side-show, but it was the first major Allied success on land during the war; and was the only campaign planned, launched and concluded by a former British colony at its own discretion during the whole of the Great War of 1914 to 1918.

The UDF, as well as Smuts's Department of Defence, acquitted themselves well during a campaign that was the first test of their strength. Notwithstanding many frustrations, teething problems and other challenges, Smuts's organisation with regard to the campaign was good, as was Botha's execution of the strategy in the field. Far away from Pretoria, the necessary administrative and logistical infrastructure for the campaign was created. Tens of thousands of troops were deployed over long distances, receiving the necessary ammunition and other supplies that were vital to waging the campaign and for bringing it to a successful conclusion. The UDF did excellent reconnaissance work, evaded frontal attacks, thereby keeping the German forces on the back foot, causing them to flee. The South African commanders drove their troops hard, but set an example themselves. In this regard Botha, and to a lesser extent Smuts, who was in the field for only a short while, also set an example.

The campaign in German South-West Africa was, from a South African point of view, a war against the vast open spaces of the territory and for the

control of its scarce water resources. The campaign was a test for the UDF with regard to mobility and endurance; the UDF being successful in this regard. The UDF overcame the challenges concerning water and transport. The UDF was also able to strike quickly at the German forces, as well as being able to concentrate superior forces successfully against the German forces. Both sides also used the new technology of aircraft to their advantage. In more ways than one, the UDF's German South-West Africa campaign was a model of how (semi-)desert warfare should be conducted.

There remains one important military question to be dealt with, namely: To what extent did its successful campaign in German South-West Africa prepare the UDF for the role it was to play in other operational areas during the Great War? In December 1915, two South African infantry brigades were sent to German East Africa and on 23 February 1916, Smuts took overall command of all the Allied forces in that war zone. But Tanganyika was not German South-West Africa with its wide open spaces. The East African terrain was bushy, with mountainous areas, and with several marshes, with concomitant tropical diseases. The allied opponent in East Africa was Lt-Col (later Maj-Gen) Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, one of the wildest German commanders of the war. Eventually Von Lettow-Vorbeck resorted to guerrilla warfare and surrendered only two weeks after the world war officially ended. During the war, South African forces also saw action in the campaign in Egypt against the Turkish-Senussi forces; in Palestine, and on the Western Front. Although the UDF gained battle experience in German South-West Africa, this campaign did not really prepare them well for the challenges they had to face in the other operational theatres where they were deployed. However, German South-West Africa was a sound basic combat training ground for the UDF and some of the lessons learnt in that arid territory stood them in good stead for the rest of the world war; for example, the importance of co-ordination between the various deployed columns.

The South African victory in South-West Africa enhanced the political and military reputation of Botha and Smuts, especially amongst English-speaking South Africans, in Britain, as well as in other dominions. But nothing came of Smuts's ideal to incorporate South-West Africa into the Union of South Africa, albeit that for many decades the territory was, in practice, administered by successive South African governments as if it were a province of South Africa. In due course, South-West Africa was classified as a Class C Mandate by the League of Nations and placed under the trusteeship and administration of South Africa. More than 50 years after the UDF conquered the territory, South African forces were, once again, deployed in South-West Africa, this time during the Namibian War of Independence (1966-1989; a conflict also known as the Border War or Bush War), when the South-West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) fought for the independence of the territory. This conflict in due course spilled over into Angola. Eventually, on 21 March 1990, South-West Africa became independent as Namibia.

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Prof. Dr.Sc. Igor Grebenkin (Russia)

Russian army officers and soldiers as sides of social conflict

During World War I Russian armed forces turned out to be a specific social unity that reflected all problems and contradictions peculiar to pre-revolutionary Russian society. They had a major influence upon the state's defense potential and its viability. In the environment of the developing social crisis the wartime army became a significant factor of social instability. The officers and soldiers proved to be one of the most significant social groups, whose confrontation set the bulk of the coming civilian conflict.

Class segregation and social inequality, typical of the early XX century Russia, produced a specific influence on such a peculiar social entity as the Empire's armed forces. Social predominance of peasants (or equal to them social groups) in the country predetermined the dominance of peasants among the privates in the army and fleet, 90% of which was comprised of peasants (up to 60%), and working people and craftsmen (over 30%). Officers were regularly comprised of no less than 50 % of the privileged social classes.¹ As General Petr I. Zalesskiy put it, in pre-revolutionary Russia "there were two races of people: "a barin" (lord) and "a muzhik" (lowbrow). "A barin" was not necessarily the man in power, not necessarily a landowner or a wealthy person, but any *well-dressed*, and, definitely, literate person. His opposite would be «a muzhik» – a peasant, a workman, a servant, the one that could hardly read and write."² This position of soldiers in the Russian Empire hierarchy meant that

¹ See: Бескровный Л.Г., *Армия и флот России в начале XX века: Очерки военного потенциала*. (Москва 1986) 15; Гаркавенко Д.А., «Социальный состав вооруженных сил России в эпоху империализма», in: *Революционное движение в русской армии в 1917 году* (Москва 1981) 30-45.

² Залесский П., «Грехи старой России и ее армии», in: *Философия войны*. (Москва 1995) 149.

they were bound to have come from “muzhik” descent, while an officer was supposed to be “a barin” (aristocrat). Subordination and strict discipline in the regular army only disguised these evident social vestiges, passing them for natural relations in military environment. This problem was not even solved by the attempts of part of the officers who tried “to approach the soldier”, that is to build up relations with their subordinates on reasonable basis. Researches of socio-psychological type of Russian soldiers also mention that, on the other hand, obedience and submission to officers were only a part of their typically peasant mentality, a habit (passes from generation to generation) to endure all hardships and harassment compliantly.³

With the beginning of World War I social setting in the country underwent some shifts, which influenced internal situation in the army. Although it increased in number, its lower rank structure hardly changed. The only thing was that its peasant constituent had grown a little.⁴ The quality of the Russian armed forces was denoted by the educational and cultural standards of the peasantry they were comprised of. Since peasants associated their Motherland with their local place, state military politics were not very comprehensible for the peasant soldiers. Explanatory work that was conducted by commanders and the clergy among the soldiers didn’t quite achieve its goal. General Anton I. Denikin was inclined to explain officers’ unreadiness to such work with lower ranks by the old army regulations, prescribing not to discuss any political issues.⁵ Modern researches point out that soldiers’ peasant mentality didn’t let them understand the reasoning of their educated superiors.⁶

³ See: Асташов А.Б., «Русский крестьянин на фронтах Первой мировой войны», in: *Отечественная история. 2003. № 2.* 72-86; Поршнева О.С., *Крестьяне, рабочие и солдаты России накануне и в годы Первой мировой войны.* (Москва 1986) 177.

⁴ In 1914-1917 conscription peasants’ part exceeded 66% (See: Гаркавенко, Социальный состав, 38.)

⁵ Деникин А.И., *Очерки русской смуты. Т. I.* (Москва 1991) 98.

⁶ See: Поршнева, *Крестьяне, рабочие и солдаты*, 178.

In any case, from soldiers' point of view, officers represented the government, which was an alien and hostile force for both peasant and working class soldiers. While the warfare developed in an unfavorable way and the soldiers' fatigue and anti-war mood increased, officers became to represent for them the main class to be interested in the war continuation.

The class of the wartime officers had acquired a significantly different social status, compared to that before the war. Now it was reinforced by mass inflow of all educated members of the society. General Staff Colonel Alexander A. Svechin, who later became a prominent Soviet military scientist, was of a very high opinion of most wartime officers. He focused on several categories of the newcomers. One of them was comprised of very young people – former students and gymnasium students, who joined the army to become warrant officers. Another was made up of people's intelligenzia representatives – warrant officers who were people's teachers and teachers' seminaries alumni. The latter group was more adaptable, endurable and managed to find approach to peasant-soldiers.⁷ These intelligenzia-officers' democratic style of behavior contradicted the traditional tsarist army system of interaction between officers and soldiers, where, for example, one couldn't imagine a handshake. Such undue familiarity was considered inappropriate and a kind of buddy-buddy manners by colleagues and the higher-ups. Nevertheless the wartime itself, and real combat conditions demanded that junior officers should rationalize their relations with soldiers. This type of young officers were not inclined to rigorously comply with the former officers' etiquette and consciously brought their social experience and manners into military environment. Appearance of such officers was appreciated by soldiers. An artillery private in 1916 K.M. Grebenkin recollects: "In the process of its formation, the artillery regiment was reinforced with new officers. The came two warrant officers, two brothers, both

⁷ See: Свечин А.А., *Искусство вождения полка по опыту войны 1914–1918* 22. (Москва 2005) 82-86.

from Moscow, brothers Scheglyayevy (sons of a Professor). The elder's name was Vladimir, and both of them were very different type from the rest. Vladimir instructed us, taught us ordnance mechanisms construction. During the classes he would always apologize if he touched someone with his elbow. Once I met him and saluted. He, coming closer, took my hand off my temple, shook it and said: "Let's agree, if there are no officers about and I am coming, come and we'll greet each other. Like an equal, shake my hand. Have you got anything to read?" "Where can get a book? Soldiers never read anything." "Come to my dugout, I've got books, you can take them. Read!"⁸ We come across quite a similar example in the report to the prosecutor by a warrant officer from 184 infantry reserve regiment E.A. Petrov, who was suspected of revolutionary propaganda among soldiers. It says: "Petrov was very simple while interacting with lower ranks, let them sit in his presence, put down hands of those who saluted..."⁹ At the end of 1916 E.A.Petrov was brought to trial and charged with revolutionary propaganda among 184 infantry reserve regiment soldiers, interestingly, his participation in social-democratic organizations was not proved.

The images of previous regular officers were preserved in the soldier's memory in connection with very different attitudes: "Officers-landowners don't take a soldier for a human being. While retreating from Kovno, crossing the Neman, the bridge was blown up. The general shouted: "Sirs officers, save yourselves!" As for the soldiers, he said that they would have enough of this shit. Our lieutenant-captain Rostislavski never called his orderly other than 'shitty thing', probably he knew neither his first nor his last name."¹⁰ This opinion that regular officers 'didn't consider a soldier a human being' can't be regarded an exception. It's worth to mention an extract from a diary by junior under-officer

⁸ «Была бы справедливость, о большем и не мечтали». Воспоминания солдата Первой мировой войны, in: *Исторический архив*. 2007. № 4. 57.

⁹ *Революционное движение в армии и на флоте в годы Первой мировой войны. 1914 – февраль 1917 г.* (Москва 1966) 235-236.

¹⁰ «Была бы справедливость, о большем и не мечтали», 57.

Shtukaturov, who, having recovered in the hospital in July, 1915 came back to the front. “The superintendent came and began to inspect those who said they didn’t possess some things. The superintendent, at the rank of a lieutenant-captain started to shout at us all, without addressing anyone personally. Why did he sow spite in the soldiers’ hearts as a farewell? If a German keiser saw this he would probably be very grateful to him... Everybody was offended, you could hear indignant outcries: “That’s what they consider us, treat us worse than dogs, why do they mutilate us, etc.”¹¹ So, this stereotypical attitude to soldiers as consumables of war and unreasonable substance, which needs only powerful pressure, was quite widespread. It was just a mirror reflection of that ever-growing reverse hostility to the “officer-landowner” stereotype that lead in 1917 to a storm of soldiers’ hatred.

A.A.Svechin paid attention to a separate group: those who were made warrant officers for distinguished service in warfare. They were excellent commanders, close to regular officers in their skill and experience. Nonetheless, it was much harder for them to find common language with soldiers, who still treated them as ‘equals’ and didn’t see any ‘honor or nobility’ in them. Such a situation could only be overcome by additional demands and severity with the subordinates. Svechin points out that “for them the way to an officer rank lay through an abrupt rupture with their class.” By the beginning of 1917, when the unrest in the army grew stronger, those were the officers that irritated soldiers more than others.¹²

The factor that aggravated soldiers’ hostility to their commanders was also low professional and moral qualities of the latter. Too widespread examples of incompetence, laziness and cowardice among the officers were evident to their subordinates, and were paid far too much for in battles. The same under-officer

¹¹ «Дневник Штукатурова», in: *Военно исторический сборник. Труды комиссии по исследованию и использованию опыта войны 1914–1918 гг. Вып. 1.* (Москва 1919) 141.

¹² See: Свечин, *Искусство вождения полка*, 94-98.

Shtukaturov, who died in 1915, wrote in his diary: “From what I have seen and experienced lately I have to make a conclusion that the greatest trouble stems from the fact, that there are very few good, devoted to their service officers.”¹³

It wouldn't be correct to formally segregate according to the officers' categories the above mentioned characteristic features of interaction between officers and lower ranks during the war. It wasn't an opposition of regular officers to wartime officers, but capable vs. incapable; reasonable democracy, tactfulness combined with demands and competence vs. buddy-buddy manners and helpless ingratiation or, on the other hand, swagger, ostentatious strictness and pointless cruelty. In each case these features depended upon individual officer perception of the right way of interaction with the subordinates and colleagues, ability and wish to build them up, level of proficiency, morality and that of culture. M.N. Gerasimov pointed out that manhandling was more typical of warrant officers, as some of them wanted 'to position' themselves as front-line officers.¹⁴ In war-time, however, this dubious way to self-affirmation was far from safe. K.M. Grebenkin describes a case, when a young warrant officer slapped privates in their faces after they failed to salute him in time. In a few days these soldiers were sent together with the warrant officer to an artillery observation post and killed him there, setting everything up as if the officer was shot because of his carelessness.¹⁵

February revolution gave rise to destruction of the traditional order the old army had been based on. Its disintegration and collapse exposed one of the most critical Russian social conflicts – between soldiers and officers. One of the officers wrote to his family from the front in March 1917: “Between us and them there is an abyss that cannot be stepped over. Whatever their personal attitude to certain officers is, we remain barins (landowners) in their eyes. When we speak

¹³ «Дневник Штукатурова», 165.

¹⁴ Герасимов М.Н., *Пробуждение* (Москва 1965) 93.

¹⁵ «Была бы справедливость, о большем и не мечтали», 60-61.

about the people we mean the nation, while when they speak about it they mean democratic lower classes... Centuries-long offense that haven't been revenged speak for them.”¹⁶ The huge wartime army prepared an abundance of human resources material for the future civil collision: the image of an enemy for millions of Russian combatants was closely associated with a compatriot – a former commander, or vice versa, former subordinate.

¹⁶ «Из офицерских писем с фронта в 1917 г.», in: *Красный архив. 1932. № 1-2 (50-51)*. 200.

Prof. Tarik Ajja (Maroc)

*L'expérience marocaine en matière d'enseignement supérieur d'histoire
militaire*

Et sans plus tarder je vais essayer assez rapidement de vous donner à grand trait les grandes lignes de cette expérience, Alors le point de départ et en guise d'introduction on peut dire que :

L'enseignement de l'histoire, au Maroc, a toujours été une préoccupation prioritaire, une source de réflexion sans cesse renouvelée et un choix de société constamment affirmé. Or on constate que les contenus historiques militaires marocains étaient hétérogènes et éparpillés dans les œuvres des historiens et chroniqueurs marocains.

En fait, les universités marocaines accordaient une importance cruciale aux contenus de l'histoire militaire dans le cadre de la problématique de la réécriture de l'histoire nationale générale, sauf que la majorité de ses travaux de recherche ont resté limités au 19^{ème} siècle (époque des réformes militaires au Maroc) ce qui a laissé un grand « fossé cognitif » dans les autres périodes de l'histoire militaire marocaine.

La création de la Commission Marocaine d'Histoire Militaire (CMHM) vient combler de façon magistrale cette importante lacune dans les études portant sur l'évolution de l'histoire militaire au Maroc. Son travail de recherche académique est empreint de rigueur, de cohérence et de pondération comme il est éloigné de tout récit romanesque et appuyé sur des sources documentaires, c'est-à-dire des qualités majeures que requiert toute véritable approche historique. Ainsi parmi plusieurs disciplines vues comme essentielles dans l'éducation de celui qui choisit la profession des armes, l'histoire militaire fut remise au premier plan.

Cette brève intervention essaie, comme je vous ai annoncé, de brosser un tableau général sur la place prise par les cours d'histoire militaire au Maroc et présente leurs contenus pédagogiques.

En effet, dès sa mise en place effective, la CMHM s'est vite attelée à remplir les missions pour lesquelles elle a été créée. Le bilan de son action couvre l'ensemble des domaines d'interventions tels qu'ils lui ont été définis et par la Décision Royale et par le Dahir portant sa création. Ce dernier stipule expressément que la Commission Marocaine d'Histoire Militaire doit **Œuvrer, en coopération avec les institutions civiles et militaires concernées, vu le caractère transversal de l'enseignement de l'histoire nationale, pour le développement de l'enseignement de l'Histoire Militaire.**

Dans ce sens, le lancement, en 2008, par la CMHM de l'Enseignement de l'histoire militaire nationale dans les Ecoles, Instituts Centres et Académies militaires a été consacré par l'Ordre du Jour adressé par Sa Majesté le Roi Mohammed VI, Chef suprême et Chef d'Etat-Major Général des Forces Armées Royales (FAR), le 14 mai 2009, à l'occasion de la célébration du 53^{ème} anniversaire de la création des FAR soulignant l'importance primordiale de cet enseignement pour l'ensemble des stagiaires, de tous les niveaux, des Ecoles et Centres d'Instruction des FAR, Sa Majesté le Roi Mohammed VI, que Dieu le Glorifie, Chef Suprême et Chef d'Etat-Major Général des FAR, A bien voulu donner une place de choix à l'enseignement de cette discipline. A ce titre, Sa majesté le Roi considère que : « *[...L'enseignement de l'histoire militaire marocaine (et son intégration) dans les programmes de formation, dans ses différentes étapes, demeure une base élémentaire pour mettre en exergue nos fondamentaux civilisationnels et l'image exemplaire du soldat marocain dans sa promptitude à s'acquitter de ses devoirs, dans la discipline, l'honneur et le sacrifice....]* ». **Extrait de l'Ordre du Jour adressé par SA MAJESTÉ LE ROI MOHAMMED VI, que Dieu le Glorifie, aux Forces Armées Royales le 14 mai 2009**

Depuis cette date, et malgré l'ampleur de la tâche et les énormes difficultés inhérentes à la nature de recherches scientifiques en histoire en générale et en histoire militaire en particulier, les cadres et professeurs chercheurs de la CMHM, spécialistes en histoire militaire, se relaient sur les établissement de formation et d'instruction militaire pour dispenser à leurs étudiants et élèves un enseignement sur l'histoire de l'Armée marocaine depuis les Idrissides jusqu'à nos jours. Ces enseignements portent aussi, sur les réalisations de cette même armée marocaine, ses diverses et mémorables batailles contre les multiples tentatives d'atteinte à la souveraineté et à l'intégrité du pays.

Les Hautes Instructions Royales ont été mises en exécution par la CMHM à travers la mise sur pied d'un programme spécifique portant sur quatre modules, à savoir :

MODULE I

Lectures analytiques d'ouvrages d'histoire militaire au profit des Officiers stagiaires (08 ouvrages / 08 Etablissements)

MODULE II

Conférences d'histoire militaire au profit des Elèves-officiers de 4^oannée et Elèves-officiers de réserve de 2^oannée (06 conférences/ 06 Etablissements)

MODULE III

Cours d'Histoire Militaire destinés aux élèves sous-officiers de 3^oannée (10 cours/ 13 Etablissements)

MODULE IV

Cours d'Histoire Militaire au profit des stagiaires du Cycle Spécial (10 Cours)

Il est à signaler que le volume horaire global de ces modules est estimé à plus de 370 Heures.

De même, et toujours, en exécution des Hautes Instructions Royales, la CMHM a élaboré élaborer, avec le plus grand soin, un programme particulier

destiné à la préparation par correspondance des officiers candidats à l'admission au Cours d'Etat-Major. Ce programme qui est entré en vigueur à partir de l'année 2012-2013 a pour finalité de doter les officiers préparatoires de connaissances approfondies relatives à l'Histoire Militaire de notre pays.

Il est présenté en 5 recueils correspondant aux 5 envois des cours par correspondance destinés aux candidats au titre du cycle de préparation de l'année considérée.

Privilégiant l'approche thématique, ce cours développe les connaissances essentielles en matière d'histoire militaire en particulier celle de l'armée marocaine à travers les Dynasties du Royaume.

1^{er} Recueil : « Histoire de l'armée marocaine de l'avènement des Idrissides à la décadence des Saadiens »

2^{ème} Recueil : « les fortifications marocaines à travers l'histoire »

3^{ème} Recueil : « Histoire de l'armée marocaine de l'avènement de la dynastie Alaouite Chérifienne à la création des Forces Armées Royales en 1956 »

4^{ème} Recueil : « conflits armés dans l'histoire du Maroc »

5^{ème} Recueil : « la marine de guerre marocaine à travers l'histoire »

En outre, une bibliographie sélective est mise à la disposition de l'officier dès le premier envoi, lui permettant d'approfondir ses connaissances sur un sujet précis.

Pour conclure, on peut dire que l'expérience marocaine en matière d'enseignement d'histoire militaire est relativement récente (6 ans seulement) ! et les travaux de recherche scientifique et d'enseignement de l'histoire militaire est un grand chantier qui ne fait que commencer dans le cadre du grand projet historique exhumatoire initié par la Commission Marocaine d'Histoire Militaire en vue de scruter au plus près les contenus historiques patrimoniaux selon les normes en vigueur en matière d'enseignement et d'établir des ponts et des passerelles consacrant l'ouverture sur les universités et les autres institutions concernées .

Mesdames et Messieurs, Voici grosso modo les grandes lignes de l'expérience marocaine en matière d'enseignement supérieur d'histoire militaire jusqu'à présent, et je vous remercie pour votre aimable et délicate attention.

Dr. Alexander Sokolov (Russia)

The money system of Russia on the eve of the First World War

In Russia, the monetary system, similar to the Western countries that began to take shape after the monetary reform in 1895-1897, which resulted in the country introduced a system of the gold standard. According to the law number issued by the state Bank credit notes not backed by gold cash, could not exceed 300 million. In the early twentieth century, Russia emerged from a period of financial and economic stagnation. By the early 1900 paper money was in circulation in the amount of 630 million rubles and gold coins 639 million. Successors Finance Minister Witte supported economic mechanism in good condition. In 1903, indirect taxes accounted for 57% of all income. During the Russo-Japanese war financial situation in Russia has deteriorated significantly. Military expenditures amounted to 2.3 billion rubles. Tensions arose with gold providing credit tickets. The gold reserves of the state Bank began to decline. Started outflow of gold abroad in the form of payments loans to foreign creditors. Military defeat and the revolution has undermined the credibility of the government. At this point the question was raised about the termination of the exchange of credit tickets for gold. The amount of issued paper money exceeded the statutory 1897 rate of almost 50 million. The Ministry of Finance was given the right to issue credit notes to 150 million rubles without gold coating. In December 1905, Finance Minister Kokovtsov went abroad in order to get to the Russian loan. External borrowing in Paris helped to overcome the crisis. Russia has supported France in its dispute with Germany at the international conference on Morocco. The loan was signed in 1906, in the amount of 845 million. In providing this loan was part of the largest European banks. Payments on loans to Russia grew from 1904 through 1907 91.4 million.

In 1908-1909, began the withdrawal of Russia from the economic crisis. The country entered a period of rapid economic growth. The prewar five-year period was a period of good harvests. In 1908 there were signs of a revival of industry and trade. Restored fiscal balance. In 1908, the amount of income amounted 2418 million rubles, expenses - 2388 million. The emission law of the state Bank increased to 314 million. Financial stabilization was achieved by two methods: increasing gold holdings of the Bank and reduces the quantity of banknotes. Were withdrawn from circulation credit tickets to 120 million rubles. The increase in revenues was carried out by changing customs duties, raising prices for wine. In 1909 Russia received from France a new loan in the amount of 525 million. Its implementation took French, English and Dutch banks. The Minister of Finance Kokovtsev managed to get approval for the operation of the third State Duma. Before the First world war government borrowing on the international market Russia is no longer made. At this time, have developed guaranteed government loans available for the construction of Railways. In the beginning of 1914 with the help of France was concluded guaranteed by the government railway loan 294,4 million. This has led to the growth of railway construction in Russia.

In the budget of Russia was of great importance revenues from indirect taxes. The Russian budget $\frac{3}{4}$ tax revenues gave indirect taxes and $\frac{1}{7}$ direct. In 1906 were cancelled redemption payments peasants, giving a year 80-90 million rubles per year. The content network of Railways, government institutions accounted for 52% of the budget. Taken on the eve of world war rearmament program for the army and the construction of a new fleet was financed by the budget. In October 1912, the war Minister Sukhomlinov in connection with the aggravation of the international situation caused by the Balkan war, demanded to allocate the Ministry of 66 million. From 1907 to 1914 for the construction of ships for the Navy were allocated hundreds of millions of rubles. Financial policy Kokovtsev was aware of the state Treasury before the onslaught agencies. He led

the policy limits of the appropriations, including the agrarian reforms of Stolypin. The Kokovtsov was against unlimited bond issue Peasant Bank.

Industrial growth and the rise of agricultural production has strengthened Russia's position in the world economy. This favored the development of lending abroad. Russia exported mainly agricultural products, raw materials and products of light industry. Active balance was the key to the stability of the gold coins in circulation. Deterrence issue of money was due to the desire to impress on the European financial circles. Total gold cash from 1908 to 1914 increased by 45%. Ruble exchange rate before world war was kept at parity: 1 ruble was equal 0, 51 U.S. dollar, 0,105, English pounds, 2,16 German marks, 2,67 French francs.

The total number of banknotes in circulation by 1914, was 2 402.8 million rubles. Credit cards are the most universal payment means, and produced by dignity in 1, 3, 5, 10, 50, 100 500 roubles. The largest value in the pre-war turnover played the money in denominations of 5, 10, 25 and 100 rubles. In addition to the gold coins and credit notes, were in circulation silver and copper money.

The gold reserves of Russia in the early twentieth century was above the sum of issued credit notes. In 1910-1914's. emission right of the national Bank amounted to 540 million roubles. In the first half of 1914 cash gold State of the Bank exceeded the standards demanded by the law. On January 1, 1914, the Golden State Bank cash was \$ 1,528 million rubles. It was the third in the world gold reserves, which exceed the total gold reserves of England and Germany. After 1906 the free convertibility of the ruble has threatened one of the foundations of the policy of the Minister of Finance Kokovtsev was the accumulation of gold. The Balkan wars 1912-1913, raised the question about the fate of foreign gold in Russia in the event of armed conflict. In the autumn of 1913 began a gradual transfer of gold in Russia. Total gold cash has increased from 1908 to 1914 by 45%. The main principle of our Finance policy Kokovtsoff felt the need to support and maintain the budget balance. By 1909,

due to its ongoing financial policy were able to achieve the active balance of the state budget and to stabilize the monetary circulation.

The pre-war five years 1909-1913, under the impact of industrial growth, a good harvest, was a period of growth of the Russian economy. The increase of the state budget was due to the rapid development of industry, increased inflow of foreign capital, the increase in taxes. Direct taxes (land tax) were a small part of the budget revenues. Played a significant role in indirect taxes that were levied on tobacco and sugar. Income from the sale of alcoholic beverages was three times more than from all direct taxes. Important among the taxes played customs duties. A balanced budget was clear advantage of Russia in relations with the European financial partners, ensuring a steady course of Russian state funds on the European market. This was an important factor of stability gold ruble. By the beginning of the First world war Russia came with a huge public debt to 9 billion roubles. About half of this sum is accounted for by foreign debt. To save the ruble, in Russian securities and prevent the export of gold from the country, the government kept in the custody of the European banks ' solid gold deposits. Before the war the government has been persuaded that in case of a conflict with Germany free convertibility of the ruble on gold will be terminated. In March 1914 Witte said about the unreadiness of Russia to the war financially. He believed that in the case of a European war, the free convertibility of the ruble on the gold will have to stop. Finance Minister P. L. Bark, recently appointed to this in January 1914, he began to pursue a policy of allocating large sums on defence. He ordered the transfer of all the Russian money from a German correspondent banks in Paris and St. Petersburg. He was sent to Berlin officials with instructions to liquidate the Russian Deposit account.

Beginning in July 1914, the First world war worsened the economic situation in Russia, leading to the breakdown of the financial system. Russia was among the first States to have translated the monetary economy on the exclusive use of Fiat paper money. The war forced the Russian government to abandon the

free exchange. In July 1914 the emission rights of the State Bank was expanded to 300 million rubles to 1.5 billion rubles. The beginning of the war caused panic among the population. Increased demand for cash. Gold and silver began to quickly disappear from circulation. In 1915 from circulation gradually disappeared copper money. Loose change has increasingly been replaced in circulation paper brands with values from 1 to 20 cents. Monetary circulation was almost completely paper. In September 1915 in Petrograd was made the issue of stamps in the denomination of 10, 15 and 20 kopecks. In the economy there was a shortage of cash. In 1914 there were an increased number of credit tickets 1282 million. From 1913 to 1916, the amount of money in circulation increased in 4 times. In the spring of 1915, the law has extended the right to issue unbacked metal money up to the level of 2.5 billion, and in the fall to 3.5 billion rubles. During 1916, the emission law of the State Bank was increased twice for a total amount of 3 billion rubles. Funds were not provided goods or gold reserve. In the country's leadership great efforts have been made to ensure that by regulating the monetary mechanism to withstand adverse trends. To Finance the deficit of the state budget were used as sources of tax revenue. Until the end of 1914 were changed rate of taxation on 12 types of indirect taxes and the introduction of two new tax. Increased rates of indirect taxation on sugar, tobacco, matches, kerosene. Increased rate of taxation on all types of direct taxes. To Finance the war was enhanced by direct taxation of the peasantry. At the same time, trying to stop inflation, the authorities began to impose administrative restrictions on the growth of the agricultural prices. The inconsistency in pricing has led to speculation.

Another important source of coverage of military expenditure internal loans, through which the government received the necessary funds. Until 1917 it was released 6 internal loans to cover military costs 8 billion rubles., brought to the Treasury, about 7.4 billion. In addition to internal, the Russian government is actively resorted to foreign loans to England and France in the form of

government loans. In the result of actions taken coating of military spending paper money emission in 1914 amounted to 67% of the budget deficit, and in 1916, this share fell to 26%. Significant changes in revenues caused the decision to discontinue the sale of vodka. This measure had a negative impact. If in 1913, the income from the wine monopoly given budget 899,3 million rubles, in 1914 only 509,3 million. The government decided to compensate for these funds, typing in the same amount of paper money. The inflationary process was intensified and the result of a decline in the gold stock of the State Bank in connection with the performance of allied financial obligations. The inflationary process was intensified and the result of a decline in the gold stock of the State Bank From the State Bank of the Russian gold was transported to England and the United States. Only in England was sent 643 million rubles. Daily consumption on the needs of the war in 1914 was \$ 10-12 million rubles. The amount of paper money in circulation increased by the beginning of 1917 5.6 times. All money supply for the period from July 1914 to January 1917, increased from 2.3 billion to 9.3 billion. By 1915, the official exchange rate decreased to 80 kopecks; by the end of 1916 to 60 kopecks. The real purchasing power of the ruble to 1917 fell in four to 27 cents to pre-war level, while the growth of the price index 7 times exceeded the level of 1914. By 1917, the costs of war to 30,5 billion rubles, or about 9 expenditure budgets 1913. The issue of paper money by the time of the February revolution covers 34% of military spending.

Golden monetary system has become the basis of economic life in pre-war Europe, in a moment of political crisis of 1914 failed. Monometallic system has proved to be a financial tool that worked only in conditions of peace and economic cooperation. War, requiring enormous resources, severely undermined the stability of the financial system of Russia. «Golden bridge», connecting Russia with the European money market, collapsed. The monetary system has

not stand the strain of the war years and has led to the virtual collapse of sustainable Russian currency in 1917.

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L'élément déclencheur de la Grande Guerre (Juillet 1914)

Nous connaissons les causes indirectes¹ de la Première Guerre mondiale, baptisée la Grande Guerre. Mais ce n'est pas le thème de notre communication. Nous voudrions apporter un éclairage analytique et concis, sur les circonstances et les facteurs de l'élément déclencheur de la Grande Guerre, avec les principales anomalies ayant aggravé ses implications sur les Balkans. Autrement dit : les causes de la cause directe de la guerre.

Rappelons d'abord l'état des lieux. Les Balkans constituent des pays multiethniques, multiconfessionnels et multiculturels, connaissant des troubles épisodiques. Leurs populations vivaient (directement ou indirectement) sous des dominations ou des influences antagonistes, de quatre empires : ottoman, russe, austro-hongrois et allemand. Tous étaient soucieux de sauvegarder leurs intérêts politico-économiques dans les Balkans. Parmi ces puissances impériales, l'Autriche-Hongrie² et la Russie³, représentaient également deux Etats

¹ Parmi ces causes indirectes classiques, vulgarisées dans les écoles, les universités et même sur Internet, on peut rappeler cinq : a) « La volonté de l'Allemagne de devenir une puissance prépondérante au cœur de l'Europe ». Une volonté qui favorisa la conception de la *Weltpolitik* du Reich (politique mondiale décidée par le *Kaiser* Wilhelm II). - b) « La crise bulgare et la montée de l'instabilité dans les Balkans » - c) L'impact des politiques impérialistes - d) Les Alliances européennes et les rivalités militaires entre elles. Les Etats membres s'employaient, à divers degrés, à renforcer leurs arsenaux et leurs effectifs militaires, en développant (bilatéralement et multilatéralement) leur coopération militaire, à la faveur de traités et d'accords, souvent renouvelables.

² Multinational par nature, l'empire austro-hongrois ne pouvait céder aux mouvements centrifuges ni séparatistes. D'autant que les organisations nationales avaient adopté une attitude plus radicale qu'en Russie. Turbulentes en temps de paix, elles n'avaient pas bougé en 1908, lorsque l'Etat autrichien annexa la Bosnie-Herzégovine.

³ En Russie, on nourrissait le rêve de *Danilevski*, où « la culture slave prévaudrait en Europe, y remplaçant définitivement la civilisation latino-germanique ». En attendant, « ses idées guidaient la politique des milieux dirigeants, aussi prompts à *russifier* à l'intérieur qu'à défendre, à l'extérieur, les droits des Slaves opprimés,

plurinationaux. Leurs peuples respectifs dominateurs⁴ semblaient vouloir à la fois réprimer les mouvements nationalistes en éveil chez les minorités et consolider leur hégémonie, grâce à leur rayonnement hors des frontières. A cela s'ajoutait le jeu et l'impact des alliances militaires, que dictaient notamment des facteurs d'ordres économiques et financiers.

C'est dans ce contexte historique et géopolitique complexe que le 28 juin 1914, l'archiduc de l'empire austro-hongrois François-Ferdinand et son épouse la duchesse Sophie, en visite à Sarajevo⁵ (capitale de la Bosnie), furent assassinés de 2 coups de feu, par un collégien de 19ans, au lycée de Belgrade, nommé Gabriel Princip⁶, de nationalité serbe. Les résultats des enquêtes menées sur place, notamment le rapport Wiesner, ne présentaient pas de « preuves suffisantes pour pouvoir engager la responsabilité de la Serbie »⁷. A qui profitait donc le crime ? Sans que tout le monde l'ait souhaité ou en soit complice, il n'aurait pas déplu totalement non plus à certains milieux gouvernementaux et classes ethniques⁸. On trouvait d'abord cette lettre officielle de l'empereur austro-hongrois François-Joseph, datée du 6 juillet 1914, adressée à son pair

Tchèques, Bosniaques, Ruthènes surtout, et ceux dont l'indépendance était menacée, tels les petits frères serbes (sic) »

⁴ Le grand-russe chez les tsars, les allemands ou hongrois au sein de la double monarchie (austro-hongroise).

⁵ Cette ville était considérée comme « le berceau de groupes nationalistes, serbes et bosniaques ».

⁶ Il était allié aux associations nationalistes et, ainsi, élevé dans des idées de grande Serbie.

⁷ Prétendant parler au nom de sa communauté, Gabriel Princip reconnu, au tribunal, avoir agi résolument à tuer le prince héritier austro-hongrois en déclarant textuellement : « je tenais l'archiduc pour notre ennemi mortel : il voulait s'opposer à l'unification de tous les Slaves du Sud ». Il prit la défense de tous ceux qui furent compromis, refusant de dire des noms pour protéger d'autres personnes. Le rapport Wiesner « donna comme seuls coupables à peu près certains des fonctionnaires serbes de frontière et de douane, un commandant serbe et un employé de chemin de fer bosniaque ». On n'en saura pas plus, officiellement (voir Emil Ludwig, *juillet 1914*, Editions Payot & Rivages, 2012, p. 28)

⁸ Des diplomates en poste à Vienne rapportaient « avoir assisté à des manifestations de joie, autant à Belgrade qu'en provinces (Bosnie-Herzégovine). On le considérait même comme « l'ennemi des Hongrois » (Emil Ludwig, op. cit., p. 36).

allemand Guillaume II, dans laquelle il pensait que « l'assassinat de son neveu était la conséquence directe de l'agitation fomentée par les Russes et les Serbes panslavistes, qui ne cherchaient qu'à affaiblir la Triple Alliance et à démembrer son empire »⁹. Et Guillaume II de préciser ce qu'il estimait devoir faire : « il faut que les efforts de mon gouvernement tendent à *isoler la Serbie et à diminuer son importance*¹⁰ dans les Balkans. »¹¹. A Berlin comme à Vienne, l'idée d'un conflit avec la Serbie était désormais acquise. Le 23 juillet, les Autrichiens décidèrent d'adresser un ultimatum à la Serbie. Aux termes du texte remis par le ministre de François-Joseph à Belgrade, la Serbie disposait de 48 heures pour l'accepter¹². Le

⁹ Cette accusation autrichienne reposait sur le fait que « les organisations secrètes serbes (animateurs de la lutte contre les Habsbourg en Autriche) étaient subventionnées par Saint-Pétersbourg. Depuis 1908, elles pratiquaient le terrorisme à l'endroit des fonctionnaires autrichiens en territoire occupé, c'est-à-dire en Bosnie » (Marc Ferro, *La Grande Guerre*, Ed. Gallimard, 1990, pp. 38-39)

¹⁰ Cette volonté austro-hongroise à l'encontre de Belgrade remontait déjà à quelques années avec le refus des autorités autrichiennes de voir les Serbes en Albanie ou à Durazzo ou de leur permettre d'avoir accès à des ports sur l'Adriatique. (Pourtant ces aspirations serbes semblaient justes et la Russie paraissait vouloir les soutenir depuis 2 ans). Mieux encore, l'idée de morceler la Serbie (sous une forme acceptable) était toujours présente à Vienne.

¹¹ L'empereur ajouta : « La paix ne pourra devenir une certitude *que lorsque la Serbie disparaîtra des Balkans en tant que facteur de puissance (...)* ». Reposant sur des renseignements des services secrets de l'empire, la teneur de cette lettre avait été conjointement conçue et inspirée par les deux comtes autrichiens Berchtold (Ministre de la Maison royale et impériale, ministre des Affaires étrangères des royaumes et provinces unies) et Forgach (Sous-secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires étrangères et ambassadeur secret et extraordinaire de Hongrie auprès du comte Berchtold). Ils étaient à la tête de ce qu'on appelait les « comtes de la guerre », incitateurs de la Grande Guerre. (Voir Emil Ludwig, l'ouvrage *juillet 1914*, Editions Payot & Rivages, 2012, p. 40). Dès lors, l'attitude de fermeté du gouvernement autrichien envers Belgrade s'accroissait. Des déclarations très hostiles (verbales et écrites) par des termes parfois injurieux, émises par des *comtes de la guerre* et des ambassadeurs austro-hongrois comme les expressions : « Marcher immédiatement contre la Serbie », « Nous allons anéantir la Serbie », « en finir une fois pour toutes avec ce foyer de conspirateurs et de révolutionnaires »etc Par ailleurs, la majeure partie de la presse exhalait sa rage contre les Serbes, contre cette « canaille », ces « bandits », ces « assassins », ces « voleurs de moutons », cette « bandes de pouilleux », et cela au milieu du mois de juillet plus qu'au début.

¹² Toutefois, les Autrichiens décidèrent d'adresser leur ultimatum une fois que le président français Poincaré (en visite officielle en Russie) serait sur le chemin du retour,

document comportait « dix revendications dont cinq relativement à l'agitation, exigeant notamment la répression de la propagande politique dans la presse et la dissolution des associations qui la pratiquaient (...) avec « la présence de fonctionnaires austro-hongrois qui participeraient à la suppression des mouvements subversifs ». Mais c'était ce point 6 qui fâchait les Serbes. Parce qu'il « mettait l'administration du pays sous la tutelle de l'Autriche » à leurs yeux.

Pachitch, président du Conseil royal des ministres de Serbie, répondit finalement, le 25 juillet, que son gouvernement acceptait toutes les clauses de l'ultimatum sauf le point 6. C'était l'impasse.

L'état-major autrichien avait établi un calendrier prévoyant l'entrée en guerre le 6 août. Mais Berlin persuada Vienne d'agir plus vite, sinon les grandes puissances interviendraient et le projet d'une guerre localisée risquait d'avorter. On décida de déclarer la guerre le 28 juillet.

I. FACTEURS INDIRECTS FAVORISANT L'ELEMENT DECLENCHEUR DE LA GRANDE GUERRE.

1. Méésententes dynastiques et politiques au sein de la famille impériales.

Les méésententes intestines entre l'empereur austro-hongrois et son prince héritier¹³ profitaient politiquement à des milieux dirigeants nationaux hostiles¹⁴ et

pas avant le 23 juillet. Il fallait prévenir toute coordination possible des réactions de la France et de la Russie.

¹³ En fait, l'archiduc était en désaccord avec l'Empereur (septuagénaire) à cause de sa Sophie. « Parce qu'il voulait imposer une femme de petite noblesse et appauvrir ainsi la lignée des empereurs légitimes avec un sang inférieur » (sic). Par ailleurs, « le Monarque se méfiait des conceptions libérales de son héritier présomptif que les militaires jugeaient avec une grande sévérité » (Marc Ferro, *La Grand Guerre*, op. cit., p.78). En effet, « la mort du neveu ne l'émeut point, il n'avait jamais pu le souffrir, mais son mariage impossible l'a rendu si haïssable à ses yeux qu'en apprenant la nouvelle, il ne vit dans l'assassinat des deux époux qu'un jugement de Dieu et qu'il dit aussitôt à son

étrangers (rivaux). Elles les incitaient à des attitudes plus belliqueuses que pacifiques, avant et après l'attentat de Sarajevo. D'ailleurs, à l'annonce du décès brutal de l'archiduc autrichien « personne ne le regretta » disaient certains¹⁵. Seuls ses enfants pleuraient au château du Belvédère ». Autant que son épouse Sophie (comtesse et duchesse) « que personne ne voulait reconnaître ». Les mouvements nationalistes extrémistes séparatistes serbes tenaient bien compte de ces réalités.

2. Ambitions géopolitiques princières jugées démesurées.

L'archiduc voulait « fortifier à l'intérieur un empire qui menaçait ruine » à la tête duquel il allait accéder. Mais le plan qu'il engageait pour y parvenir semblait démesuré aux yeux de certains milieux politiques et militaires, tant à Vienne que dans les Balkans : « enlever la Transylvanie aux Hongrois, opérer un rapprochement quelconque avec la Roumanie, accéder à l'ancien désir des Tchèques, se faire couronner à Prague comme à Budapest, transformer le dualisme en triolisme, et même subdiviser l'empire, s'il le fallait, en cinq Etats confédérés ». Le Prince héritier en espérait « que les Slaves, se sentant à leur

aide de camp : *Le Tout-Puissant ne permet pas qu'on le défie.* » (Emil Ludwig, op.cit., p. 38).

¹⁴ Les comtes autrichiens *Berchtold* (ministre de la Maison royale et ministre des Affaires étrangères des royaumes et des provinces unies) et *Forgach* (Sous-secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires étrangères et en même temps ambassadeur secret et extraordinaire de Hongrie auprès du comte Berchtold) étaient en tête de liste des personnalités gouvernementales les plus influentes qui, par des motivations politiques et des sentiments d'antipathie, n'appréciaient guère l'archiduc François-Ferdinand. A tel enseigne que l'attentat de Sarajevo « les emplissait tous deux de joie » (Emil Ludwig, « *juillet 1914* », Editions Payot & Rivages, 2012, p. 31). Certains chefs militaires autrichiens partageaient aussi leur attitude hostile envers l'archiduc.

¹⁵ En réalité, les sentiments étaient différents chez l'entourage gouvernemental direct de l'empereur François-Joseph. Par exemple, « [Conrad](#) (chef d'état-major austro-hongrois) ou encore [Istvan Tisza](#) (président du conseil du [Royaume de Hongrie](#)), semblaient soulagés, pour des raisons divergents, tandis que le ministre commun des affaires étrangères, [Berchtold](#), était profondément attristé ».

aise dans le pays, n'auraient plus envie d'en sortir »¹⁶. Un tel objectif politique contredisait naturellement le rêve d'une Grande Serbie¹⁷.

3. Mûrissement et urgence accrue des objectifs nationaux (souvent historiques).

Cette évolution fondamentale pressante des objectifs s'opérait chez les Etats alliés antagonistes, dans un enchevêtrement d'intérêts stratégiques mutuels, sans précédent¹⁸, notamment à partir du début 1914.

II. FACTEURS DIRECTS FAVORISANT L'ELEMENT DECLENCHEUR DE LA GRANDE GUERRE.

1. Insuffisance des mesures de sécurité.

L'examen des circonstances de l'attentat de Sarajevo fait ressortir une insuffisance des mesures de sécurité¹⁹ prises en Bosnie-Herzégovine. Dès qu'il eut vent du projet d'assassinat que fomentaient les dirigeants de l'organisation de la « Main Noire », Nikola Pasic, Premier ministre serbe, « tenta de faire comprendre aux Autrichiens que le voyage du prince héritier austro-hongrois pourrait mal se terminer »²⁰. Il aurait souhaité son report²¹.

¹⁶ Emil Ludwig, l'ouvrage *juillet 1914*, Editions Payot & Rivages, 2012, p. 18

¹⁷ Voilà pourquoi, malgré la sympathie qu'éprouvait François-Ferdinand pour les Slaves, sinon pour les Serbes, beaucoup parmi ces derniers ne paraissaient pas l'apprécier, le jour de sa visite à Sarajevo avec la duchesse Sophie.

¹⁸ La Serbie, développant son armement, tenait à son indépendance par rapport à la Bosnie-Herzégovine, et se sentait rassuré du soutien de son allié russe en cas de besoin, tant à l'égard de l'Autriche-Hongrie que de l'Allemagne. L'Allemagne, de son côté, avait doublé ses dépenses en armement pour une éventuelle attaque préventive contre la Russie dont elle redoutait une agression surprise. En réaction, la Russie s'allia à la Grande-Bretagne et à la France, par vigilance. La France, pour sa part, ambitionnait reprendre l'Alsace-Lorraine de l'Allemagne en comptant sur le soutien des Anglais et des Russes. Ces derniers, comme les Autrichiens, s'intéressaient à une extension dans les Balkans. Si donc les austro-hongrois décidaient d'attaquer la Serbie, ils pourraient alors se tailler une place stratégique dans l'Europe du Sud-Est. Pour contrecarrer ces plans, la Russie promit donc le 25 juillet 1914 son soutien à la Serbie. Soit 3 jours seulement avant l'ultimatum de Vienne.

¹⁹ Emil Ludwig, op. cit., pp. 18-28.

²⁰ Marc Ferro, *La Grande Guerre 1914-1918*, Ed. Gallimard, 1990, p. 78.

2. Une visite officielle contrastant avec la date choisie.

De par sa nature et son jour de déroulement, la visite de François-Ferdinand n'était pas propice. D'abord, on lui donna un « *caractère purement militaire* »²² et non un aspect politico-protocolaire. François-Ferdinand privilégiait en cette circonstance sa qualité de général à celle d'archiduc en portant son uniforme. Ensuite, la visite intervint le jour même de l'anniversaire de la bataille de Kossovo²³. Elle apparaissait en conséquence comme une provocation²⁴.

Passons maintenant à d'autres éléments d'analyse qui, ajoutés aux facteurs favorisant l'attentat, venaient accélérer le glissement vers la guerre après l'attentat.

Ces éléments peuvent se résumer en 11 points, sous l'intitulé suivant :

III. DIVERGENCES DE VUES, FAUX CALCULS ET MAUVAISES HYPOTHESES.

1 – Manque de coordination des idées et croisement chaotique des initiatives.

²¹ En fait, « les révolutionnaires serbes en territoire autrichien échappaient au contrôle de ses services secrets dont le chef, le colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevic, était en même temps la tête pensante de la « Main Noire ». Néanmoins, Vienne ne semblait pas avoir tenu compte de l'avertissement de Pasic pour ajourner la visite de François-Ferdinand.

²² Emil Ludwig, l'ouvrage *juillet 1914*, Editions Payot & Rivages, 2012, p. 20

²³ Les Serbes célébraient entre eux l'anniversaire de la bataille de Kossovo, au cours de laquelle, cinq siècles auparavant, leurs pères ont été anéantis. « Une nation qui, avec des discours et des chants, commémorait sa plus grande défaite, comme un terrible avertissement ». Voilà dans quel climat tendu et inopportun, l'archiduc avait décidé de fouler (en tenue militaire de Général) le sol de Sarajevo.

²⁴ On rapportait que « les Serbes, en centaines de milliers, que l'Autriche contraignait à prendre le nom de sujets (...) sentaient redoubler leur colère à l'idée que ce prince héritier étranger voulait leur imposer sa présence en signe de domination, en même temps que celle de sa femme, laquelle, là-bas à Vienne, n'était pas bien considérée. (Marc Ferro, *La Grande Guerre 1914-1918*, op, cit., p.77.). Ainsi, « pour les jeunes Serbes, la visite de François-Ferdinand appelait un châtement » (Emil Ludwig, op., cit, p. 19). Autrement dit, sa mort.

2 – A Vienne, les autorités gouvernantes austro-hongroises étaient divisées. Les militaires (Conrad²⁵ et Krobatin²⁶) « voyaient dans l’attentat l’occasion enfin offerte d’une guerre préventive contre la Serbie » par une « opération rapide, de courte durée ». Ne souhaitant pas la guerre, les politiciens, Berchtold²⁷ et Tisza²⁸, « prévoyaient que la Russie pourrait intervenir »²⁹.

3 – A Berlin, les milieux dirigeants n’étaient pas moins opposés qu’à Vienne. « Les militaires préconisaient aussi une guerre préventive contre la Serbie ». L’empereur Guillaume II qui « n’avait pas manqué d’envisager l’éventualité d’une intervention de la Russie et de la France » finit par approuver ses chefs militaires.

4 – En fin de compte, les dirigeants austro-hongrois et allemands « écartèrent l’hypothèse d’une intervention de la Russie et de la France », estimant que « la Russie n’était pas prête à intervenir militairement » d’une part, et que « le tsar ne pouvait se déclarer solidaire de régicides » d’autre part. Quant à la France, on estimait « qu’elle était occupée par des questions de politique intérieure » et que son armée « manquait d’artillerie lourde ». A tel enseigne que des responsables gouvernementaux croyaient plus plausible « une intervention de la Bulgarie ou de la Roumanie, moins de la Russie, à peine de la France ».

5 – Concernant l’Angleterre, les Autrichiens et les Allemands semblaient encore plus tranquilles, estimant que Londres regarderait le conflit sous l’optique d’« une crise balkanique résoluble par voie diplomatique, rien de plus ». D’où l’offre de médiation proposée par la Grande-Bretagne. De toute façon, celle-ci

²⁵ Chef d’état-major austro-hongrois.

²⁶ Ministre de la guerre

²⁷ Ministre autrichien des Affaires Etrangères

²⁸ Président du conseil du royaume de Hongrie

²⁹ Car seule la Russie - différemment des autres Etats européens - se trouvait directement touchée (par la crise austro-serbe) dans ses sphères d’influence vitales, et semblait prête à prendre le risque d’un conflit avec la double monarchie (Pierre Renouvin, *La crise européenne et la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris, 1962, p. 202).

« devait gérer les problèmes générés par la question irlandaise » croyait-on encore, à Vienne comme à Berlin³⁰.

6 – Les dirigeants russes, de leur côté, ne supposaient pas non plus que l'Allemagne pourrait agir militairement pour soutenir l'Autriche au niveau des Balkans. Ils gardaient en mémoire les multiples interventions de Berlin auprès de Vienne pour la dissuader chaque fois qu'elle envisageait déclencher une guerre contre la Serbie. Une partie des dirigeants anglais et français partageaient quasiment le même sentiment. Mais c'était négliger deux éléments nouveaux dans l'équation. *Primo*, il s'agissait d'un assassinat politique. *Secundo*, la victime, François-Ferdinand, avait été l'ami du Kaiser allemand qui, contrairement à l'empereur autrichien, le tenait publiquement en estime. Pour ces deux raisons combinées, Guillaume « ne voulait pas qu'ultérieurement, on puisse dire que l'Allemagne avait retenu le bras de l'allié autrichien »³¹

7 – La froideur manifeste qui caractérisait les relations entre François-Joseph et François Ferdinand, et l'antipathie que suscitait ce dernier chez les plus influents de l'état autrichien semblaient avoir berné les services secrets serbo-russes à pronostiquer initialement une « sanction diplomatique sévère » de la part des austro-hongrois, au cas où les extrémistes serbo-bosniaques exécutaient leur plan d'assassinat. Une autre erreur de calcul, parce qu'on aurait confondu *realpolitik* et *intérêt d'Etat* avec *sentiments* et *mésententes politiques dynastiques*. Car bien qu'« on fit au prince héritier des *obsèques de troisième classe*, et que ni à Budapest, ni dans la capitale on ne proclama le deuil national, et bien que Vienne resta Vienne et la musique ne cessa de jouer »³², l'Etat austro-

³⁰Pourtant, en offrant leur médiation peu avant l'ultimatum, les Anglais avaient fait comprendre qu'ils ne pouvaient rester indifférents au conflit austro-serbe.

³¹Marc Ferro, *La Grande Guerre 1914-1918*, op. cit., p. 79

³²Marc Ferro, op. cit., p. 78

hongrois décida quand même de déclarer la guerre à la Serbie sur ultimatum de 48 heures³³.

8 – Malgré le caractère discutable du plan militaire austro-allemand en tant qu'option par rapport à une action diplomatique, l'erreur d'évaluation de Vienne et de Berlin aurait été aggravée par une précipitation volontaire dans l'exécution du plan. Les gouvernements austro-hongrois et allemands jugeaient que « plus vite l'Autriche attaquerait la Serbie, mieux ce serait »³⁴. Le *Kaiser* insista dans ce sens, en écrivant de sa propre main : « Maintenant ou jamais »³⁵.

9 – Vu ce qui précède, l'empressement austro-allemand étriqua considérablement les délais de mobilisation et d'attente. En effet, un mois seulement séparait, jour pour jour, l'attentat de Sarajevo (28 juin) et la déclaration de guerre (28 juillet).

10 – Les médias n'avaient joué aucun rôle de dissuasion rapide et déterminant en faveur de la paix³⁶. Il a fallu attendre huit jours avant la déclaration de guerre pour qu'un journal allemand³⁷ suggérât que « le conflit austro-serbe restât localisé », en alertant les diplomates sur « des conséquences incalculables qui découleraient de l'intervention d'autres puissances dans le conflit en question »³⁸. Contrairement à cette vision, la Russie, par voie de son

³³ Il est peut-être révélateur de remarquer que, contrairement en Autriche-Hongrie, le Royaume de Serbie avait annoncé l'observation d'un deuil national de 8 semaines » (voir, Clark, *Les somnambules*, p. 388)

³⁴ Même beaucoup de politiciens et diplomates des deux empires partageaient carrément la même vision que les militaires. Particulièrement Jagow (secrétaire d'Etat allemand aux Affaires Etrangères) qui « poussait l'Autriche à intervenir militairement *le plus vite possible, dès réception de la réponse serbe (à l'ultimatum) qui ne pourrait être que négative* ». (Voir Marc Ferro, op. cit., pp. 79 et 83)

³⁵ Cette phrase fut griffonnée, par l'empereur allemand lui-même, en marge du rapport de l'ambassadeur autrichien Tschirschky qu'on lui avait présenté.

³⁶ Au contraire, « la presse nationaliste serbe, profitant de la liberté garantie par la constitution, se déchaînait contre la double monarchie (austro-hongroise) ».

³⁷ Le journal *Norddeutsche Zeitung*, de Berlin, édition du 19 juillet 1914 (commentaire).

³⁸ Une manière indirecte de défendre la thèse austro-allemande du conflit, en décourageant toute initiative étrangère européenne, fut-ce-t-elle diplomatique.

porte parole Sazonov, fit savoir au comte Pourtalès, ambassadeur d'Allemagne à Saint-Petersbourg, que même « un conflit bilatéral (austro-serbe) et localisé, pourrait déclencher une guerre générale »³⁹.

11 – On ne semblait pas avoir pris très au sérieux « les obligations d'alliances » qui liaient officiellement certains Etats. Sinon on aurait pu prévoir que si l'Allemagne soutenait l'Autriche-Hongrie militairement et que la Russie défendait en conséquence la Serbie, la France appuierait la Russie et Londres se solidariserait, tôt ou tard, avec Paris. C'est pourtant ce qui advint.

Ainsi, par leurs calculs et leurs hypothèses erronés, les protagonistes se laissaient glisser vers la Grande Guerre sur deux pistes parallèles, sans trop le savoir⁴⁰.

Examinons à présent six leçons auxquelles on peut conclure :

IV. LES LEÇONS DE L'ELEMENT DECLENCHEUR DE LA GRANDE GUERRE.

1 – La précipitation dans une déclaration de guerre peut engendrer des malheurs indélébiles à l'humanité, dépassant les frontières nationales. Par l'ultimatum empressé de Vienne et ceux qui l'ont soutenu, « une masse de 500 millions d'hommes ont été entraînés par quelques douzaine de chefs (...) » écrivait l'historien Emil Ludwig⁴¹

2 – Quelle que soit sa puissance militaire, un pays doit toujours privilégier la voie diplomatique pour résoudre un conflit, sans chercher à

³⁹ Une manière indirecte de mettre en garde de toute intervention militaire autrichienne contre la Serbie, même de façon localisée.

⁴⁰ Les uns se trouvaient incités à la force militaire et les autres s'interdisaient toute précipitation armée, en restant vigilants. Mais nul ne croyait vraiment à un conflit continental et encore moins à une guerre mondiale. On redoutait dans le pire des cas une guerre localisée (austro-serbe) à défaut d'une solution diplomatique. Une option de punition planifiée au départ par les Autrichiens et les Allemands, où Berlin s'était réservé le rôle de maintenir le conflit localisé.

⁴¹ Emil Ludwig, *juillet 1914*, op. cit., p. 9.

atteindre à la souveraineté de l'Etat adverse. La clause 6 de l'ultimatum austro-hongrois rendait toute entente entre Vienne et Belgrade impossible.

3 - Dans un conflit extérieur, le rôle d'un Etat militairement allié n'est pas politiquement moins déterminant que son partenaire concerné. Quand l'Autriche avait voulu empêcher les Serbes de pénétrer en Albanie pour atteindre la mer, l'Allemagne avait récusé cette méthode le 11 novembre 1912, dans une lettre mémorable. Il aurait suffi à l'empereur Guillaume II de répéter à son pair autrichien, le 6 juillet 1914, les mêmes termes de refus. Le Cabinet de Vienne se fût trouvé dans l'impossibilité d'agir, et par suite la Grande Guerre eût été évitée.

4 - Aucun Etat ne peut prédire parfaitement le temps, l'espace, le coût et les conséquences d'une guerre une fois déclarée. La Grande Guerre que l'on voulait courte, limitée et localisée, s'avéra finalement longue, totale et mondiale⁴². Il est plus facile d'allumer un incendie que de l'éteindre⁴³.

5 - Une victoire militaire n'est jamais totale. Les vainqueurs sont seulement moins perdants que les vaincus. Ils laissent toujours des plumes, même en arrachant les ailes des ennemis⁴⁴. Economiquement et socialement, la France

⁴² « En 1917, il n'était plus de nation qui ne fût directement ou non concernée par la guerre. A celles qui intervenaient en dernier lieu, leurs associés demandaient autant leur aide économique que l'appui de leurs armes, une nouveauté par rapport aux premières années de la guerre (...) »

⁴³ Evoquant « la guerre de vingt jours » entre Israël et Hamas (déclenchée début juillet 2014), Béchir Ben Yahmed déclarait dans ce sens « qu'une fois de plus, on s'aperçoit que l'on ne sait jamais, lorsque débute une guerre, comment elle va évoluer et ce que seront ses conséquences... » (Jeune Afrique, n° 2794 du 27 juillet au 2 août 2014, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Le bilan de la Grande Guerre est horriblement désastreux, pour tous : 8 millions 650.000 morts. Même les pays alliés vainqueurs contre les empires austro-allemands et la Turquie ont subi des grandes pertes humaines. La France avec 1 million 350.000 morts, la Grande-Bretagne 950.000 morts. La Russie fut la plus éprouvée avec 2 millions 300.000 morts. Les pays adverses, vaincus, furent péniblement affligés aussi par leurs nombreuses victimes. L'Allemagne, en tête de liste, recensa 1 million 600.000 morts, les royaumes Autriche-Hongrie réunis dénombèrent 1 million 450.000 morts, presque autant que la France, malgré la victoire de cette dernière. Les pays ayant déploré moins de personnes tuées étaient par ordre décroissant : 500.000 pour l'Italie, 400.000 pour la Turquie et 100.000 pour les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, les moins éprouvés en pertes humaines.

et l'Angleterre, prospères en 1914, devinrent « meurtries et détruites »⁴⁵. Politiquement, les Alliés ne s'apercevaient pas qu'ils perdaient la paix en gagnant la guerre. Ils le réaliseront un quart de siècle plus tard.

6 - Des objectifs de guerre visés par un ou plusieurs Etats coalisés contre l'ennemi commun, peuvent être ratés et appliqués à l'encontre de ceux qui l'avaient planifié au départ. L'attentat de Sarajevo eut pour conséquence le démembrement de quatre empires : russe, austro-hongrois, allemand et ottoman.

7 - L'attentat de Sarajevo démontrait qu'un mouvement séparatiste⁴⁶ peut provoquer une catastrophe effroyable en recourant au terrorisme contre l'Etat, au lieu de suivre la voie politique⁴⁷. Une catastrophe pouvant dévaster non seulement les intérêts nationaux, mais détruisant la sécurité collective et la paix internationale. Nulle argumentation d'indépendantisme ne devrait prévaloir à un tel cataclysme, aussi contestables que puissent être les thèses légitimistes pour l'intégrité territoriale.

⁴⁵ Marc Ferro, *La Grande Guerre*, op.; cit., p. 391.

⁴⁶ Une société secrète appelée « La Main Noire » fut créée en mai 1911, par une dizaine d'hommes, civils et militaires de différentes professions et échelles. Son objectif principal était « la création par le moyen de la violence, de la Grande Serbie » unissant tous les serbes. Pour réaliser cet objectif, la dite organisation « préférait l'action terroriste aux activités culturelles. Elle devait donc rester secrète « (sic). Toutefois, son ambition de réunifier les serbes des Balkans ne pouvait se concrétiser qu'au détriment de l'intégrité territoriale de l'Etat austro-hongrois. Un Etat ayant légitimé juridiquement le rattachement des provinces de Bosnie-Herzégovine (cédées par l'empire ottoman) en vertu de l'accord bilatéral conclu avec la Serbie, en 1909. Par conséquent, « les autorités austro-hongroises considéraient que la société de la Main Noire était une organisation à la fois séparatiste et terroriste (...) ». D'autant que plusieurs de ses membres vivaient ou ayant résidé dans les provinces austro-hongroises de Bosnie-Herzégovine en qualité de sujets (citoyens) de l'empire, et jouissaient ainsi de tous les droits reconnus à leurs concitoyens autrichiens.

⁴⁷ Il convient de signaler à ce sujet que la Serbie avait pris l'engagement, en 1909 (soit un an après « le rattachement de la Bosnie-Herzégovine à l'Autriche ») d'établir des relations amicales avec l'empire austro-hongrois. Or, Vienne reprochait à Belgrade de « pratiquer une politique agressive à son endroit, allant jusqu'à perpétrer un crime contre l'archiduc-héritier ». Le soutien discret et indirect qu'accordait la Serbie aux éléments séparatistes et terroristes de « la Main Noire » à l'encontre de l'empire austro-hongrois en était la plus notoire démonstration.

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Lt. Col. Samir Chemi¹ (Tunisie)
Recrutement et Mobilisation des Tunisiens
pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale
1914-1918

Introduction

Le statut de protectorat imposé à la Tunisie suite au traité du bardo (12 mai 1881) a permis à la France une mainmise totale sur le pays. Tous les potentiels naturels, économiques et humains étaient à la disposition des autorités coloniales.

De 1914 à 1919, 80.339 soldats tunisiens furent mobilisés pour servir sur les champs de batailles en Europe et en Orient sous le drapeau français. A ces effectifs s'ajoutent 30.000 travailleurs mobilisés dans l'industrie ou dans les campagnes françaises. Les pertes s'élevaient à 35 900 tués et 29.000 blessés pour une population totale de 1.800.000 habitants².

Un siècle après, on peut toujours se demander sur la légitimité de mobiliser les tunisiens dans un conflit essentiellement européen. Comment les autorités coloniales ont-elles appliqué et modifié la loi tunisienne relative au recrutement pour fournir aux unités françaises les effectifs demandés. Quelles étaient les conditions de vie et de services des soldats tunisiens mobilisés pendant la 1^{ère} Guerre mondiale et quel était l'impact de cette participation sur eux, sur leurs familles et sur la société tunisienne ?

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² - François Arnoulet, « Les tunisiens et la première guerre mondiale (1914-1918) » in *Revue de l'Occident musulman et la Méditerranée* n° 38, 1984, pp.47-61.

Pour l'élaboration de cet essai j'ai eu recours, outre certaines sources bibliographiques, essentiellement à deux types de sources archivistiques :

- la correspondance politique officielle du résident général de France en Tunisie avec son département de tutelle (Ministère des Affaires Extérieures).

- la correspondance des soldats tunisiens sur les fronts avec leurs familles et amis en Tunisie telle quelle nous est parvenue à travers la commission militaire de contrôle postal.

Cet essai s'articule comme suit :

- La conscription en Tunisie à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale et les visées du Protectorat.

- Les conditions de vie et de service des tunisiens mobilisés en France.

Conclusion : l'effort de guerre fut-il récompensé ?

I. LA CONSCRIPTION EN TUNISIE A LA VEILLE DE LA PREMIERE GUERRE MONDIALE ET LES VISEES DU PROTECTORAT FRANÇAIS.

L'histoire de la conscription en Tunisie commence vers 1830 avec la création du premier noyau de l'Armée tunisienne moderne qui succéda aux janissaires ottomans installés dans le pays depuis 1574. Pendant les trois premières décennies, elle n'était régie par aucun texte. Il s'agissait plutôt d'un enrôlement arbitraire. Ni l'âge de la recrue, ni la durée du service, ni le mode de recrutement, ni son territoire n'ont été déterminés. Il a fallu attendre la proclamation du Pacte Fondamental(1857) qui stipulait le principe de la conscription au sort pour que la première loi sur le recrutement baptisée « *Flambeau éclatant* » soit promulguée en 1860. Les dispositions de cette loi ont constitué un tournant dans l'histoire de la conscription, mais leur application fut éphémère et ils tombèrent rapidement en désuétude.

1. Les objectifs du protectorat

Sous le protectorat, la conscription a connu une évolution sans précédent. La loi de recrutement a été rectifiée et adaptée à la nouvelle situation, l'objectif étant d'étendre le territoire de recrutement et limiter les nombreux cas d'exemption afin de profiter des ressources humaines du pays. En effet, pour éviter de faire appel à un nombre élevé de soldats métropolitains, le commandement militaire a entrepris dès le début du protectorat de se servir de la loi tunisienne de 1860 pour incorporer les Tunisiens dans l'armée d'occupation. La majorité du contingent tunisien sera affectée aux corps français pour y servir. Le seul corps proprement tunisien, la Garde beylicale, ne comprenait que six cent hommes environ. Sa mission et son organisation affirment son caractère symbolique. Il semble que la volonté de la France de garder une armée tunisienne n'était qu'un prétexte pour maintenir en vigueur la loi de recrutement afin d'incorporer les jeunes tunisiens dans le corps d'occupation. Dans sa lettre du 14 déc. 1882, le commandant en chef du corps d'occupation, le Général Forgemol l'a explicitement exprimé :

« .. Sans rien préjuger des projets que pourrait avoir le gouvernement français sur l'annexion définitive de la Tunisie et sur la participation ultérieure de l'élément tunisien à la formation d'une armée d'Afrique , il paraissait prudent , pour réserver l'avenir , de conserver l'armée tunisienne afin de ne pas laisser tomber en désuétude une loi de recrutement qui permettrait d'utiliser sans difficultés les ressources en hommes du pays. »³

En effet, après la pacification du pays, le gouvernement français résolut de réduire les effectifs du Corps d'Occupation en rapatriant plusieurs formations

³ - Lettre du 14 Déc.1882 au ministre de la Guerre, citée par Cabuche (Lt. Colonel), *Rapport sur l'armée tunisienne* , in Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Quai d'Orsay, Paris), Nouvelle Série Tunisie : 1882-1917, copie microfilmée à l'I.S.H.M.N, Tunis, bobine 237, Carton 283, dossier 2 .

métropolitaines⁴. Le vide créé par le départ des soldats français devait être comblé par un recrutement massif des soldats tunisiens.

En s'appuyant sur une tradition militaire ancrée dans la régence, soutenue par une loi de recrutement promulguée depuis 1860, les autorités du protectorat vont créer dès 1883 des unités mixtes (franco-tunisiennes), puis on décide de créer deux régiments tunisiens : l'un des tirailleurs, et l'autre des spahis (cavaliers). Ces deux corps furent attachés au XIXème Corps d'Armée français.

Malgré les modifications et les améliorations qu'il a fait subir à la loi de recrutement afin de la rendre plus rentable et plus supportable, le gouvernement du Protectorat n'a pas pu concilier la population de la Régence avec la conscription. Cette population réagissait mal au recrutement et le service militaire demeurait une charge lourde dont-on essaye de s'acquitter par tous les moyens possibles. Néanmoins, certains adhéraient au métier militaire comme engagés volontaires bénéficiant de quelques primes et avantages. L'émigration, l'absentéisme, la corruption, les fraudes, les actes de violence⁵, les mutilations volontaires... étaient des échappatoires couramment tentées pour se soustraire au service militaire. Mais, astreinte à fournir les contingents, la majorité de la

⁴ - « ... Six bataillons d'infanterie, deux escadrons de cavalerie, trois batteries d'artillerie de montagne, deux compagnies de train et un tiers ou un quart de l'effectif des troupes affectées aux services administratifs, doivent être rapatriés d'ici au premier Octobre prochain (1883) ... ». Extrait d'une lettre du Général de Division Forgemol au Résident Général, datée du 21 Aout 1883, in A.N.T, série E, carton 449, dossier 1/3 : Affaires militaires, doc. n° 3.

⁵ - A titre indicatif, le mouvement des habitants de la ville de Nefta contre le décret de 6/11/1890 relatif à l'annexion de leur ville au territoire de recrutement. Ils ont collecté 1200fr. pour financer le déplacement d'une délégation à Paris afin de demander auprès du ministre des affaires étrangères l'abolition du décret ou son ajournement. Rapport du résident général au MAE daté du 3/7/1891, ISHTC, bob.237, Ns 285, folio113.

Manifestation des habitants de Matmata contre le décret de 3/3/1896 qui les soumit à la loi de recrutement et attaque armée de la commission de recrutement puis désertion vers la tripolitaine. Rapport du résident général au MAE daté du 18/5/1897, ISHTC, bob.539, Ns 290 doc 147-152...

population, soumise malgré elle, se résigne dans l'impuissance et les lamentations.

2. La Tunisie pendant la guerre

Dès le printemps 1914 Tunisie une sécheresse exceptionnelle annonce une mauvaise récolte qui va se répercuter sur le commerce intérieur et extérieur. Le manque de production, les perturbations des échanges, les spéculations, l'usure et l'effort de guerre imposé à la Tunisie vont dégrader davantage la situation des tunisiens déjà extrêmement lésés par la colonisation et aggraver leur misère. Les difficultés économiques furent ressenties essentiellement par la population agricole qui se trouvait dans l'insolvabilité. Le moratoire décrété jusqu'au 20 mai 1915 n'était pas en mesure de résoudre le problème. Décrivant cette situation le résident général écrit : «... *La misère est toujours très grande. Les questions de distribution de secours et de tarification du prix des denrées sont toujours pour nous les plus épineuses. Le commerce juif dépiste dans ses spéculations tous les expédients administratifs. Le poisson manque à présent par la suite de la fermeture de la pêche et la hausse du blé et de la semoule ne pourra être atténuée que quand nous auront un arrivage du Maroc...J'ai lu ce matin dans un journal italien un article extrêmement déclamatoire sur la misère en Tunisie et sur l'état lamentable où se trouve réduite la partie pauvre de la colonie italienne que le consul est impuissant à assister. L'un des plus grands dommages causés par la mobilisation est ici l'arrêt des travaux de construction des chemins de fer et d'exploitation des mines. En France les chômeurs sont sous les drapeaux où ont les nourrit. En Tunisie se sont des autochtones ou des Italiens qui ne trouvent pas d'autre travail* ». ⁶

Toutefois, depuis l'installation du Protectorat dans la Régence, l'institution militaire offrait, dans une société en crise, des chances d'emploi qui

⁶ - Lettre du résident général G. Alapetite au MAE daté du 02/03/1915, Ibid.

peuvent garantir un minimum de revenu. La paupérisation de la population qui s'est aggravée suite au bouleversement des structures socio-économiques et à l'exploitation coloniale des ressources du pays, contraignait certains déshérités à venir aux garnisons proposer leurs personnes comme engagés volontaires. Ce sont des personnes venues des milieux ruraux ou citadins appauvris. Pour eux le métier d'arme était la seule façon d'obtenir une sécurité matérielle. Les autorités du Protectorat les encourageaient à s'engager en leur faisant miroiter les avantages de la carrière militaire. Certains des jeunes soldats préféraient la vie dans les casernes à la misère qui les guettait ailleurs, une fois libérés. Ainsi, tous les ans au moment de l'incorporation du nouveau contingent et de la libération des soldats qui ont accomplis deux ans de service, bon nombre de ces derniers demandaient à rester comme remplaçants⁷. Pendant les années de vaches maigres le nombre des volontaires augmente sensiblement. Certains vont trouver dans l'engagement un moyen de survie.

3. La population tunisienne et la mobilisation

La répugnance de la population tunisienne au service militaire va s'aggraver durant la première Guerre mondiale. En effet, depuis le déclenchement des hostilités et surtout après la débâcle de l'automne 1914, le service militaire est désormais perçu comme un moyen d'amener les jeunes gens du pays vers une mort presque certaine.⁸

⁷ - Cabuche (Lt. Colonel), *Rapport sur l'armée tunisienne*, in Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Quai d'Orsay, (Paris), Série Tunisie : 1882-1917, copie microfilmée à l'I.S.H.M.N, Tunis, bobine 237, Carton 283, dossier n° 2 .

⁸ -Mahjoubi (A.), *Les origines du mouvement national en Tunisie (1904-1934)*, Publication de l'Université de Tunis, Tunis, 1982, p.186.

La désertion, les mutilations volontaires, les émeutes, les rixes pendant les campagnes de recrutement expriment le désarroi et le refus de l'enrôlement⁹. Le refus de servir était réprimé dans le sang. Plusieurs déserteurs furent fusillés sur tout le territoire de la régence.

La correspondance officielle reflète ses faits. Le résident général écrit : « *Nous avons eu une petite émeute au contrôle de Sfax. Un cheikh a été frappé par ses administrés qui lui ont arraché un déserteur qu'il essayait d'arrêter. Après quoi toute la fraction a pris la brousse. Le général décide avec moi d'envoyer la bas une compagnie de Zouaves territoriaux pour faire une sorte d'occupation militaire du territoire de la fraction en révolte* »¹⁰. Il considère dans une autre lettre que « *les désertions des soldats indigènes prennent en Tunisie des proportions tout à fait alarmantes* ».¹¹

« *Le commandement local du haut au bas de l'échelle devra surtout être délivré de l'anxiété que lui cause chaque départ parce qu'il se demande chaque fois si l'agitation et le mécontentement n'iront pas jusqu'à la rébellion* ».¹²

Sentant qu'ils étaient astreints au service obligatoire ou induits en erreur dans un engagement volontaire, les soldats tunisiens s'intéressent très vivement aux opérations de recrutement en Tunisie et essaient d'épargner leurs proches du même sort en les conseillant de se racheter à n'importe quel prix. Plusieurs correspondances des soldats sur le front à leurs parents démontrent leur attachement à ce que leurs proches n'arrivent pas au front.

⁹ - Au mois de novembre 1914 un bataillon de tirailleurs à Bizerte refusait l'embarquement vers la France. L'agglomération Ketetna, caïdat de sfax, a connu la désertion collective de 25 soldats, fin 1914... ANT, série E, carton

A/440, doss 98/18, doc.14. Voir aussi dossier n°18 « déserteurs du caïdat des fraichiches ».

¹⁰ - Lettre du résident général G. Alapetite au MAE daté du 04/01/1915, Ibid.folio.31.

¹¹ - Lettre du résident général G. Alapetite au MAE daté du 24/12/1914, Ibid.folio.30.

¹² - Lettre Alapetite au MAE datée du, 22 /01/1915, ISHTC, *papiers d'agents*, bob.493, f.63.

Le tirailleur Tahar ben Larbi écrivait : « Il faut, il faut, de toute nécessité me donner des renseignements au sujet de mon frère Ahmed ben Lakhdar, est-il pris comme soldat ? Oui ou non ? S'il n'est pas exempté dis-lui de ma part qu'il vende tous les animaux, les tiens et les miens, tous et qu'il se rachète. Il ne faut pas qu'il vienne au régiment. Mon cher frère depuis que j'ai reçu ta lettre j'ai perdu la raison. Je ne dors ni la nuit ni le jour... Il faut lui télégraphier d'urgence et lui faire connaître le conseil que je lui donne. Si donc il est pris comme soldat tu conduiras toi-même et mon cher frère Amara ses animaux ainsi que les miens sur le marché et tu les vendras pour te procurer les fonds nécessaires au remplacement. Il faut que mon frère ne vienne jamais, je compte sur toi ». ¹³

Le soldat Mustapha ben Bouzayen écrit à son père : « *Au sujet de mon frère Med Salah il faut lui prendre un remplaçant. Il ne faut pas le laisser aller au régiment. Mais pas du tout. Si tu veux tu peux vendre deux bœufs, trois vaches qui ont mis bas, tu vendras la jument qui est chez Sadok ainsi que les brebis que tu possèdes en association avec Ali, tu verras ce qu'il convient de faire pour le remplacement. Mais tu ne le laisse pas partir* » ¹⁴.

II. LES CONDITIONS DE VIE ET DE SERVICE DES TUNISIENS MOBILISES

1. LES CONDITIONS DE VIE DES SOLDATS TUNISIENS EN FRANCE

Dès leur arrivée en France les soldats tunisiens furent regroupés dans des dépôts de regroupement. La vie dans les dépôts laissait beaucoup à désirer. Dans un compte rendu rédigé à la suite de sa visite au camp de Montmajour (près d'Arles) qui recevait les soldats tunisiens au retour du front, Albin Rozet, attaché au ministère de l'intérieur note que les combattants ne peuvent changer de linge,

¹³ - Fond SHAT, bobine 73, carton n°1001 doc. 112.

¹⁴ -*Ibid.*

n'ayant en double ni chemise, ni chaussettes, ni mouchoir. Si la nourriture est satisfaisante, les conditions de logement sont précaires. Les militaires cantonnent dans de vieilles églises en ruine. Ils n'ont pour dormir que des paillasses peu fournies et une seule couverture en laine. Il n'y a ni savon, ni cache-nez. Le manteau est réduit à une simple pèlerine couvrant juste le haut du corps¹⁵.

*** La censure des correspondances**

L'officier interprète Galtier envoyé en mission aux dépôts d'Aix et d'Arles rapporte que la correspondance est importante par le nombre des lettres envoyées, elle l'est aussi par le contenu de ces lettres qui souvent ne seraient pénétrer sans danger au sein des familles africaines. Il fallait d'après lui enrayer autant que possible ce mouvement réciproque de nouvelles qui ne peuvent que produire de mauvais effets. Selon lui toutes les correspondances doivent être surveillés et contrôlés attentivement.¹⁶

Les autorités ont créé la Commission Militaire de Contrôle Postal qui fut chargé du tri, de la traduction de la correspondance de départ et d'arrivée. Elle doit procéder à la censure des lettres qui peuvent véhiculer des informations des descriptions ou autre données susceptible de porter atteinte au moral de la troupe ou de la population.

Le résident général écrit à ce sujet :« *Le général Moinier a télégraphié avant-hier l'ordre de censurer les lettres des soldats indigènes. La censure est faite ici (en Tunisie) depuis le mois de septembre. Si l'on avait attendu*

¹⁵ - François Arnoulet, « Les tunisiens et la première guerre mondiale... » op.cit. p.54.

¹⁶ - Rapport de l'officier interprète de 1^{ère} classe Galtier en mission aux dépôts d'Aix et d'Arles, Ibid., folio 50.

l'intervention du général Moinier la panique aurait pris de bien plus grandes proportions. »¹⁷

Mais l'existence connue de tous d'un contrôle postal a eu pour effet de refouler les confidences, de supprimer les descriptions parfois intéressantes du début de la guerre.

*** La nourriture**

La nourriture devait être insuffisante, très rationnée ou qu'elle ne leur plait pas car elle est inadaptée à leurs goûts. A Verdun des unités entières de tirailleurs musulmans sont dotées de musettes pleines de lard¹⁸. Plusieurs soldats énumèrent dans leurs lettres les denrées qui leurs font défaut (couscous, piment, huile...).

Dans une lettre datée du 5 mars 1916, à son frère à Tunis, le soldat Elie Scemama du 4^{ème} Zouave a écrit : *« ...depuis quelque temps on nous donne plus à manger comme avant. La ration de l'ordinaire est diminuée. Avant on avait une demi boule de pain par homme. Maintenant, on ne nous donne qu'un quart. On a le droit de 450 g de viande par jour. Ils ne nous donnent même pas 100 g et tous du gras que les chiens n'acceptent pas. On nous donne un demi sceau de patate pour 50 hommes. Au lieu du café on nous donne du thé pas même pas sucré. En tous cas ils veulent nous faire crever de faim et avec ça ils nous font travailler nuit et jour. Je ne sais pas comment on pourrait avoir de la forme... »¹⁹.*

Dans une lettre expédiée de France à Sassi ben Khemis,(Kairouan), le soldat El- Aroussi ben Tayeb écrit : *« en ce moment, nous ne percevons que 100*

¹⁷ - Lettre Alapetite au MAE datée du 4 décembre 1914. Ibid.f.4.

¹⁸ - Gilbert Meynier, op.cit.

¹⁹ -ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période du 1^{er} au 10 /02/1916.

*g de pain toutes les 12 heures et encore cette denrée ne nous est donnée que tous les deux ou 03 jours. Nous n'avons pas de pomme de terre, de sel, d'haricot et les gens meurent de faim ».*²⁰

Le 10 oct. 1917, le soldat Mohamed du 8^{ème} tirailleur décrit sa situation lamentable : « *Je n'ai pas un sous pour acheter de quoi écrire, Nous mourrons de faim et j'achète du pain pour éviter de mourir d'inanition »*²¹.

Le soldat Hassid David du 3^{ème} régiment de génie écrit à un parent à Tunis : « *Voilà l'hiver qui vient ! croyez-vous que c'est une vie, surtout qu'on est très mal nourris...Pensez que vous avez un cousin qui est loin et qui est privé de toute nourriture »*.²²

*** Les conditions climatiques**

Le climat affecte particulièrement les hommes qui ne furent encasernés qu'en Afrique du Nord ou jeunes conscrits n'ayant jamais traversé la Méditerranée. Dès novembre 1914, gelures de pieds, bronchites et broncho-pneumonies déciment des régiments entiers et les hommes sont pétrifiés par le froid.²³ Les Tirailleurs se plaignent surtout du froid très qui sévit sur le front ou dans les dépôts. Certains d'eux réclament à leurs parents des vêtements de laine (tricot, chaussettes..) et des vivres. Dans une lettre un soldat donne la description suivante :

« Le pays est très froid, la pluie et la neige ne cessent de tomber, le brouillard et les nuages règnent en permanence, le soleil ne se montre qu'à de

²⁰ - ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période du 1^{er}/7 au 15 /08/1918.

²¹ -ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période de février 1917.

²² -Ibid.

²³ - Gilbert Meynier, « Le problème du loyalisme des Algériens dans l'Armée française 1914-1918 » in *Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire Moderne*, 6^{ème} série, n°10, 80^{ème} année, édité en supplément à la *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* n°2, 1981, p.2.

rare intervalles. »²⁴Le tirailleur Amor ben Salem du 8^{ème} RTT écrit à un ami à Béja : « Nous avons eu ici environ 0,75cm de neige, mais actuellement c'est la gelée qui règne partout. L'eau qui est sur la terre a durci au point que les voitures passent dessus sans la briser. Une rivière qui a la largeur de la Medjerda (la plus grande rivière en Tunisie), mais qui roule plus d'eau, est complètement gelée. Mais ce qui donne une idée plus saisissante de ce froid, c'est qu'un œuf brisé est trouvé durci comme s'il avait été cuit au feu. La plupart des militaires ont eu les pieds coupés. Les pieds s'enflent, l'homme devient impotent et l'amputation s'impose. Demande, ô mon frère, à Dieu d'alléger le malheur qui s'est abattu sur nous »²⁵.

* L'état psychologique

De l'ensemble de la correspondance se dégage une impression de lassitude et de tristesse et même de désespérance. Beaucoup de lettres contiennent des citations de poésie mélancoliques sur les tristesses de la séparation et de l'isolement.

« Nous ne verrons plus notre pays » écrivent les uns, « j'ai mis sur ma lettre plus de larmes que d'encre » écrivait un tirailleur, « que Dieu nous donne la force de supporter nos fatigues et nos maux ».

« Je suis profondément peiné, écrit un soldat, le monde s'assombrit devant moi quand mes amis reçoivent des lettres et que j'en reçois pas », « Je n'ai plus de nouvelles je me trouve isolé dans le monde, je suis obligé de pleurer moi-même sur moi puisque je n'ai pas de parent pour pleurer sur moi. J'aime

²⁴ - Rapport de la Commission Militaire de Contrôle Postal, mars 1917 in SHAT, bobine, S73, carton 1001.

²⁵ - ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période de février 1917.

*mieux une lettre que 1000 fr. car une lettre de vous qui me parvient c'est la moitié de vous-même qui m'arrive. »*²⁶

Nombreux étaient les soldats qui reprochent à leurs familles de les laisser sans nouvelles du pays. « *Nous ne sommes pas encore morts* » écrivaient-ils « *et pourtant vous agissez comme si nous l'étions. C'est même pi car les morts reçoivent sur leurs tombes la visite d'un parent ou d'un ami.* »²⁷.

Certains soldats semblent très empressés de quitter le régiment. Laroussi Ben Brahim, du 4^{ème} RTT l'exprime comme suit : « *Quant à la médaille militaire ou à la légion d'honneur. Je tiens à te dire que je n'en ai pas besoin...Ce qui me faut en ce moment c'est la classe, c'est tout et j'en ai marre* ». ²⁸

***Problèmes d'intégration et d'adaptation**

L'adaptation aux conditions climatiques, à l'univers clos du régiment, de la formation sanitaire, des centres d'hébergement n'était pas facile. Encore moins l'était la vie dans les tranchées. Les nouveaux conscrits tunisiens se sentaient harcelés par une discipline qu'ils ne comprenaient pas. L'instruction militaire et le maniement des armes n'étaient pas une tâche simple pour eux peu instruits, voire en majorité analphabètes. Une fois incorporés, les jeunes conscrits auront affaire à une nouvelle vie à laquelle ils ne sont pas habitués. En effet, la vie militaire est de loin différente de la vie qu'ils menaient avant leur recrutement. La discipline, la hiérarchie, l'uniforme, les activités spécifiques, les contraintes de service ... sont tous des facteurs qui se répercutent sur la nouvelle recrue.

²⁶ - Fond SHAT, bobine, S73, carton 1001, doc. 45 et 46.

²⁷ - Rapport de la Commission Militaire de Contrôle Postal, mars 1917 in SHAT, bobine, S73, carton 1001.

²⁸ - ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période de février 1917.

Après les lourdes pertes des premiers mois de la guerre, le Commandement français se résigne à employer les maghrébins comme troupes de choc, transportées en première ligne à la veille d'un assaut et retiré ensuite lorsque l'assaut a eu lieu.

2. LES CONDITIONS DE SERVICE

Les Tunisiens faisaient partie (avec les Algériens et les Marocains) de l'Armée d'Afrique (19^{ème} Corps d'Armée) dont l'emblème était un croissant. Ils étaient affectés essentiellement dans des régiments de tirailleurs, zouaves ou spahis et ils ont combattu sur tous les fronts : en France, aux Dardanelles, dans les Balkans et au moyen Orient (Palestine, Hedjaz...)

* **Inégalité devant le feu**

Dans son compte rendu Albin Rozet signale que les tirailleurs interrogés se plaignent qu'on les fait toujours combattre à la baïonnette contre les tranchées allemandes en terrain découvert et que des sections entières étaient décimées à plus de 85%. Un soldat tunisien sur le front a écrit à un parent à Tunis : *« de 1 h de l'après-midi à 2 h 30, le canon tonnait sans arrêt sur nous. Les bombes arrivaient par 30 ou 40 à la fois. Les unes creusaient des entonnoirs dans le sol. Les autres fûissent sur nos têtes, d'autres encore répandaient sur nous des gaz et des balles et cela dure ainsi jour et nuit. Nous avons dû pour cette raison reculer pendant 4 jours... quant à ma permission pour aller à Tunis, Dieu seul sait si elle me sera accordée... »*.²⁹

Sur le front certains soldats tunisiens ont noué des relations amicales avec les Allemand. Dans une lettre à un parent à Testour, datée du 23 septembre 1915, un tirailleur témoigne : *« je vais vous donner des nouvelles sur les*

²⁹ - ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période du 1^{er} au 10 /10/1915, folio 8.

relations qui existent entre tirailleurs et Allemands. Nous lions conversations dans les tranchées. Ils ne nous tirent pas dessus et nous agissons comme eux. Nous nous donnons réciproquement du tabac. Il n'y a que l'artillerie qui tire ; quant aux fusils on ne s'en sert jamais. Nous sortons des tranchées les Allemands et nous causons et nous nous promettons de ne pas nous tirer dessus. Ils nous disent nous sommes camarades, nous ne faisons pas de mal... »³⁰.

Le soldat Ali ben Sassi, du 3^{ème} régiment mixte Zouave/Tirailleurs décrit la situation sur le front : « Le feu est derrière moi et si je recule, il me dévore. Il y a devant moi des démons auxquels je livre combat. Au-dessus de ma tête, planent des oiseaux qui veulent ma mort et sous mes pieds, des sabres entaillent mon chemin... ».³¹

*** Pensions et indemnités**

La principale revendication consiste dans l'insuffisance et le retard apporté au règlement des primes et aux envois d'argents aux familles restées en Tunisie dans un état précaire. « *Moi, dit un tunisien d'origine rurale, j'ai femme et enfants. Si je meurs ma famille n'aura plus de pain, on ne fera pas de pension à ma femme et alors !* »³²

Le décret beylical du 1^{er} aout 1914 accorde une indemnité journalière dite « familiale » de 0.75 fr. et une haute paye de 0.25fr. à tous les réservistes tunisiens rappelés au service quel que soit la situation de leurs familles. Les familles de ceux des militaires appelés en France recevront une indemnité globale de 1 fr.

³⁰ - *Ibid.*

³¹ -ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période de février 1917.

³² - SHAT, Vincennes 6N 28, cité par Arnoulet, « Les tunisiens et la première guerre mondiale ...op. cit. p.61.

Les pensions de blessures, infirmités et les pensions des ayants droits ne seront liquidées qu'après la Guerre.

Sur le front français les rémunérations des soldats tunisiens ne sont pas payées régulièrement. Les retards dans le paiement des primes d'engagement ou autres soldes auraient suscité un vif mécontentement parmi les tirailleurs à Aix-en-Provence. Certains d'entre eux auraient même refusé de repartir sur le front avant que les sommes dues leurs soient remises³³.

Un groupe de Tirailleurs tunisiens faisant partie d'un détachement de renfort envoyé d'Arlès au régiment sur le front se serait livré à une manifestation dans la gare sous prétexte qu'ils n'avaient pas reçu la haute paye qui leur était due depuis plusieurs mois³⁴. La répression de ces « indisciplinés » est forte. Ces récalcitrants tous blessés appelés à retourner au front pour la 3^{ème} et la 4^{ème} fois sont sévèrement châtiés.³⁵

*** Les permissions**

Au début de la guerre il était interdit aux maghrébins en général de rentrer dans leurs pays en permission ou en convalescence. Les chanceux parmi eux qui ont pu contourner les mesures de restrictions ont rapporté l'horreur de la guerre et le désastre des forces françaises devant la puissance militaire Allemande.

Le résident général de France en Tunisie estime qu'il serait de la plus grave imprudence de continuer à rapatrier en Tunisie des soldats indigènes tunisiens blessés. Il considère que depuis ces envois l'état d'esprit des indigènes se modifie d'une façon préoccupante. Il propose que ces soldats fussent soignés

³³ - Rapport de l'officier interprète Piat, daté 7/10/1915, Ibid, dossier 1665, f.197.

³⁴ - Du général Vèrandcdt Division d'Occupation de Tunisie au résident général daté 30/1/1915. Ibid. f.203.

³⁵ - Rapport de l'officier interprète Piat, daté 7/10/1915, Ibid, dossier 1665, f.197.

dans le Midi de la France jusqu'à leur rétablissement³⁶. Les ordres les plus stricts ont été donnés aux ports français pour empêcher l'embarquement de tout indigène blessé ou convalescent.

Privés de permissions vers leurs pays natals, les soldats maghrébins étaient très inquiets. Ils déplorent l'injustice et la discrimination. Une lettre rédigée à Aix en Provence et adressée à un député français, certains soldats expriment, on ne peut mieux, leur frustration et leur colère : « ...*Vous voudrez bien nous faire savoir si nous sommes vos ennemis ou bien vos braves soldats musulmans...N'avons-nous pas versé notre sang pour notre chère mère patrie la France ? Ne sommes-nous pas venu de bonne volonté un grand nombre de nous. Pourquoi donc ne pas nous accorder tout au moins une petite faveur celle d'aller en permission voir nos parents et retourner ensuite...Pourquoi accordez-vous des permissions au français en Algérie et à nous turcos non ?...Ah quelle injustice ! Au lieu de nous encourager avec les petites permissions vous nous défendez de voir nos parents, nos familles... tout le monde est découragé, aucun gout du travail vue cette injustice qui existe entre nous et soldats français. Aussi quelle haine, quel mépris de nos chefs aussi quand le besoin nous appelle à rentrer dans un bureau quelconque on est pris pas plus que pour des chiens. Pourquoi donc. Cela est aussi pour nos pauvres officiers. Un officier indigène qui à sa rentrée au dépôt venant d'un hôpital il est tutoyé comme un chien. Quel rang occupons-nous donc ? Les juifs sont considérés mieux que nous pourtant quels service rendent-ils à la France ? Ils obtiennent une permission pour l'Algérie. Vraiment plus nous travaillons pour la France plus on est mal vu. Nous n'avons aucune faveur pour bien travailler... »³⁷.*

³⁶ - G. Alapetite, télégramme du 6/10/1914 au MAE Paris. Fond MAE, bobine P80/ dossier 1664/ folio18.

³⁷ - Lettres de soldats musulmans, Ibid., folio 119.

D'autres soldats ont adressé une supplique au président de la république française, datée du 15 janvier 1915 et signée par 111 spahis algériens engagés depuis août 1914. Ils appuient leur demande de permission par les lois de la religion musulmane stipulant que le musulman ne doit pas quitter sa femme plus que 3 mois.³⁸

Au début de février 1915 le ministre de la Guerre autorise le rapatriement des soldats algériens et tunisiens en permission. Ils doivent être sélectionnés selon les avis de leurs chefs et des officiers interprètes chargés de leur assistance et surveillance. Les permissionnaires doivent concourir à l'encadrement de la nombreuse recrue dans leurs pays respectifs c'est pourquoi ils devraient être aptes à servir d'instituteurs, maintenir les traditions du corps, exalter le sentiment naturellement guerrier de la recrue. Ils devront surtout être d'un loyalisme assez éprouvé pour qu'abandonnées à eux même, ils soient incapables de jeter le trouble dans les milieux indigènes ou militaires par des propos tendancieux des récits fantaisistes ou exagérés³⁹. Pour éviter de compromettre le moral de la population et surtout de la recrue par la diffusion des informations sur le déroulement de la guerre et sur l'état des soldats tunisiens sur le front, les autorités ordonnent de n'envoyer en Tunisie que ceux qui ne portent pas de mauvaises nouvelles ou d'impression de panique, ceux dont l'esprit est familiarisé avec la guerre actuelle et n'était pas aussi frappés par le souvenir des hécatombes du début des hostilités.

Toutefois, les récits sur les horreurs des combats sur le front pouvaient être transmis malgré toutes les précautions et les mesures prises. Du 1^{er} novembre au 12 janvier 1915, 107 permissionnaires tunisiens ont été rapatriés. Les uns régulièrement par les dépôts pour encadrer les régiments après huit jours de

³⁸ - Supplique adressée au président de la République Ibid., folio 122 et suivants.

³⁹ - Ministre de la Guerre au Général commandant la 15^{ème} Région Marseille, Ibid. folio 177.

permission. Les autres irrégulièrement par des formations sanitaires. Le rembarquement de 17 de ces derniers donna lieu à une manifestation publique indigène regrettable. Tous se louèrent des soins reçus dans les hôpitaux, mais les récits faits par certains d'entre eux des horreurs de la guerre actuelle et surtout les listes des morts qu'ils donnèrent semèrent la frayeur ; il se produit dans les régiments indigène un mouvement de désertion qui atteignit jusqu'à l'effectif de 60 déserteurs dans une seule compagnie de Tirailleurs et amena des conflits armés avec la gendarmerie indigène dans plusieurs tribus. Le vœu du commandement à tous les degrés a été que les permissions fussent suspendues. Depuis le 12 janvier 1915 aucun permissionnaire n'a plus été envoyé en Tunisie⁴⁰.

*** Les soldats tunisiens prisonniers en Allemagne**

Les prisonniers musulmans ont été réunis au camp de Zossen où ils semblent être l'objet d'un traitement particulièrement bienveillant. Certaines correspondances des tirailleurs prisonniers contiennent des photographies dans lesquelles ils sont représentés vêtus en soldats allemands (vareuse de campagne, culotte d'infanterie, demi-botte), parfois chéchia genre turc. La plupart des prisonniers tunisiens demandent du *takrouri* (drogue douce sous forme de tabac) et de la *neffa* (tabac à sniffer) pour les vendre trop cher à leurs camarades.

La bienveillance, la propagande germano-turque ont pu avoir certains résultats escomptés. Des tirailleurs tunisiens prisonniers en Allemagne ont rejoint les rangs turcs.⁴¹

Dans son rapport sur l'état de certains prisonniers évacués à l'hôpital Lamartine n°21, l'officier interprète Auger décrit leur situation lamentable. « *Sur*

⁴⁰ - Télégramme du 9 février 1915 d'Alapetite au MAE, Ibid. folio 187.

⁴¹ - ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour Octobre 1916, folio 3.

*les 17 que j'ai déjà vu les uns sont privés d'une jambe, les autres d'un bras, l'un d'eux est à peu près aveugle, d'autre ont perdu un œil. ... Ils avaient séjourné peu de temps il est vrai dans les camps où la nourriture était tout à fait mauvaise. Elle se composait le matin d'un liquide jaunâtre appelé café, à midi de légumes pomme de terre choucroute avec quelquefois une saucisse et rarement de la viande, enfin le soir d'une sorte de bouillon à la farine de seigle (brouet sans sucre) que les prisonniers ont nommé « la colle ». La portion de viande dans les hôpitaux était très faible et des tirailleurs m'ont cité le poids de 70 ou 80 grammes par homme quand on leur en servait. De tous nos tirailleurs aucun n'avait plus son uniforme et quelques-uns avaient même troqué leurs costumes militaires contre un habit civil y compris le chapeau ».*⁴²

Plusieurs prisonniers rapportent qu'ils étaient harcelés par des officiers Allemands et turcs pour quitter les rangs français et venir combattre aux côtés d'eux. Parfois on leur propose des primes assez importantes ou on leur promet des postes de choix après la guerre. Certains affirment qu'il étaient torturés, privés de nourriture et maltraités suite à leur refus de se rallier aux Allemands.

*** Les soldats tunisiens sur le Front d'Orient**

Dès l'automne 1916, les soldats tunisiens commencèrent à être dirigés vers le front oriental discrètement afin d'éviter toute éventuelle réaction réfractaire à l'emploi des tunisiens contre les turcs. 8.000 tunisiens ont regagné les fronts orientaux aux Dardanelles, Grèce (Salonique, Macédoine), Égypte, Hedjaz, Palestine... sous le drapeau français.

Sur le Front d'Orient les conditions n'étaient pas plus clémentes. Le sergent Tayeb ben Mokhtar du 9^{ème} bataillon mixte écrit le 11/2/1917 à Felix Sebag résident à Sousse : « *Je suis à plus de 250 km de Salonique dans le plus*

⁴² - Rapport de l'officier interprète Auger détaché à l'hôpital Lamartine n° 21, daté 8 mars 1915, Doss.1665, f.36

*vilain des villages Burbuska. Nous avons beaucoup souffert pour arriver dans ce sale bled. Nous avons trouvé des régions montagneuses et avons jusqu'à 1 m de neige. Nous avons eu bien froid. Il y a huit jours que je suis dans un trou et il neige toujours. Heureusement que l'on trouve du bois très facilement dans cette contrée et que l'on peut faire du feu. Nous sommes loin de tout et il est impossible de trouver quoi que ce soit. Pas d'allumettes, pas de tabac, pas de bougies, et pour la nourriture c'est la même chose. Ce n'est pas le pays des rêves ».*⁴³

Toutefois, les militaires tunisiens sur le front de Hedjaz (presqu'île d'Arabie), manifestent une satisfaction profonde de ce que plusieurs d'entre eux, bien notés pour leur conduite, aient été autorisés à se rendre en pèlerinage à la Mecque. Un soldat affecté au hedjaz écrit : *« je suis en ce moment entre la Mecque et Médine, à deux jours de marche de cette dernière ville. Je te dirais également qu'il y a beaucoup d'abeilles (avons, projectiles ?) quoi que soit le côté où l'on se trouve. La santé pour l'instant est excellente, grâce à Dieu. Comme nourriture on nous donne du riz et de la farine avec lesquelles nous faisons des beignets, mais la farine est plutôt noire. Nous sommes avec les anglais, ressemblons à des bédouins vivant au milieu d'eux »*⁴⁴.

Dans une lettre daté du 28 déc.1917, le soldat Nataf, du 2^{ème} Bis de Zouave, nous apprend que la situation en Orient est pire qu'en France. Le pain est cher et n'en a pas assez car on ne peut pas en avoir même à 200 fr. le kg. Le pain de 3 livres coute à Salonique 4 à 5 fr. c'est pourquoi il fut obligé à manger des figues. Pas trop de travail disait-il, mais on mange peu.⁴⁵

⁴³ - Rapport de la Commission Militaire de Contrôle Postal, mars 1917 in SHAT, bobine, S73, carton 1001, folio121.

⁴⁴ - ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période du 1^{er}/ 7 au 15 /08/1918, folio 4.

⁴⁵ - *Ibid.*

La traversée vers Salonique n'était pas facile, le soldat Elzear écrivait à Louis Levy à Tunis : « *Après 11 jours de traversée nous voici enfin arrivé à Salonique. Notre voyage s'est agrémenté de mille incidents divers et nous avons dû à la sollicitude de la Marine militaire voyager sur la mer quelques 60 heures qui n'avait pas été prévues dans le programme* »⁴⁶.

Le soldat Mokhtar ben Sadoc du 4^{ème} Spahis, décrit sa situation à Salonique : « *La ville de Salonique, dans laquelle nous nous sommes, ressemble à Tunis. Elle est même un peu plus grande. Tout y est hors de prix. Le pain y est très rare. Quand on peut s'en procurer, on le paye 100 fr. le kilo. Quant aux figues sèches s'est comme en Tunisie et il en est de même pour beaucoup d'autres denrées. Les soldats ont tout ce qu'il leur faut, mais la population civile est dans la misère. Cependant lorsque nous avons débarqué nous sommes restés sans vivres pendant 9 jours* »⁴⁷.

*** Les pertes humaines**

Les premiers mois de la guerre étaient particulièrement atroces pour les soldats tunisiens et maghrébins en général. Les quelques milliers de tirailleurs qui ont contracté un engagement pour la durée de la guerre furent dirigés vers le front sans une véritable formation militaire. Ils étaient sans aucun doute de la « chair à canon ». La boucherie de Charleroi en témoigne. Le témoignage officiel le confirme. « *On a été très frappé d'apprendre que pour l'attaque du château de Vermelles on avait fait prendre la tête de l'assaut aux Spahis tunisiens, c'est-à-*

⁴⁶ - SHAT, 7 N, dossier 1, n° 1001, Correspondances des militaires et des travailleurs tunisiens en France, Copie ISHTC, bobine S73, folio123.

⁴⁷ -ANT, Série E, 440 A / 18, Mobilisation 1914-1918, dossier 344-349, Rapport de la Commission militaire de contrôle postal pour la période du 1^{er}/ 7 au 15 /08/1918, folio 4.

dire, à des hommes qui la veille encore n'avaient pas de baïonnettes parce qu'on avait besoin d'une pour marcher en avant des troupes françaises hésitantes »⁴⁸.

Durant les hostilités, les pertes s'élevaient à 35 900 tués et 29.000 blessés pour une population totale de 1.800.000 habitants⁴⁹. Bien que les études présentent des chiffres différents sur les pertes humaines dans les rangs des tunisiens mobilisés, elles sont toutes unanimes sur l'ampleur de cette hécatombe qui a secoué la démographie tunisienne.

Conclusion

Face au durcissement des autorités coloniales qui procédèrent le lendemain de la Guerre à l'oppression de la mouvance nationaliste représenté à l'époque essentiellement par le Mouvement des Jeunes Tunisien, les survivants des soldats tunisiens mobilisés pendant la Grande Guerre sous le drapeau français, vont sentir une autre fois l'amertume de l'ingratitude. L'effort de guerre et le tribut de sang fournis par la régence et ses hommes ne seront pas récompensés. La chasse aux nationalistes et aux syndicalistes, les décrets scélérats le manquement au respect des droits et des libertés des tunisiens et les obstacles mis en places pour entraver la marche du pays vers l'autodétermination, sont parmi les facteurs qui ont poussé un bon nombre des soldats démobilisés à intégrer la résistance armée contre la colonisation. D'autres ont choisi d'adhérer aux partis et organisations nationalistes. Dans les deux cas leur expérience militaire aux régiments ou sur les fronts fut utile.

⁴⁸ - Lettre Alapetite au MAE datée du ,15 /01/1915, ISHTC, *papiers d'agents*, bob.493,f.49.

⁴⁹ - François Arnoulet, « Les tunisiens et la première guerre mondiale (1914-1918) », *op.cit.*

Prof. Abdoul Sow Fastef-Ucad (Sénégal)

***"L'apport de la religion dans l'effort de guerre au Sénégal,
1914-1918"***

Résumé

A la veille de l'éclatement de la Première Guerre mondiale, la population française était dans l'incapacité de fournir à son armée les contingents de soldats nécessaires pour contrebalancer le poids militaire de l'Allemagne. Aussi, la France «agressée» par son ennemi sollicite-t-elle l'aide de son empire colonial qui, pour lui assurer sa survie, lui envoie tous ses hommes de 18 à 45 ans pour défendre leur «patrie» d'adoption et intensifier sa production dans tous les domaines. Ainsi dans la colonie du Sénégal, pour relever un tel défi, la France initie-t-elle une nouvelle politique de propagande.

Cette communication se propose d'abord d'analyser pourquoi la France, puissance coloniale, qui a toujours mené une politique antireligieuse au Sénégal adopte une nouvelle attitude prouvant qu'elle n'est pas l'ennemie des musulmans et qu'elle n'a plus de grief contre l'islam. Une telle attitude n'est que ruse politique pour atteindre ses objectifs ; ensuite il s'agira d'expliquer que les stratégies mises en œuvre constituent une réconciliation tactique dont le seul but est de gagner la confiance et la compréhension des populations musulmanes majoritaires au Sénégal à qui elle impose un lourd effort de guerre qui n'est pas sans conséquences ; enfin nous nous proposons de montrer que ce changement de stratégie a beaucoup contribué à la réussite des campagnes de

recrutement de tirailleurs en AOF et au Sénégal du député Blaise Diagne nommé Commissaire général du recrutement.

Introduction

En pleine guerre 1914-1918 la France confrontée à des besoins de soldats décide de concrétiser l'idée de Mangin selon la quelle les troupes africaines habituées aux guerres coloniales pourraient être utilisées dans les champs de bataille de l'Europe pour contrebalancer le poids militaire de l'Allemagne.

Dès la fin de 1914, l'empire colonial devient un réservoir de soldats et de main-d'œuvre composé des hommes valides de 18 à 45 ans ; leur mission est de défendre leur « patrie » d'adoption et d'intensifier la production de tous les secteurs économiques. Ainsi au Sénégal, pour relever ce défi, la France se lance-t-elle dans une nouvelle politique de séduction et de propagande.

Pourquoi la France, puissance coloniale, qui a toujours mené une politique antireligieuse au Sénégal adopte une nouvelle attitude prouvant qu'elle n'est pas l'ennemie des musulmans et qu'elle n'a plus de grief contre l'islam ? Une telle attitude n'est-elle pas une ruse politique, pour gagner la confiance et la compréhension des populations musulmanes majoritaires au Sénégal à qui elle impose un lourd effort de guerre qui n'est pas sans conséquences?

Cette communication se propose d'analyser ce changement de stratégie qui ressemble fort bien à une réconciliation tactique et de montrer si elle a beaucoup contribué à la réussite des campagnes de recrutement de

tirailleurs en AOF et au Sénégal du député Blaise Diagne commissaire de la République dans l'Ouest Africain chargé du recrutement indigène.

I. L'école coloniale, un centre de propagande

1. Un programme additif

Avec l'éclatement de la première guerre mondiale, les programmes des écoles sont modifiés pour les besoins. Il est demandé aux enseignants d'accorder une large place dans les enseignements au rôle de la France dans le monde, à son œuvre de civilisation et de libération. Cela dans les villages les plus reculés. Cette demande se transforme en injonction vu le ton de George Hardy nommé le 20 septembre 1912 inspecteur de l'enseignement de l'AOF: « *Je n'admettrai point que, par ce temps de guerre inexpiable, une semaine pût se passer, sans que l'instituteur fit allusion aux événements terribles et grandioses auxquels la France est intimement liée¹* ». Ce programme additif comprend un certain nombre de thèmes à inculquer aux élèves.

2. Un résumé des idées à inculquer aux élèves

L'inspecteur de l'AOF Hardy propose un nouveau programme adapté au contexte de la guerre résumé en plusieurs thèmes.

- La France n'est pas responsable de la guerre

¹Hardy, G. (1916). En Passant. BEAOF, n° 20.

La France ne l'a pas cherché, mais « elle a prouvé, une fois de plus qu'il n'était pas dans ses habitudes d'avoir peur² ». L'inspecteur part des opérations de « pacification » en Afrique et des « bienfaits » qui en ont résulté, surtout la paix française pour dire que la France, un pays pacifique, s'est vu imposer la guerre. Donc le maître doit convaincre tous les élèves sans exception que la France n'a pas voulu cette guerre pour qu'il n'y ait aucun doute sur la responsabilité allemande et de ses alliés qualifiés de « nations de proie » et sur les mérites de ceux qui les combattent.

- La France fait appel à l'effort de guerre

Cet appel s'adresse à des « populations qu'elle a sauvées de la barbarie et de l'esclavage mais elle sait se réserver le principal, et tous ses enfants luttent également pour sa cause³ ». Il s'agit ici de parler aux élèves des contributions de guerre sous toutes ses formes et de valoriser les sacrifices consentis par les populations. Pour faire accepter ces sacrifices imposés et prévenir d'éventuelles révoltes des populations, l'inspecteur Hardy lance un appel aux instituteurs du cadre indigène pour d'une part, expliquer le sens des efforts exigés d'elles, de convaincre les sceptiques et les récalcitrants ; d'autre part, amener les enfants à aimer la France et leur montrer à quel point leur sort et celui des français sont intimement liés.

- La guerre, un combat libérateur

²Ibid. p 16

³Ibid.

La guerre est présentée aux enfants des écoles comme un combat libérateur de toutes les nations menacées par la sauvagerie et la barbarie allemandes. Le maître explique aux élèves que si les Français respectent les normes internationales de la guerre, les Allemands n'en ont cure :

« Les armées allemandes dévastent et tuent pour le plaisir...elles incendient les villes et les villages, ruinent les monuments précieux du passé, martyrisent les habitants désarmés, mutilent les enfants, outragent les femmes, achèvent les blessés, volent tout ce qui se trouvent sur leur passage. Elles ont imaginé des procédés de combat tout à fait barbares, des jets de liquide enflammé et de gaz asphyxiants, une lutte souterraine et sous marine, une guerre de lâches et d'assassins⁴ ».

▪ L'étude de ce chapitre de l'histoire de France se termine par une sorte de prémonition :

« L'Allemagne sera punie par la défaite des armes, par la perte de ses colonies, par la ruine de son industrie et de son commerce, par la faim, par les guerres civiles⁵ ».

3. L'histoire au service du patriotisme

Ce programme introduit dans les écoles par nécessité est une véritable campagne de propagande pour le patriotisme. L'histoire est mise au service de la propagande politique et selon Hardy, par cette action les maîtres contribueront à la victoire contre l'Allemagne.

⁴Ibid. p 17

⁵Ibid.

Ce mouvement est animé depuis la France par l'historien Ernest Lavissee connu pour son anti-germanisme depuis la défaite de 1870. Dès le début de la guerre 1914-1918 il a jugé utile d'écrire des lettres aux Français pour entretenir la confiance en la victoire finale. Ces lettres sont publiées en Afrique dans le BEAOF. L'auteur y explique les projets de l'Allemagne en cas de victoire, les raisons d'espérer en la victoire finale. Nous en retenons les aspects qui interpellent directement les colonisés à savoir le sort réservé aux colonies d'Afrique. Pour Lavissee, la paix allemande signifie le démembrement, la ruine et l'humiliation de la France. Il considère comme l'extrémité de la honte la perte de l'empire colonial

« dont nous sommes justement fiers, car il a été conquis par le sang de nos soldats, organisé par l'intelligence de nos administrateurs militaires et civils, et si bien, si humainement gouverné que la France est pour l'indigène une patrie pour laquelle on meurt⁶ ».

Le député Blaise engagé dans l'armée, à partir du front lance en 1914 un appel à ses compatriotes en leur expliquant les raisons pour lesquelles ils doivent s'engager dans l'armée : d'abord ils doivent s'enrôler massivement pour défendre la France considérée comme le foyer commun contre les brutales convoitises de la Germanie en armes ; ensuite il leur explique le sort que leur réserve l'Allemagne :

« C'est en effet nous, les Français d'outre-mer, que l'Allemagne visait en attaquant contre le droit et la justice, la France. Ce sont nos

⁶Lavissee, E. (1916). La guerre que les Allemands voudraient faire. BEAOF n° 24, p 209-215

foyers que les sauvages de l'Europe centrale avaient en vue de s'annexer par le fer et le feu. Le geste de la France prouve combien les colonies lui tiennent à cœur⁷ ».

Il lance un appel à tous les Français, sans distinction pour barrer la route au projet allemand :

« Plutôt que de laisser détruire, par le démembrement de la France, l'œuvre tant de fois séculaire des aïeux qui créèrent la nation française ; plutôt que de payer, nous la France, un tribut au Kaiser et à son peuple ; plutôt que de descendre du haut rang que nous tenons dans l'humanité à la condition de peuple inférieur, de peuple subordonné ; plutôt que d'être, nous la France libératrice de tant de peuples, réduit en servage... Est-ce qu'il ne vaudrait par mille fois mieux mourir⁸ ».

⁷ La démocratie du Sénégal. Mercredi 23 septembre 1914. Lettre de Blaise Diagne. Pour la Patrie. Blaise Diagne député du Sénégal, soldat de 2^e classe au 40^e régiment d'infanterie de ligne à Orléans

⁸ Ibid.



*Blaise Diagne (1872-1934), premier député africain élu
au parlement français saluant ses électeurs après les élections
du 10 mai 1914*

Cette approche de Lavisse remonte après la défaite de 1870, période pendant laquelle, il avait utilisé l'histoire à l'école pour faire enrôler les jeunes, développer le chauvinisme et la germanophobie. Ces lettres de propagande écrites par Lavisse ont inspiré certainement l'inspecteur Hardy dans son programme de sensibilisation et d'explication au niveau des écoles d'Afrique.

Avec ce programme de 1914 destiné aux écoles des colonies françaises d'Afrique, on assiste d'une part à une falsification délibérée de l'histoire de manière à provoquer chez l'Africain une amnésie volontaire

relative à son histoire si détestable, qu'il refuse de s'y reconnaître. Il devient alors un être flottant, parce que ne connaissant pas son passé, ses traditions et de ce fait il est perméable à toutes les influences extérieures. D'autre part, le programme additif portant sur la guerre 1914-1918 n'est qu'un tissu de mensonges pour faire adhérer les Africains privés de liberté et opprimés par le système colonial à la cause de la France.

II. Une réconciliation tactique avec les populations musulmanes

La politique anti-islamique de la France au Sénégal est édulcorée. Pour les besoins de la cause, le Français est présenté aux élèves et à la population comme un véritable combattant, alors que l'Allemand est un assassin.

Si la France

« a prouvé qu'elle savait respecter ses sujets dans leur propriété, leur liberté, leur vie et leur religion, l'Allemagne jusqu'ici, a seulement prouvé qu'elle savait mentir et qu'elle ignorait le sens des mots liberté, loyauté, droiture, humanité⁹ ».

Cette comparaison entre les deux pays vise à nier à l'empereur d'Allemagne le droit de s'autoproclamer protecteur des musulmans sans raison alors que selon Hardy, dans les colonies d'Afrique vivent la plupart des musulmans, et que ces derniers sont au courant de la manière dont les Allemands traitent les indigènes de leurs colonies.

⁹Hardy. (1916). Op.cit.

Toujours pour gagner la confiance des musulmans de l'AOF, les autorités coloniales du Sénégal décident en 1916 d'envoyer « un représentant des musulmans d'AOF » à la Mecque en la personne de l'imam de la grande mosquée de Kaolack, Abdou Hamid Kane. Le but recherché par les autorités est double : d'une part, par cette mesure, montrer aux colonisés musulmans que « *la France entretient les meilleures relations avec le grand chérif et que les Lieux Saints se trouvaient placés sous la protection de la France et de ses alliés*¹⁰ » ; d'autre part, les honneurs - croix de la Légion d'Honneur décerné par le gouvernement français- et les égards reçus lors de son passage en France sont bien accueillis par les musulmans et à son retour du pèlerinage il est fêté. Pour sa famille, le sens de ce voyage est autre car c'est le gouverneur qui a sollicité ses prières pour la victoire de la France.

Cette information peut être acceptée comme une probabilité car un rapport sur la situation politique et administrative des pays de protectorat confirme une telle pratique du pouvoir colonial. Ce rapport révèle que les marabouts du Sénégal à part « quelques illuminés sans influence » opposés au recrutement, « n'ont pas tenté de faire l'opposition à notre autorité¹¹ ». Pour l'administration coloniale, les chefs religieux ou des confréries les plus autorisés l'ont aidé et comme preuve elle cite l'exemple d'un ancien cadi supérieur cheikh Amidou Kane

« imam de Matam [qui] réunit les fidèles à la mosquée de Sinthiou Bamambé, le premier vendredi de janvier [1917] et prononça des prières,

¹⁰ANS. 10D1/ 002. Rapport d'ensemble sur la situation politique et administrative des pays de protectorat du Sénégal. 1918

¹¹Ibid.

demandant au « Très Haut » d'intercéder en faveur de nos armes pour nous faire obtenir la victoire. Ce n'est pas du tout un acte isolé¹² ».

Lors des recrutements qui ont débuté en fin décembre 1916 pour se prolonger courant 1917, les autorités se sont heurtées à plusieurs difficultés, révoltes et assassinats. Une des raisons est que le pouvoir colonial avait décidé de revenir sur son engagement de ne plus recruter de soldats jusqu'à la fin de la guerre.

Des chefs religieux qualifiés « d'illuminés sans influence » par le pouvoir colonial se sont violemment opposés au recrutement de soldats sénégalais. Certains notables de la vallée du fleuve Sénégal fortement islamisée avaient refusé de fournir les contingents de recrues demandés pour le motif que ces recrues ne pouvaient être que des volontaires. Le chef de canton du Thior Diander, Alassane Dia, un marabout déclare « qu'Allah lui ordonnait de marcher à sa suite contre les Français¹³ ». En Casamance, Séguéla chef du principal « parti », le groupement de Seléki et son fils se rebellent contre le chef de poste de Kamoubeul. Un mahdi déclaré dans la nuit du 24 au 25 janvier 1917 attaque le poste de douane de Séléty en Basse Casamance sur la frontière de la Gambie décapitant le préposé européen et tuant son cuisinier et un garde frontière¹⁴.

¹²Ibid. Mouvement islamique

¹³ANS. 10D1/002. Recrutement

¹⁴Ibid.

III. Cette stratégie a-t-elle véritablement impacté sur le recrutement ?

Paradoxalement la campagne d'explication et de sensibilisation a été concluante dans la perspective française malgré le fait que la politique de la France à l'égard de l'islam était de contenir la religion musulmane trop expansive. D'ailleurs, toutes sortes de stratégies sont imaginées et mises en pratique pour un endiguement de l'islam mais sans compter avec le dynamisme et la capacité de cette religion à l'environnement africain.

Pour toutes ces raisons, les musulmans des colonies françaises en particulier du Sénégal ne devaient pas avoir la mémoire courte au point d'oublier le combat anti-islamique, la guerre contre les chefs tiédos, l'interdiction de l'enseignement coranique, l'arrestation et l'exil des marabouts. Rien n'y fait.

En effet la sensibilisation et la propagande contre l'Allemagne et son roi à l'école ont atteints les objectifs visés voire donné des résultats satisfaisants comme l'atteste Amadou Hampaté Ba dans un de ses ouvrages. L'auteur, élève à l'école de Djenné pendant la guerre 1914-1918 explique l'impact des commentaires des communiqués de l'agence Havas faits par le maître sur les enfants. A l'occasion, l'instituteur présentait Guillaume II comme un grand sorcier, l'incarnation du diable, un prince maudit qui cherche à dominer le monde. Hampaté ajoute que

« notre maître d'école réussit à nous faire haïr si violemment les Allemands que nous les appelions plus que du nom injurieux de boches.

Notre haine était telle qu'à la vue d'un serpent ou scorpion, nous mettions à hurler Hé voila un sale Boche, tuez-le avant qu'il ne s'échappe¹⁵ ».

Pour la France, le loyalisme et le dévouement des chefs n'ont pas baissé d'intensité depuis le déclenchement de la guerre ; les chefs religieux ne sont pas en reste car en dehors des prêches, des prières formulées sur la demande des autorités coloniales, les hautes autorités ont été amenées à donner en plus des preuves. Au Sénégal, l'islam est confrérique et se compose de plusieurs tarikhas de la plus ancienne à la plus récente : Khadrya, Tijania, le Mouridisme et les Layènes. Le maître d'œuvre des opérations de recrutement en Afrique occidentale française est le député Blaise Diagne nommé à cet effet Haut commissaire chargé du recrutement des tirailleurs sénégalais. Certaines personnes affirment qu'il a été introduit auprès de la plus haute autorité de la Tijania El hadji Malick Sy et des Layènes par Seydou Nourou Tall grand marabout et fidèle serviteur de la France; ce dernier a facilité les contacts entre Blaise Diagne et les Lébous et aussi la confrérie Layéne. Blaise Diagne a rencontré aussi Ahmadou Bamba fondateur du Mouridisme en exil au Gabon.

Le fondateur de la confrérie mouride, Ahmadou Bamba répond favorablement à la requête de l'administrateur du Baol Lassalves ; ainsi lors du recrutement du premier trimestre de 1915 le marabout mobilise-t-il 551 talibés qu'il présente à la commission de

¹⁵Ba, A, H. (1991). Amkoullel, l'enfant Peul. Coéditions Actes Sud-Labor-L'aire.

recrutement mobile dont 200 sont déclarés aptes à l'enrôlement¹⁶. Le fils aîné de Cheikh Ibra Fall bras droit d'Ahmadou Bamba est recruté.

Blaise Diagne et sa commission de recrutement sollicitent El Hadj Malick Sypoursa participation à l'effort de guerre, en d'autres termes fournir à la France en conflit des hommes valides choisis parmi les milliers de talibés ou disciples sous sa responsabilité. Il répond à Blaise qu'en sa qualité des responsables des enfants de ses disciples confiés à lui pour apprendre le coran, il ne pouvait pas satisfaire leur demande. Devant l'insistance de Blaise Diagne, il leur remet son fils aîné. Aujourd'hui ce geste est interprétée comme un sacrifice qui a « *permis de sauver la vie de plusieurs milliers d'innocents talibés qui étaient sous sa [El Hadj Malick Sy] responsabilité et que l'homme blanc allait enrôler comme tirailleur dans l'armée française*¹⁷... ». Tous les cas cités sont pour l'administration coloniale une preuve de la sincérité des sentiments des plus hautes autorités musulmanes du Sénégal à l'égard de la France.

¹⁶Cité Thilmans, G & Rosière, P. (2012). Les Sénégalais et la Grande guerre. Lettres de tirailleurs et recrutement (1912-1919). Dakar : Editions du Musée Historique du Sénégal (Gorée) ; Thiam, I, D. (2009). Le Sénégal dans la guerre 14-18 ou le prix du combat pour l'égalité. Dakar : NEAS

¹⁷Entretien avec Pape Amadou Sall petit fils d'Ahmet Sy, le 7 juillet 2014 dans sa maison à Rufisque.



Défilé de tirailleurs sénégalais devant le Palais du Port
Carte postale Dakar le 27 septembre 1917

Tous ces appels de la France du décret du 31 août 1914 à celui de 1918, le Sénégal a répondu favorablement en donnant à l'armée française ses hommes âgés de 18 à 45 ans. Le nombre de soldats enrôlés dans l'armée française est la preuve du succès des opérations de recrutement. De 1914 à 1915 sont recrutés 20 591 tirailleurs et 7 225 originaires des communes mixtes (27816 au total) sur une population estimée à 1 201 925 habitants soit 1,73% de la population¹⁸. En 1916 sur les 50 000 hommes exigés de l'AOF, le Sénégal en a fourni 7506. En 1917 le contingent demandé au Sénégal est de 1500 hommes. En 1918 avec les contraintes liées à la prolongation de la guerre, la France fait encore appel à l'AOF et confie à Blaise Diagne la mission d'intensifier le recrutement de soldats indigènes.

¹⁸Thiam, I. D. (2009). Op.cit

Conclusion

La politique de recrutement au Sénégal fut une véritable réussite pour Blaise Diagne Haut commissaire chargé du recrutement et pour la France dont les besoins en soldats ne faisaient que croître. Pour atteindre ses objectifs, la France est contrainte de revoir sa politique anti-islamique pour « charmer » les musulmans, gagner leur confiance et celle de leurs représentants les plus autorisés afin d'amener les populations à accepter sans problèmes les effets de l'effort de guerre exigé. Cette nouvelle stratégie n'est rien d'autre qu'une réconciliation tactique facilitée selon l'administration coloniale par le fait que le Sénégal était « un pays soumis et une population bien en main¹⁹ ... ».

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¹⁹Cet argument est discutable car le Sénégal était divisé en deux zones : régions d'administration directe et les pays de protectorat. En plus certaines régions n'étaient pas totalement soumises à l'autorité coloniale. Autre preuve les nombreuses oppositions, défiances et rebellions des chefs traditionnels, des notables et même des populations. Enfin les dépêches échangées entre le gouverneur général et les gouverneurs des colonies font état des difficultés rencontrées lors des opérations de recrutement tout en signalant les cercles qui refusent de fournir les quotas exigés.

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***Situation Matérielle et Sociale des Démobilisés Tunisiens Ayant Servi
sous le Drapeau Français au Lendemain de la Première Guerre
Mondiale***

INTRODUCTION

L'histoire militaire de la Tunisie a accompagné partiellement celle de la France dans un vingtième siècle marqué par la Première Guerre mondiale. En effet, les soldats tunisiens ayant servi sous le drapeau français pendant cette guerre ont tenu une place importante dans l'armée d'Afrique et ce, par leur courage, leur discipline et leur dévouement. L'apport de ces soldats à l'effort de guerre français est certain.

Une fois la Grande Guerre terminée, les opérations de démobilisation de ces soldats a débuté ainsi que la liquidation de l'état de guerre. Pour assurer la bonne exécution de ces opérations, l'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne (A.C.A.T), créée au lendemain de l'établissement du protectorat français en Tunisie en 1881, était chargée d'apporter son aide aux démobilisés afin de leur assurer une meilleure réintégration dans la vie civile et de les faire bénéficier des avantages que leur procure le statut d'Anciens Combattants.

Ces contingents tunisiens ayant servi dans l'armée française pendant la Première Guerre mondiale et démobilisés au lendemain de la cessation des hostilités ont-ils pu acquérir tous les droits inhérents au statut d'ancien combattant? La situation matérielle et sociale de ces démobilisés était-elle à la hauteur de leurs attentes ?

¹ - Membre de la Commission Tunisienne d'Histoire Militaire.

Dans cette intervention, nous commencerons par évoquer brièvement la contribution des soldats tunisiens à l'effort de guerre français. Nous étudierons ensuite leur situation matérielle et sociale au lendemain de leur démobilisation, et évaluerons cette situation par rapport à celle de leurs camarades français. Avant de conclure, et en guise d'ouverture, nous évoquerons brièvement- et à titre indicatif- la situation matérielle et sociale des soldats tunisiens démobilisés au lendemain de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale.

APERÇU HISTORIQUE ET JURIDIQUE DES CONTINGENTS TUNISIENS

La loi organique de 1857 révisée le 7 février 1860, constituait le premier document établissant un service militaire obligatoire en Tunisie. Elle instaurait une période active de trois ans et une période de 7 ans dans la réserve pour tous les Tunisiens de confession musulmane à l'exception des inaptes pour raisons de santé ou des jeunes étudiants titulaires d'un certificat délivré par la mosquée Zitouna.

Après l'établissement du protectorat français en Tunisie, l'armée tunisienne fut réduite à une garde beylicale en décembre 1883. La loi du 31 décembre 1882 a créé au sein du corps français 12 compagnies mixtes composées de Français et de Tunisiens (infanterie, cavalerie et artillerie).

La loi du 10 septembre 1883 ainsi que celle du 12 janvier 1892 confirmèrent l'ensemble des procédures d'engagement et dès le début de la Première Guerre mondiale, une série de décrets précisa les détails de l'incorporation de la durée des hostilités. Le nombre total des Tunisiens ayant servi sous le drapeau français pendant la Grande Guerre s'élève ainsi à 80 339 dont 38 251 furent envoyés sur le front. 8000 firent partie du corps expéditionnaire d'Orient. D'autres sources avancent d'autres chiffres de participants : 62 461 combattants et 25 000 travailleurs.

Les pertes s'élevèrent à 35 900 morts et disparus et 29 000 blessés sur une population totale de seulement 1 800 000² habitants dont 60 000 israélites qui n'ont jamais pris part à ce conflit.

Le 11 novembre 1918, les effectifs tunisiens sous les armes comprenaient 42 500 hommes parmi lesquels 23 500 démobilisables qui ont réintégré la vie civile avant le 29 septembre 1919.

SITUATION MATERIELLE DES SOLDATS TUNISIENS DEMOBILISES AU LENDEMAIN DE LA PREMIERE GUERRE MONDIALE

Pour assurer la bonne exécution des opérations de démobilisation et sauvegarder les intérêts des démobilisés et des familles des morts et disparus, l'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne dut prendre à son compte une grande partie des fonctions normalement dévolues aux corps de troupe, aux Intendances, à la direction du Service de Santé et aux centres de réforme.

L'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne dut donc étendre ses services et en créer de nouveaux. Son activité s'exerça essentiellement dans la liquidation des primes de démobilisation et dans l'attribution d'emplois civils aux démobilisés

Les primes de démobilisation

Réglémentées par le décret du 27 mars 1919, les primes de démobilisation se composent d'une prime fixe de 250 francs pour les militaires ayant servi pendant trois mois au moins dans une unité combattante, une prime de 100 francs pour ceux qui n'avaient pas quitté leur pays et une prime supplémentaire de 5 francs par mois passé dans une unité de combat.

²François ARNOULET, « Les Tunisiens et la Première Guerre mondiale (1914-1918) » in *Revue de l'Occident musulman et la Méditerranée* n° 38, 1984, pp.47-61.

Près de 29 718 démobilisés et réformés ont reçu la prime³. Le nombre des ayants droit à la prime de démobilisation, y compris les réformés, était de 29 718. Leurs nom et adresse étaient connus du service des effectifs de l'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne. Ces opérations de paiement ont commencé le 12 octobre 1919 et se sont terminés une année plus tard.

Indemnités spéciales

La guerre a laissé 5670 réformés n°1⁴ et 4122 réformés n°2⁵ parmi lesquels les militaires tunisiens des classes mobilisées pendant les hostilités. Tous étaient envoyés à leurs foyers en attendant la commission de réforme et ses décisions concernant la valorisation des pensions.

Le bureau des Réserves de l'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne sert en outre d'intermédiaire entre les centres d'appareillage et les mutilés qui désirent le remplacement ou la réparation de leurs appareils de prothèse. C'est également ce service qui assure la remise aux familles des décédés français et tunisiens des diplômes de « Mort pour la France » remis par le Ministère, ainsi que des décorations posthumes attribuées aux militaires décédés dans l'accomplissement de leur devoir. Il transmet également les brevets et insignes de décorations attribuées aux militaires démobilisés.

Mais la sollicitude du Ministère de la Guerre tunisien avait à s'exercer sur des victimes de la guerre encore plus intéressantes que les réformés. Ce sont les familles des militaires « indigènes » décédés ou disparus au cours des hostilités. Ces familles sont en effet d'une inaptitude totale, non seulement à comprendre et à accomplir les formalités nécessaires à la satisfaction de leurs droits, mais aussi dans la majorité des cas, à manifester leur existence et

³Eric DEROO, Pascal LE PAUTREMAT, *Héros de Tunisie*, Cérès éditions, Tunis, 2005, p.78.

⁴ Soldats réformés des suites de blessures et/ou maladies contractées durant leur service actif.

⁵ Soldats réformés souffrant de maladies non contractées pendant leur service.

provoquer ainsi les gestes administratifs qui doivent leur procurer les réparations prévues par la loi.

A cet égard, l'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne se substitua entièrement à ces familles pour préparer les dossiers des décédés ou disparus. Ces familles auront ainsi le droit de toucher deux indemnités : l'attribution du pécule des décédés (500 francs selon le décret en date du 23 septembre 1917. 6276 familles de décédés ou disparus en ont bénéficié) et l'allocation de la pension de famille. C'est le service de contentieux de l'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne qui s'occupe de ces deux questions.

Attribution d'emplois civils

Un décret beylical en date du 18 juillet 1909 réservait aux militaires tunisiens réunissant 7 ans et demi de services un certain nombre de places dans l'Administration du Protectorat. La démobilisation en 1919 apporta un accroissement considérable du nombre des demandes d'emploi. La majeure partie des places disponibles était réservée aux réformés.

En dehors des emplois réservés dans les Administrations, de nombreux militaires réformés ou démobilisés ont été, par l'intermédiaire de l'Administration Centrale de l'Armée Tunisienne, pourvus d'emplois divers chez des industriels, des commerçants, des cultivateurs, etc.

Au 1^{er} janvier 1922, le bureau des emplois civils de l'Armée tunisienne avait reçu 11 589 demandes d'emploi dont 4414 provenant des réformés et 7175 de démobilisés. A la même date, 1392 emplois avaient été attribués dont 1061 aux réformés et 331 aux démobilisés⁶.

Certaines catégories de militaires démobilisés ont reçu des indemnités de 15 francs attribuées par le Gouvernement tunisien. Ces catégories sont :

⁶Raymond Emile DREVET(Commandant), *L'Armée Tunisienne*, Imprimerie Ch. Weber. Tunis, 1922, p.366.

-les anciens militaires habitant la Tunisie, ayant appartenu à un Corps dont le dépôt est en Tunisie et ayant obtenu la Médaille commémorative des opérations du Maroc.

-Les anciens militaires habitant la Tunisie et qui ont été réformés avec pension à la suite de blessures reçues au cours de la guerre de 1914-1918.

D'autres démobilisés ont demandé et obtenu des licences pour exploiter des cafés qui sont devenus des lieux de rencontres et d'échanges intellectuels, où on commence à parler de politique, d'égalité avec les Français, d'indépendance même si ces questions sont abordées de manière très générale.

De son côté, l'Office des Mutilés et Anciens Combattants, créé en 1922, s'occupe notamment de la rééducation professionnelle, du placement, des prêts professionnels, des prêts d'honneur, des prêts pour habitation à bon marché, soins médicaux gratuits, emplois réservés, secours divers, etc. Ces différents avantages ont d'abord été élaborés à l'attention des Anciens Combattants français en Tunisie qui ont demandé de bénéficier des mêmes mesures prises en métropole. Malgré les promesses des autorités coloniales, les Anciens Combattants tunisiens ont été très peu touchés par ces avantages acquis par leurs camarades français de Tunisie. Pour beaucoup de démobilisés tunisiens, le statut de combattant n'est pas encore reconnu. La carte du combattant, créée à la fin des années vingt, a d'ailleurs été distribuée avec parcimonie.

SITUATION SOCIALE DES DEMOBILISES TUNISIENS AU LENDEMAIN DE LA GRANDE GUERRE

L'encadrement social et politique des Anciens Combattants tunisiens remonte à la Grande Guerre. Des associations d'Anciens Combattants encouragées par les autorités officielles sont chargées d'encadrer les Anciens Combattants tunisiens. La plus ancienne (L'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Grande Guerre, groupant en 1931 environ 1500 adhérents français et tunisiens), date de 1918. Depuis 1922, les Anciens Combattants étaient

administrés par l'Office Tunisien des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de la guerre qui dépendait à la fois du Ministère des Anciens Combattants et de la Résidence générale. Au niveau du quartier, Dar el-Askri (maison du combattant ou du soldat) est le lieu de réunion et de récréation des anciens militaires en général ; c'est aussi là qu'on distribue les aides en nature à l'occasion des fêtes nationales françaises et des fêtes religieuses tunisiennes.

Entre les deux guerres mondiales, on compte une dizaine d'associations ou amicales. En 1931, sept parmi elles se sont groupées en fédération : Fédération Tunisienne des Associations des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de la Guerre). La politisation de ces associations est déjà perceptible dès le début des années vingt avec l'Association des Anciens Combattants Musulmans qui conteste la représentation lacunaire des Tunisiens dans les autres associations existantes.

En outre, l'association des Amitiés africaines gère à partir de Paris les Diar el-Askri (Maison du combattant) et encadre les militaires nord-africains. Pour les autorités coloniales, l'enjeu est important : depuis les années vingt, les Anciens Combattants Tunisiens sont considérés comme étant une population acquise à la France, disciplinée, ayant servi sous le drapeau français avec un dévouement allant même jusqu'au sacrifice suprême. Ceci étant, les Anciens Combattants Tunisiens pourraient être dangereux si toutefois ils venaient à basculer du côté du mouvement nationaliste car ils apporteraient ainsi leurs connaissances des armes à la résistance armée tunisienne contre l'occupation française. Il s'agit donc pour la France de faire des Anciens Combattants un contrepoids aux partis nationalistes, ce qui a obligé les autorités coloniales à satisfaire quelques revendications de ces démobilisés pour améliorer leur situation matérielle et sociale précaire.

Pour éviter toute politisation de ces groupements et associations, un régime d'association unique a été établi en 1943 : c'est l'Association des Anciens

Combattants et Victimes de la Guerre en Tunisie, qui évoluait à côté d'une dizaine d'amicales.

Les Anciens Combattants et les anciens militaires en général, sont considérés souvent par une grande partie de la population tunisienne comme un phénomène mineur du moins au cours de années vingt étant donné que ces militaires étaient d'origine sociale modeste (les lettrés sont exonérés du service militaire et les riches ont le droit au remplacement administratif). De même, ils sont considérés comme étant acquis à la France. Ce n'est que plus tard que les chefs nationalistes ont œuvré pour rallier à leur cause ces Anciens Combattants rodés au maniement des armes. La consolidation des effectifs du mouvement nationaliste a été encouragée par un mouvement de désertion qui commence à prendre de l'ampleur parmi les militaires, désormais récupérés et enrôlés par le mouvement national qui les valorise et leur offre la possibilité de regagner la communauté nationale. D'ailleurs, plusieurs parmi eux vont adhérer au mouvement de libération nationale. En effet, ces Anciens Combattants sont attirés par l'action nationaliste qui, par conviction ou pour valoriser leur patriotisme, sont devenus militants et ont regagné la résistance armée, contribuant ainsi à la libération de leur pays.

En essayant d'élargir leurs bases sociales, les partis politiques comme le Néo-Destour ou le Parti Communiste ainsi que le syndicat de l'Union Générale des Travailleurs Tunisiens vont s'intéresser aux Anciens Combattants et les mobiliser au sein de leurs mouvements respectifs⁷.

Evoquant l'importance du rôle joué par les combattants tunisiens au sein de l'armée française, Jacques Frémeaux écrit : « *Sans la contribution des*

⁷ Habib BELAID, « La réintégration des Anciens Combattants Tunisiens dans la vie active après la Première et la Deuxième Guerres Mondiales », Actes du colloque *Histoire de l'Armée Tunisienne*, 30-31 octobre 1997, Publications du Ministère de la Défense Nationale, Tunis, juillet 1998, pp.242-249, p.244.

*contingents levés Outre-Mer*⁸(en l'occurrence les contingents tunisiens), la rentrée au combat d'une armée française significative aurait été impossible »⁹.

Ces contingents ont permis à la France de s'imposer à nouveau comme puissance militaire et surtout d'être présente à la cessation des hostilités lors de la capitulation allemande en mai 1945¹⁰.

La France a-t-elle reconnu en ces contingents tunisiens les sacrifices qu'ils ont consentis pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale pour contribuer à sa délivrance du joug nazi ?

La France n'a pas reconnu comme il se doit la contribution des soldats tunisiens lors de sa victoire pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Elle n'a pas accordé non plus de grande importance à la satisfaction des besoins des soldats tunisiens démobilisés au lendemain de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale qui vivent des situations matérielles et sociales difficiles, ni n'a pris en compte du reste le sentiment d'inégalité ressenti par les Tunisiens démobilisés dont les indemnités et les pensions étaient inférieures à celles que touchaient leurs camarades français. Cette situation déplorable n'a pas changé au lendemain de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale malgré les sacrifices consentis par les combattants tunisiens. Ils vont trouver des difficultés de recasement, d'obtention de terres riches, d'autorisations d'ouvrir des débits de tabac, et seront de plus défavorisés et

⁸ Pour Jacques FREMEAUX, les contingents d'Outre-Mer sont « *les contingents français principalement recrutés en Afrique* », in « La participation des contingents d'outre-mer aux opérations militaires (1943-1944) » in Actes du Colloque International : *Les armées françaises pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale 1939-1945*, Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Techniques avancées, Paris, 7-10 mai 1985, pp. 355-363, p.355.

⁹ *Idem.*

¹⁰ André COUSINE, « La participation française à la campagne d'Italie et au débarquement de Provence », in Actes du Colloque International : *Les armées françaises pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale 1939-1945*, Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Techniques avancées, Paris, 7-10 mai 1985, pp 365-383, p.377.

victimes de négligence et de discrimination, et ce, même au sein des organismes d'Anciens combattants¹¹.

SITUATION MATERIELLE ET SOCIALE DES COMBATTANTS TUNISIENS DEMOBILISES PAR RAPPORT A CELLE DE LEURS CAMARADES FRANÇAIS

Les démobilisés tunisiens se sont plaints:

- de l'insuffisance des indemnités familiales par rapport à leurs camarades français (1/4 de moins).

- du séjour trop prolongé sur le front après la cessation des hostilités et ce, par rapport à la durée allouée à leurs camarades français pour regagner leurs foyers. D'ailleurs, beaucoup de Tunisiens avaient été expédiés du front français vers le front d'Orient sans avoir revu leurs familles.

En effet, à leur démobilisation, les combattants tunisiens ont été mal traités, n'ayant reçu leurs pensions que tardivement. Ils se sont plaints des inégalités entre eux et les Français concernant notamment la durée du service militaire (trois ans pour les Tunisiens et dix-huit mois pour les Français), les indemnités, les emplois, etc. ces inégalités ont fait naître chez les Tunisiens un sentiment d'injustice, d'amertume voire de révolte, d'autant plus qu'ils étaient (à tort ou à raison) considérés par leurs compatriotes comme étant « acquis à la France ».

Il est à remarquer néanmoins que ce sentiment d'injustice et d'amertume est ressenti contre les autorités coloniales et non contre les combattants français avec qui les Tunisiens ont vécu au front, lieu où l'on ne tenait pas tellement compte des différences de statut.

Ces militaires se mesurent surtout selon leurs faits d'armes et non selon leur origine, leur race ou leur grade car le front est un lieu spécifique de

¹¹ Archives d'outre-mer (Rue Oudinot, Paris), Affaires politiques C 1425 D.7, page 5.

sociabilité et de solidarité entre les combattants, les clivages et les inégalités se surmontent grâce à la fraternité d'armes acquise sur le champ de bataille, à l'esprit de corps développé ainsi qu'à la camaraderie régimentaire sans équivoque. Ce sentiment persistera chez les combattants à la démobilisation que ce soit entre les soldats tunisiens eux-mêmes qui vont constituer un groupe social et culturel homogène, ou entre les soldats tunisiens et leurs camarades français par le biais des Associations d'Anciens Combattants.

L'esprit de corps des combattants tunisiens s'est développé au front au sein d'unités combattantes dans des moments très difficiles et dans un espace de sacrifice suprême. De même, la fraternité d'armes acquise sur le champ de bataille loin de leurs familles est due essentiellement aux situations matérielles et morales non seulement difficiles mais aussi inégales par rapport à leurs camarades français. Ce qu'ils ont enduré au cours de la guerre (qui a duré six ans), les sacrifices consentis et les conditions de vie très difficiles sur le front ont été à l'origine de leur solidarité. Celle-ci s'est perpétrée après la démobilisation dans l'association des Anciens Combattants et victimes de la guerre sans distinction d'origine sociale, ni géographique. Cet espace de réunion de la grande famille militaire de feu (Diar-El-Askri) est un lieu ouvert de sociabilité entre anciens militaires et Anciens Combattants tunisiens et français. Ces derniers bénéficient toujours d'une situation matérielle plus favorable (pension plus élevée, facilité d'accès à des emplois prioritaires, etc.)

Rien d'étonnant donc qu'une certaine amertume à l'encontre des autorités françaises grandisse dans les rangs des Anciens Combattants tunisiens et les rendent plus solidaires pour revendiquer leurs droits.

CONCLUSION

La réintégration des combattants tunisiens démobilisés au lendemain de la Première Guerre mondiale dans la vie civile et active n'a pas été facile pour eux, cela est dû essentiellement au manque de postes d'emploi à pourvoir, et qui ont été réservés en priorité aux combattants français en Tunisie ainsi qu'aux réformés tunisiens. Les combattants tunisiens démobilisés se sont contentés d'emplois subalternes avec une faible rémunération.

De même, le service de l'intendance lui-même n'a pas été outillé pour subvenir aux besoins des démobilisés, ce qui a causé beaucoup de retard dans le règlement des primes et des pensions des démobilisés.

Cette situation a eu un impact important sur l'effectif des engagés volontaires et des réengagés tunisiens sous le drapeau français pendant l'entre-deux-guerres mondiales et sur l'effectif des soldats tunisiens qui ont participé à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. A cette réduction des effectifs s'ajoutent les mouvements de désertion des soldats tunisiens qui ont été signalés pendant ces deux périodes. Ceci est dû essentiellement à la situation matérielle et sociale difficile que vivaient leurs compatriotes- les Anciens Combattants de la Première Guerre mondiale- et qu'ils ne voulaient pas revivre à leur tour une fois démobilisés.

Bien que le nombre des soldats tunisiens qui ont participé au second conflit mondial aux côtés des forces alliées était plus réduit (de moitié) par rapport à celui de la Première Guerre mondiale- en partie à causes des raisons citées ci-dessus-, la valeur combattive des soldats n'en a pas pour autant été altérée. Leurs faits d'armes et leurs exploits militaires étaient reconnus par tous ceux qui ont participé à ce conflit planétaire.

Aujourd'hui, la mémoire partagée entre les Anciens Combattants tunisiens et leurs camarades du front doit être consolidée et ce, pour vivre un monde meilleur, un monde de paix.

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***The Danish Armed Forces' pre-war views and preparations
and the developing reality 1914-1918***

This paper is first and foremost a summary of the results of the author's latest eight years' research into the professional military and naval as well as strategic dimensions of Danish history during the First World War. The published results are listed under literature. It is a field formerly left nearly un-researched as it was considered irrelevant within the existing narrative.

In the years up to the War the Danish Navy and Army were aware that their country's fate in a German-British War depended on whether or not - and when - the British Royal Navy could and would try to enter the Baltic Sea, and on whether Germany considered it necessary to invade Denmark to prevent this from happening. Nobody in Denmark knew that the Kaiser had been forcefully convinced in February 1905 by the Chief of the General Staff, Count Alfred von Schlieffen, that the army lacked the forces necessary to occupy Denmark at the outset of a war where both Britain and France were enemies. Danish neutrality should therefore be respected as long as the country did not openly side with Germany's enemies.

The Danish Prime and Defence Minister from January 1905, the liberal leader Jens Christian Christensen, unknowingly reinforced that German acceptance of Danish neutrality. He understood that if Germany was victorious in a war where Denmark was among her enemies, his country would be absorbed into the German Empire.

In February 1906 Christensen established contact with the new German General Staff Chief, Helmuth von Moltke (the younger). The prime minister used Captain Louis Lütken as his intermediary. Lütken was not only Christensen's selected administrative leader of the War Office, he was his friend and advisor

and he knew Moltke from a study detachment to the German General Staff three years earlier. During the talks that took place in 1906-07, the Danish officer made clear to Moltke that Denmark would never voluntarily join Germany's enemies in a war. As most Danes were strongly anti-German due to the continued German occupation of North Schleswig and the Prussian pressure on the Danish majority of the province, Christensen's secret initiative was highly controversial. However, even if the Social-Liberal Party ("Det radikale Venstre") that ruled Denmark with a minority government from summer 1913 to spring 1920 had not been informed about the Lütken negotiations when they happened, it agreed fully with Christensen's situation analysis and the commitment he had made to Germany.

The defence laws completed in 1908-09 under Christensen's guidance were tailored to support and reinforce the message given by Lütken. Danish neutrality should be defended against all belligerents, but it should be organised in a way that would reduce any German need and temptation to occupy Danish territory to do the job with own forces. Copenhagen with the government and the main bases of the armed forces should be protected against a coup and bombardment that repeated what the British and done in 1807. The eastern coast of the Great Belt and key territorial waters in "*Smaalandsfarvandet*" - the bay with small islands adjacent to the eastern side of this strait - should be guarded and defended by land and naval forces as well as new island forts against any British use of the area for coaling during operations into the Baltic Sea.

The expectations of Great Power operations and planned defence force deployments

It was expected that Europe would experience an international crisis of one to three weeks duration before the outbreak of a great power war, and it was foreseen that such a war would be decided in some months by major battles.

The immediate threat: a German coup against Copenhagen

The German February 1905 decision to respect Danish neutrality remained unknown in Copenhagen. However, the Danish Commanding Admiral, Vice-Admiral Otto Kofoed-Hansen, was nearly certain - and the Commanding Generals Vilhelm Gørtz and August Tuxen considered it probable - that the initially undecided naval situation in the North Sea made an early British attempt to enter the Baltic Sea unlikely. Even so, the admiral and generals could not rule out that Germany would act to make certain that Denmark behaved. Therefore the armed services considered it necessary to prepare for possibility that Germany might try to force Denmark to join her prior to or at the start of great power hostilities by a coup landing combined with a bombardment threat against Copenhagen.

A later German landing close to Copenhagen

Even if the German operation to force Denmark to take her side and make its territory available to the German Navy did not take place at the outset of the war, it might happen later, at a time after Danish mobilisation where Copenhagen had become effectively defended against a direct coup assault. If so, the Germans were expected to make a landing south of the capital but north of the town of Køge and achieve her objective either by breaking through the fortress by an immediate assault or – less likely – by bombardment.

A probably later British threat against Copenhagen

After the Royal Navy had won a decisive victory over the German Navy in the North Sea it was expected to force its way through the Danish Straits into the Baltic Sea. As was the case with Germany, the British might conduct an operation against the Danish capital to encourage its government to join the Allies. One likely possibility would be the arrival of a naval bombardment fleet from the north through the Sound.

British use of Danish territory and territorial waters

Even without a British operation against the Danish capital, Royal Navy's operations through the open Great Belt to threaten the German Baltic coast and make the British blockade fully effective would bring serious challenges to Danish neutrality. In a war where Britain had joined the French-Russian Entente, an additional important benefit created by a successful passage would be to establish an effective support of Russia. Operations into the Baltic would require fuelling bases, initially for coal fired destroyers, and thereafter for all fleet units. Such fuelling bases might be established offshore, and the most likely area was the "*Smaalandsfarvandet*" already mentioned. An entry attempted passage might be linked to landings of land forces in Jutland meant to attack across the border into Schleswig to threaten the Kiel Canal. One possible landing place would be Esbjerg just north of the border. Its harbour might also be used as destroyer base for British close blockading operations in the Heligoland Bight.

The foreseen Danish reaction to the pre-war crisis would be a partial mobilisation of a "neutrality guard" with the tasks of protecting Copenhagen against a German coup and creating security for any full mobilisation that would bring the field army regiments and the fortress garrison up to a total of close to 100.000 men. A partial mobilisation exercise carried-out in September 1913, the first ever, was very successful.

Denmark's neutrality defence strategy had two elements: a neutrality declaration from December 1912 that confirmed that the Danish Straits were open to all with *and* a prepared defence deployment that concentrated the main part of the army on Zealand. Half of that part supported the defence of Fortress Copenhagen against coup. The other half guarded the Zealand coasts against landings. As soon as the mobilised units reached a training level that made mobile operations possible, one of the key missions would be defend the

northeast Zealand peninsula waist between Køge and Roskilde against German landings, including the coast close to Køge.

A smaller part of the army remained in Jutland and Funen to mark sovereignty and neutrality. One of the missions was to guard Esbjerg against British use. In case of German invasion the force should maintain a foot-hold in Jutland. If possible the districts north of the Lim Fjord should be held. If that became impossible, the Lim Fjord island of Mors should be held as a final redoubt.

The main part of the navy would be concentrated in Copenhagen to defend the capital against naval bombardment supported by mine fields and in cooperation with existing and new coastal forts. Nearly all naval units were part of the prepared neutrality guard. The new submarines were meant to assist the army by attacking any ships landing troops on the east coasts of Zealand. Another submarine mission was to counter a bombardment fleet approaching Copenhagen from the north. A small independent mixed submarine-torpedo boat flotilla was to deploy to the Great Belt to operate against any British attempt to establish bases in “*Smaalandsfarvandet*”.

The developing reality during the war

During the first days of August 1914 when the Austrian-Serbian War in the Balkans spread to become general European war, it became clear that Germany would respect Danish neutrality.

The main reason for changes to the planned defence deployment was that on the first morning of the German-British war Denmark responded positively to a German wish to have the Great Belt closed by mines, even if this act was in direct contradiction to the neutrality declaration commitment to keep the straits open. As a result of that decision the naval presence in the Great Belt was increased from a small, mixed flotilla to a squadron with nearly half the navy's modern units. Another result of the start of German-British hostilities and the

German request was a partial army mobilisation that went far beyond creating the planned small neutrality guard. The “neutrality guard” actually called-up amounted to nearly 60.000 men, nearly two-thirds of the available strength. The guard remained at that very high level for nearly a year, firstly because the war was not decided quickly by clear victories, and secondly because the generals perceived – correctly – that once reduced, the Social-Liberal government would keep the force at the lower level even if the situation later brought a direct threat against the country.

The vulnerability of modern land forts such as those in Fortress Copenhagen

The unexpected quick and easy destruction of modern Belgian forts in autumn 1914 by new German heavy artillery chocked the Danish army leadership because the forts that formed the north front of Fortress Copenhagen were of similar design, but older and less protected than some of those destroyed. The army considered two possible responses. The one supported by the artillery specialist was to create a half-circle of field works in front of the permanent fortress works and within support range of the fortress artillery. These field works should occupy the line where the battery positions of the super-heavy, but only medium range artillery had to be placed to reach central Copenhagen. Another possibility would be to establish a line of field works further forward, the “Tune Position”, one that would cover the “waist” of the North-East Zealand peninsula and thereby occupy the “land-bridge” between the Fortress and the forward deployed half of the Zealand field army.

However, for more than six months after the Belgian collapse nothing happened. There was no urgency as a German force sea-landed on a coast would not have siege artillery available, and by May 1915 the part of the field army with Copenhagen garrisons had become ready to deploy in effective occupation of the important land-bridge.

Direct infantry protection of the permanent fortress works had been left to the less capable reserve units available thanks to the still high manning level of “neutrality guard”. However, when reductions in the size of the guard in late summer 1915 forced to army to deploy regular line infantry for fortress coup defence, the army got government authority to construct the Tune Position to ensure occupation of the crucial land bridge. The alternative half-circle anti-bombardment position preferred by the artillery officers was only prepared constructed two years later, when the Commanding General who had chosen the Tune Position option had been retired.

The indecisive and resource intensive character of land warfare

The most important surprise for Danish Army in 1914 - as for everyone else - were the lack of ability of armies to achieve an operational and strategic decision, the transformation of the fighting into traditional siege warfare on a massive scale, and the resulting massive requirements for defensive and siege warfare weapons from machineguns and hand-grenades over trench mortars to a strong and varied bombardment artillery with vast amounts of ammunition for all, from small arms to railway artillery.

When the war came, the Danish Army ammunition stocks were not even up to the very limited national requirements, most of the artillery was obsolete and the available modern field artillery pieces lacked High-Explosive shells. The country had only a domestic production of rifles, light machineguns, and small arms and artillery ammunition, and that production depended on the necessary import of metals and chemicals. It was to achieve a government decision to try to buy additional ammunition and means to produce it that the Danish King had agreed to reduce the neutrality guard in summer 1915, the step that made the “Tune Position” essential to the Commanding General.

The unexpected long duration of the war also meant a constant pressure on the population, the mobilised conscripts and the armed forces cadre. It created

an ever deepening fatigue and widespread rejection of everything military. Even if Denmark was not active participant, the duration of the war with the exposure to the images and narratives from the machine-age battlefield – as well as the increased and highly visible social inequality - meant that the traditional opinions and values of the Danish society came under pressure.

The attrition rather than decisive naval warfare and the submarine's key role

The lack of decision at sea gave meant that the use of the fast growing number of fast improving submarines and both sides' efforts to combat the new threat came to dominate naval warfare. The Danish Navy had been aware of some of the potential of the new weapon for five years before the war when it developed its own submarine force. The naval chief of staff had also noted the possibility that Britain might use the Sound for sending submarines into the Baltic Sea. However, the navy did not foresee that submarine warfare would bring politically difficult minor violations of Danish neutrality when one belligerent attacked enemy submarines and their escorts in Danish waters, where the navy was obliged to protect them. First German and then British anti-submarine operations brought the worst violations of Danish neutrality during the war: the German violation in the Sound in August 1915 and the British on the west coast of Jutland in September 1917.

The possibility of further transit of British submarines through the Sound and accompanying risk of skirmishing between German and Danish warships meant that Denmark discreetly participated in creating a combined German-Swedish-Danish anti-submarine barrier directed against the British during winter-spring 1916. The Danish Army realised that the combined barriers undermined the navy's possibility to send its submarines to Køge Bay to participate in the defence against a German landing. When the German Navy deployed a strong permanent guard force with a pre-Dreadnought battleship to the area southeast of

Copenhagen in spring 1916 to support the barrier, the army saw the force as a bombardment threat against both the capital and the new Tune Position. The lighters with the force might be used to surprise land an infantry force that could open a coastal breach in the position and the forward defence of Copenhagen.

The important role of offensive aviation

The German airship and later night bomber bombardment campaign against Britain from spring 1915 onwards underlined that Copenhagen was completely exposed to that new type of bombardment – and any bombardment of the Danish capital had been a very sensitive issue since 1807. The city's vulnerability to airship bombardment had been recognised before the war, but it was not considered an urgent problem, and the necessary defences could not be established with the very limited funds available.

However, the airship bombardment now meant that both the Danish armed services participated in the creation of an anti-balloon and later anti-aircraft defence of the capital and its naval base. Older and new anti-ship artillery was converted for high-angle fire and deployed in the fortress works with searchlights, an air defence unit was improvised from coastal gunners, and light machineguns manned by a volunteer corps were deployed on the roofs of high buildings against low-flying aircraft. The initial defence was in place by mid-1916 and during the next 18 months a unified artillery air defence system with warning elements and civil defence measures had been formed. The main air defence weakness remained that even if the government had been willing to take the decision to do so, Denmark could neither produce nor purchase the fighter aircraft from the belligerents necessary to build-up the balanced force considered necessary. On the contrary, from winter 1917 onwards the Social-Liberal defence minister used administrative means to stall the planned completion of the artillery air defence that he and his party saw as useless and potentially as a provocation by demonstrating mistrust and enmity towards Germany.

The strategic linkage between Denmark and an ever more important Norway

Sweden and Denmark had finally agreed on the text of a Declaration of Neutrality under pressure from the Balkan War Crisis, and as Norway joined, the three countries published their common declaration in December 1912. The great powers speculated that the declaration might be followed by a formal alliance, but the only further coordination of their security policy was an agreement to inform the other two countries about any steps to increase military readiness. During the war, the three countries did seek to coordinate their policies towards the belligerents to the extent possible and held regular meetings of their kings and foreign ministers, and the three navies developed a practical cooperation passing technological information about the mines that were a constant threat against their shipping.

In late summer 1916 the perception of an increased risk of a British Great Belt passage attempt combined with a Danish political crisis, the Romanian demonstration of the opportunism of neutrals and possible Danish reactions to a renewed unrestricted U-boat campaign. The result was a German Army acceptance of war planning against Denmark. As the army lacked troops, most operations would have to be conducted with the Navy's mining and air bombardment units. However, the Danish Køge Bay mine field combined with the just completed coastal forts on the south coast of Amager to deter use of modern battleships in the bombardment of the Danish capital. Later the German relations to Norway deteriorated during the winter 1916-17 as a result of the intensifying U-boat war off North Norway to the extent where it was considered possible that the Scandinavian country would join the Allies. Now the planning against Denmark intensified, as the Jutland peninsula and Kattegat islands were needed for air and naval bases to conduct such a war, and the German Army found the necessary forces to invade and occupy. From bases in northern

Denmark it would be possible to bomb the chemical plants in southern Norway that had become essential for Allied ammunition production since the ammunition crisis of 1915.

The German envoy to Copenhagen kept the Danish Foreign Affairs Minister, his friend Erik Scavenius briefed about the developing German planning against Denmark and informed him about the text of the ultimatum that would be presented just before plans were executed. The Danish Government did not inform the armed service leaders about how the Germans planned to use Jutland for operations against Norway, and the information was not included in the official history published in spring 1922. Therefore the linkage would be hidden to most decision-makers 18 years later.

After May 1917 the strategic importance of south and south-western Norway – and Jutland – continued to grow, meaning an ever increasing risk of Scandinavia being drawn into the war. From autumn 1917 the Allied anti-U-boat effort in the northern part of the North Sea became focused on creating a massive mine barrier between Norway and Scotland. It should contain the U-boat threat against sea routes outside the North Sea and reduce attacks against the important “Scandinavian Convoys” sailing between Bergen and the Orkney Islands. By March 1918 the Royal Navy plan to establish a major naval base in the Stavanger area to support the eastern end of the barrier was ready, and after the huge project had finally been completed in autumn 1918, the Norwegians were coerced to extend the eastern end by mining of the gap between the barrier and their islands. In April 1940 the Royal Navy did not wait for Norwegian action.

The total character of the war and the challenge to society

The belligerents soon started propaganda campaigns to influence both home and world – meaning neutral - opinion. The restrictions on the Danish press put in place at the start of the war were meant to block information about Danish defence measures and ensure that the reporting about the war remained neutral,

meaning that the dominant pro-Allied and anti-German attitude of public opinion and the media was kept away from the front pages. In Denmark the German Envoy tried to manage his country's propaganda effort. He knew that it was an uphill struggle, and he attempted to constrain initiatives that would be counter-productive. The best he could do was to sponsor, guide and influence the government press.

Initially sectors of the Danish economy benefited much from the war. In the still largely liberal economy both ship-owners and farmers had a couple of extremely good years, but even then the pressure from fast rising prices meant that the government intervened in the management of the national economy to contain the resulting problems. The behaviour of those growing rich from the war provoked the majority that suffered and as in the belligerent countries state intervention and regulation continued to increase. As the British Navy campaigned in autumn 1915 to make the trade blockade of Germany effective, the Danish associations of merchant and industrialists were forced to enter into a formal agreement to stop their members earning money exporting to Germany what they had imported from Allied or other neutral countries.

However, until spring 1917 the state authorities only had to balance the trade with both sides and to contain the effects of inequality. This changed in a fundamental way with the start of the unrestricted U-boat war in February 1917 and the ever more total economic war against the Central Powers that followed the U.S. entry into the war in April. The Danish society quickly experienced serious energy scarcity and a quickly rising unemployment. Even if she was neutral, the Denmark also experienced the fast deepening fatigue and accelerating social unrest that destabilised Russia, led to militarisation of the German economy and to energetic civilian government intervention and mutual coordination of all war efforts of the Allies. From spring 1918 the Danish society experienced a growing and ever more radical socialist opposition both inside and outside the Social-Democratic Party. Violent demonstrations and strikes were

fuelled by the suffering of the large number of unemployed. The armed forces became infected. The left-socialists had started a conscientious objector movement that influenced the long-service conscripts and the end of 1918 saw a couple of semi-mutinies. Conscripts from Copenhagen were considered unreliable. Arms, ammunition and explosives were concentrated to depots under reliable armed guard.

The collapse of Germany into divisive radicalism and revolution

The Danes had both admired and feared the Germans because of their discipline, industry and cohesion of their society. Therefore the sudden collapse of the country into rebellion, revolution and anarchy came as a shock and highlighted how brittle the remaining stability must be elsewhere. Danish Social-Democrats had always been closely linked to their German sister party, and the break between the mother party and the strong Left-Socialists south of the border was closely observed as a warning. It is likely that the Danish Social-Democratic leader, Thorvald Stauning, also learned of the benefits of some cooperation with the national-conservative military, hitherto condemned as both useless and a class enemy of the workers.

To stop or contain the risk of revolution spreading from Germany, army and naval units that were considered reliable were deployed to the Jutland land border and to the exposed southern coasts of the Danish islands. It quickly became clear that the German rebels were no serious threat. The only direct result of the German revolution was when the German pre-Dreadnought battleship, *Schlesien*, now used as a cadet training ship, sought protection in Danish territorial waters from the revolutionary sailors of Kiel. The main threat came from radicalised Russian Prisoners-of-War who had escaped or released from camps in Germany. The country already had problems with Russians who had arrived from Germany during the war or were treated in the Horserød hospital camp close to Helsingør (Elsinore).

Short conclusion

The traditional narrative of Denmark during the First World War - attractive, but false - is a story of how a strict neutrality of foreign policy, fair trade relations with both sides and media impartiality was sought in principle, but adjusted when necessary due geographical position dominated by German power. According to the tale, a highly talented Social-Liberal government manoeuvred the country safely through the war. Military preparations could do nothing to deter military actions of the great powers, whether Germany or Britain, they could only irritate and provoke Germany if not approved by her. The narrative was recently updated by the prominent 20th century historian, Bo Lidegaard, with elegance and clarity, but without any foundation in new research.

The reality was that the German Army did not consider it possible to use two of its too few army corps to take and occupy Denmark to meet the navy's operational requirements. This partly because Fortress Copenhagen could not be taken quickly and therefore would tie-up the forces landed on Zealand. They might be cut-off on the island if and when the Royal Navy arrived in Danish waters. Therefore the army successfully vetoed any operations against Denmark until autumn 1916, and the next half year it was unwilling to consider more than a very limited advance to Esbjerg and Fredericia - when troops became available - to supplement its new defence posture in North Schleswig. In autumn 1916 the naval defences of Copenhagen deterred the only serious threat against the capital, that of heavy naval artillery. Until spring 1917 Danish neutrality was not a delicate, but robust. To the extent relevant, the neutrality was consolidated by the capital's defences and by the deployment of a reinforced army battalion to Esbjerg. When the German Army qualified its veto in spring 1917 making it dependent of events in Norway, the only influence left to any Danish government was to choose whether to resist or accept German occupation of Jutland to be used as a forward base for operations against Norway. There is very little doubt

that the ruling Social-Liberal government's reaction to the German ultimatum already known to its inner circle would have been limited to one of protest.

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Prof. dr. Wim Klinkert (The Netherlands)

Prepare to deter. Dutch neutrality as a strategic problem, 1904-1914

In 1903, a group of prominent Dutch military experts drew up an extensive report on the coastal defences of the country. They unanimously concluded that tens of millions of guilders had to be invested to bring both the coastal defence works and the fleet operating close to the coast up to modern standards. The naval base at Den Helder and the IJmuiden fortifications as well as those at Hook of Holland – the seaside protection of Amsterdam and Rotterdam respectively - needed to be modernised. But also the defence works at the Scheldt Estuary, at the southwester tip of the country, were mentioned. All in all, it would be the third substantial Dutch investment in fortresses and war material after the modernisation Dutch New Waterline and the building of the Fortress Amsterdam. Both of these projects had cost the Dutch Government many tens of millions of guilders in the 1880s up to the turn of the century. These two extensive lines of fortifications, both based on an ingenious system of inundations, had attracted some praise from abroad, but as they were lying inland and were obviously meant for the defence of the country, they had not made Dutch defence policy a subject of European interest. This was about the change when plans for improvement of the coastal defences became public knowledge.¹

This brings us to the leading questions of this article: Why were the defence initiatives of a neutral power, lacking any territorial ambitions, of interest to the major European powers, and why did this interest increase significantly from 1910 onwards? How did the Dutch war preparations, based

¹ See on Dutch defence policy: W. Klinkert, *Het vaderland verdedigd. Plannen en opvattingen over de verdediging van Nederland, 1874-1914* (Den Haag 1992) and Wim Klinkert, *Defending neutrality. The Netherlands prepares for war, 1900-1925* (Leiden and Boston 2013).

only on the effective protection of the neutral territory, change because apparently the Dutch preparations had international complications? And finally how did this work out during the First World War?

First, it is important to realise that the choice for armed neutrality created several difficult strategic questions in itself. Remaining neutral in case of a European conflict meant the Dutch would spread their army along the borders. This was meant as deterrence and as show of will to protect the neutral territory with force if necessary. Should an attack take place, the army would retreat within the safety of the fortress lines that protected the western part of the country, which included the main cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. So, if neutrality was violated, the army would resist, but not fight to death because it subsequently had to repel an attack on the fortified lines for at least a few months. Only this scenario would make the country a credible ally if a major power came to its rescue and it would increase the Dutch chance for a seat at a future peace conference.

Second, armed neutrality was also based on the assumption that the interests of the surrounding major powers would be served best when a neutral power controlled the estuary of three main European rivers (Meuse, Rhine and Scheldt). None of the great powers would ever agree with the dominance of one of them over this strategically located coastal area. It meant, in theory, that the Dutch were always sure to find an ally, but that it was an unspoken assumption, not a policy advocated by the Government. On the contrary, the Dutch Government repeatedly declared that it would not side automatically with the opponent of the country that invaded its territory. It wanted to have complete freedom of action to decide any course it wanted at any time.

Third, the defence of the Netherlands posed a difficult and interesting strategic problem. As the army was considered absolutely necessary to defend the core of the country on its own for weeks, maybe even months, how much was to be invested in the protection of outlying parts of the country, especially Limburg

in the southeast and Zeeland in the southwest? On the one hand, both areas were obviously not part of the Fortress Holland; on the other it was areas like this, which could drag Holland into a war against its will. Limburg in the southeast was important if the German Army wanted a quick and easy route towards France, and the Dutch military authorities were well aware of that. They had observed the large railway yards built in the 1880s in small German towns very near the Dutch border.² Zeeland controlled the waterway to Antwerp: that city, with a large and modern fortress ring around it, was the *reduite nationale* of neutral Belgium and presumably the location for British military assistance for Belgium in case that country's neutrality was violated. Such an event could lead to dangerous international complications for the Dutch. As a relatively small military power the Dutch strategic dilemma was how to handle both the defence of their Fortress Holland for a longer period of time as well as use military might to protect outlying areas, which could become of major interest to the Germans, French or English.

From the turn of the century, step by step, the Dutch preparations to protect the country's neutrality could no longer take place in a military vacuum. Especially German-British maritime rivalry on the North Sea was considered a potential danger, and a new Franco-German war was considered very likely in the not too distant future. The first rivalry affected the Dutch coast, the second affected Limburg. What were possible answers?

One answer was the strengthening of international law, a solution very much favoured by Dutch politicians and legal experts. The 1907 Hague Convention respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers and Persons in Case of War was quite important in that regard, as it led to discussions on the credibility of the power armed neutral states could bring to bear. Thus coastal defence works could not remain so obviously out of date but had to be

² Klinkert, *Vaderland verdedigd*, 237.

strengthened also for this reason. Furthermore, the Dutch had been shocked by the Japanese attack on Port Arthur, the Russian city in China, in 1904, which had taken place without a formal declaration of war. The Dutch military especially saw this as a bad omen for future conflicts, in which the attacker would overwhelm his opponent by way of a surprise attack. Lacking strategic depth, this was considered a dangerous development for Holland. A Dutch attempt to include, in the Hague conventions, an obligatory period of 24 hours after a declaration of war, before hostilities could begin, failed.³

The other answer was modernising and expanding defences, but that expensive option brought some difficult questions with it. Was money to be invested in the Fortress Holland, lying inland and obviously purely defensive? Or should it be invested in the outlying provinces, as they were more likely to be in danger of being violated by foreign powers? Yet strengthening defences there could be interpreted as choosing sides while doing both simultaneously was very much beyond the means of the Dutch Treasury. So it is no surprise foreign eyes were looking with interest at the solutions the Dutch would come up with.

Let us go back to the plans of 1903 to modernise coastal defences. They had hardly had time to gather dust as the situation was evolving very quickly. In 1904, the surprise attack of Japan on Russia, mentioned before, and the passage of the Russian Baltic fleet through the North Sea stirred military opinion. Especially while the Russian fleet fired at fishing boats not far from the Dutch coast. As a response, the Dutch Navy came into a state of alert; while the government contacted London and Berlin to be sure Dutch neutrality was not in danger in any way.⁴ Differently but more or less simultaneously formal visits by large German and British naval squadrons, a new phenomenon for the Dutch, attracted attention. In July 1904 part of the German North Sea Fleet visited

³ W. Klinkert, "J.C.C. den Beer Poortugael" in: G. Teitler and W. Klinkert (eds.), *Kopstukken uit de krijgsmacht* (Amsterdam 1997) 250-267, there 263.

⁴ C. Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland, 1903-1907* (Den Haag 1958).

Zeeland and in August the following year a large British naval squadron called on IJmuiden, the North Sea port close to Amsterdam. Both visits triggered all kind of speculations in the Dutch press, but they caused no incidents.

Partly as a result of the Russian-Japanese War the Hague Peace Conference of 1907 codified the rights and duties of neutrals. This not only brought the question on the credibility of armed defence of neutrality to the fore – especially regarding the Scheldt estuary as the Dutch guns would be unable to block this waterway to Antwerp in any way - but also the discussion of a possible British blockade. In a British-German war the Dutch expected the British to block the German coast, and opinions differed on the expected British actions regarding the Dutch coast. Most Dutch experts agreed that a British blockade outside Dutch territorial waters but blocking shipping towards Holland, was in fact a violation of Dutch neutrality and thus a possible *casus belli*.⁵ Further, the scenario of a landing of the British army on the northern coast of the Netherlands was considered a possibility as the British could attack the main German naval ports over land from the northern Netherlands. The question of the blockade was dealt with in the 1908 London Declaration concerning the Laws of the Sea that did indeed protect neutral rights, but as it was never ratified, the Dutch were rather sceptic about its importance in wartime. Great Britain would choose might over right, they thought; because that is what major powers tend to do. The Second Boer War in South Africa, in which the small Boer republics fell victim to British imperial might – at least that had been the majority opinion in Holland - moreover, had not been forgotten.

These international developments are reflected in Dutch war planning. In September 1907, for the first time in several decades, large military exercises were held at the coast, in which not only army and navy participated, but also a new organisation, the military coastguard, founded in 1906 to increase readiness

⁵ Klinkert, *Vaderland verdedigd*, 449.

in case of an undeclared invasion by hostile naval forces. The eastern land border had always been the area where a ‘strategic surprise’ was feared. Now the press extensively covered the coastal exercises, also because the Queen was present and the navy just had presented its first submarine. Some newspapers guessed that ‘Southland’, the attacker, was in fact France. Others impassionedly compared the manoeuvres to the glorious days of 17th century Dutch coastal defence by the navy.

New also was the appointment of foreign military and naval attaches in The Hague. Until 1907 only the British army and navy were represented here, but in just three years, from 1907 to 1910 the French and Germans joined them. Moreover, the French were the most frequent visitors to Dutch military exercises, a fact perhaps less surprising as it were probably the Dutch that were the first to confront a German advance towards France.

The newly appointed military attachés were also interested in the Belgian-Dutch efforts to cooperate more closely militarily, something that had been under discussion since 1904. In both countries it was not the government but individual officers and publicists who emphasized that a closer cooperation between the two neutral states would add significantly to the military weight the countries could bring to bear. Both armies combined might constitute a serious enough force to deter both the Germans and the British from violating the neutral borders. It is especially between 1904 and 1907 that this topic was discussed frequently in public, yet both governments remained silent.⁶ For the Dutch Government it was unacceptable to connect their freely declared neutrality to the internationally guaranteed neutrality of Belgium. It would reduce their absolute freedom of action in a future crisis. Moreover, as most analysts expected Belgium to be invaded in the next war, that country would drag Holland into the conflict too: The Netherlands stood a greater chance to remain outside a future

⁶ Klinkert, *Defending Neutrality*, 52-54.

European conflict if it remained on its own. Some liberal Dutch Members of Parliament did raise the issue of internationally guaranteed neutrality for the Netherlands as well. They argued it would strengthen the Dutch position and, as an attractive 'by-product' would reduce the need for increased defence spending. The government did not agree. They were not inclined to 'beg' for guarantees and the proposal did not get a majority.⁷

From 1904 onwards therefore one sees a growing interest in the question of neutrality and Dutch coastal defences: it had become a topic of some international importance and the Dutch were well aware of that. In 1906, the Government discussed the modernisation for the first time in Parliament. The need to act was clear, but the problem was finding the means, since the expensive Amsterdam Fortress had not yet been completed and the field army was also being expanded and modernised at great cost. It was urgent, but not only money was a problem, also building new strong defences in the south-western province of Zeeland, positioned outside the Fortress Holland, was problematic. Major investments there could be justified by pointing at international law that demanded effective and credible defence of neutral territory. As mentioned the obsolete guns along the Scheldt that were still in use could only protect neutrality symbolically by firing some harmless projectiles. But effectively closing the Scheldt with modern fortifications at its mouth would hinder British support to Belgium and would consequently favour the Germans. Opponents constantly stressed that the only beneficiaries of the strong Dutch coastal defences were the Germans: who else but the German Army could persuade the Dutch to spend so much money on building defence works outside the Fortress Holland, something that had not been done for almost forty years!

Two scandals in 1910 made things even worse. The first one was the publication of a presumed threat by the German *Kaiser* made directly to Queen Wilhelmina back in 1904 to strengthen Dutch coastal defences or risk a German occupation. It was the interpretation of a

⁷ Klinkert, *Vederland verdedigd*, 430-431.

meeting that had taken place between Abraham Kuyper, at that time the Dutch Prime Minister, who was considered 'pro German' and the German secretary of state for foreign affairs Oswald von Richthofen (1847-1906).⁸ When it became public, it became the subject of a Parliamentary debate in February 1910. Nothing could be proven with any certainty, but speculation remained. The second scandal involved rumours that the mighty Krupp arms factory was behind the Dutch construction plans. It would manufacture the guns that would close off the Scheldt to the British.⁹ The Dutch army, both in Europe and in the colonies, had indeed been a major client of Krupp's for decades. And when it became known other firms competing for this major order were quickly put off, this was a gift for those who feared the Netherlands was moving further into the German sphere of influence. It led to a Parliamentary inquiry and debate in November 1910 and kept creeping up during the following year. In the end Krupp did get the order to produce the guns, but then it was already 1913 and a lot of troubled water had passed through the Scheldt.

All in all, tensions around the defence of the Netherlands peaked in 1910, precisely the year the Dutch parliament had to decide how to spend many millions on coastal defence. The law regarding this issue had been announced formally at the opening of Parliament in September 1909. The Belgians had been informed unofficially even earlier. The government stressed that the huge sums only served to deter any violation of the neutral Dutch territory. Dutch North Sea ports were potentially of such importance for the major powers as naval bases, that only a credible deterrence would suffice. As it was the most expensive Dutch military proposal ever made, it led to fierce polemics: why not fortify the Meuse bridges in Limburg, obstructing a possible German advance over land? Why not invest more in repelling amphibious operations by the army deeper inland instead directly at the coastline? Why invest in Zeeland, outside the Fortress Holland? Why not abandon the plan altogether, as international law was the future for the protection of neutral states, and because all surrounding major powers would only gain by respecting Dutch neutrality? It became by far the most heated debate on fortifications and naval affairs the Dutch had ever known.

⁸ C. Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland, 1907-1914* (Den Haag 1961) 598

⁹ C. Smit, *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland, 1899-1914* (Den Haag 1968) 119-122.

The discussion lasted all through 1910 and 1911, as the government and the military reviewed the plans more in detail. It was the French press that made the plans into a European issue. Roland de Marès (1874-1955), a francophone Flemish journalist, working for *Le Temps* in Paris and *L'indépendance belge* in Brussels, published from October 1910 onwards articles to stir up French and Belgian public opinion against the Dutch plans, calling them pro-German and accusing the Dutch of hindering the British to help Belgium in case Germany attacked that country. On 16 January 1911 the Dutch plans were discussed in the French parliament, introduced by the right wing *député* Jules Delafosse (1841-1916). Foreign Minister Stéphane Pichon (1857-1933) welcomed this criticism on Holland. He even toyed with the idea to make the issue the subject of an international conference, but outside France support for this suggestion was extremely low.

In Great Britain it was *The Times* that in December 1910 and January 1911 devoted a series of articles on this question. The newspaper stated several times that German strategic interests inspired the Dutch plan. In this regard, the newspaper followed the general trend at the time of mistrust towards German intentions. The Dutch newspapers followed with great interest how all major European press agencies reported on this case. It was unusual to have Dutch defence issues debated by commentators and prominent military experts from all over Europe, among others Charles a Court Repington (1858-1925) of *The Times* and Richard Gädke (1852-1926) of the *Berliner Tageblatt*.¹⁰

Except from some French and Francophone Belgian circles most comments stressed the Dutch freedom of choice as to how they should defend their neutrality but also pointed out that the question of the Scheldt was potentially dangerous in case of a European crisis. Speculations involving different war scenarios were put forward, as was the widely felt idea that criticising the Dutch would only make them more stubborn.

The question kept commentators, journalists, lawyers and diplomats busy for several months to come, but in the end, the Dutch themselves reduced the tension by postponing the final decision and scaling the expensive plans down. In 1912 the Government gave priority to strengthening the mobile field army, which could be seen as a less controversial tool for the protection of the neutral territory

¹⁰ Herman Langeveld, "Abraham Kuyper, Hendrikus Colijn and Dutch Foreign and Military Policy 1901-1914", *Dutch Crossing: A Journal of Low Countries Studies* (Autumn 1992) 5-19, there 11. All press articles are collected in Louis van Outhoorn, *Internationale Phonogrammen betreffende onze kustverdediging* (Haarlem 1911).

as its mobility made it effective against potential threats at any part of the border. When the issue of coastal defence was brought forward again, the minister of War told Parliament the defence works at the mouth of the Scheldt were to protect the harbour of Flushing against a *coup de main*, not to close off the Scheldt effectively. Flushing was important for the Dutch Navy as an additional base for submarines and torpedo boats. This meant, according to the Government, it was a purely national affair, not related to the ambition of any foreign country. Parliament agreed and work began. In the end, only the foundations were laid. When on 4 August 1914 Great Britain joined the war, the Dutch declared the Scheldt closed to all belligerent ships, a declaration Britain accepted. The fortress was never built.

This episode tells us that in a climate of rising tensions, the defence effort of a neutral state is taken into account by major powers. A number of questions came to the fore, which would resurface during the First World War and even into the next.

Behind closed doors Dutch military authorities became aware of the difference between deterrence to safeguard neutrality and preparations for an actual defensive war, possibly with an ally. During the years 1914-1918 those two proved to be incompatible and led to serious tensions between the Government and the military leadership. The military point of view was, that preparations, including informal talks with foreign powers, were essential in times of danger and were the only way a defend the country successfully. Already in 1910 the Dutch General Staff pointed out that the defence of the country would benefit substantially when the government would indicate timely which major power would be the potential ally. Only then could war preparations be fruitful. The Government on the other hand followed a strictly legal argumentation, which insisted that neutrality excluded any military preparation that could be considered beneficial to a belligerent. During the mobilisation years, this difference of opinion led to several clashes between the Dutch

commander-in-chief and the government, but a solution had not been reached. This meant the military leadership planned more and more in isolation, going as far as making detailed plans in 1917 and 1918 with the British Army and Navy how to fight together in case of a German attack, without any formal consultation with the Government.¹¹ Apart from this, during the years of the First World War, the Dutch military leadership was constantly in informal contact with representatives of belligerent powers, through their representatives in The Hague.

As Dutch military planners became more than before aware of the international relevance of their planning, they were unaware of the fact that around 1908 decisions had been taken in London and Berlin not to include Dutch territory in British and German initial war plans respectively. From that year onward, British planning for a continental war was more and more directed towards Belgium and France.¹² Helmut von Moltke (1848-1916), of course, changed the Schlieffen Plan, around that same period.¹³ But as before 1908 both these major powers had considered using Dutch territory, in theory, it was not inconceivable this could change again. We now know that, should the delay at Liege exceed 12 days, the German General Staff would have insisted on crossing into Holland in order to speed up the advance towards France.¹⁴ And the importance of the Dutch coast for the Germans was obvious, Friedrich von Bernhardi (1849-1930) had stressed such a scenario in his controversial book *Deutschland und der Nächste Krieg*, published in 1911 and also widely read in Holland, moreover in the German war planning, a British attack via Antwerp and the Netherlands was at least until 1911, considered possible. When in 1916 the Germans made their contingency planning regarding the neutrals, they called the

¹¹ Klinkert, *Defending Neutrality*, 222-225.

¹² D.H. Thomas, "The use of the Scheldt in british plans for the defence of Belgian neutrality, 1831-1914" *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* (1963) 449-470.

¹³ H. Ehlert (ed.), *Der Schlieffenplan* (Paderborn 2007).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 469 and 471.

plan regarding Holland *Fall Küste*.¹⁵ To go even one step further, after the German fortification of the Flemish coast was completed, the German military in 1917 gave their blueprints to the Dutch army that planned new fortifications in Zeeland, according to the German specifications. Only the end of the war prevented the building of these extensive coastal batteries.¹⁶

Also, Dutch public opinion became more than ever aware of the vulnerability of the country and the potential dangers surrounding it. It reacted by emphasizing its own independence and aloofness from power blocks. Some sought refuge in international law, others in stronger defence, but both with the same goal. I fully agree with Maartje Abbenhuis' analysis that from 1910 on the neutrality of the small neutrals militarized. In the case of Holland, the proposed building of the Flushing fortress was the pivotal moment.¹⁷

Concluding. Around 1910 the Dutch neutral position was used for the first time as one of the elements that forged the relationships between the major powers. For France Holland

was important because the Dutch might be the first to confront the Germans on their march towards Paris and large sections of the French military and many politicians feared that Holland was becoming a German satellite state. Germany could, on the other hand, stress in 1910 how much it valued and respected Dutch independence – as long as the Dutch coast was well protected

¹⁵ W. Klinkert, "Fall K: German offensive plans against the Netherlands 1916-1918" in: W. Klinkert and H. Amersfoort (eds.) *Small powers in the Age of Total War, 1900-1940* (Leiden and Boston 2011) 85-118.

¹⁶ J.R. Verbeek, *Kustversterkingen, 1900-1940* (Haarlem 1989).

¹⁷ M. Abbenhuis *An Age of Neutrals. Great Power Politics, 1815-1914* (Cambridge 2014) 224-232. On the Dutch strategic position see also: J. Steinberg, "A German Plot for the Invasion of Holland and Belgium, 1897" *The Historical Journal* (1963) 6, 107-119; J.C.G. Rohl, "Admiral von Muller and the Approach of War, 1911-1914", *The Historical Journal* (December 1969) 651-673; D. Stevenson, "Belgium, Luxemburg and the Defence of Western Europe, 1914-1920" *The International History Review* (November 1982) 504-523 and Jeffery A. Gunsburg, "La Grande Illusion: Belgian and Dutch Strategy Facing Germany, 1919–May 1940" *The Journal of Military History*, 78:1 (January 2014) 101-58.

against the Entente, but that was not said aloud. Britain refrained from criticism towards Holland; in fact, the Scheldt had lost its importance as all planning for sending the British army to the continent had already shifted to the French ports. When Holland closed the Scheldt to British ships it was no longer a strategic problem for Britain. Only Churchill was the exception: he still focused on Antwerp – and led marines to that city – and six months later Churchill would propose an attack on the German North Sea ports via the northern Dutch provinces. That plan was stored away when the choice fell on Gallipoli. In the end the Dutch were not altogether wrong when they claimed their neutrality benefitted all, the only problem was, nobody could give any guarantees.

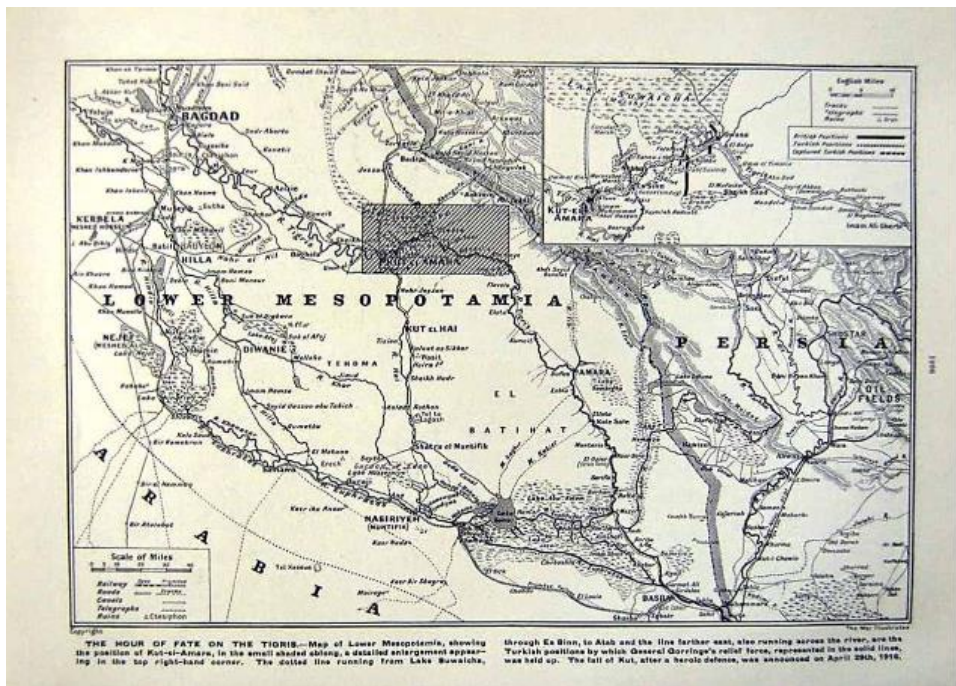
Dr. Saif Al Bedwawi (UAE)

Mesopotamia Operation

British policy towards the Gulf during World War I

Introduction

Thousands of miles away from the Western Front a different kind of war was fought in the Middle East, an "old fashioned war" of small armies, large spaces, cavalry and manoeuvre, and transport by camels, mules and rivers.



When World War I began in 1914, the Indian forces (of British India) were called upon to protect British interests in the Gulf. They were not equipped at the level of European forces, because their duties were to protect the borders of

India's foreign and internal security. But British interests of the oil fields in the Arabian Gulf and mainly oil fields of Abadan (Persia) necessitated the British government to ask the Government of India to send infantry brigade to Bahrain to monitor the situation, and if the situation worsened then occupies the Fao and nearby areas of the oil fields and oil pipelines.

British/Indian Force (Force D)⁽¹⁾

The Title that was launched by the Indian government on the strength of these forces is (D), led by Brigadier Delamin and installed as follows:

- Command Brigade
- artillery battalion dedicated to mountain areas.
- Mines squadron.
- Infantry Regiment No. 4.
- Mules and two workstations.
- Signal squadron.
- A field ambulance unit.
- The Logistics Unit.
- Mail field.
- Unit hardware.
- **Force D full power:**
 1. 91 British officers.
 2. 918 other British ranks.
 3. 82 Indian officers.
 4. 3640 other ranks of Indians.
 5. 460 attached civilians.
 6. 1290 of mules to navigate.

¹ · Ron Wilcox, *The Mesopotamia Campaign of the First World War* (South Yorkshire 2008) 7-8.



German influence on the region:

German influence began growing in the region, especially after the agreement to train the Turkish army and bring it up to the level of European armies. There were various German presences in different places in the Gulf i.e. in Persia, Qatar, Basra, and the rest of the countries that were under the Ottoman Empire.

Furthermore, British fear had enhanced due to a plan by Germany in the creation of a railway line from Turkey to Baghdad and then to Kuwait. That meant direct threat to oil fields of the Gulf.

Furthermore, personalities like Wilhelm Wassmuss, the German spy in Persian, were making situation more complicated⁽²⁾.

². Wassmus was a German intelligent who became Muslim and had rallied supporters in Persia to fight against Britain like Lawrence of Arabia.



Wassmuss of Persia



Lawrence of Arabia

The situation in the Gulf at the break of WWI

The Rulers of the Arabian Gulf were invited in 1916 by Sir Percy Cox, (British diplomat in the Gulf), for a meeting (*darbar*) in Kuwait to discuss means of protecting the area.

The purpose of the meeting was to emphasize the relationship between Britain and the countries of the region, and that these forces came to protect the common interests from any attacks that might be carried out by Turkish troops / German³.

Accordingly, Arabs who were not happy with Turkish policy easily were moved on the British side. They cooperated with Britain hoping that she would help them to get independent after the war.



Arab leaders after *Durbar* 1916

³. Jamal Zachariah Qasim, *The Arabian Gulf Modern History: the internal affairs* (Cairo 1990) 28.

Arabs pro-British

1. Amir Abdul Aziz bin Saud of Najd.
2. Sheikh Khazal al Kaabi of Muhammarah (now called Khuzestan in Iran).
3. Sheikh Jabir al Mubarak al Sabah, (Mubarak al Sabah died in 1915).
4. More than 100 tribal leaders from various areas of Basra and the Gulf.

The major theme of the conference was to put in front of those Arabs leaders that Britain was their only friend and it's time to stand against Turkish forces. Sir Percy Cox had emphasized on the British government respect for the Muslim Holy Places. Furthermore, British government asked the leaders for their cooperation in the war, and offered in return to guarantee them against Turkish attack.

The aims of the Expedition:

The aim of sending Indian troops to the Gulf was stated by the Military Secretary of the Indian Office⁴ as follow:

First: It would checkmate Turkish intrigues and demonstrate British ability.

Second: It would encourage the Arabs to rally to British side mainly Sheikh of Kuwait and Muhammarah because oil fields were in their territories.

Third: It would safeguard Egypt, and without Arabs support a Turkish invasion of Egypt was impossible.

Fourth: It would effectually protect the oil-installation at Abadan.

⁴. Mesopotamia Commission, *Report of the Commission Appointed by Act of Parliament to Enquire into the Operations of War in Mesopotamia* (London 1917) 12.

Occupation of Basra:

British D Force, which started from Bombay under General Delamin, received sealed orders, and arrived at Bahrain on October 23rd 1914. Every efforts were made to quiet the Arabs' apprehensions, and British political officers were successful in securing that object.

On the 5th of November 1914, war with Turkey was declared. Two fresh brigades were sent out from Bombay under Sir A. Barrett which arrived on November 14th, and November 22nd Basra was occupied without much difficulty after a number of skirmishes. The new commander became General Sir A. A. Barrett, who took over from Delamin ⁽⁵⁾.



General Sir A. A. Barrett



General Delamin

Advancing into Mesopotamia:

British and Indian troops made rapid progress inland against weak Turkish resistance. On December 9th, they pushed and occupied Kurna, 50 miles above Basra at the junction of the Euphrates and the Tigris.

Despite the unforgiving climate, British forces continued to march steadily up the River Tigris in 1915. By 28 September, under the leadership of

⁵. Ibid.

[General Charles Townshend](#), they had taken the town of [Kut-al-Amara](#) just 120 miles south of Mesopotamia's major city, Baghdad. Scornful British estimates of Turkish fighting capabilities seemed to be amply borne out by events - witness, for example, the timorous surrender of 2,000 Turkish soldiers to a tiny British advance force in the garrison town of [Amara](#) in June 1915 ⁽⁶⁾.

On April 1st, 1915, the Government of India had decided to reorganize the British Forces from a Division to an Army Corps. This reorganization meant more Divisions to be sent and a new Commander. General Sir John Nixon was appointed as the new commander. He arrived with his staff on April 9th, 1915.



General Townshend



General Nixon

The desire to advance on Baghdad became feasible with the new reinforcement even that was not the original aim of the Expedition namely to protect oil installations.

That plan was given to General Townshend who had taken Kut Al Amara in September 1915. He was put in command of the 6th Division, and immediately was ordered by General Nixon to proceed toward the Baghdad ⁽⁷⁾.

General Townshend advanced toward Baghdad through Tigris River occupying in the way Amara and other cities defeating several Turkish forces.

⁶. Wilcox, *Battles on the Tigris*, 8.

⁷. Mesopotamia Commission, *Report*, 15.

General Nixon though on 5th of October, 1915 had asked for more troops' reinforcement to secure route of communication which was 500 miles long.

Accordingly, Gen Townshend orders were: "...We are for the present, to hold the position we have gained and thus our present orders are not to advance to Baghdad"⁽⁸⁾.

Battle of Ctesiphon

The tide turned quickly, however, at the Battle of [Ctesiphon](#) (22-26 November 1915) against British troops. General Townshend had anticipated an early success with his 13,700 riflemen, 5 batteries, and 11 squadrons of cavalry.

The Turkish forces at Ctesiphon were:

18,000 infantry

400 cavalry

2 regiments of camelry guns.

19 machineguns.

And more than 1000 Arabs volunteers.

Commander: Yusef Nur-ed-Din Pasha.

The Siege at Kut

More than half of the British and Indian troops that fought at Ctesiphon were killed or wounded. The survivors then endured a dangerous and exhausting retreat to Kut-al-Amara without decent medical or transport facilities.

The Commander telegraphed Gen Nixon " I mean to defend Kut as I did Chitral", in Pakistan ⁽⁹⁾.

⁸. "Ibid"

Bolstered by 30,000 reinforcements, Turkish troops besieged Townshend's forces in Kut-al-Amara before the Allied troops could act on the British War Cabinet's advice to withdraw further down the Tigris. The siege of Kut-al-Amara lasted 147 days, before the 11,800 British and Indian troops inside the garrison town finally surrendered on 29 April 1916.

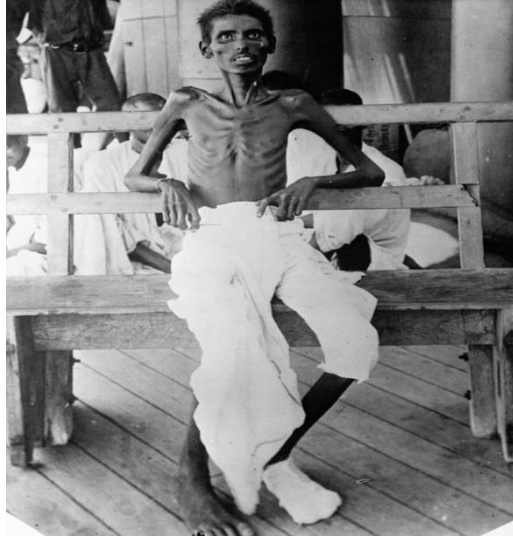


Trenches at the siege of Kut

Conditions and Long March:

Conditions during the siege were appalling. In bitterly cold weather and with little medical treatment, many of the soldiers did not survive the winter. Several attempts were made to relieve the besieged town, but they encountered stubborn Turkish resistance and all ended in failure. For instance, the relief force under the command of [General Aylmer](#) suffered heavy losses at [Hanna](#) in January 1916 and at [Dujaila](#) two months later.

⁹. Wilcox, *Mesopotamia Campaign*, 180.



Indian soldier after Al Amara siege

Captured British and Indian soldiers were brutally treated on their march to Turkish prisoner-of-war camps in [Anatolia](#). Of the 11,800 men who left Kut-al-Amara with their captors on 6 May 1916, more than 4,250 died either on their way to captivity or in the camps awaited them at the journey's end ⁽¹⁰⁾.

General Townshend though was treated well by his captives; he lived in comfort near [Istanbul](#) for the remainder of the war, on a small island.

Lessons from Mesopotamia Operation

If one analyzes the frictions of Mesopotamia Operation, we can say the following:

First: Training. The Indians troops were not trained for a modern war, but they were trained for frontier and internal security of India.

¹⁰. "The Persian Gulf Historical summaries, 1907-1953. Vol., I" (London, 1987) 43-59

Second: The Iraqi climate was different than that of Indian weather. There were many swamps, flies, and the heat of summer depleted the British force and strained its tenuous supply line.

Third: Medical arrangement was far below the scale.

Fourth: Change of Objective. The British campaign Mesopotamia had a limited objective of protecting oil interests in the Gulf. However, the decisive victory in Basra that came too easy had encouraged them to advance to Baghdad.

Fifth: Change of Commanders. Delamin, Barrett, Nixon, Townshend, and Maude. Each one wanted to make a name for him in history.

Sixth: Turkish troops were forceful fighters and not as expected by British, they offered very high standard of Defence. General Kalil though did not get replacement for his loses because Turkey became involved more in Russia and Europe.



Fall of Bagdad in 1917

Lt.Col. Dr. Said Hamad al Kalbani (UAE)

**The economic impact of the First World War on the Arabian Gulf
region
(1914 - 1918)**

Introduction

The Arabian Gulf region enjoyed relative stability before the First World War. However, the war affected the world in general and the Gulf region in particular. The results were positive for some and negative for others. This research considers the economic impact on the Arabian Gulf region as a result of that war. Before addressing the impact, I am going to provide a general idea of geographic location, social reality, the international competition and finally the economy in the region before, during and after the First World War.

The geographic strategic location

The Arabian Gulf region has always enjoyed special significance on the map of the world since ancient times. Empires competed over it because of its strategic location, which was considered one of the trade transportation routes between the East and the West. This competition increased the economic importance in transferring commerce across its land and sea routes through the ages.

Social status

The geographic nature of the Gulf region divided the population into the following groups:

❖ **Bedouin.** The Bedouin were desert dwellers whose lives depended on moving to find water and pasture. They lived in tents. With

increasing urban development, their lifestyle became closer to that of the urban lifestyle.

❖ **Urban populations**. They were residents of coastal cities, and they represented the majority. Their lives were associated with diving and the pearl trade, fishing and shipbuilding. Their livelihood was mainly sea-based and led to direct contact with other civilizations such as India and countries in Africa. The ships and boats used for diving would sail in fleets and one of the ships' captains would be appointed by the local Sheikh as Admiral and known as "Nokhitha.

❖ **Plains population**. They made up the farming class of the community. They relied on water from wells, creeks and rain for farming and livestock.

❖ **Mountain population**. They were a group of people who chose to live in the mountains.

❖ **Arab Islands population**. They were people who lived on the islands and farmed.

The intertwined social fabric of the Gulf created many common customs. However, each population had individual customs depending on the nature of living, which led to some specialized trades and direct contact with other civilizations, such as India and Africa. This fact, coupled with a love of reading, led to an active seeking of knowledge in the countries they visited for trade.

This interaction also helped establish relative stability in the region, especially after the success of some of political alliances that expelled the Portuguese from the region. The success of these alliances helped to increase tribal alliances in the Gulf, each according to their intellectual and doctrinal orientation and geographic location. In addition, small tribal groups joined large tribes seeking protection and stability.

International competition over the Arabian Gulf

Followers of Arabian Gulf economic history would recognize the growing global interest to gain commercial and economic privileges in the region. This interest emerged after the discovery of the Far East and its wealth through geographic exploration that attracted European kingdoms competing with each other during the Renaissance period. The Sixteenth Century started with the Portuguese occupation of the area and then Dutch represented by the Dutch East India Company. This was followed by a Russian attempt at dominance and then France, represented by the French East India Company. The English then occupied the area and imposed political domination over the region through the British East India Company supported by the British Crown in India. In addition, there was the German attempt to occupy the Arab Gulf in 1899 after the Ottoman Sultan granted Germany, the last competitor to Britain in the Gulf region, the privilege of building a railroad to connect Berlin to Baghdad. However, this attempt failed because of the political complications that befell the region during the First World War between the same countries competing in the region, namely Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire on the one hand, and Italy, England, France and Russia on the other.

Economy in the Arabian Gulf before the First World War

Sea ports in the Gulf region played a prominent role in trade between the East and the West. Trade was at its highest during the Eighteenth Century through exports and imports of various goods like pearls, copper and spices, wool, dates, coffee, and coins, using Arab, Indian and European fleets. However, at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century Britain managed to dominate trade in the Arabian Gulf through the management of production centers, major sea ports and the presence of the British East India Company, in addition to restricting commercial activities to treaties and agreements signed with rulers in the region. This resulted in a weakening the role of the local sailing ships; they were

incapable of competing with British ships operating on commercial lines between India and the Gulf.

In the 1860s, there was a shift in the economy of the Arabian Gulf in favor of Britain through the development of a local naval transport network using newly-introduced steam-powered ships. This displaced local sail ships that moved to the less lucrative mail service. However, even this service did not last due to the advent of telegraph. In mid-sixties and as a result of the revolution in the field of transportation and communications, commerce in the region was dominated by Indians and other business agents who operated in India and Europe.

The following are some of the most prominent commercial activities in the Arabian Gulf before the First World War:

Pearls Trading: Trade of natural pearls ranked first in the Arabian Gulf. It was the only source of income for the local population in that period. The annual value of revenues from pearl fishing amounted to half a million rupees in 1790 AD. The main center for pearl fishing was on the Islands of Bahrain.

Until 1902, Manama and Langah were the only pearl markets in the Gulf, but as a result of the strict Persian customs in Langah and the availability of steam ships to the free port of Dubai, Langah trade moved to Dubai, where pearls were graded before being sent to Europe and other markets. The era that preceded the First World War can be considered the golden age of pearl trade.

Arms Trade: The third Afghani War (1879- 1881) played a significant role in attracting the attention of the British and Indian governments to arms trade in the Gulf region. Arms trade was at its peak in the period that preceded the First World War, especially between 1896 and 1898. However, this trade was gradually eliminated at the outbreak of the First World War, especially after the closure of the arsenal in Muscat and the confiscation of the French weapons. The

British government opposed the growing arms trade and enacted laws to maintain the security of their trade in the Arabian Gulf.

General trade: Trade also included various items, such as food, minerals, fabric, and wood. In addition, other items such as dates, Arabic coffee, spices, perfumes, minerals, and silk fabric imported via the Gulf to Persia, Iraq, and Turkey were also traded. This variety played a prominent role in the region's commerce.

Economy in the Arabian Gulf during the First World War 1914-1918

Interest in the Gulf region increased significantly in the period between 1914- 1945, between World Wars I and WW II, due to the aforementioned location between East and West, its proximity to competing countries and due to its oil wealth. During World War I, both Britain and the United States competed over the franchise for oil exploration in the Gulf region. Since the discovery of oil in the area of Masjed Suleiman South Fares in 1908, Britain had been keen on signing a treaty with the rulers of the Arab tribes during the second and third decades of the twentieth century for oil exploration in their countries. The United States possessed great potentials in oil exploration and wanted to maintain its oil reserve, so they demanded the Arab countries in the region to follow the open door policy.

Economic conditions in Iraq

British politicians were divided about the affairs of the Arabian Gulf; some believed that Britain's interest required control of the Arab Gulf and Iraq, while others believed that their interest lay in the control of the Red Sea and Syria to maintain the route to India. However, the British military leadership issued orders in October 1914 for the occupation of Basra and the Arab Al-Ahvaz under the pretext of protecting the oil fields in Choctr and Masjed

Suleiman and protecting its allies in the Gulf region from Ottoman or German attack, in addition to protecting the trade route between Basra and Ahvaz.

The Ottomans opted to stand against Britain by declaring Jihad, provoking the Iraqis and convincing the clerics to lead the campaign and resist the occupation in the Arab Gulf and Abadan.

Economic conditions in Oman

The period between 1914- 1920, witnessed deterioration of economic conditions due to civil wars and the collapse of the general situation in the Gulf region. Trade in Muscat declined 50%. Historical sources indicate that Oman's main imports; rice, cotton, coffee, sugar and cooking oil, plummeted from 4.2 million rupees to 2.9 million rupees between 1915 to 1916, and even reached 2,499,755 rupees in 1917. Exports such as dates and handicrafts also declined to 25% of the total commercial income in 1915.

In 1918, prices skyrocketed in Muscat as a result of tribal unrest, prohibition of arms trade in 1911, Dubai Port rivalry to Muscat Port, and lack of commodities because of the war. This situation made the government unable to meet its financial obligations toward Indian traders. Therefore, Oman applied for a financial loan from the British government and the collateral was Muscat Customs. Britain approved the loan in return for a project to reorganize the financial management and security system, in addition to the assignment of some British men in India in key positions in the Government of Muscat.

Economic conditions in Kuwait

Kuwait was not initially concerned about the First World War, but that situation changed after the drop in the pearl market in the region and in Kuwait particularly. Pearl traders in Bombay refrained from buying pearls from Arab Gulf dealers. The war also delayed the arrival of commercial vessels and rice and sugar prices rose especially with the lack of previously stored quantities.



Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait

Kuwait provided valuable services for the English during the First World War, especially during the reigns of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah and his son, Sheikh Jaber. In 1913, Sheikh Mubarak offered the English trading benefits in the area Burgan Kuwait, and he gave them exclusive oil exploration rights. In return, Britain showed interest in uniting the Arabs, realizing their aspirations, and standing by them against their German and Turkish rivals.

Economic conditions in Saudi Arabia

Britain signed several treaties with Abdulaziz Al-Saud, recognizing him as governor and ruler of Najed, enjoying the powers of a governor in exchange for not signing any agreement or granting any privileges to any foreign country except Britain. In one treaty, Britain acknowledged him as governor of Najd and Hasa, Qatif and Jubail, especially after regaining Al Ahsa from the Ottomans. Al Ahsa area is considered as economically significant for Al Saud family. It is their gateway to the Arabian Gulf; this period became a turning point in the history of the Arabian Peninsula. The region turned into an arena for international conflicts between Britain, Al Saud, and Sharif Hussein, on the one hand, and Germany and the Ottoman Empire, on the other.



King Abdul-Aziz of Saudi Arabia

Economic situation in Bahrain and the Trucial States

During the First World War trade including the arms trade, was affected. In 1915, arms trading was totally banned by British forces all over the Gulf. They did not allow ships carrying weapons to pass through the Arab Gulf; thus affecting one of the pillars of economy in the region as the arms trade was lucrative at that time.

Bahrain. In 1915, the outbreak of plague had a destructive impact Bahrain with 5,000 people dying from the disease. Medications could not be brought in because of the disruption in import and export.

European traders who came to Bahrain were not willing to pay high prices due to the recession of the European trade in Europe because of the war, and this led to a recession in the pearl trade in Bahrain.



Bahrain during the War

Trade between India and Bahrain was affected negatively because commercial steamships were used for the British war effort, and exports plummeted from 1,740,608 GBP to 461,624 GBP in 1915. Imports also declined as follows:

- In 1914, imports reached an amount of 1,877,630 GBP.
- In 1915, imports plummeted to 758,418 GBP; a 66% reduction.
- In 1916, food prices increased because of the restrictions imposed by the British government on exports in India and the lack of commercial ships. All prices rose in Bahrain, such as rice, spices, cooking oil, tea and wheat.

- In 1917, the restrictions and difficulties facing traders selling pearls pushed many traders to change their business activities from pearls to the food trade.

- In 1918, there was some economic improvement, compared to 1916 and 1917. Food prices improved with subsidies from the Bahraini government that reduced food prices, especially prices of spices brought from India. The pearl market, however, was still suffering recession because of the difficulty in selling this merchandise. It began to subside and its market began to die down. Revenues from pearl trading plummeted remarkably in this year. Imports in 1918 amounted to 1,607,049 GBP, compared to 1,529,753 in 1916 and 1917; an increase of %5.05.

- The commercial situation in the Trucial States was affected after the disruption of mail services in 1916, which led to the disruption of all commercial correspondence between the Trucial States and commercial agencies in India and elsewhere as a result of allocating all mail ships to the British war effort. In 1917, most vessels used for pearl fishing gave up this trade because of war and this led to low production.

Economy in the Arabian Gulf after the First World War

The outcomes of the war undoubtedly played a pivotal role in the region. Britain and France illegally and unreasonably split the legacy of the Ottoman Empire. All the promises Britain gave to the rulers of the region vanished in thin air. They were replaced by treaties and conferences, such as Sykes-Picot and San Remo.

- **Trucial States, Bahrain and Oman.** The British - American political competition was driven by economic factors since it focused on acquiring the privilege of oil exploration in the countries of the Arabian Gulf. Britain monopolized economic privileges before the advent of their American economic rival to the region. In Bahrain, America tried to convert its privileges into American franchises, but Britain intervened legally since Bahrain signed an agreement in 1892, stipulating not to compromise the British privileges in Bahrain, including the right to explore for oil. As a result, an independent American franchise of the company known as BABCO was established in Canada and the company acquired the privilege of oil exploration on May 31, 1932.



Muscat post-WWI

Pearl trade continued to deteriorate and decline in Indian and Bahraini markets. However, imports and exports witnessed a slight increase in 1919, compared to 1918, as a result of Britain initiating trade with other markets in the region, such as Al Ahsa and Najed markets, and the engagement of Bahraini and Indian traders. Imports in 1919 amounted 1,414,423 GBP compared to 64,344 in 1918. Exports in 1919 amounted to 946,000 GBP.



Sharjah Air Station 1932

Muscat signed an agreement with a British company for oil exploration on June 24, 1937. The commercial sector in Oman amounted 575,603 GB in 1919 compared to 575,603 GBP in 1918 with an increase of 43,315 GBP. Imports amounted to 260,752 in 1919, compared to 239,965 in 1918 with an increase of 20.787 GBP. The most important imports of food commodities were

rice, coffee and cotton. The value of exports amounted to 314,851 GBP in 1919, compared to 242,323 GBP in 1918 with an increase of 72,528 GBP. Export of carpets amounted to 141,628 GBP.

The First World War produced new innovations and military technologies with foreign powers in all kinds of weapons of land, sea and air. These weapons were brought to the GCC markets, and the countries of the region rushed to buy them to provide the necessary protection.

- **Saudi Arabia**

The Saudi ruler offered Britain an opportunity for oil exploration in the country before holding an agreement with the Americans, but based on reports from experts, the British believed that there was no oil in the Arabian Peninsula. As a result the Saudi ruler turned to the United States, especially as he was in dire need for huge amounts of money due to lack of pilgrims. In addition, he was planning for the development of the Saudi Army, hoping it would become more developed and organized. Therefore, he started exploring new markets to spend the enormous oil wealth. The Saudi government approached the American contender in the oil markets, who sent representatives from Standard Oil of California to conduct some preliminary studies that confirmed the availability of oil in the region of Al-Ahsa and the company acquired privilege of oil exploration on the May 29, 1933. After that the name of the company became “Arabian American oil Company” or ARAMCO. Several other companies started pouring to the region for the same purpose.

- **Kuwait**

In Kuwait, the economic competition heated between the British and American oil companies, despite the attempt of British companies to exclusively monopolize oil exploration and keep other competing oil exploration companies away. However, the political situation in Kuwait and the region wasn't suitable for public and direct competition with big governments and countries. Therefore, the Sheikh of Kuwait had to adopt a policy giving the two rivals an equal

opportunity in accordance with the open door policy. The two rivals would be content and Kuwait would maintain good relationships with Britain and America at the same time. As a result, Kuwait Oil Company was established on February 2, 1934.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper is to shed light on the economic situation in the Gulf region before, during and after the First World War, and how that war affected the political and economic life and social development in the region, especially with the discovery of oil for ships machinery and warplanes in land, sea and air battles.

It is also obvious that the Arabian Gulf played an important role during the First World War in terms of its economic importance that led to European competition to take control of the region.

In addition, Gulf rulers realized the importance of working on the independence of their area and they successfully managed to do so in later periods.

The Gulf rulers realized the importance of balance in the handling trade and resources between the major powers. Balance in trade creates a commercially competitive climate and leads to strengthening international political relationships between countries in the region and the major countries.

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LTC Dr. Cris Quanten (Belgium)
***The Belgian contribution to the campaign in German East
Africa during the First World War***

Introduction

Current military historiography is fully dedicated to the centenary of the First World War. In addition, all attention goes to the European front characterized by a strategic immobility, desperate trench warfare and massacres bordering on madness. However, the First World War was not limited to Europe. There were still plenty of secondary fronts, which remain largely uncovered. Belgian troops thereby also played their part. In this article we will highlight one of these secondary fronts, namely the deployment of the Belgian colonial army, the so called *Force Publique* in German East Africa from 1916 to 1917. This commitment must be seen against the background of the large-scale British campaign against the German colonial army led by Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Operations began on 8 August 1914 and lasted until 25 November 1918 - more than two weeks after the armistice in Europe.

It is not our intention to go into detail about the British-German campaign - this has been extensively covered in numerous other publications - but to discuss the Belgian involvement, and in particular the Belgian military contribution to this operation. At the same time, the deployment of the *Force Publique* in German East Africa cannot be seen separately from the political context. Therefore, the political decision-making process - and this at both the Belgian and the international level - is also scrutinized. The complex - and often divergent - interests that were at stake for the various actors, after all, gave rise to different strategies. To

orient our research, we have posed ourselves the following questions: How did the Belgians end up in this arena? Which Belgian interests warranted such a military deployment? What was the overall Belgian contribution to the British war effort? To what extent has the Belgian military intervention influenced the course of the operations? And finally, what results did the Belgian military deployment yield in both military and political terms? In order to formulate an answer to all these questions, we have opted for a three-pronged approach. In the first part we discuss the general context both in the Belgian Congo and in German East Africa on the eve of the First World War. The section on the Belgian military operations has been chronologically divided into three parts: from 1914 to 1916, what we have called the defensive phase; the year 1916, which was marked by the attack on Tabora and 1917 with the attack on Mahenge. In the epilogue, we briefly outline the subsequent course of the operations, although the Belgians were no longer directly involved. Finally, in the conclusion, we elaborate on the political and military consequences of the campaign and make an overall evaluation.

For this study, we rely mainly on existing literature. However, very little in-depth research has been done on the Belgian military campaign in German East Africa and an overview that examines the military operations in their wider political and international context, is virtually nonexistent. In most cases the studies are the work of soldiers who were themselves involved in some operation and these emphasize a particular aspect. An exception on this is the three-volume book “*Les campagnes coloniales belges: 1914-1918*”, which was edited by the Belgian Ministry of Defence

in the early thirties.¹ For the political and diplomatic aspects, the work of Ingeborg Vijgen: *Tussen mandaat en kolonie. Rwanda, Burundi en het Belgische bestuur in opdracht van de Volkenbond (1916-1932)* proved to be enlightening.² We also did our own archival research. Especially the archives of the *Force Publique* in the Africa archive of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, and the so-called Russian archives of the Royal Army Museum in Brussels, which includes the Belgian military documents relating to the campaign in German East Africa, yielded surprising results.

General background on the eve of the First World War

Since 1885, Belgium possessed its own colony in Central Africa, the Belgian Congo.³ At the head of the colony stood the Governor General.⁴ In practice however, he had no political power; he was merely responsible for the implementation of colonial policy. The actual decision-making power was in the hands of the Ministry of Colonies in Brussels. In 1914 it was led by the Catholic Jules Renkin. The colony also had its own security forces, the *Force Publique*. This colonial army formed the

¹ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, *Les campagnes coloniales belges, 1914-1918*, Institut Cartographique Militaire, Etat-Major Général de l'Armée, 3 Vol, 1927-1932.

² VIJGEN (I.), *Tussen mandaat en kolonie. Rwanda, Burundi en het Belgische bestuur in opdracht van de Volkenbond (1916-1932)*, Acco, Louvain, 2005, pp. 47-71.

³ Congo was colonized at the initiative of King Leopold II and was initially a personal possession, called the Congo Free State. It is only in October 1908 that the colony was transferred to the Belgian State and it was named the Belgian Congo.

⁴ In 1914 Felix Fuchs was the Belgian governor-general in Congo.

backbone of the colonial system. It had to create a climate of security and peace; the necessary condition to let the colony reach its full maturity. On the eve of the First World War the *Force Publique* consisted of some 15,000 Congolese soldiers, framed by 275 Belgian officers and NCOs.⁵ Its organization reflected the paternalistic colonial approach based on the principle of strict racial segregation between Africans and Europeans. The command functions remained firmly in the hands of white officers, while the Congolese soldiers had to be satisfied with lower, executive functions. Since its inception in 1885, the *Force Publique* was primarily a police force that was responsible for local law enforcement and the effective occupation of the territory. This is also evident from the organization. Due to the vastness of the country (80 times the size of Belgium) and the poor road infrastructure which made rapid movements of large units virtually impossible, the *Force Publique* had a very decentralized structure. For example, each district had one company.⁶ The territorially scattered units were available for the local district commissioners. The commander of the *Force Publique* had a purely administrative role. He was only responsible for the logistical preparation of the units. The effective deployment of the troops was a matter for the local colonial officials. The *Force Publique* was therefore not an army in the classic sense of the word. It had neither the resources nor the structure to carry out large-scale military operations.

⁵ HENRY DE LA LINDI (A.), *Les campagnes belges d'Afrique (1914-1917)*, in *CRAOCA*, Nr. 2, 2005, p. 29.

⁶ The colony was organized in 22 districts. It was only in July 1914 that the Belgian Congo was divided into four provinces: Kasai-Congo, Equateur, Province Orientale and Katanga. The organization of the *Force Publique* was adapted to that. Henceforth, the troops were split into four groups, one for each province.

In 1914 Germany was a major colonial power. It had four colonies in Africa, two of which bordered on the Belgian Congo, namely Cameroon and German East Africa.⁷ At the head of German East Africa was governor Heinrich Schnee, who favored a policy of neutrality and wanted to keep the colony out of the war for as long as possible.⁸ However, the commander of the colonial forces, Lieutenant Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck, had a different opinion.⁹ He conducted a more expeditious policy and wanted to prepare the colonial army for possible operations from the moment he arrived in January 1914. The forces, or *Schutztruppe*, that were at his disposal consisted of 216 German officers and non-commissioned officers and 2,500 native troops, also known as

⁷ The German colonies were: Togo (recaptured in August 1914 by the French and British); South Africa (retaken by the South Africans in July 1915); Cameroon (recaptured by the British, French and Belgians in a joint campaign which lasted from September 1914 to April 1916, where 10,570 Belgians and Congolese soldiers were used) and finally East Africa.

⁸ In 1914 German East Africa had a population of 7.645 million natives and 5,336 Europeans. The most densely populated areas were Ruanda and Urundi.

SCHNEE (H.), *Deutsch-Ostafrika im Weltkrieg*, Vero Verlag, s.l., 1919, p. 28.

⁹ Von Lettow-Vorbeck had previously gained a lot of operational experience. In 1900 he took part in the international expedition against the Boxer Rebellion in China. He was also involved in suppressing rebellions of the Herero and the Khoikhoi in German Southwest Africa between 1904 and 1906. In January 1914, the then 44-year-old lieutenant colonel was appointed commander in chief of the armed forces in German East Africa.

VON LETTOW-VORBECK (P.), *La guerre de brousse dans l'Est-Africain (1914-1918)*, Payot, Paris, 1933, p. 32.

askaris.¹⁰ The territory of German East Africa was vast (twice the size of the motherland). The terrain, the climate and the existing infrastructure would have a significant impact on the conduct of military operations. In the west, on the border with Congo, and in the northwest is a mountainous region with peaks over 4,500 meters. The rest of the country consists mainly of savannah and vast bamboo forests. It is a very dry and very barren area. Additionally, there are several lakes - in fact, they are real interior seas - the most important of which are Lake Victoria in the north and Lake Tanganyika in the west. These lakes would play an important role in the logistic supply of the troops. The area where the operations took place is located just south of the equator, leaving only two seasons: the dry season from May to late October, followed by the wet season from November to April. During the latter successive torrential rains change dirt roads into real mud pools, rendering military operations virtually impossible. During the dry season, daytime temperatures can reach 35 degrees Celsius while the nights are very cool. In the mountainous regions night frost can even occur. In addition to these extreme temperature differences, there are also numerous diseases and infections, such as malaria, dysentery and sleeping sickness which make the living conditions very hard. In terms of infrastructure, there were very few paved roads in German East Africa. In most cases dirt roads and trails connected the main towns and villages. However the colony possessed a well-developed rail network. The railway from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika

¹⁰ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 40.

VON LETTOW-VORBECK (P.), Op. Cit., p. 11.

ran centrally across the country. This 1,250-kilometer line of communication was vital for Germans for the rapid movement of troops as well as for the provisioning of supplies from the port of Dar-es-Salaam.

1914-1916: the defensive phase

On 4 August 1914 Germany invaded Belgium. With this the motherland was dragged into the First World War. Initially the Belgian government hoped to keep the colony out of the conflict. For that she relied on Article 11 of the Berlin Conference Act of 1885 which stipulated the neutrality of the Congo Basin, provided that all signatories were in agreement. Paris and London, however, refused to agree with the Belgian neutrality proposal. At that time the German troops in Africa were outnumbered. The allies saw this as an opportunity to definitively deal with the German colonial empire as well as with the German *Mittel-Africa* ambitions. They therefore had more to gain from an offensive attitude than from neutrality as proposed by the Belgians.¹¹ On 8 August 1914 the British started hostilities by shelling the port of Dar-es-Salaam.

The German Governor Schnee realized that an escalation of the war to Africa was inevitable. He could therefore only accept the plans as proposed by the military commander. The top priority was the development of the colonial army. Apart from all German men in the colony, additional native soldiers were also mobilized. In December 1915 the German colonial army had already 11,367 *askaris* commanded by

¹¹ VIJGEN (I.), Op. Cit., p. 51.

2,712 Germans.¹² They were organized into 45 companies. In addition there were 2,600 Tutsis from Ruanda, called Ruga-Ruga, who had sided with the Germans and served as auxiliaries.¹³ Nevertheless, von Lettow-Vorbeck realized that despite the substantial increase in forces, he was no match for the Allied's superior numbers in the surrounding countries.¹⁴ Instead of a conventional approach, he therefore resolutely opted for a mobile guerrilla war, based on small units. Through the masterful use of the maneuver on the interior lines and the performance of small-scale actions without letting the enemy come to grips, he wanted to force his numerically superior opponents to spread out their forces throughout the country.¹⁵ The strategy of von Lettow-Vorbeck was clear: the more allied troops he could keep in German East Africa the fewer troops were

¹² Among the German officers also was a certain Kurt Wahle. He was a retired general who was on holiday with his son in German East Africa at the time of mobilization. He volunteered spontaneously and was initially responsible for the logistic supply of troops and later for all the operations in the western part of the colony.

MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Dl. 1, p. 110.

¹³ The Tutsis were led by mwami Musinga, who strongly favoured the Germans.

KLM (Royal Museum of the Armed forces and of Military History), Fund 185, Box 2299, Map 5469, *Correspondance entre le vice-gouverneur Malfeyt et le commissaire général Henry*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁴ The situation for von Lettow-Vorbeck was anything but favorable: in the north, the British mobilised three divisions in British East Africa; in the east they imposed a complete naval blockade thereby compromising the supply line to the colony; in the south in Mozambique a thousand Portuguese troops were mobilized, in addition to a thousand British troops in Rhodesia. Finally, in the west, the Belgian led *Force Publique* had a similar troop strength as the German colonial army.

¹⁵ VON LETTOW-VORBECK (P.), Op. Cit., pp. 24-31.

available for the European front and therefore pressure on the German front in Europe would decrease.¹⁶ The deployment of his force was completely in line with that strategy. He turned the bulk of his forces - about 6,800 troops - to the northeast, opposite British East Africa (present-day Kenya and Uganda) where he expected the greatest threat. A group of 2,000 soldiers guarded the coast to prevent a possible disembarkation by the British Navy. In the northwest, opposite Uganda and Kivu, he placed 3,000 troops. In the west 1,500 troops guarded the border between Ruanda and the Belgian Congo and another 500 troops were responsible for the control of Lake Tanganyika. Finally, he sent a force of 1,500 troops to the south to block a possible incursion from Rhodesia or Mozambique.¹⁷ Von Lettow-Vorbeck personally commanded the northern forces opposite British East Africa. Because of the enormous distances between the different fronts, however, he could not possibly lead all the operations himself. He therefore restricted himself to giving general guidelines. For the exact details, he counted on the sense of initiative of the local commanders who possessed a great freedom of action.

Von Lettow-Vorbeck realized only too well that time was not his ally. The Belgians and the British were busy building and reorganizing their forces and it would take some time before they were at full strength. Under those circumstances, attack appeared to be the best defense. So he decided from the start to take the initiative by performing harassing actions. These were surprise attacks against the British lines of

¹⁶ VON LETTOW-VORBECK (P.), *Op. Cit.*, p. 11.

¹⁷ JANSSENS (E.), *Histoire de la Force Publique*, Gesquière, Brussels, 1979, p. 156.

communication in British East Africa, as well as against positions of the *Force Publique* at the border with the Belgian Congo. It is in this context that as of 15 August 1914 eastern Congo was rocked by numerous raids conducted by German patrols.¹⁸ Most of the time these were small-scale guerrilla actions without leading to a decisive battle. Then again, the main effort of von Lettow-Vorbeck was not in the west at the border with Congo, but in the northeast opposite British East Africa where he expected the greatest threat. On 22 August there was a significant turn of events. The German warship *Hedwig von Wissmann* shelled Albertville from Lake Tanganyika, thereby heavily damaging the Belgian steamer *Alexandre Delcommune*. From then on the Germans were masters of Tanganyika and they did not hesitate to fire upon Belgian positions on the west bank of the lake. A response to these provocations was inevitable. Initially, the Belgian government had instructed Governor-General Fuchs to maintain a strictly defensive policy.¹⁹ However, the border between Congo and German East Africa was more than 800 kilometers, and guarding it was hampered by the mountainous terrain. Moreover, border defense was a provincial responsibility: in the north that was the *Province Orientale* headed by vice-governor Justin Malfeyt and in the south that was Katanga where Charles Tombeur was vice-governor. Each province thereby obstinately followed its own course and coordination between the two was minimal.

¹⁸ LEFEVRE (P.), LEFEVRE (J.-N.), *Les militaires belges et le Rwanda 1916-2006*, Racine, Brussels, 2006, pp. 19-22.

¹⁹ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 129.

It is only with the shelling of Albertville that the policy of the Belgian government toughened. In a telegram dated 28 August, the then Minister of Colonies, Renkin, bluntly stated that limited offensive actions were now admitted for the purpose of defending the territorial integrity of the colony.²⁰ But the *Force Publique* was not prepared for the conduct of large-scale operations: they possessed neither the resources nor an appropriate structure. It was essential that the *Force Publique* was reformed from a local police force to a deployable army as soon as possible. Especially vice-governor Tombeur, who was also a colonel in the *Force Publique*, would play a leading role therein. On his own initiative he decided to reorganize the different companies into three battalions with a unified command structure. The centralization permitted a greater flexibility to the deployment of the troops. That decision soon proved to be the right choice. When on 5 September the Germans attacked the little town of Abercorn in nearby Northern Rhodesia, Tombeur decided - at the request of the local British commander - to send a battalion. This had to buy the British the necessary time to mobilize and send reinforcements to the threatened area. Meanwhile, the Belgians had to protect the border between Abercorn and Saisi and prevent the Germans from threatening the Belgian southeast flank. Eventually two battalions - which amounted to 55 Belgians and 1,360 Congolese - were deployed during the operation. They stayed in Northern Rhodesia until November 1915. The situation in the Northern *Province Orientale* differed thoroughly with the one in Katanga. Vice-governor Malfeyt - unlike Tombeur - had no previous military

²⁰ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, pp. 130-131.

experience and had handed over command of the troops to his deputy, Major Henry Josué who used a more cautious tactic. To defend the border he used an outstretched linear dispositive with the *Force Publique* - still organized in companies – to occupy a number of strategically important positions. From August the Germans offensive actions also started here. There were skirmishes at Toa, Uvira, Kisenyi, Luvungi and the island of Kwidjwi in Lake Kivu, where the *Force Publique* suffered many losses.

In early 1915 it was apparent that the followed strategy had to be adapted; defensive actions alone didn't suffice anymore. The Belgian Congo could no longer just stand by and watch at the German attacks. The idea of an attack on German East Africa became increasingly acceptable: Belgian defensive policy was exchanged for an offensive one. The Belgian government in exile (Le Havre) also supported the switch. She realized that offensive action against German East Africa, could yield not only military but political benefits as well. She counted on a territorial expansion of the Belgian colony as payment for its participation in the Allied war effort. The Belgian government was particularly interested in the left bank of the Congo estuary.²¹ The idea was that Belgium would cede the occupied territories in German East Africa to the British, who would in turn, put pressure on Portugal to relinquish the left bank of the Congo estuary to Belgium. As compensation, the Portuguese would

²¹ Congo, the size of which corresponds with that of entire Western Europe, had only a coastline of 37 kilometers. The fact that the left bank of the Congo estuary was in the hands of the Portuguese, made the colony also very vulnerable. Therefore the Belgian government had a high interest in securing control of the left bank. For that they were counting on the diplomatic support of the British in exchange for participation in the war effort against German East Africa.

acquire a part of the German colony on the border with Mozambique. However, this was a bold calculation, and the outcome was far from certain.

A large-scale military action required a prior reorganization of the *Force Publique*. Firstly the actions of the two regions had to be coordinated. In February 1915 the Minister of Colonies decided to hand overall command of the troops of the two provinces over to Colonel Tombeur.²² This brought the entire eastern front under his command. He had to coordinate the military efforts and ensure the unity of command. From Elizabethville he reorganized his forces, which he divided into two groups: the Brigade North led by Colonel Philippe Molitor and the Brigade South led by Lt. Col. Frederick Olsen. Each brigade consisted of two regiments that were in turn composed of three battalions. In total, about 10,000 men. Yet the reorganization also revealed many problems, especially in logistics. All supplies had to be brought in from Matadi, the only port on the Atlantic Ocean, a trip of more than 2,800 kilometers, which took no less than four months. For that, thousands of indigenous

²² There was a lot of envy between Henry and Tombeur. Both were hoping to be given the supreme command of operations in eastern Congo. That Tombeur eventually got the position came as no surprise. In addition to his military career, he had a lot of political experience as vice-governor after all. He had also been orderly of Albert I and therefore enjoyed the King's confidence. Following the appointment of Colonel Tombeur as overall commander of operations, Lt. Col. Henry - deeply disappointed - requested a transfer to the European front.

HENRY DE LA LINDI (A.), *Op. Cit.*, pp. 36-38. VIJGEN (I.), *Op. Cit.*, p. 59.

carriers, who often lived in appalling conditions, were used.²³ The armament of the *Force Publique* was ill-suited for offensive operations. Therefore, in 1915 an extensive weapons program was launched that involved new weapons and artillery pieces being brought from Belgium and France.²⁴ It was clear though that the reorganization of the *Force Publique*, on both the logistical and organizational level, would still take a long time to complete and held back the planning of operations. Because of this Tombeur's anticipated offensive had to be postponed three times.

The measures that had been taken were not only situated on the military but also on the political level. For example, from 1915 onwards, the Belgian government was going to take several diplomatic initiatives. Indeed, she realized that the deployment of the *Force Publique* could only be effective if it was part of a broad international approach. She therefore

²³ In practice, entire villages - men, women and children - were mandatorily employed to obtain a sufficient amount of carriers. For the whole of the campaign in German East Africa the total number of carriers is estimated at 260,000.

ABZ (Archive of Foreign Affairs), AA, FP 2663, 28 February 1919. MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 1, p. 34.

²⁴ So the old and worn out Albini rifles, which were still fired with black powder, were replaced by the French Gras (in total 15,500 pieces). The artillery was renewed as well: in addition to the existing Nordenfeld- (47mm) and Krupp Guns (75mm), four batteries of four guns each were Saint-Chamond (70 mm). The problem was that no ammunition was provided for those new guns. So there was nothing for it but to use the existing stock of 75mm shells, but that meant that all the shells had to be filed down by 2.5mm!

TASNIER (L.), VAN OVERSTRAETEN (R.), *Les opérations militaires*, Bertels, Brussels, 1923, pp. 328-329. MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, pp. 70-74.

went looking for allies, just like on the European front. The British colonial forces seemed to be the obvious choice. Where the unofficial contacts between the commanders on the ground were very positive, the British Colonial Office proved very reluctant towards mounting a combined military operation. The British suspected the Belgians of having territorial ambitions to the east of Congo, which conflicted with their pursuit of a north-south connection on the African continent. Moreover, the British troop strength, both in British East Africa and Northern Rhodesia, was as yet too limited to launch a large scale operation. The British military buildup was still in the works and it would eventually take until 1916 before it was at full strength.

The British dismissive attitude led to disappointment and incomprehension by the Belgian government.²⁵ Whereas in 1914 the British did not want to know about the Belgian neutrality proposal and were in favor of an operation against the German Colony, they now suddenly appeared unwilling to cooperate on the Belgian initiative. Without British support a large-scale offensive seemed to be excluded for the time being. However, the Belgian Minister of Colonies, Renkin, did not yet want to throw in the towel. He promptly ordered Tombeur to develop the operational plans. The colonel wanted to launch a converging attack based on two columns, one approaching from the north via Kigali and one from the south via Bismarckburg.²⁶ His intention was to encircle the German forces in the west of German East Africa and eliminate them.

²⁵ VIJGEN (I.), Op. Cit., p. 60.

²⁶ KLM, Fund 185, Box 1569, Folder 3856, *Instructions générales du Colonel Tombeur aux commandants de groupes*, pp. 162-165.

This way he wanted to put an end to the German attack on the east of Congo. However, this plan proved to be too ambitious, especially without British help. In July 1915 they were modified at the insistence of the government and reduced to a smaller operation that was only set against Ruanda.²⁷ The northern column had Kigali - the administrative capital of Ruanda - as objective while the southern column focused on Nyanza - the political capital and the residence of mwami Musinga. In order for the operation to be successful Tombeur set as prerequisite that Lake Tanganyika had to be recaptured. The Germans really controlled the entire region with their navy on Lake Tanganyika. At the same time the lake was absolutely vital for the logistical supply of Belgian troops during their advance.²⁸ At the continued insistence of the Belgians, the British finally proved willing to cooperate. In October and November 1915, two fully disassembled British battleships were transported over land from Cape Town to Lake Tanganyika.²⁹ Together with several smaller Belgian ships they would have to mount the attack on the German fleet. To support this maritime action, the Belgian government also sent four seaplanes as air support to Congo. This first joint initiative was successful: in February 1916, the Hedwig von Wissmann was sunk. Four months later, in June 1916, the last German warship, the Graf von Götzen, was disabled after a

²⁷ ABZ, AA, FP 2650, *Télégramme de Renkin à Tombeur*, 21 June 1915.

²⁸ The German navy on Lake Tanganyika was inter alia composed of the ships Hedwig von Wissmann, Kingani and Graf von Götzen.

²⁹ KLM, Fund 185, Box 3204, Folder 7089, *Rapport du major Stinglhamber*, pp. 321-322.

raid by Belgian aircraft. This meant the Germans lost control of Lake Tanganyika.

In December 1915 there was a major reversal. The British notified the Belgian Government that they yet would like to participate in a combined attack on German East Africa. A defeat of the British troops in Tanga had been decisive for the British change of heart.³⁰ The military defeat had important political consequences: the British now realized that they should no longer underestimate the German colonial army, and especially that they needed the Belgian *Force Publique* for their operations against German East Africa. Moreover, the situation in German Southwest Africa had also changed. In July 1915 the German colony had been recaptured by South African troops.³¹ At the request of the British,

³⁰ Tanga was a strategically important city on the Indian coast. From there a railway line went to Uganda. On 2 November 1915, a force of 8,000 Indians, supported by the Royal Navy, disembarked with the intention to conquer a bridgehead. However, von Lettow-Vorbeck had prior knowledge of the attack and he used the railway to transfer additional troops in extremis from the northern front to Tanga. The British were not informed of this and were met by fierce German resistance. After three days of heavy fighting, the Indians were forced to return to their ships. In addition, they had to leave all their heavy equipment behind. British losses, 360 killed and 487 wounded, were high in comparison with the German's: 61 dead and 81 wounded. The Battle of Tanga, the first large-scale confrontation in German East Africa, was therefore a humiliating defeat for the British.

TASNIER (L.), VAN OVERSTRAETEN (R.), Op. Cit., p. 333. VON LETTOW-VORBECK (P.), Op. Cit., pp. 43-44. HORDERN (C.), *Military operations East Africa*, Vol. 1, His Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1941, pp. 60-170.

³¹ In 1910 the Union of South Africa was founded. It had the status of a dominion within the British Commonwealth. The first government was led by Prime

these newly available troops would be used against the last German stronghold: German East Africa. So in early 1916, the 17,000 soldiers who were already stationed in British East Africa were joined by 15,000 South Africans.³² This force was led by the South African General Jan Christiaan Smuts, who already wanted to begin with a large-scale operation in the spring of 1916. Now nothing seemed to stand in the way of a combined operation against German East Africa. Also the planning of the operations gained momentum. The plan was to perform a double envelopment: the British, who had the most troops, would attack with three divisions from the north, while the Belgian *Force Publique* had to advance with two brigades from the west.³³

This put an end to the defensive phase. From 1914 to 1916 the Belgians had limited themselves to defending the Congolese border. Yet this did nothing to prevent the German attacks. An offensive against German East Africa seemed inevitable. To that end, the *Force Publique* was reorganized and rearmed. It was intended to launch a limited offensive to conquer a strip east of the Congolese border and thus put an end to the German operations. The Belgian Government argued that the

Minister Louis Botha, who would fully support Britain during the First World War. He would deploy the South African troops on the side of the British.

³² ABZ, AA, FP, 2650, *Note de Renkin au Roi Albert*, December 1915.

³³ Additionally, in the south there were also operations being conducted by the Portuguese from Mozambique and by the British from Northern Rhodesia. Yet these were secondary operations. The intention was to force the Germans to send troops to the south, and so weaken the northern front. According to von Lettow-Vorbeck the greatest threat came from the British in the north and the Belgians in the west.

HORDERN (C.), *Op. Cit.*, pp. 275-293.

territories that were occupied by the *Force Publique* could later serve as bargaining chips for territorial expansion of the colony. Therefore 1916 was the year of the reversal in the Belgian strategy: a defensive policy was exchanged for an offensive one.

Offensive phase: the attacks on Tabora and Mahenge

On 26 February 1916 General Tombeur gave his guidelines for the final attack.³⁴ His final plan remained roughly the same as the initial plan, with only some minor modifications. To circumvent the German defensive positions north of Lake Kivu, the northern brigade had to advance from Kivu to Kigali through Ugandan territory. The southern brigade would attack south of Lake Kivu towards Nyanza via Shangugu.³⁵ For his offensive Tombeur had 11,698 soldiers and 719 Belgian officers and NCO's at his disposition.³⁶ On 20 April 1916 the operations began. Initially the *Force Publique* met with little resistance. Von Lettow-Vorbeck had indeed moved different units of the western front to the northeast in a reaction to the large-scale British offensive that had started in March. The remaining troops in the west could only limit themselves to small-scale actions, after which they always retreated to the next defensive positions. Without too much difficulty, the Belgians captured Kigali on 6

³⁴ In February 1916 Colonel Tombeur was appointed general-major by Minister Renkin.

MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, Annexe Nr. 1, *Précisions au Plan de Campagne*.

³⁵ The German forces north of Lake Kivu were commanded by Captain Wintgens (1.100 men); those in the south by Major von Langen (700 men).

³⁶ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 60.

May and Nyanza on 19 May. After the capture of the latter city, mwami Musinga, who - until then - had collaborated with the Germans, submitted to the Belgians. With this act the *Force Publique* got their hands on the whole of Ruanda.

The swift success of the Belgian advance came as a surprise. As a consequence, Tombeur urged Minister Renkin to continue the operations.³⁷ The conditions seemed favorable for wresting even more territory from the Germans without too much effort. Because the British had their hands full in the northeast, the Belgians should be able to do so virtually unchallenged. Minister Renkin was clearly on the same wavelength as the general on this. He assumed that the more land area the *Force Publique* conquered, the more Belgium would be able to influence the repartitioning of Africa in a post-war peace conference. His goal was to put Belgium in the strongest negotiating position possible. In his eyes the conquest of vast territories in German East Africa was the best guarantee for obtaining territorial compensation at the Congo estuary. Whereas Minister Renkin initially only counted on the territory of Ruanda, he now seemed to nurture far greater ambitions: in a telegram to Tombeur he promptly gave permission for the conquest of the whole area between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria, as well Urundi and a strip east of

³⁷ ARA (Belgian State Archives), de Broqueville fund, Nr. 421, *Télégramme de Tombeur à Renkin*, 7 June 1916.

Lake Tanganyika all the way to Kigoma. This was a considerable expansion of the original objectives.³⁸

Backed by the Belgian Government, Tombeur resumed his advance in early June. The Brigade North marched further towards Lake Victoria which was reached on 1 July. But there she came across fierce German resistance, by which she was held up. Meanwhile, the Brigade South had started its march toward Usumbura and Kitega, which were captured on 6 and 17 June respectively. After the fall of these cities, the local Tutsi leader, mwami Mwambusa, had no choice but to submit to the Belgian authorities. This brought Urundi effectively under control of the *Force Publique*. On 8 July, the southern brigade continued its operations in the direction of Kigoma. That city was of strategic importance: it was not only a major port on Lake Tanganyika, but it was also the terminus of the railway line from Dar-es-Salaam. On 28 July the city fell into the hands of the *Force Publique* without much resistance.³⁹ The Belgian advance seemed unstoppable. In less than three months' time, the *Force Publique* had accomplished all its operational aims. It now controlled an area three times the size of Belgium. Things looked very bad on the western front for the Germans. Due to the rapid advance of the different

³⁸ ARA, de Broqueville fund, Nr. 422, *Télégramme de Renkin à Tombeur*, 9 June 1916. KLM, Fund 185, Box 2312, Folder 5493, p. 281, *Ordres du général Tombeur aux commandants de brigades*.

³⁹ The capture of Kigoma also had significant advantages in terms of logistics. Henceforth supplies for Belgian troops could be transported by ship from Albertville, which was significantly faster than over land.

MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, pp. 365-398.

Belgian columns, the German troops were cut off from each other and threatened to become isolated from their main force in the east. Therefore, von Lettow-Vorbeck decided to regroup them in Tabora and have them construct a defensive position.⁴⁰

The withdrawal had important consequences. British General Smuts wanted to administer a decisive defeat to the Germans at Tabora. For that he was planning a large operation for which he also counted on the Belgians. The British had suffered considerable losses during their offensive in the northeast and their advance had been very difficult. The climatic conditions had also taken their toll and had caused a lot of victims among the South African and Indian troops. That was in stark contrast to the Belgian successes. Therefore Smuts wanted to use the *Force Publique* for his attack on the German stronghold. In early July, the British general sent a request to Tombeur to partake in the offensive via the Belgian liaison officer Captain Raoul Van Overstraeten.⁴¹ The aim was to attack Tabora, which was an important road junction and trade center, simultaneously from different directions, and subsequently eliminate the encircled German troops.

The proposal came as a surprise to the Belgians. It signified a further expansion of the war. The proposal therefore created some debate in the Belgian government. Especially Foreign Minister Eugène Beyens

⁴⁰ VON LETTOW-VORBECK, Op. Cit., pp. 166-168.

⁴¹ ABZ, AA, FP 2653, *Télégramme de Orts à Renkin*, 5 July 1916. VAN OVERSTRAETEN (R.), *En ces temps-là. Carnets d'un officier de liaison dans l'Est Africain*, Mouscron, 1961.

opposed.⁴² He feared that the Belgians were increasingly being used by the British to do their dirty work, without receiving any guarantee from the British Government for any form of compensation whatsoever. He wanted to avoid the *Force Publique* being used to purely serve the British interests. However, Minister Renkin did not agree. He especially considered the long-term advantages and therefore came back to his earlier arguments of the more areas the Belgians could conquer, the more they would benefit during the future peace talks. Moreover, it was hard to leave the British, who at that time were making heavy sacrifices on the European front, to their own devices.⁴³ Renkin's arguments finally proved to be decisive. On 12 July Tombeur received permission from the Belgian government to take part in the operations against Tabora.⁴⁴ That approval had been given on one condition: the deployment of the *Force Publique* had to be restricted to the area delimited in the south by the railway from Kigoma to Tabora and in the east by the line Tabora-Mwanza, an area of no less than ten times the size of Belgium.⁴⁵ With this, the originally planned limited Belgian advance went out the window. Belgian territorial appetite appeared to be insatiable.

⁴² BEYENS (E.), *Un diplomate belge au service de son pays, 1915-1917*, Centre Guillaume Jacquemyns, Brussels, 1981, pp. 247-248.

⁴³ To relieve the front at Verdun, the British had started the Somme offensive on 1 July 1916, in which hundreds of thousands of British soldiers would die. It would therefore be particularly difficult for the Belgians to refuse participating in the attack on Tabora.

⁴⁴ ABZ, AA, FP 2658, *Télégramme de Renkin au Roi Albert*, 15 July 1916.

⁴⁵ ABZ, AA, FP 2653, *Télégramme de Renkin à Tombeur*, 1 August 1916.

Mid-August, the Belgian northern brigade and the British column started with their advance on Tabora. However, they both met with fierce German resistance that caused a lot of delay. Especially the British offensive could not seem to get out of the starting blocks. Meanwhile Tombeur had ordered the Brigade South to progress to Tabora from Kigoma, on a route running alongside the railway. The aim was to take the fortified city in a pincer movement. However, coordination between the different forces was lacking. In addition, the southern brigade encountered significantly less resistance during its advance, making them progress much faster. In late August the brigade was less than 50 kilometers from Tabora.⁴⁶ It looked increasingly likely that Tabora would be taken by the Belgians and not by the British. But that liberation would have to wait until 19 September. By clever maneuvering, forward German troops managed to temporarily halt the advance of Brigade South. That tactical defeat, however, would not affect the ultimate outcome of the battle. Rather, the delay of the western column allowed Brigade North to still achieve a timely junction, thereby threatening to encircle the German forces in Tabora. General Wahle, who commanded the German forces in Tabora, realized that the battle was lost. Instead of fighting to the bitter end against the Belgian superior force, he decided to withdraw his troops and join von Lettow-Vorbeck's main force. As a result the *Force Publique* took the city on September 19 without fighting. The Belgians had won the race to Tabora. In less than five months, they had marched more than 1,500 kilometers on foot in especially trying circumstances. The price they

⁴⁶ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, pp. 419-452.

paid was high: 24 Belgians and 481 Congolese were killed during the fighting; another 17 Belgians and 853 Congolese died due to illness.⁴⁷

The taking of Tabora led to great optimism on the Belgian as well as the British side. Everyone seemed to assume that the German resistance would now rapidly crumble. The Belgian government also believed then that the moment was favorable to politically cash in on its military successes. In September, Minister Renkin launched a proposal to transfer the control of Tabora to the British in exchange for British recognition of the Belgian rights to the other territories that the *Force Publique* had conquered.⁴⁸ The purpose of the underhanded initiative was clear: by showing the necessary goodwill, the Minister hoped to receive formal guarantees from the British on the Belgian claims to the conquered territories in the west. However, the attempt did not achieve anything. The British played their cards close to their chest and relegated the final settlement of the ownership to a peace conference to be organized later. On 25 February 1917, the Belgians had no alternative but to hand over the city and the entire region surrounding it to the British during an impressive parade. The Belgians were - yet again - left behind with no guarantee of territorial claims. Meanwhile Tombeur had already begun the withdrawal of the Belgian troops because the government had decided that they would no longer take part in the continuing campaign in German East Africa. Only four battalions of the *Force Publique* would stay behind in the German colony to occupy the conquered territories (Ruanda, Urundi and

⁴⁷ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 3, p. 438.

⁴⁸ KLM, Fund 185, Box 74, Folder 163.

the area between Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika to Kigoma).⁴⁹ In early 1917 many officers and NCOs were withdrawn to Belgium, where they were needed on the front on the Yser river. In February General Tombeur also left. He was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel Armand Huyghé.

However, the evacuation of Tabora was not the end of the Belgian deployment in German East Africa. The troops of von Lettow-Vorbeck - still some 7,500 men strong - had lost increasingly more ground because of the successive Allied offensives.⁵⁰ At the end of 1916 they were pushed back to the southeast in the vicinity of Mahenge, where they were in danger of being surrounded. General Smuts was convinced that the end of the campaign was now in sight. To eliminate this last German stronghold, he had planned a grand offensive after the wet season in 1917.⁵¹ But it would never come to this. On 24 February, von Lettow-Vorbeck took the initiative by unexpectedly launching a counterattack. He succeeded in breaking through the encircling forces with 500 men, led by Captain Wintgens.⁵² It was the beginning of a hellish journey through the colony. Not only Tabora, but also the other territories occupied by the Belgian forces came under threat again. The Belgian government immediately

⁴⁹ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 13.

⁵⁰ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 2, pp.

605-606.

⁵¹ ABZ, AA, FP 2654, *Télégramme de Tombeur à Renkin*, 17 and 20 December 1916.

⁵² ABZ, AA, FP 2654, *Télégramme de Van Overstraeten à Renkin*, 24 February 1917.

offered the British to send 4,500 soldiers of the *Force Publique* in.⁵³ The reason why the Belgian Government came with this - quite remarkable - proposal is unclear.⁵⁴ In contrast with the previous operations, a further territorial expansion was absolutely out of the question. Perhaps they hoped the proposal would create some leniency with the British with regard to the realization of the Belgian demands in Central Africa.

Throughout the summer of 1917 the Belgians and the British unsuccessfully pursued the German column.⁵⁵ Ultimately, it was not until October 1917 that the German raid came to an end. The result was that the final offensive against the main force of von Lettow-Vorbeck had been stalled. In June 1917 it was therefore agreed that the Belgians would leave the pursuit to the British; at that moment the German force had marched to the northeast, in the direction of Kenya. Rather than continuing the chase, the Belgians would, along with the British, prepare a major offensive against the German main force in the vicinity of Mahenge. Two hastily assembled columns of the *Force Publique* were transferred to Dodoma and Kilosa from Kigoma by means of the central railway; from there they went on foot to the plateau of Mahenge. The Belgian troops got moving mid August. Huyghé's plan was to surround the Germans. For that the columns advanced along two axes toward Mahenge. During their

⁵³ ABZ, AA, FP 2654, *Télégramme de Renkin à Malfeyt*, 30 March 1917. MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 3, pp. 14-17.

⁵⁴ VIJGEN (I.), Op. Cit., p. 69. VANGANSBEKE (J.), *Comrades in Arms? Het diplomatieke steekspel tussen België en het Britse Empire in Africa tijdens de Grote Oorlog*, in BTMG, Nr. XXXVIII, Brussels, 2008, p. 144.

⁵⁵ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 3, pp. 105-115.

progression the troops met with stubborn resistance by German forward positions. However, the Germans wanted to avoid a decisive battle and thus continued to retreat after each confrontation. Once the Belgian troops threatened to encircle Mahenge the Germans called it a day and they cleared the fortified city. On 9 October, Mahenge fell into the hands of the *Force Publique*. This effectively ended the active role of the Belgians in German East Africa.⁵⁶ The pursuit of the German troops was left to the British. The latter had already started with a large scale offensive from the east. As a result, the proverbial noose tightened around the German troops. Nevertheless, von Lettow-Vorbeck would provide another major surprise: with his force he managed to break through the encirclement and escape to Mozambique, where he played a game of cat-and-mouse for ten months (from November 1917 to September 1918) - with his British pursuers.⁵⁷ But despite their numerical superiority they still failed to catch him. Cornered by his pursuers, he crossed the border with German East Africa again in late September 1918. From there he advanced to the north to subsequently invade Rhodesia. Von Lettow-Vorbeck was like a ghost. The British were at wits' end. In late October, it even looked as if the Germans wanted to push through to Angola via Katanga. But it would never come to this. On 13 November 1918, a British courier was captured

⁵⁶ During the operations in 1917, both during the pursuit of the column Wintgens and in the attack on Mahenge, four Belgians and 144 Congolese were killed. In addition, a further 13 Belgians and 417 Congolese died due to illness or accidents.

MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Dl. 3, p. 438. KLM, fund 185, Box 2823, Folder 6425, *Rapport du docteur Rodhain*, pp. 1-91

⁵⁷ Von Lettow-Vorbeck's forces consisted at that time of 320 Duitsers and some 2.000 askari's.

by a reconnaissance unit of von Lettow-Vorbeck. From the papers he had on him, it was evident that the war in Europe had ended: Germany had signed a truce on 11 November. Continuing the fight in German East Africa would therefore be pointless. Von Lettow-Vorbeck then decided to lay down his arms. On 25 November he surrendered with his troops in Abercorn to the British. This brought an end to the First World War in Africa. Von Lettow-Vorbeck had performed above and beyond the call of duty. For four years he succeeded, with only a token force, to fix a much stronger opponent in East Africa which never managed to defeat him. German East Africa was the only front in the First World War where the Germans remained undefeated. This would contribute to the myth that would arise around the person of von Lettow-Vorbeck in the postwar period.

Conclusion

The Belgian military deployment in German East Africa as well as the associated political objectives saw a whole evolution during the First World War. We have labeled the period from 1914 to 1916 as the defensive phase. The objective as proposed by the Belgian government in this phase was twofold: firstly, to assure the defense of the eastern border of the colony, and secondly to prepare a limited offensive from 1915 to put an end to the German invasions in the Belgian Congo. With this the Belgian defensive policy was exchanged for a more offensive one. Conducting offensive operations entailed, however, that the *Force Publique* - which was originally founded as a local police force – had to be transformed into a deployable army. This transformation process would take a considerable amount of time. In addition, collaboration with the

British was also crucial. However, London provisionally kept its distance. The British suspected the Belgians of having territorial ambitions to the east of the Congo, which did not fit into their pursuit of a north-south connection on the African continent. For all these reasons it would eventually take until April 1916 before a combined offensive got underway. This brings us to the second phase: the Belgian offensive against German East Africa. This operation was originally only focused on Ruanda. However, as the *Force Publique* continued its advance, the territorial ambitions were also adjusted. After Ruanda, Urundi soon followed and eventually the whole area between Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika was conquered. The line of thought of the Belgian government was that the conquered territories would serve as leverage for a territorial expansion of the colony during the postwar peace talks. The greater the occupied territory, the more weight Belgium would carry. However, the Belgian government was not interested in an expansion of the colony to the east; rather, its sphere of interest lay in the west, on the Congo estuary. For this, they proposed a sort of exchange triangle: Belgium would transfer the areas in German East Africa that had been captured by the *Force Publique* to the British who, in return, had to put pressure on the Portuguese to give up the left bank of the Congo estuary to the Belgians. Yet that reasoning was called into question from the outset. The British played their cards close to their chest and abstained from any pronouncement on possible compensations. This uncertainty would urge the Belgians - especially Minister Renkin - to an even greater military zeal. By unconditionally deploying the *Force Publique* on the British side, he still hoped for a British recognition of the Belgian claims to the area between Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika. It is against this background

that the participation of the Belgians to the subsequent operations, first against Tabora and then against Mahenge, must be seen. But that recognition failed to materialize and the proposed exchange even less so. The fact is that London did not give any consideration to the aspirations of its small ally. German East Africa was simply too important a link in the creation of the British north-south connection from the Cape to Cairo. Throughout the campaign, London would use the Belgians, without giving anything back in return. Belgium risked being left behind empty-handed after the war. During the Paris Peace Conference, where the distribution of the German possessions in Africa was discussed, the Belgian diplomats would do anything within their power to salvage territorial compensations.⁵⁸ For that they received support from an unexpected quarter. Pressured by the American President Woodrow Wilson, the British finally had no option but to slice up the colonial cake. In May 1919, the negotiators reached an agreement, in which Ruanda and Urundi became Belgian mandates under the auspices of the League of Nations.

From a military point of view, the Belgian contribution to the operations in German East Africa should not be underestimated. At the zenith of the operations, the numerical strength of the Belgian colonial army amounted to a quarter of that of the British troops. Considering the vastness of German East Africa as well as the experienced German colonial army, the Belgian military involvement was therefore of crucial importance to the British. Additionally, the *Force Publique* achieved remarkable results. In a few months' time they managed to conquer the whole western front and occupy a vast area. This led to significant savings

⁵⁸ VIJGEN (I.), Op. Cit., pp. 87-106.

for the British: because of this they could concentrate their forces in the northeast against the German main force. In addition, the Belgians would also play an important role in the follow-up operations against Tabora and Mahenge, although without decisively defeating the Germans. Yet all these military successes cannot be separated from the German strategy. For von Lettow-Vorbeck, after all, the biggest threat came from the British and not from the Belgians and therefore he directed his main force toward the northeast. This explains why the Belgians met relatively little resistance during their advance from the west. Major battles, comparable to those in Europe, did not take place there. The conflict was mostly limited to small-scale battles and skirmishes with an enemy who retreated time and time again. The biggest obstacle on the Belgian operations was therefore not the German resistance, but the terrain, climate and above all the logistics that suffered from ever longer lines of communication. This is also evident from the official list of losses of the *Force Publique*. The number of casualties due to illness and exhaustion was a multiple of the number of soldiers who were killed during the fighting.⁵⁹ Throughout the colonial war from 1914 to 1918, 28 Belgians and 625 Congolese were killed; 30 Belgians and 1,270 Congolese died from disease and accidents. Nevertheless, the highest price was paid by the forgotten group of indigenous carriers. They had to drag supplies for the troops for hundreds of kilometers in appalling conditions without anyone caring for them. Few numbers on their losses are available. Clearly, the Belgian administration was absolutely not interested in their fate. Recent estimates – which are

⁵⁹ MERZBACH, LIBERT, PEETERS, STIERS, WEBER, Op. Cit., Vol. 3, p.

still very cautious – assume some 27,000 men, women and children perished.⁶⁰ Not only the black soldiers, but a lot of carriers as well therefore paid for the Belgian military successes with their lives. They were sacrificed on the altar of Belgian colonial interests in a war that was not theirs.

⁶⁰ DE WAELE (J.), *Voor vorst en vaderland : zwarte soldaten en dragers tijdens de Eerste Wereldoorlog in Congo*, in *Militaria Belgica 2007-2008*, Koninklijke Vereniging Vrienden van het Legermuseum, Brussels, 2009, p. 128.

Major General (ret.) Dr. Mihail E. Ionescu (Romania)

The Crisis of July-August 1914 and Romania's Options

World War I. Brief historiographical retrospective

*"How was it that the world was so unexpectedly plunged into this terrible conflict? Who was responsible? Not even the astutest and most far-seeing statesman foresaw in the early summer of 1914 that the autumn would find the nations of the world interlocked in the most terrible conflict that had ever been witnessed in the history of mankind [...] The nations slithered over the brink into the boiling cauldron of war without any trace of apprehension or dismay"*¹. These are the words of Lloyd George, the prominent British politician, when describing the breaking out of World War I, the world "slithering into war" without realizing it.

There is a long-running debate in the international historiography regarding the origins, causes and responsibilities in the outbreak of World War I which we shall not delve into². However, we shall keep in mind the fact that none of the major belligerents assumed the entire responsibility for the catastrophe. Both during the conflict and afterwards, the two camps blamed each other. The interwar period was marked by the victors' discourse, which placed the entire blame for the disaster on the defeated parties. As reconciliation between the belligerents failed to materialize and the world plunged into an even more terrible catastrophe, World War II, the truth remained a secondary goal. During the

¹ Lloyd George, *Memoires de guerre*, vol. I, traduction de Charles Bonnefon, A. Fayard & Compagnie, Editeurs, Paris, 1934, p. 61.

² For this debate, see, among others, *The origins of the World War I*, edited by Richard F. Hamilton, Holger H. Herwig, Cambridge University Press, 2003; William Mulligan, *The origins of the First World War*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

postwar period, under the circumstances of the bipolar confrontation, the attention of the global historiography focused on the enormous conflict of 1939-1945, which became the “favorite subject” of the historical research. Thus, the debate of the subjects regarding World War I remained in the shadow, but the latter was not forgotten. In the first postwar years, Soviet and Western historians (Luigi Albertini, A.J.P. Taylor) accredited the idea – undoubtedly, with the necessary nuances – that there has been a continuity in the German politics from the 19th century until World War 1. The Second World War appeared as the direct result of the first, therefore Germany was responsible for launching them both. However, the “exigencies” of the “Cold War” imposed a different vision, which downplayed the deep contradictions among the European powers at the beginning of the 20th century. The fact that a commission of French and German historians tried to accredit the idea that the major international actors had a shared responsibility in the outbreak of World War 1 is very revealing. This thesis of “shared responsibility” is now largely accepted, even if it was vehemently contested in the 1960s by Fritz Fischer, who tried to demonstrate the exclusive guilt of Wilhem II’s Germany.

Recent research³ emphasized the context of that era, marked, among others, by the increased globalization caused by the advent of telegraph and railroads, which had unified the European continent, and by the progress of science and technology, which created the impression that the future was wide open. It was that “belle époque” that was so much talked and written about, but which, paradoxically, announced the great cataclysm.

There is also a different interpretation, not necessarily new, that emphasizes the contribution of the political and military decision makers in the

³ Charles Emmerson, *1913: In Search of the World before the Great War*, PublicAffairs, Falkirk, 2013.

outbreak of the conflict⁴. The war could have been avoided, certainly, but the decision makers lacked vision, taking step after step in the direction of conflict, which exceeded any prediction and expectation. This “sleepwalking” by the politicians resembled a risky game of poker, in the context of a rapidly changing multipolarity, characterized by arms race, mistrust and weak international institutions⁵.

It must be said that there were attempts to stop the descent into the abyss, in the words of the German ambassador to Great Britain, Karl Max Fürst von Lichnowsky⁶, and Edward Grey, the British foreign minister⁷. But the hurricane could not be stopped.

The war broke out very rapidly, the state of belligerence between Austria-Hungary and Serbia (July 28, 1914) being followed by a torrent of declarations of war and, in just one week’s time, the two large coalitions, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, were at war.

If we examine the declarations and the initiatives during the crisis, one can conclude that no one wanted a generalized war. Austria-Hungary, through its actions, wanted only to punish Serbia and to put an end to the irredentist acts near its borders. Russia wanted merely to determine Austria to give up its plans to liquidate Serbia. At its turn, Germany sought to protect its ally, Austria-Hungary, from being humiliated once again, as it had happened in 1913. At the same time, Berlin saw it as a proper moment to settle its traditional dispute with France. This fact confirms Churchill’s assertion: “*The great wars break out when the two*

⁴ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, Penguin Books, 2012.

⁵ Ibidem, p.545-550.

⁶ Karl Max Fürst von Lichnowsky, *Misiunea mea la Londra*, traducere Andrei Alexandru Căpușan, Institutul European, București, 2013.

⁷ Edward Grey, *Memoires*, Paris, Payot, 1927, Appendice D., p. 576-589.

protagonists consider themselves more or less equal and when each of them believes in having a chance to win”⁸.

Despite from being short, as some contemporaries expected, the war proved lengthy and destructive, causing huge loss of human lives. It was the first war of the industrial age, a total war, as Erich Ludendorff called it.

This very rapid course of action can be explained by the speed of mobilization. Germany mobilized its army on the assumption that the Russian army needed more time to make its troops operational. But, once the mobilization was launched, it could no longer be stopped, prompting the historian A.J.P. Taylor to launch the “*theory of war by timetable*”. In other words, once the first steps have been taken, the war was waged according to the timetable of trains⁹.

Controversies (debates) regarding Romania’s attitude towards war

Like most European states, Romania, a secondary actor in the Concert of Europe, was taken by surprise by the rapid evolution of the events. Ion G. Duca, one of the most influential leaders of the Liberal Party, wrote that “*Nobody was thinking of generalized war. At least in what I was concerned, I must confess that I was convinced that war will not break out. I knew that there was a strong pacifist current in France and Britain and that Germany, in full prosperity and happiness, or Austria, feeble from all angles, would not dare to unleash a war which they could hardly win. It seemed to me a mental aberration of such proportions that I was unable to see the leaders of these states capable of*”¹⁰.

Princess Marie, the consort of crown prince Ferdinand, has too recorded the devastating impact that the outbreak of the conflict had over Romanians:

⁸ François Kerdaudy, *Lumea văzută de Churchill. Afirmații, Confidențe, Profeții*, Pro Editură și Tipografie, 2007, p.44.

⁹ A.J.P Taylor, *War by Time-table; How the First World War Began*, American Heritage, New York, 1969.

¹⁰ I. G. Duca, *Memorii*, volume II, Neutralitatea. Partea I (1914-1915), ed. Stelian Neagoe, Editura Expres, Bucharest, 1992, p.35

“And behold, just a month after the assassination in Sarajevo and after many tribulations, the die was cast and war was decided. Austria declares war on Serbia on June 28 [July 28].

We are looking at each other frightened by the terrible significance of this moment, when the peace of the world is shredded to pieces. The fuse was lit, just how long will the flame go?”¹¹.

Prime minister Ion I.C. Brătianu, in accordance with the information relayed by Constantin Diamandy, the Romanian minister to Russia, considered that war would only break out in four or five years, while King Carol I was convinced, from what he had learned from Emperors Wilhelm II and Franz Joseph, that war would not begin soon.

At the beginning of the conflagration, the Romanian nation was faced with an especially difficult geopolitical and geostrategic situation. Two of the major belligerent powers, Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire, had under their domination territories inhabited by a Romanian majority. Namely, Transylvania and Bukovina, under the rule of the Dual Monarchy, and Bessarabia, annexed by the Russian Empire in 1812.

The Romanian Kingdom itself was placed between the two aforementioned empires, with territorial claims both in the West and East. In addition, it was part of the Triple Alliance, which it joined in 1883¹². The presence of the Romanian state in the coalition of the Central Powers represented the Romania’s answer to its national security needs. Romania was no match to

¹¹ Maria, Regina României, *Povestea vieții mele*, volume II, translated from English by Mărgărita Miller-Verghi, ed. Ioana Cracă, Editura Eminescu, Bucharest, 1991, p.395.

¹² For this sequence in the Romanian foreign policy, see: G. Căzan, S. Rădulescu-Zoner, *România și Tripla Alianță*, Bucharest, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1979; *Documente Diplomatice Române, seria I, volumul 11, 1883*, eds. Alin Ciupală, Rudolf Dinu, Antal Lukács, foreword by Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, minister of Foreign Affairs, introduction by Rudolf Dinu, Editura Academiei, București, 2006 etc.

Russia – which was perceived as the main threat –, the alliance with Austria-Hungary being therefore seen as a deterrent against a potential invasion and even allowing Romania to stand a chance if such a situation arose. The cost of this solution was by no means cheap. The national movement of the Romanians from Transylvania now became prisoner to this alliance. It was obvious that Romania could not afford to advocate the disintegration of its ally, which it needed to survive at the expense of national unification. Another significant cost was that, as long as Russia was in opposition with the Central Powers, Romania had to avoid the goal of recovering Bessarabia and to abandon even the preservation of national identity of the Romanians from this province.

The system created in 1883 functioned efficiently until 1914. Under the circumstances of the confrontation between the two camps – the Entente and the Central Powers –, Romania has forced to reconsider its foreign policy options. Russia, for decades regarded as the main threat to Romania, was a member of the Entente, while the Balkan Wars had shown that the Central Powers and especially Austria-Hungary pursued a Balkan policy which was in dissonance with Romania's interests.

On the other hand, to the south and east of the Carpathians, the public opinion manifested a strong pro-Entente stance, which was, in essence, Francophile. On this background, a certain reorientation in the politics of Bucharest took place, the most significant moment being the visit by Tsar Nicholas II to Constanța (June 1/14, 1914)¹³. Nevertheless, the difficulties in the relation between Romania and Russia had not been overcome, suspicion and mistrust remaining the main characteristics of the bilateral rapports.

The start of the hostilities forced the Romanian state to take a stance. With this aim, King Carol I summoned the Crown Council at the Peleş Castle

¹³ Ion M. Oprea, *România și Imperiul Rus (1900-1924)*, Editura Albatros, Bucharest, 1998.

from Sinaia on July 21/August 3, 1914¹⁴. The Council scrutinized the text of the Austrian-Romanian treaty, which clearly stated, in the Article 2, that “*if Romania was attacked without any provocation from its part, Austria-Hungary is obliged to give timely help and assistance against the aggressor. If Austria-Hungary was attacked in similar circumstances by one or several states neighboring Romania, the latter is obliged to immediately help the former*”. From the same article, it was clear the Romania was not bound to assist or offer military support to Austria-Hungary, given that the latter had not been victim, but rather the initiator of the attack against Serbia. Moreover, Romania was not consulted by its ally when the latter decided to declare war.

In the Crown Council, the diverging views of the Romanian leaders regarding Romania’s path became quickly apparent. King Carol I, strongly supported by P.P. Carp, affirmed that the only way forward was with the Central Powers, which had guaranteed the security of the Romanian state for three decades. Most of those present, led by prime minister Ion I.C. Brătianu, argued that Romania should not take such a step. Romania should not contribute to the destruction of a small nation and should not fight alongside Hungary, which pursued such a strong policy of denationalization of the Romanians from Transylvania. As a consequence, the Council decided almost unanimously that “*Romania should take all the measures to guard its borders*”. This ambiguous formula received varied interpretations, some claiming to signify “armed expectative”, others neutrality. What is certain is that Romania placed itself outside the conflict, which amounted to an unofficial divorce with the Triple Alliance.

We have to mention that one important factor that stood behind this decision was Italy’s attitude, herself member of the Triple Alliance since 1882. Right during the debates from the Crown Council, the news arrived regarding the

¹⁴ For more details, see Ion Mamina, *Consilii de Coroană*, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1997, p. 27-52.

Italian neutrality, something that weakened the position of King Carol I, who sought to immediately enter the war alongside Central Powers¹⁵.

In fact, on September 10/23, 1914, the two countries signed an agreement regarding the simultaneous abandonment of neutrality¹⁶. This renunciation was provisioned to enter into force following an eight day prior warning. At the same time, the two governments pledged to maintain constant relations in order to coordinate their actions, “*so that to maintain the same attitude in order to safeguard their respective interests in their action for maintaining the neutrality, in the eventuality of mediation or in case neutrality would no longer be possible because their respective interests were threatened or harmed*”¹⁷.

At this point, a few words must be said about Romania’s decision to remain neutral, as adopted by the ruling elite at the start of World War 1. Like any other historical process, this decision was extremely complex – the narrative reproduced above described in fact a “wait and see” trend –, and this fact immediately stood out. Even if one cannot talk about a political crisis – in other words, an open clash between the two sides confronting each other in the Crown Council –, for those at the core of political power the decision to remain neutral represented, in fact, a compromise. This compromise had been reached between the two main positions, namely the one of Carol I – who backed the immediate entry into the war alongside Austria-Hungary – and the one of the government. The liberal head of the cabinet, Ion I.C. Brătianu, and with him the entire pro-Entente camp, understood that Romania could not afford joining one of the sides, but believed that the war – estimated to be short – could offer unexpected opportunities. Much of the public opinion was already dissatisfied with the secondary role reserved for Romania by the ally Austria-Hungary in the

¹⁵ *La Romania nella grande guerra. Documente militari e diplomatici italiani, 1914-1918*, a cura di Rudolf Dinu, Ion Bulei, Editura Militară, Bucharest, 2006, p.37-52.

¹⁶ Central National Historical Archives (hereinafter ANIC), fonds Casa Regală I, file no.61/1914, p. 1.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

successive Balkan crises (1912-1913), thus downplaying the importance of the political and military partnership with Vienna. On the other hand, Russia had already signaled its openness towards the formation of a strong Romanian state through the inclusion, at the right moment, of Transylvania. As early as June 1st, 1914, therefore right on the eve of World War 1, the Tsar had visited Romania for one day (in Constanța, on the shore of the Black Sea). His foreign minister, Sergey Sazonov, stayed a few more days in Bucharest, then, together with Romanian prime-minister Ion I.C. Brătianu, visited Predeal, the border crossing between Romania and Austria-Hungary. From here, as if by chance, the automobile carrying Brătianu and Sazonov entered Transylvania. This is what Sazonov wrote in his postwar memoirs about this unusual, yet symbolic, incursion: “/.../ *our automobile quickly crossed the border line to the amazement of the customs post and we drove a few kilometers on Hungarian territory. I suppose that, in the moment when we crossed into Transylvania, the same thought passed through our minds: we were now entering a Romanian land waiting to be liberated from the Hungarian yoke and to be reunited with the motherland. Obviously, we did not share these thoughts, as the moment for such confessions had not arrived yet*”¹⁸. All this happened in early June 1914, just two months before the outbreak of World War 1.

The moment arrived much quicker than the two statesman expected to. In his memoirs, the same Sazonov claimed that “*the intimacy (intimité) and the trust between Russia and Romania*” established in early June “*attracted the Romanian government on our side*”. Moreover, this government, “*in agreement with the public opinion*”, considered that Russia was correct “*to affirm the impossibility for Romania to achieve national unity without our support*”. In the opinion of the Russian diplomat, this would have been the reason why, at the start of the war, “*no one, except King Carol and a few other representatives of*

¹⁸ S. Sazonov, *Les Années Fatales*, Payot, Paris, 1927, p.123.

*the neoconservative party of Carp and Marghiloman, felt bound to the agreements with the Central Powers*¹⁹. Thus he explained Romania's declaration of neutrality, which did not *"let herself tempted by the cabinet in Berlin, which waved Bessarabia as a reward"*²⁰.

This trend in the Romanian decision making process soon became stronger. So much so that, according to the telegram sent on September 17, 1914, by O. Czernin, the Austrian minister to Bucharest, to his superior in Vienna, Berchtold, the Romanian king confessed that he was thinking about abdicating. Czernin considered this an *"impossibility"* and expressed his hope that, *"if the king believes, for the moment, that he cannot intervene alongside us, then neutrality must be maintained for a short while and, following our first victories, Romania will join us"*. In addition, King Carol, in order to hasten Romania's entry into the war alongside the Central Powers, came up with a plan during the same conversation with Czernin. *"Then – according to the Austrian ambassador – the King told me that he wants to offer me a very special token of trust and that he wants to make a proposition that would make him look like a traitor to his own people. Yet, he is fully confident that no one would find out about the abuse committed by him"*. The proposition went like this: *"Vienna to act on its own initiative in order to prompt Bulgaria to officially declare that it would attack Romania if the latter would turn against the Central Powers. This would put some sense back into the heads of those from here and force them to behave themselves. His Majesty was very clear that he has full confidence in me because he knows that the secret of this proposition would be forever protected from the incompetents that cannot be relied upon. I gave my word to the king that I would respect this condition"*²¹.

¹⁹ Ibidem, pp.246-247.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ ANIC, Microfilms Austria, roll 220, frames 253-254. Apud Sorin Cristescu, *Ultimele zile din viața regelui Carol I în lumina rapoartelor diplomatice austro-ungare și belgiene*, "Cohorta", no. 1/2015, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova.

Two days later, Czernin reported to the same recipient in Vienna that King Carol I informed the new German ambassador in Bucharest that “*Today, the Russian government announced its readiness, in writing, to relinquish to Romania the part of Bukovina inhabited by Romanians and the whole of Transylvania. The king wants to postpone the answer for a couple of days hoping that the victory of the Central Powers would change the situation, enabling him to reject the offer*”²².

Therefore, just shortly after the outbreak of the war, an unexpected opportunity had already arisen for Romania. Without having to intervene in the war, all it took was the acceptance of the Russian proposal in order to achieve the unification with Transylvania and with the part of Bukovina inhabited by Romanians. The proposal was even more tempting – and here one can decipher Russia’s intention to draw Romania to its own camp, thus taking it away from its traditional alliance – as the leaders from both camps still persisted in their belief that the war would be short, something that induced their counterparts in Bucharest the feeling that this extremely rare opportunity had to be exploited. The Russian plan partially succeeded. But, ten days later, the government in Bucharest was cautious enough to sign with Russia a secret agreement, which did not coerce Romania to enter the war but which enabled it, in the eventuality of a Russian victory and as a reward for its neutrality, to get hold of the lost national territories²³.

During the two years of neutrality (1914-1916), the Romanian political class and public opinion were divided into two large segments – “pro-Entente” and “Germanophiles”. We have to emphasize that, while both camps shared the

²² ANIC, Microfilms Austria, roll 220, frame 1065, in Ibidem.

²³ *Războiul României. Trădarea Rusiei țariste. Documente oficiale* with a foreword by a diplomat, Editura “Cartea Românească”, Bucharest, 1921, p. 85; *România la începutul “Marelui Război”*. *De la atentatul de la Sarajevo la moartea regelui Carol I...*, p.335.336.

same goal, namely national unity, they differed on priorities, visions and ways to achieve it.

The arguments invoked by each party were impressive, something that highlighted once again the outstanding complexity of the situation of the Romanian nation and made Bucharest's position extremely difficult, especially because the evolution of the conflict represented a mystery.

The supporters of the alliance with the Central Powers invoked the principle of continuity in the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Romania, its presence in this coalition of forces having represented, as already mentioned, the pillar of its security for over three decades. In addition, they also invoked the attitude and conduct of the Russian Empire until that moment, which was considered the main threat against the existence of the Romanian state. If victorious, Russia would have controlled the straits in the Black Sea, something that would have meant economic death for Romania. In addition, Romanians from Bessarabia were undergoing a harsh process of denationalization perpetrated by the Russian authorities, something that they had to be rescued from.

On the other hand, the supporters of the Entente emphasized the fact that Russia did not act alone, but in alliance with France and Britain, two countries that had played a decisive role in the creation of the modern Romanian national state thanks to the massive support they granted in the period 1856-1866 to the unification of the two extracarpathian Romanian principalities. The balance of power – which represented a fundamental paradigm in the relations on the European continent in the 19th century – made improbable that the two major Western powers would accept Russia's exclusive preeminence in Southeast Europe. Furthermore, Austria-Hungary was on the brink of dissolution and the Romanians under its rule were enduring a harsh policy of denationalization. It should also be added that, for decades, this policy that the Romanians from the dual monarchy were subjected to was widely publicized to the south and east of

Carpathians, so that the unification of these territories was seen as absolutely necessary and urgent.

After two years of neutrality, marked by disputes among Romanian politicians and within public opinion regarding the camp Romania should opt for, the liberal government led by Ion I.C. Brătianu signed, on August 4/17, 1916, the political treaty and the military convention with the Entente²⁴. Ten days later, on August 14/27, 1916, the Crown Council, convened under King Ferdinand, validated the government's earlier choice, deciding to join the action alongside the Triple Entente, which materialized by declaring war on Austria-Hungary during the same night²⁵.

The declaration of war, presented by the Romanian minister to Vienna, Edgar Mavrocordat, enumerated the stages of the Romanian presence in the alliance and the reasons for which it chose not to join, on July 15/28, 1914, the declaration of war of Austria-Hungary. At the same time, the document mentioned the policy of denationalization promoted by Vienna and (especially) Budapest both before the war and during the two years of conflict. Consequently, Romania saw itself justified to resort to military force in order to achieve its goals. It was the formalization of a “divorce”, the “death certificate” of an alliance, anticipated by the Balkan crisis of 1912-1913 and eventually materialized on July 21/August 3, 1914.

Conclusions

The crisis of July-August 1914 put the Romanian nation in a highly complex situation, Romania being left with only three options: (1) to enter the war alongside Central Powers, with whom it had a treaty signed in 1883; (2) to

²⁴ *România în Războiul Mondial 1916-1919*, volume I, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Națională, Bucharest, 1934, p. 9-14.

²⁵ *România în Războiul Mondial 1916-1919*, volume I, Documente-Anexe, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Națională, Bucharest, 1934, p.3-5.

join the Entente; (3) to remain neutral. In early August 1914, the Crown Council opted for neutrality, but Bucharest saw it as temporary and gradually developed an increasingly stronger relation with the Entente, on whose side it entered the war in mid August 1916. It is worth mentioning that Romania had territorial claims on both sides, something that was speculated by the two belligerent camps, which engaged in pressuring Bucharest. Romania's option was in line with the public opinion, which strongly supported Romania's entry into the war alongside the Entente.

As for the maintaining of neutrality throughout the conflict, it represented a marginal idea, backed a small number of people. Among them, some of the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party, a minor formation with very limited support among the population.

The decision of July 21/August 3, 1914, doubled by that of August 1916, highlighted the fact that the Romanian foreign policy abandoned the Balkan direction, which had functioned for over three decades, and opted for a central European direction, this time alongside France, Britain and Russia²⁶.

The decisions taken by Bucharest in 1914 and 1916 implied major risks, but they were eventually validated by the outcome. Russia, consumed by the Bolshevik revolution and the civil war, did not take part to the new political-territorial arrangements in Europe and in the world. Thus, Romania became, *ipso facto*, part of Western Europe, joining its political-territorial and security system at the end of the Great War (1918).

²⁶ Romania had been connected to the West since 1883, when it joined the Triple Alliance, but many initiatives of Bucharest were directed to the Balkan Peninsula, as it happened with the Balkan wars of 1912-1913. Through its geostrategic position, through its tradition and potential, Romania, without being a Balkan country, paid much attention to the developments in the region and often chose to involve in the problems of the states from this area.

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Bulgarian Military Intelligence during World War I:
Basic Organisational and Operational Aspects

Introduction

At the end of the 19th and early 20th century military intelligence in Europe reached an unprecedented scale. Substantial amounts of money were being allocated for the acquisition of relevant information; espionage became fundamental to the European countries and their armies in preparation for a future war. The reason for this is the change in the global political situation after the 80s of the nineteenth century, when all the major European countries, as well as Japan and the US, suddenly developed economic, political and territorial claims. This resulted in a global armament and rearmament. The very nature of the intelligence also changed. Until then, the Great Powers led mainly political intelligence, performed primarily with small groups of people: diplomats and intelligence professionals, who acted under the disguise of travellers, merchants, and missionary priests. The creation of armies during peace, numbering in the hundreds of thousands of people, suddenly increased the need of army management for intelligence information about the armed forces that were potential adversaries. Thus at the late 80s and early 90s of the nineteenth century the political intelligence with its characteristic elitism and limited numbers stepped down and military intelligence stepped up to primarily importance.

Gradually, this trend affected the military policy of the smaller European countries, including Bulgaria. Institutional development of the Bulgarian military intelligence was transferred from the Educational office (1891) to the Office of the War Department and the Information Bureau (1903) of the Army Headquarters, which carried out intelligence and other tasks. As a separate military structure the Bulgarian Military Intelligence was founded in 1908. Its

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appearance was a direct result of the growing awareness of the government, following the failed Ilinden-Preobrazhenie uprising, that the only way to resolve the Bulgarian national question was a war against the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, after the Russian-Japanese War of 1904-5 it became clear that it was impossible to wage a modern war without effective intelligence. On 11 January 1908 an ordinance of Knyaz Ferdinand was passed, with which the Information Bureau of the Operational Command of the Bulgarian Army Headquarters was transformed into an Intelligence section.

The first big tests for the Bulgarian military intelligence were the two wars. In 1912-13, Bulgaria was relatively well prepared in terms of intelligence, given the state of the armed forces of the Ottoman Empire. The potential of the military intelligence services, compared to the other Balkan countries Bulgaria was forced to fight against in the Second Balkan War, were limited. This was the main reason for the restructuring of military intelligence in Bulgaria. That restructuring began in the autumn of 1913.

On 12 October 1913 Chief of Staff, General Ivan Fichev sent detailed reports on the state of Bulgarian military intelligence to the War Minister, General Kliment Boyadzhiev. Fichev stated that in view of "the likely future events", Bulgaria's neighbouring countries should be studied "closely, especially in military terms." According to him, "the relations among the Balkan states are so vague and fragile, it would be very hard to predict which of the neighbouring countries would represent the greatest danger and, therefore, which country would have to be studied in greater detail than the others". The Chief of Staff thought that the Bulgarian interests in the near future would not require a new offensive war against Turkey, but there was no guarantee "that Turkish interests with respect to us are peaceful." The final conclusion was that "the effort we put in the intelligence of all the neighbouring countries should be equally intensive; intelligence gathered on Romania, Greece and Serbia should be equally well-

founded and most detailed”¹. The main organisational plan outlined in the report of General Fichev was that intelligence work against the neighbouring countries should be carried out by two parallel networks - an organisation led by the respective Bulgarian military attachés, and a second network, much more deeply buried in the country.

That strategic concept, the actual author of which was the head of the military intelligence Sava Madrov, was endorsed by the Minister of War and was put to immediate implementation. By the time Bulgaria entered into World War I certain success in this regard was achieved. Changes in the military intelligence continued during the war, at which time they were dictated mainly by specific military conditions.

Legal basis for the operation of the military intelligence

The legislative beginning of the Bulgarian military intelligence is associated with the endorsement of the Law on the Structure of Armed Forces of the Bulgarian principality of 1891.² According to this law, it is the responsibility of the General Staff of the Bulgarian Army to carry out strategic military intelligence. According to Article 139 of the Act, "the Army Headquarters is responsible in peacetime ... for the study of the theatres of war ... in neighbouring countries in every way possible, ... for the collection of information on the status of the armed forces and military resources of neighbouring countries ...".³ Gradually, the first specific regulations governing the Bulgarian military intelligence appeared. Among them the following must be noted: "Position on the Secret Intelligence Service at the Headquarters of the Army", the project of

¹ State military history archives (SMHA), collection 23, inventory 2, archive unit 294, pp. 376-377.

² **Eldarov, Svetlozar.** "On the history of the Bulgarian military intelligence in the Ottoman Empire and the Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation (1895-1908)". - In: *Military History Journal*, 1990, № 2, p. 4.

³ *Bulgarian Military History. Selected writings and documentation. Vol. 2.* Sofia, 1984. p. 260.

which dates back to 1907⁴, and "Instructions for military attachés and secretaries of foreign armies" of 1910.⁵

The master document of military intelligence during World War I was entitled "Rules for the Secret Intelligence Service at the Headquarters of the Army." It was created on 1 April 1915 and was endorsed by the Minister of War on April 28.

The Regulations listed rules governing some of the main elements of the informational circle in intelligence. Part "A" of the Regulations provides a description of the relevant information of concern to the Army headquarters in peacetime and in wartime. The issues around the collection of necessary information were discussed in separate paragraphs, dedicated mainly to the rights and obligations of secret agents. Circulation and dissemination of the obtained information was also regulated. In the area of dissemination of obtained information "Rules ..." is perfectly laconic - § 6 obliges the head of the Intelligence Section to report to the Head of the Operational Department of the Army Staff of all files and issues of the Intelligence Service. The organisational structure of the Bulgarian military intelligence, according to the Regulations, included the following major elements: Intelligence Section at Army HQ, staffs at inspection and divisional areas, military attachés of Bulgaria abroad, secretaries in some Bulgarian consulates, individual secret agents.

As a whole, the Regulations document can be evaluated positively. At the same time, it should be noted that certain substantive issues had been left out, while others were not regulated in the best possible way. No provisions relating to the extraction of information from public sources were included. An essential source of information, such as the deserters from foreign armies, was only

⁴ See **Prodanov, Nikolay**. "History of the legislative foundations of national security. 2. Bill of Statute for the Bulgarian military intelligence of 1907". - *Archives Review*, 2008, № 1-2, pp. 128-133.

⁵ **SMHA**, collection 02, inventory 1, archive unit 17, pp. 24-29.

mentioned in section 2 of Appendix 2 of the Regulations. The relations between intelligence authorities working undercover in the Bulgarian diplomatic missions abroad, and the official leaders of these missions were not regulated, and neither were those between the intelligence section of the Army HQ and the headquarters of the inspection and divisional units when conducting intelligence work. Despite these weaknesses, the Regulations of 1915 created the legal prerequisites for adequate work of our military intelligence.⁶

Structure of Military Intelligence

During World War I the organisational centre of Bulgarian military intelligence was the Intelligence Division of the Operations Department of the Army in Operation Headquarters (ID-AOHQ). During the period 1914-1918, the division was headed by officers such as: Sava Madrov⁷, Panayot Minkov⁸, Stefan Noykov⁹, Vladimir Pavlov¹⁰ and Atanas Vatev¹¹. Later, two of them built

⁶See **Prodanov, Nikolay**. "On the legislative basis of national security. 1. Top secret Rules for the organization of the Secret Intelligence Office at Army HQ from 1915". - In: *Bulgarians in the wars for national liberation and unity 1876-1919. Reports and announcements at the National scientific conference*. Pleven, 2008. pp. 346-364.

⁷Madrov, Sava Kolchev - born 18 Jan 1872 in Gabrovo. Graduate of the Military School in Sofia and the General Staff Academy. Head of IS- AOHQ 18 Aug 1913 - November 1914.

⁸Minkov, Panayot Petkov – born 2 March 1870 in Sofia. Graduate of the Military School in Sofia. Head of IS- AOHQ Nov 1914 – 15 Sept 1915. Commanding Officer of 8th Marine Division in WWI. Injured in action against the Romanian army in Dobrudzha, died of his wounds on 30 Sept 1916.

⁹Noykov, Stefan Noykov - born 25 Oct 1876, Sliven. Graduate of the Military School in Sofia and the Italian General Staff Academy. Head of IS- AOHQ 15 Sept 1915 – 31 March 1916. Member of the delegation to sign the Treaty of Neuilly. Joined army reserves on 6 Jan 1921. Advisor and Head of section at the Bulgarian Commission for Reparations 1921. Member of the Bulgarian representation to the League of Nations 1922. Head of the Bulgarian delegation for the Bulgarian-Yugoslav negotiations in Nis 1923. Head of General Staff from 18 May 1923. Fired by the army in 1923. Died from his wounds at the attack in Holy Sunday Church on 25 April 1925.

¹⁰Pavlov, Vladimir Pawlov. - born 8 Jan 1882, Kazanlak. Graduate of the Military School in Sofia and the Italian General Staff Academy. Head of IS- AOHQ 31 March 1916 – 31 Oct 1917. Fired from the army in 1923.

successful military careers - General Vatev was the War Minister for a short period of time in 1934, and Colonel Noykov - Chief of Staff of the Army in May-June 1923.

ID-AOHQ was relatively small and formed following the principle of territoriality. Its most important operational agents were the Bulgarian military attachés abroad. Directly subordinated to ID-AOHQ were some separate intelligence units – the residents in Thessaloniki, the Special Intelligence Office in the War Department, the intelligence offices in Svilengrad and Tulcha, created at the end of the war.

Intelligence authorities in peacetime existed as a part of the inspection and divisional units, which in wartime were deployed in the intelligence sections to the HQs of the separate armies (2-3 officers) and intelligence structures to the divisional offices (initially 1, then 2 officers).

The blade of tactical intelligence was the so called Partisan forces. The Partisan Eleventh Infantry Macedonian Division should be given special recognition here. The personnel of this formation consisted of rebels and chieftains of the Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation. The unit was the direct successor of the partisan units of the Macedonian-Adrianople volunteers from the time of the Balkan wars. On 22 August 1915, by Order №421 of the Military Office, the Partisan force was formed, consisting of headquarters, stations for the collection of information, Partisan army (company-size formation) and Partisan platoons. The most important structure of the Partisan Headquarters was the Intelligence section, which kept record of the Partisan platoons, collected and processed information about the enemy and via the headquarters of the division forwarded it to the headquarters of the Second

¹¹ Vatev, Atanas (Anastas) Vatev – born 22 Oct 1881, Lovech. Graduate of the Military School in Sofia and the Italian General Staff Academy. Head of IS- AOHQ 31 Oct 1917 – 8 Feb 1920. Head of the Central committee of the Military Union 1932-34. War Minister 9-19 May 1934. Died 21 April 1967.

Army and the Army HQ. Ten points of inquiry were provisioned, each having its chief and six couriers. The separate Partisan company was formed later and as a unit it had three officers and 290 sergeants, corporals and soldiers. The Partisan platoons included a commander - senior sergeant, four sections with junior sergeants as commanders, 30 soldiers, five couriers and scouts. The main part of the personnel were Macedonian Bulgarians with long experience in IMARO¹².

During World War I the Bulgarian army developed specific types of operational intelligence - air, radio-intelligence and tapping enemy field telephone lines. In the course of the war internal intelligence authorities were also formed, more specifically in the occupied territories of Macedonia, Moravia and Romania.

Activities of the Intelligence authorities

In the years of World War I the HQ of the Bulgarian armed forces developed all kinds of military intelligence, according to the type of intelligence gathered: strategic, operational and tactical.

The strategic military intelligence, which generally constitutes the most significant scientific interest, was executed exclusively by the body of the military attachés abroad. Among them vital roles had the officers Franz Chervenakov (Italy 1914-15; Switzerland 1915-17), Dimitar Bogdanov (Switzerland 1918), Grigor Preslavski (Russia until 1915), Alexander Samardzhiev (Romania until 1916), Todor Markov (the Ottoman Empire 1914-15), Dimitar Azmanov (Serbia until 1915, the Ottoman Empire 1916-17), Iliya Kableshkov (Greece 1914-17, the Ottoman Empire 1917-18).

The activities of individual military attachés differed greatly taking into account the specific conditions of the country in which the specific officer was

¹² **Minchev, Dimitar.** "IMARO platoons during World War I". - In: *100 years Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation*. Sofia, 1994. pp. 137-144.

sent. Top priority was given to the tasks assigned to military attachés in countries that could become Bulgarian adversaries in the upcoming war. The work of our military diplomats in Russia, Romania, and Serbia had specific characteristics.

Major Grigor Preslavski , the military attaché of Bulgaria in St. Petersburg had rather singular tasks. He was appointed to his new position in the spring of 1914 at the request of the Minister Plenipotentiary of Bulgaria to the Russian Empire General Radko Dimitriev, who knew Preslavski from his work as Assistant Chief of the Intelligence Section of the Third Bulgarian Army in the Balkan War. Preslavski had to work in complex and controversial conditions. His superiors (although not full superiors) were Ministers Plenipotentiary R. Dimitriev and, after the First World War, Mikhail Madzharov. Both were prominent Russophiles, whose personal beliefs governed their diplomatic work. Madzharov, for example, was intransigent that the competent Bulgarian authorities should not carry out intelligence activities in Russia.

Furthermore, as early as April 1914, a document entitled "Additional instructions" was sent to Preslavski¹³. Its main idea was that the overall responsibility of the Minister Plenipotentiary was to promote good relations between Bulgaria and Russia. The most significant particular indication in the document was that the military attaché "should strive to maintain the traditional close relations between our [i.e. Bulgarian, author's note, N.P.] and the Russian army". Preslavski was encouraged to follow a line of caution and restrained protection of the Bulgarian national interests. That line was very difficult to align with intelligence work. The possibilities before Preslavski to receive legally up-to-date information from Russian official institutions were limited. According to the testimonials of the Bulgarian officer he obtained information mainly from fellow military attachés. Preslavski had close connections with the Austro-Hungarian, Turkish and Swedish military attachés.

¹³ SMHA, collection 23, inventory 2, archive unit 502, p. 64.

As for the actual intelligence work, Preslavski noted in his memoirs the following: "I did not have the logistics for this service [i.e. intelligence]; besides, such logistics would have needed means I did not have."¹⁴ Preslavski's statement was misleading. He carried out intelligence work, with his main source of information being the Bulgarian officers who attended Russian military academies. Through an intermediary and probably in return for payment Preslavski received information from the Bulgarian officers in the Russian army. It is an interesting fact that he was clearly in contact with a person from the immediate surroundings of Radko Dimitriev, because on several occasions in his official correspondence he quoted excerpts from letters of the General.

At the beginning of 1915, as a result of the campaign of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (with the participation of the respective Russian authorities) and with the active cooperation of Mihail Madzharov, Preslavski was discredited and forced to leave Russia. The situation at the Bulgarian Embassy in the Russian capital was so inauspicious for carrying out specific activities that the official Bulgarian authorities did not even send an official replacement for Preslavski.

Due to imperial order № 25 of 1 November 1913, Captain Alexander Samardzhiev was appointed military attaché in Romania. Like Preslavski, he also had real reconnaissance experience. Before he came to Bucharest he was assistant to the Chief of the Intelligence Section at Army HQ.

The conditions for intelligence work in Romania, similarly to Russia, were not good. Information from the official Romanian authorities was practically unattainable. Romanian authorities put spokes in the wheels of all foreign military attachés, but most blatantly so of the Bulgarian representative. Samardzhiev explicitly noted, "When it comes to me, everything I ask for is

¹⁴ **Preslavski, Grigor.** *Memories and Impressions. From the Diary of a military attaché to Petrograd in 1914-15. Sofia, 1939, p.34.*

either reserved, or subsequently becomes reserved¹⁵ or depleted, or they delay things until I get tired of waiting and stop asking for it myself.”¹⁶

Relying mainly on Bulgarians living in Romania, Samardzhiev managed to create an extensive network of agents. One could get a clear idea of the essence of that network from a detailed report of the Bulgarian officer to the Chief of Staff of the Army in Operation from August 1918, commending 12 people of his agents in Romania to be awarded for significant military merits. After the announcement of the Bulgarian-Romanian War in the autumn of 1916 they were all suspected of espionage. Extreme measures were taken against them and all were kidnapped and taken to Moldova. Some were sentenced to death and only the Romanians' hasty escape from Bucharest (due to which the respective court correspondences were abandoned) delayed serving their sentences. With Samardzhiev's commendation, the following were awarded orders, medals and financial remuneration: Radoslav Radev from Constanta, merchant, killed by the Romanians, awarded *National order of military merit* (NOMM), VI grade, on military ribbon; Alexander Pornyakov from Lom, headmaster of the Bulgarian school in Bucharest, sentenced to death, sentence not carried out, awarded NOMM, VI grade and 800 leva; Dimitar Kopchev from Tulcha, teacher in Bucharest, sentenced to death, sentence not carried out, awarded silver *Medal for military merit* (MMM), on the military ribbon and 800 leva; Ivan Varbanov from Kotel, headmaster of the Bulgarian school in Constanta, awarded NOMM, VI grade and 800 leva; Ivan Ognyanov from Constanta, merchant, awarded NOMM, VI grade; Todor Karageorgiev from Silistra, clerk, awarded silver Medal for military merit, on the military ribbon; Varban Raev from Denizler Village, Tutrakan, tavern-keeper, awarded silver Medal for military merit, on the military ribbon; Vladimir Rachev from Tutrakan, merchant, awarded silver Medal for military merit, on the military ribbon; Stoyan Abrashev from Tutrakan, municipal

¹⁵ *i.e.* secret.

¹⁶ SMHA, collection 23, inventory 2, archive unit 300, p. 6.

scribe, awarded silver Medal for military merit, on the military ribbon; Dimitar At. Kalev from Tutrakan, retailer, awarded with silver Medal for military merit, on the military ribbon and 500 leva; Nikola Tsachev from Silistra, retailer, awarded silver Medal for military merit, on the military ribbon and 500 leva; private Alexy Arnaudov from Tutrakan, military man, scribe and an "active agent", awarded silver Medal for military merit, on the military ribbon.¹⁷

Assigning a new Bulgarian military attaché to Belgrade proved to be slower than to other countries, because after the Balkan War, diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Serbia were severed and had to be repaired first. Only then could a Bulgarian military diplomat be accredited to the Serbian capital. The appointing took place in March 1914, and the appointee's name was Major Dimitar Azmanov. At the time of his appointment, Azmanov had no experience in reconnaissance and in his memories he expressly noted that the calling of the military diplomat was "completely different than his entire career thus far." According to Azmanov, "my knowledge of them (the Serbians – author's note, N.P.) was too superficial"¹⁸; he didn't even speak Serbian.

Azmanov failed to find solid ground for his activities in Belgrade, because he remained in the Serbian capital only for four months - till the evening of 13 July 1914, when immediately following the Serbian government with the majority of the staff of the legation, he relocated to "the military capital" Nis.

At the beginning of April 1914, with the start of Azmanov's career abroad, the Army Chief of Staff demanded his recommendations on the number of agents required and the cost of their salaries¹⁹. "The perfect shape" of the Bulgarian secret intelligence service in Serbia, according to Azmanov, needed

¹⁷**SMHA**, collection 40, inventory 1, archive unit 125, p. 471-476. See **Prodanov, Nikolay**. "Staffing and networking of the residency of Bulgarian military intelligence in Bucurest, Sept 1913 – Aug 1916". - In: *The Balkans – language, history, culture. Vol. 2. Second International Scientific Conference 23-24 Oct 2009*. Veliko Turnovo, 2011. pp. 141-155.

¹⁸ **Azmanov, Dimitar**. *My Epoch 1878-1919*. Sofia, 1995. p. 34.

¹⁹ **SMHA**, collection 23, inventory 2, archive unit 224, p. 119.

several important structural elements. First, it was necessary to find a "loyal, intelligent and courageous figure here in Belgrade, to conduct the activities." The next level comprised the agents "in the headquarters of each divisional region," helped by 15-20 assistants. Azmanov saw his role in the whole system as the man who "directs the activities of all agents through the mediation of the Head agent". Until an appropriate person were appointed "head agent", Azmanov took the burden of executing his functions.

In June 1914, the military attaché reported the proposed changes to the already established structure of the intelligence network. His proposal envisioned the formation of a reconnaissance organisation entirely on the principle of territoriality. Each of the major Serbian centres was to have a Bulgarian agent stationed to monitor "from here [i.e. from Belgrade, author's note, N.P.] life there and report of all events, deployment and so on." These individuals were to be supervised by and were to answer directly to the military attaché. At the time of his report, Azmanov had three such agents: for Stip and Bitolja areas, as well as a potential agent for Skopje. Probably until his departure for Nis, Azmanov's network of agents remained in the above described state.

In Nis, Azmanov relied mainly on agents of Bulgarian descent, as well as on direct observations of the forces deployed to the east on the Bulgarian border. According to his own statements, this information later proved to be very accurate. In Nis, Azmanov applied an original approach to reconnoitering, of gathering information about the organisation and deployment activities of the Serbian army. He summarised the data from the obituaries of the fallen Serbian servicemen published daily in the newspapers, which were usually accompanied by detailed information on military rank, unit, place and date of death. A positive testimonial of Azmanov's work in Nis is the fact that he found out and reported to Sofia the actual position of the Serbian army in the end of September 1915.

At the end of his work in Serbia, Major Azmanov found himself in heavy conflict with the Minister Plenipotentiary to Serbia Stefan Chaprashikov. The

conflict grew mainly because of the yet unclear statute of the military attaché and the controversy around the relations of the attaché with the Bulgarian diplomatic representative. The question was to what extent was the military attaché under the command of the plenipotentiary and what degree of autonomy he had in performing his duties. It looked as if everyone was guilty in that situation of uncertainty. Neither Chaprashikov and Azmanov, nor the Army HQ and the Foreign Ministry did what was necessary to help the few Bulgarian representatives in Serbia work as a team. In the last decisive weeks before the Bulgarian military attack on Serbia, the two most senior figures in the diplomatic agency in Nis turned out to be enemies, drawn into a most unfortunate conflict that brought nothing but negative consequences.

Among the military attachés to neutral countries at the time of World War I, two require special mention: Colonel Franz Chervenakov and Major Dimitar Bogdanov, military attachés to Switzerland. Both officers took their appointments in exceptional circumstances. Chervenakov was transferred to the republic in the Alps in the autumn of 1915 from the identical position in Italy. Bogdanov was appointed the Bulgarian representative to Bern in the spring of 1918 when his predecessor came into opposition to the Minister Plenipotentiary Georgy Pasarov; the predecessor was discredited and sent back to Bulgaria.

Information on the activities during the war of the Bulgarian military attachés to Switzerland is prolific which allows us to draw significant conclusions. First, it becomes apparent that a long-term strategy for the development of the military-diplomatic institute, particularly at times of war, was lacking. The major principle of organising a strategic intelligence system, which is capable of resolving operational issues at times of war, in times of peace had been neglected. The Bulgarian military attaché was not appointed to Switzerland as a result of preliminary analysis as to the need of his presence, but rather as a result of the pressure of events. This situation brought about a sequence of negative events. Chervenakov, speedily appointed to Bern, had no one to rely on

for his activity initially. Subsequent activities aiming at building a network of people to actively support the Bulgarian military attachés was not very successful.²⁰

Despite the above mentioned difficulties and numerous other flaws in the organisation and command of the activities of the Bulgarian attachés to Switzerland, existing documents attest to the attachés' efforts to do everything that was possible to gather genuine and timely intelligence for the Army HQ in an impossible, from the point of view of intelligence-operational settings, situation. Surviving documents point to the conclusion that the military attachés were mostly successful in carrying out this fundamental task. Additionally, some of Chervenakov's reports contain fair and precise analysis of future war activities, based on excellent information. In a report of 10 February 1916 he writes the following: "It would appear that neither of the parties in the conflict will win decisive victory; peace will be established as a result of general exhaustion of resources and wide-spread fatigue among the nations"²¹.

At the end of 1913 and during 1914, in line with Colonel Madrov's concept, the second, parallel to the original intelligence network in neighbouring to Bulgaria countries was established. In August 1914 Captain Konstantin Nastev was appointed undersecretary to the Bulgarian Consulate General in Thessaloniki. He was publicly fired by the army just before his appointment and was immediately secretly restored to his army rank. Nastev functioned officially as a civilian in Thessaloniki. The competent Bulgarian authorities used, in this situation, the extensive experience of Bulgarian reconnaissance against the Ottoman Empire before the Balkan War; the majority of the undersecretaries in

²⁰ See **Prodanov, Nikolay**. "Bulgarian military attachés to Switzerland during World War I". - In: *WWI on the Balkans. Collected reports and announcements from the International Scientific Conference in Sofia, 10-11 Oct 2005*. Sofia, 2006. pp. 294-305.

²¹ **Markov, Georgy**. *The Big War and the Bulgarian key to the European vault 1914-1916*. Sofia, 1995. p. 234.

the Bulgarian commercial agencies at the time were intelligence officers²². Not least because of the successful work of the so called military secretaries in previous years (Capt. Racho Penev, Capt. Todor Markov, Capt. Hristo Lefterov, Capt. Dimitar Mustakov, Capt. Stefan Todorv) the Bulgarian representation in Thessaloniki had accumulated considerable expertise in reconnaissance. The plan was Nastev to be the resident and command an assistant with the rank of captain and four other agents on the roll, in Kavala, Serres, Thessaloniki and Drama, respectively.

Captain Konstantin Nastev worked in difficult operational environment. Following the Second Balkan War Thessaloniki was almost totally ‘de-Bulragianised’ and experienced serious difficulties communicating with Sofia. The Greek secret police actively worked against Nastev and his organisation; as of the autumn of 1915 the counterintelligence divisions of the armies that disembarked in Thessaloniki joined efforts with the Greek secret police. Several showy provocations against Nastev were organised. Nevertheless, he managed to build a small but efficient intelligence network that attracted Italians, Turks, Jews and Bulgarians.

In December 1915 Nastev was arrested by the Anglo-French army in a campaign that targeted the detention of the diplomatic staff of Bulgaria, Austro-Hungary, Germany and the Ottoman Empire in Thessaloniki (62 individuals). In the months that followed, the captain and the rest of the staff from the Bulgarian Consulate in Thessaloniki were released by the French authorities at the Franco-Swiss border. Nastev was sent (at his entreaty) to the First Army as a company commander. He died in battle on 21 November 1916 at the Cherna Bend²³.

²² See **Koevsky, Hristo**. “Military Intelligence under the cover of Bulgarian commercial representation. 1897 – 1912”. - Journal of the Institute for Military History. Vol. 58. Sofia, 1995. pp. 96-134.

²³ See **Prodanov, Nikolay**. Captain Konstantin Nastev – Bulgarian military intelligence officer in Greece, 1914-1915”. - In: *I hear your voices. Outstanding students and Bulgaria. 130 anniversary of the Thessaloniki Boys School. Reports and* 719

One of the immediate results from Bulgaria's entering into World War I in the autumn of 1915 was the capturing of foreign servicemen: Serbs at the beginning, but later on servicemen of different nationalities. Following the successful Bulgarian campaign against Romania in the autumn of 1916 the number of the prisoners of war grew immensely. At the time the Tutrakan Fort was taken, the Bulgarian army captured 450 Romanian officers and 28000 private soldiers. Russian servicemen were also taken prisoners of war. It was in the autumn of 1916 that the German allies alerted the Army in Operation HQ, that those prisoners of war could be a source of vital information. A new intelligence unit was created; gradually it came to be called Special Intelligence Bureau at the War Department. Captain from the reserves Stefan Mladenov, a professor in History of the Bulgarian Language at the University in Sofia, was appointed Chief of the Bureau. His choice was a felicitous one: the professor was at the time the best known Bulgarian polyglot. He spoke about 30 languages, including Romanian. At the same time he had no experience in intelligence, Nevertheless, Mladenov managed to successfully organise the functioning of the Bureau which carried out standardised interrogation of the prisoners of war. As a result it accumulated huge amounts of intelligence information. The Special Intelligence Bureau was operational till the summer of 1918²⁴.

It is imperative to note, that the Bulgarian military intelligence units at the time of World War I successfully liaised with the coalition partner intelligence services. Numerous examples can be provided of joint work at the level of central authorities as well as at the level of specific assignments of individual Bulgarian army intelligence officers (Samardzhiev, Azmanov,

announcements from the National Scientific Conference, Blagoevgrad, 29-30 April 2009. Blagoevgrad, 2011. pp. 448-460.

²⁴ See **Prodanov, Nikolay**. "Special Intelligence Bureau at War Department, 1916-1918: organisational and operational issues". - In: *100 years independent Bulgaria: pillars of statehood. Collection of reports and announcements from the International Scientific Conference in Sofia, 14-15 Oct 2008*, Sofia, 2009. pp. 164-173.

Nastev)²⁵. Cooperation in reconnaissance existed in several of the major information gathering campaigns²⁶.

Conclusion

The activities of the Bulgarian military intelligence during World War I can be viewed as relatively successful. Huge volumes of information were gathered, processed and reported to the relevant army HQs. At the same time intelligence services show significant weaknesses due to the ineffective pre-war training and the insufficient human and material resources. It is necessary to note the unresolved organisational statute issues. Among those, the lack of understanding often exacerbating to confrontation between Bulgarian military attachés and the ministers plenipotentiary in several foreign countries, stand out.

²⁵ **Aleksandrov, Valentin.** *Bulgaria and the Secret War. Austro-Hungarian and German intelligence in Bulgaria 1914-1944.* Sofia, 1992.

²⁶ See **Prodanov, Nikolay.** "Intelligence backup of the Tutrakan campaign of the Bulgarian Army during WWI". - In: *WWI and the events on the Dobrudzha front.* Tutrakan, 2011. pp. 44-60.

Major Dr. Hakan BACANLI (Turkey)

***Activities Undertaken for the Writing of Military History
During World War I and the Ottoman Archives Pertaining to
First World War***

Abstract

The defeats and expansiveness of the territories the Ottoman State lost, during the wars she fought in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of twentieth century, had great detrimental impacts on the life of the state as well as on that of peoples leading to economic recessions and migrations to the extent that in time they had immediate effects on the social structure of the country and plagued the social psychology of the nation. Notwithstanding the prevailing unfavorable circumstances, with the aim of inspiring and enhancing the public morale and uniting people around certain concepts and targets more nationalistic and effective modes were sought; consequently, “history,” especially “war history” emerged as one of the most fundamental arguments in realizing this endeavor. During the Second Constitutional Monarchy, when Turkism was the dominant movement and the Union and Progress was in power, the youth was particularly given education in national decorum and history. In this era, in 1909, with the founding of the *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni* [Ottoman Historical Society], the first official historical committee to be instituted in the Ottoman State, the contemporary and scientific research was launched; the first historians of the Turkish Republic were trained here. Despite the beginning of World War, at a time when the repercussions of the Balkan Wars were still

resonating, and when the Ottoman State was engaged in battles with numerous elements at various fronts, the Ottoman administrators and commanders realizing the importance of writing of the chronicles of both the prevailing war and of the past wars undertook studies to this end. Ottoman Army, while fighting throughout the World War I, strove for collecting the war documents and war chronicles with the aim of founding a war history archive and launched studies for writing of war history through the medium of recently founded *Tarih-i Harp Şubesi* [War History Division]. Founding of *Tarih-i Harp Şubesi* and initiation of the systematic writing of history constitutes a significant and a historical turning point in transferring the military culture and the history of wars the Turkish Army, one of the oldest armies in the world, engaged in.

Key Words: World War I, Writing of History, War History, War History Division

1. Institutionalizing Writing of War History; Reorganizations in the General Staff and the Activities undertaken for the Writing of War History

The day the Second Constitutional Monarchy was declared – 23 July 1908 – General Staff, *Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Dairesi* [Department of General Staff], was a department within the organization of the Ministry of War.

Upon the proposals made and the studies undertaken by Ahmet İzzet Pasha, appointed as the *Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Reisi* [Chief of General Staff] on 14 August 1908, the cadres and structure of the *Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Dairesi* was reorganized in five departments under the

chairmanship of Lieutenant General Ahmet İzzet Pasha and the vice-chairmanship of Brigadier General Salih Pasha. Among these five the departments the task of writing of war history was given to the charge of First Department, which was also responsible for training and organizing of maneuvers.¹ However, due to certain privations in the organization, and undertaking of densely conducted training exercises writing of war history could not have been realized.

Prior to the Balkan War, Owing to the intensity of work and overwhelming responsibilities undertaken by the newly founded departments, the *Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Dairesi* was subjected to a new reorganization and the number of departments was increased to seven.² Among these seven departments activities to be undertaken for the writing of history of war and collecting of chronicles were, once again, given to the First Department responsible for training, and conducting of maneuvers.

Working within such a framework of organization Balkan War was engaged, upon the declaration of mobilization orders for the Balkan War, Supreme Command Headquarters, composed of six departments, was formed.³

¹ Turkish General Staff Department of ATASE Archives (TGS-ATASE), Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-2; File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-5.

² TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-6.

³ TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-7.

The defeat the Balkan War brought necessitated new changes within the framework of *Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Dairesi*. Chief of General Staff, and the Minister of War, Enver Pasha, altering the structure of the General Staff constructed it of four main departments. In this new four-department organization the activities pertaining to the history of war were not overlooked, and this task, as it was the case in previous organizational changes, was left to the First Department.⁴

This organization of the General Staff continued until the declaration of mobilization for the First World War.

Upon the founding of Supreme Military Command on 3 August 1914, with a decree, at the start of the mobilization for WW I, necessary changes were introduced to the structure of the General Staff; and in accordance with the advice of the German Reorganization Committee due changes to meet the demands of war were made in the structure of the General Staff. German General Bronzart von Schellendorf was appointed as the Chief of Staff. Supreme Military Command, subsequently, was reorganized in seven departments.⁵ However, soon – on 9 September 1914 – new changes were made in the structure of the Supreme Command and the number of departments was increased to ten.⁶

Aiming at writing of our history of war based on reliable sources, preventing war history sources from disappearing, and transferring them to

⁴ TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-7.

⁵ TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-8.

⁶ TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-9.

the coming generations by archiving the relevant documents, a provisionary Department of War History was founded in affiliation to the Deputy Undersecretary of Ministry of War upon the orders of the Deputy Chief of Staff and the Minister of War Enver Pasha issued on 11 April 1916. Hence, the division undertaking the writing war history activities within the structure of the 1st Department after the Balkan defeat was promoted to the level of an independent department.⁷

Attempts directed at collecting and writing the history of the First World War by the belligerent European states induced the founding of the War History Department, thereby set the institutional basis for the study of military history.⁸

Lt.Col. Hafız Cemil Bey served as the Director of the War History Department from 1916 to 1919.⁹

⁷ TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 5, Index: 1-14.

Again upon the orders of Enver Pasha, dated 12 November 1916, the War History Department was affiliated to General Staff, and it was further stated that the department be affiliated to Supreme Command Chief of Staff until the declaration of peace.

⁸ AKBAYRAK, Hasan. *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Tarih Yazımı: Millet'in Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine* [Writing of History from Ottoman Era to Republic: From Nation's History to People's History]. 2nd Ed. İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2012. p.181.

⁹ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 28, Folder: 130, Index: 30-2.

In an undated document addressed to the Directorate of General Headquarters 1st Department it is stated that a war history division was founded at the Department of Public Order under the leadership of Kaymakam Cemil Bey. Certain documents bearing the signature "Director of the Departments of War History and Public Order Kaymakam Hafız Bey" can be regarded as direct evidence to the fact that the mentioned departments were united under the command of the same commander. For further information on Staff Lt.Col. Cemil (Hoşcan)'s brief bibliography please see *Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd (ATASE) Başkanlığı Tarihi (1916-1998)* [History of Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies (ATASE): 1916-1998]. Ankara: Genelkurmay, 1999. p.81.

As the World War I waged on, continuous modifications were made within the organization of the General Staff and in 1917 the organization was expanded to embrace twenty-seven departments in which the Department of War History received its place as the 16th Department.¹⁰

2. Department of War History Begins Writing War History

The order enabling the founding of War History Department – 11 April 1916 – stipulated that the war chronicles of the units be collected by the department and that the history of the waging war be written starting with the Çanakkale Battle.¹¹

To be able to write the history of the Çanakkale Battles, the Department of War History began accumulating the documents pertaining to the battles, and asked the concerned sections of the Supreme Command Headquarters for relevant records (especially those concerning the formation of Vth Army, orders given, reports, and documents held by the Vth Army).¹²

Within the framework of the writing of History of Çanakkale Battles a *Medhal* [preliminary introduction] was drawn, printed in a limited number, and sent to command headquarters confidentially to receive the opinions of the relevant personnel. It was requested that the *Medhal* sent to the departments at the Supreme Command Headquarters, be evaluated, and the

¹⁰ TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 12, Index: 1-9.

¹¹ TGS-ATASE, Collection: TGS War History Chronicles, File: 1, Folder: 5, Index: 1-14.

¹² TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 28, Folder: 130, Index: 30.

points of view be forwarded to the Department of War History. The views were to be gathered and put together by the War History Department.¹³

Department of War History required the memoirs and any available document, from the prominent commanders, the epitomes of heroism and self-denial, who had fought in the battles even before its foundation. War History Department, in a letter addressed to the Ist Army Commander Esat Pasha, dated 9 May 1916, stating that the War History Department had started collecting the official war documents, was aiming at making the heroic defense, due measures taken, sacrifices made at the world renown Çanakkale Battles by the Turkish nation and its commanders known; moreover, that its primary objectives also included the realization of writing of war history for enhancing the national spirit, and making use of the past experiences in the further development of the army. The department further requested Esat Pasha's permission for either sending or assigning of an official to record and/or copy his significant and invaluable memoirs.¹⁴

The department also asked for the memoirs of the IIIrd Army Commander Mahmud Kamil Pasha, 11th Corps Commander Abdülkerim Pasha, and of the Iraq Regional Commander Nureddin Bey¹⁵ in writing.¹⁶

¹³ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 28, Folder: 130, Index: 30-3.

¹⁴ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1.

¹⁵ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-6.

Iraq Regional Commander Nureddin Bey, in his rejoinder dated 27 March 1916, declared that his appointment to Iraq coincided with the most turbulent years of Iraq and that he was overwhelmed with the reorganization and restructuring of the army; that he requested the documents, which would set the basis of his memoirs for the writing of war journals, written during his term from the Iraqi Army Headquarters, and that he would write his memoirs as soon as he received the mentioned documents.

War History Department requested the documents pertaining to the activities and command of Iraq Regional Commander Lt.Col. Süleyman Askeri Bey,¹⁷ who had committed suicide upon losing the Suayyibe Battle – 12-14 April 1915 – from Major Adil Bey and Captain Halil Bey who had served under him.¹⁸ Moreover, applying to General Director of Police, Ahmet Bey, on 6 June 1916, information on how the Baghdad Deputy Governorship and Command was administered after Süleyman Askeri Bey's death.¹⁹

In a letter dated 30 August 1916, Cevat Pasha was asked to send his memoirs and relevant documents for the writing of Çanakkale Battles concerning the battles conducted at the Çanakkale Strait.²⁰

On 30 October 1916, War History Department, writing letters to IIIrd Army Commander Vehip Pasha, Brigadier General Talat Bey, Commander of 20th Heavy Artillery Brigade, Corps Commanders Mehmet Ali Pasha,²¹ and Fevzi Pasha requested their memoirs on the battles they

¹⁶ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-1a.

¹⁷ *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na Katılan Alay ve Daha Üst Kademedeki Komutanların Biyografileri* [Biographies of the Regiment Commanders and Higher Ranking Officers Who Had Taken Part in World War I]. Ankara: ATASE, 2009

¹⁸ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-9.

¹⁹ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-7.

²⁰ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-12(13).

In his rejoinder, dated, 7 September 1916, Cevat Pasha declared that the information related to his undertakings as the Fortified Region Commander had been recorded in detail in the war journals and that he had no further information to add; however, he wrote, if needed, he would supply more information on the events taking place in the journals.

²¹ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-18.

In his rejoinder, Ist Army Commander, Brigadier General Mehmet Ali Pasha, declared that he had no memoirs on the Çanakkale Battles other than those mentioned in the journals.

had engaged. In a letter written to Brigadier General Talat Bey, War History Department, that was writing the accounts of the naval campaign at the Çanakkale Front, requested his memoirs as he had commanded the Heavy Artillery Brigade retaliating to the enemy fleet. Mehmet Ali Pasha and Fevzi Pasha were, likewise, requested to send their memoirs especially on the successful maneuvers they had conducted on the Right Flank, Zığındere, in June.²²

Following is the letter sent to Mustafa Kemal Pasha on 11 November 1916, by the War History Department:²³

To: Mustafa Kemal Pasha

Çanakkale Battles that won a new victory and confidence to the army and the nation alike constitute triumphant phases full of your unprecedented heroism, perseverance, and self-denial as of their first dreadful occurrence.

To be able to write a realistic and an irreproachable history of this turbulent era, that is to constitute the unique and glorious golden pages of history, personal memoirs of courageous and decisive commanding officers like yourselves, rather than the minutes of war, are hereby requested.

Although considering your current busy state of affairs, Department of War History, convinced, could not help but

²² TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-15(16-17).

²³ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-14.

request your invaluable memories that would lend utmost help in laying the foundations of the studies undertaken by the Department from you. I hereby pray God for your future victories, and tender my respects with the hope of granting of my humble wishes, Sir.

*Department of War History*²⁴

Mustafa Kemal Pasha meeting the request of the Department of War History presented the study titled "Report on Ariburnu Battles." The introduction of the report is dated 25 January 1916. In his introduction, Mustafa Kemal Pasha states that the General Headquarters Department of War History, attempting to write a thorough work on the phases of the First World War with the aim of handing it down to the coming generations as a memento, vigorously demanded his sending of detailed reports of the battles he conducted and fought in Ariburnu and Anafartalar together with his memoirs and evaluations. Some of the issues Mustafa Kemal Pasha mentioned in his introduction are invaluable in revealing a notion of history an Ottoman General develops at an excruciating moment in waging war, and in demonstrating the importance he gives to the writing of history, as follows:

Although I have some written and unwritten memoirs, other than the official documents contained in war chronicles pertaining the battles engaged with the Ariburnu Forces and Anafartalar Group, both of which I commanded and conducted,

²⁴ Mustafa Kemal. *Ariburnu Muharebeleri Raporu* [Reports on the Ariburnu Battles] Ed. ATASE. Ankara: TGS, 2011. This text takes place in the appendix.

writing of detailed reports on the operations and battles, with the aim of enriching and shedding light on our military history as a whole, necessitates recollecting of all the memories in tranquility, appropriate time, and place. First the activities at Arıburnu, and then the fatigue the Anafartalar Battles gave continued until I was taken ill. Although I found to rest for a while it was far from being adequate; soon, I joined the maneuvers in the east. My days, there, passed in haste. Not being able to find a peaceful moment due to maneuvers and battles at Bitlis, Muş, Çapakçur fronts; and owing to the new responsibilities I was compelled to undertake after my appointment to the 2nd Army Deputy Command it was virtually impossible for me to meet those in the heat of the war. Not to hinder the writing of a book the Department of War History has undertaken until the signing of a peace treaty by not writing a thorough historical document on the maneuvers I had conducted, I availed myself to gathering of some of my notes, available here with me, under excruciating circumstances at any appropriate time and place; hence, I was but compelled to send only the relevant parts, which I deemed suitable, with the hope of serving objectives of the Department of War History.²⁵

Department of War History, aiming at including different aspects of the battles, requested information from the other commanding officers as well. In its letter dated 15 October 1916, the department requested 9th

²⁵ Mustafa Kemal. *Arıburnu Muharebeleri Raporu* [Reports on the Arıburnu Battles] Ed. ATASE. Ankara: TGS, 2011. p.3.

Corps Medical Commander İhsan Pasha to write his memoirs.²⁶ Moreover, with a communiqué dated 31 October 1916, the department also asked for the memoirs of some of the German commanders who had taken active duties in the Turkish Army during World War I,²⁷ among whom were Merten Pasha,²⁸ and V. Usedom Pasha.²⁹

Furthermore, Department of War History, aside from requesting and collecting the memoirs and documents the commanders who had held offices in the Ottoman Army during the World War I had, and strived for gathering information and documents on the officers and soldiers, who had been martyred at different fronts, as well as on their heroic deeds.

Through a letter sent to General Headquarters Department of Intelligence on 30 October 1916, we learn that Ministry of War, prior to the founding of the Department of War History, had already requested and collected, at least some, documents pertaining to the martyred officers and their heroic actions.³⁰ As the Department of War History needed the heroic stories of the officers and soldiers, and as such stories were rarely mentioned in war journals they were asked from the relevant sections of the command headquarters.³¹ On 27 November 1916, Department of War History sending messages to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Army Commands requested the writing of the unique examples of heroism and self-denial,

²⁶ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-10.

²⁷ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-22.

²⁸ Rear Admiral, Çanakkale Strait Fortified Area Commander.

²⁹ General Commander of Straits, Marshal V. Usedom.

³⁰ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-19.

³¹ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-25.

In its rejoinder 1st Department said that they did not have those documents but could be asked from 2nd Department and *Muamelat-ı Zatiye* [Personnel Department]

the martyred officers and soldiers displayed, as a separate book or sending them to the Department of War History.³²

In a communiqué issued by the Supreme Command to the armies and corps on 10 February 1917, it was stated that publication of the courageous acts demonstrated by the soldiers and officers alike, and recitations of glorious instances of war would not only reinforce nation's fondness in military profession and feeling of pride in heroism but would also enhance the fervor and perseverance thereby prove influential in winning triumphant victories. Stating the importance of the case thus, sending of detailed documents, related to individual deeds of the soldiers or officers and/or of troops or detachments, embracing the outstanding examples of heroism and self-denial were requested by the Department of War History.³³

General Command Headquarters Department of Intelligence with a communiqué on 16 July 1918, requested the photographs and information on the martyrs, who sacrificed their lives in undertaking heroic deeds, from the Department of War History to be given to the press.³⁴ In order to meet the requirements of the communiqué, Supreme Command, issuing an order on 23 July 1918, to all the armies, demanded that information on the acts of self-denial displayed and photographs of those who were martyred performing their duties for the country be sent to Department of War

³² TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-23.

³³ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-35.

³⁴ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-50.

History to be given to the *Matbuat-ı Umumiye Müdürlüğü* [Directorate of General Press] to be exposed to public.³⁵

Department of War History, along with its other activities, while trying to accumulate the war journals and files not sent, was also indulged in safeguarding the scattered documents by filing, recording, and registering them.³⁶ Moreover, in 1917, the department drew and issued a regulation – *Harb Cerideleri ile Vesaik-i Harbiye Dosyaları Hakkında Talimat* [Regulations Governing War Journals and War Documents] – in order to standardize the writing of war journals throughout the armies.³⁷

3. Archive Studies Undertaken by the Department of War History and the Archives to be Exploited for Research Related to World War I

Department of War History had also undertaken the task forming of an archive by collecting journals and war documents. Department,

³⁵ TGS-ATASE, Collection: BDH, File: 1486, Folder: 17, Index: 1-51.

³⁶ *T.C. Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Harb Tarihi Dairesi Tarihçesi (1916-1962)* [History of Turkish General Staff Directorate of War History (1916-1962)]. Ankara: Genelkurmay, 1963. p.3.

³⁷ *T.C. Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Harb Tarihi Dairesi Tarihçesi (1916-1962)* [History of Turkish General Staff Directorate of War History (1916-1962)]. Ankara: Genelkurmay, 1963. p.3.

TGS-ATASE, Collection: Genelkurmay Harp Tarihi Tarihçesi [TGS-History of Department of War History], File: 1, Folder: 5, Index: 1-14.

As Minister of War desired Department of War History bring the records of the earlier Ottoman battles together and expand the collections, Undersecretary of Minister of War asked Supreme Command Staff Office to permit the three stories at the northern section of the Gümüşsuyu Barracks, then was under renovation, be given to Department of War History. Thus, it becomes evident that the Department of War History, in time, began to undertake more responsibilities that required a larger space to conduct its studies.

through a series of communiqués, demanded the units responsible for keeping the war journals and files during actions forward all the recorded material until March 1916 at once, and that the material recorded thereafter be sent in every three months to the Department of War History.³⁸ Officers in charge of keeping the war journals were invited to the Department of War History and asked whether they had submitted the war journals of the units they were affiliated to. Those who had lost their war journals in action were asked to write brief history of their units.³⁹

Moreover, in order to write the accounts of the campaigns realized before World War I, efforts were spent to bring the relevant war documents to the achieves. As a result of numerous correspondences and meticulous researches some of the invaluable documents, registries, journals, and files belonging to Ottoman-Greek War, Ottoman-Italian War, Balkan War, and to various wars were gathered in the archives of the Department of War History.

Ottoman State, during World War I, in the early 1915, transferred the documents which were deemed to be significant to Konya – then a relatively secure place – in 208 containers. Strict orders were given to the Governor of Konya for keeping the documents away from disasters like fire and moisture, and safe from any intruders who might want to open the

³⁸ *T.C. Genelkurmay Başkanlığı Harb Tarihi Dairesi Tarihçesi (1916-1962)* [*History of Turkish General Staff Directorate of War History (1916-1962)*]. Ankara: Genelkurmay, 1963. p.3.

³⁹ AKBAYRAK, pp.184-185.

containers. A year later document boxes were transferred back to İstanbul.⁴⁰

A decree was issued on 21 July 1917, for the transfer of the documents related to war history to be found at the *Bâb-ı Âlî Hazîne-i Evrak* [State Archives] and its affiliates to *Harb Hazîne-i Evrâk* [War History Archive], founded within the Department of War History. *Meclis-i Vükelâ* [Council of Ministers], in its reply declared that it was not possible to hand the original documents over, but the copies would be provided upon request and on signing of a receipt.⁴¹

Owing to the efforts the Department of War History spent in gathering war journals and documents, and setting up of the archives, a thorough corpus of documents and unit journals pertaining to World War I have survived to our day.

a. Turkish General Staff Military History and Strategic Studies Directorate (ATASE) Archive

ATASE Department Archives hold war records and military information dating from Crimean War (1853-1856) to Gulf War (1991). Of the ten million documents found in the archives 3.671.470 documents belong to the World War I (1914-1918) collection which is available to the exploitation of the academic researchers. The collection contains various orders and correspondences in addition to reports on supplies, medical

⁴⁰ *Belgelerle Arşivçilik Tarihimiz (Osmanlı Dönemi)* [History of Our Archives through Documents: Ottoman Period]. Vol: I. Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü [General Directorate of Turkish Prime Ministry State Archives], 1999. p.22.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.447.

issues, personnel affairs, war journals, mobilizations, victuals, housing and administration, troop transfers, various land and naval campaigns as well as foreign press reports on political and military events, and disposition and organization of the armies.⁴²

b. General Directorate of Prime Ministry State Archives

Department of Ottoman Archives, affiliated to the General Directorate of Prime Ministry State Archives, holds 150 million documents and registry books from the earliest times of the Ottoman period to our day.

Document collections in the archives form a unity inasmuch as the institutional field of expertise is concerned. Archiving of the documents, in various funds, in accordance with the provenance system still continues.⁴³ The classified collections that have been opened to

⁴² TETİK, Ahmet. “Dünden Bugüne Genelkurmay ATASE Arşivi” [Turkish General Staff ATASE Archive: Past and Present], in *Uluslararası Türk Arşivleri Sempozyumu* [Proceedings of International Turkish Archives Symposium] (17-19 November 2005). T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü [General Directorate of Turkish Prime Ministry State Archives], 2006. pp.116-118.

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⁴³ ÇETİN, Attila. “Başbakanlık Arşivi’nde Uygulanan Tasnif Sistemi ve Kullanılan Kodlar.” [Cataloging System and the Codes Used at the Prime Ministry Archive] in *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi* [İstanbul University Faculty of Letters Journal of History]. Issue: 31, 1977. pp.235-237.

Prime Ministry Archive, in order to render this vast and rich collection available for the exploitation of the researchers employed various methods of classification, relying on either subject or chronology. As the subject based and chronological classifications were far from meeting the needs of the archive, and were observed to be incongruent with the principles of modern archiving principles, these methods were cast aside. Hungarian Turkish Historian and an archivist, Dr.Fekete Lajos, who was in Turkey from 1936 to 1937, introduced a new system for the classification of the documents. Dr.Lajos proposed the employing of *provenance* – where source, origin, and funds were complied with – method for cataloging.

researchers can be exploited through catalogue research to be conducted via Internet; the documents discovered are given to the researchers in digital form.

Department of Ottoman Archives also contains documents and correspondences pertaining to World War I. This collection can be reached through relevant compendia.⁴⁴

c. Directorate of Ministry of Defense Archive

As far as the World War I records are concerned, unit registries, general casualty books, personal files and pension cards of martyrs and veterans, hospital records, recruiting office ledgers, decoration information, and personal files of the generals and officers are embraced by Ministry of Defense Archives.

d. Directorate of Naval History Archive

Documents pertaining to the Ottoman naval power as of 18th Century to the end of 1920s are found at the Naval History Archives

Accordingly, documents were to be collected in relation to the departments and subjects they belonged; thus, the past would be recreated. Although Dr.Lajos's proposals and ideas were accepted, this new method could only be put into practice as of 1956.

⁴⁴ General Directorate of Prime Ministry State Archives, with the aim of creating a convenient medium of study prepared a guidebook – *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi* [Guide to Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive] – that is revised as the catalogues improve. General Directorate also undertakes various studies on certain issues deemed necessary by conducting a meticulous research and by publishing them in modern Turkish and/or in various languages. Relevant information on the publications is to be found through the directorate's internet site. Some of these publications include invaluable material on World War I. The directorate published books directly related with World War I – *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Çanakkale Muharebeleri* [Çanakkale Battles in the Ottoman Documents] 2 vols. (2005); *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Birinci Dünya Harbi* [World War I in the Ottoman Documents] 2 vols. (2013) – composed of scrupulously chosen documents.

affiliated to Naval Museum Command, Beşiktaş, İstanbul. The archive holds documents on the studies Ottoman Ministry of Navy had undertaken, as well as on the organization of the Ottoman naval force, and the characteristics of the ships found in the fleet. Information pertaining to the activities undertaken by the Ottoman fleet during World War I is open for the exploitation of researchers.

e. Directorate of Turkish Red Crescent Society Archive

The records of the activities undertaken by the Red Crescent Society during World War I, letters, memoirs and records of the prisoners of war, correspondences with the Red Cross Societies of various countries, and the documents on the contributions made by the Red Crescent Society are to be found at the Turkish Red Crescent Society Archive, at Etimesgut, Ankara.

f. Other Archives

Archive at the Ankara University Institute of Turkish Revolution History (TITE) and Turkish History Foundation (TTK) does also contain visual materials, documents as well as personal memoirs related to World War I.

4. Commanders who had served at the Department of War History

Some of the officers who had taken active duties in World War I were later appointed as chiefs to the General Staff Directorate of War History with the aim of benefiting from their wartime experiences, command, military knowledge and culture in writing of war history.

Studying the biographies of the commanders who were appointed as the directors of the General Staff Department of War History until 1953 – Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir (ERKİLET) (1920-1921), Mahmut Belig (UZDİL) (1921-1923), Sait Pertev (DEMİRHAN) (1923), Ali Fuad (ERDEN) (1923-1924), Hüseyin Hüsnü (KILKIŞ) (1924-1925), Mustafa İzzet (YAVUZER) (1925-1926), Hüseyin Hüsnü (KARTALTEPE) (1926-1927), Kenan (ULUERGÜVEN) (1927-1928), Mehmet Vehbi (KIPÇAK) (1928-1935), Osman Zati (KORAL) (1935-1936), Mustafa Sabri (ERTUĞ) (1936-1937), İbrahim Rahmi (BEKEN) (1937-1938), İsmail Hakkı (BERKOK) (1938-1939), Veysel (ÜNÜVAR) (1939-1947), Zeki (ERKMEN) (1947-1949), Mümtaz (ULUSOY) (1949), and Bekir Sıtkı (OKAN) (1951-1953) – it can be observed that they had all taken active duties in World War I as commanders of corps, divisions, chiefs-of-staff, regiments, and as range inspectors.⁴⁵

Some of the officers who had also held active duties during World War I – Col.Arif (BAYTIN), Col.Ali Behçet (GÜNAY), Col.Hasan Cemil (ÇAMBEL), Col.Mehmet Şükrü, Col.İsmail Hakkı (IŞIL), Lt.Col.Mehmet Sadık, Lt.Col.Ahmet Tevfik, Lt.Col.İsmail Hakkı (ERDENER), Lt.Col.Hürrem, Maj.Hasan Faik (ALSAC), Maj.İsmail Hakkı (HASA) –

⁴⁵ For further information please see:

Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na Katılan Alay ve Daha Üst Kademedeki Komutanların Biyografileri [Biographies of the Regiment Commanders and Higher Ranking Officers Who Had Taken Part in World War I] 3 Vols. Ankara: ATASE, 2009

Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüd (ATASE) Başkanlığı Tarihi (1916-1998) [History of Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies (ATASE): 1916-1998]. Ankara: Genelkurmay, 1999.

were later appointed to various sections at the General Staff Directorate of War History.⁴⁶

Following the Moudhros Armistice, on 26 November 1918, Lt.Col.Ahmet Tevfik, who was earlier sent to Germany to inspect the studies the Department of War History was undertaking in Germany, was later appointed as a member to World War I Investigation Committee; and Col.Ali Behçet (GÜNAY) was assigned to the commission set up for investigating the misuses at Deputy Supreme Command, and at the relevant departments and divisions of the Ministry of War.⁴⁷

A significant number of officers and commanders took office at the General Staff Directorate of War History in the aftermath of World War I. Aside from the tasks they had undertaken, their writing of their memoirs contributed a great deal to our understanding of World War I.⁴⁸ Furthermore, during World War I, they had even translated some of the works, related to waging war, published abroad into Turkish.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ For further information please see: *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na Katılan Alay ve Daha Üst Kademedeki Komutanların Biyografileri* [Biographies of the Regiment Commanders and Higher Ranking Officers Who Had Taken Part in World War I] 3 Vols. Ankara: ATASE, 2009.

⁴⁷ *Birinci Dünya Savaşı'na Katılan Alay ve Daha Üst Kademedeki Komutanların Biyografileri* [Biographies of the Regiment Commanders and Higher Ranking Officers Who Had Taken Part in World War I] Vol: I & II. Ankara: ATASE, 2009. pp.366-367 & pp.124-125.

⁴⁸ Some of the commanders who wrote their memoirs of World War I were Cemil CONK, Ahmet Cemal Necip (BÜYÜK-SAKALLI), Mehmet Esat (BÜLKAT), Aziz Samih (İLTER), Halis, Süleyman İzzet (YEĞİN), Ahmet İzzet (FURGAÇ), Aliİhsan (SABİS), Mustafa İsmet (İNÖNÜ). The memoirs and the works written by the commanders who had taken active duties at World War I were all published by the General Staff Department of War History, which later continued its mission under the name of General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies, ATASE.

⁴⁹ For further information please see:

Lt.Col.Mehmed Nihad Bey, who had taken active duties at the Çanakkale Battles and İnan Campaign, and at the General Headquarters Staff, produced invaluable works by making use of the Department of War History archive; moreover, he pioneered in translating the foreign publication in the field into Turkish. Considering the number and quality of the works Mehmed Nihad Bey produced, and his endeavor as a Reader of History at the War Colleges in helping innumerable officers gain a well-established notion of history, he is still regarded as the leading War Historian of our country.⁵⁰

Col.Hasan Cemil (Çambel), although did not take active duty in World War I, took duties as a Division Commander, Range Inspector, Military Attaché at the Stockholm and Berlin Embassies, was later appointed as the founding member of the Turkish History Society, and was later elected and served in the 1935-1941 period as the director of the society.⁵¹

İHSANOĞLU, Ekmeleddin, Ramazan ŞEŞEN, M.Serdar BEKAR, Gülcan GÜNDÜZ (Eds.). *Osmanlı Askerlik Literatürü Tarihi* [Ottoman Military Literature] 2 Vols. İstanbul: İslam Tarih, Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi [Center for Islamic History, Art, and Culture], 2004.

⁵⁰ For further information please see:

BACANLI, Hakan. “Son Dönem Osmanlı Devleti’nin ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin Önemli Harp Tarihçilerinden Bursalı Mehmed Nihad Bey ve Tarihçiliği” [Mehmed Nihad Bey of Bursa as an Important Historian of the Late Ottoman State and of the Turkish Republic]. IIIrd International History Education Symposium. Sakarya. June 25-27, 2014.

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⁵¹ *Birinci Dünya Savaşı’na Katılan Alay ve Daha Üst Kademedeki Komutanların Biyografileri* [Biographies of the Regiment Commanders and Higher

5. Military Periodicals in the World War I

Ceride-i Askeriye [Military Journal], the first official journal giving information on the military affairs of the Ottoman State, began its life in 1864; and the *Mecmua-i Fünun-ı Askeriye* [Appreciating Military Affairs Magazine] began to be published in 1882 were plagued by the beginning of World War I.⁵²

The name of the periodical titled *Mecmua-i Fünun-ı Bahriye* [Appreciating Naval Affairs Magazine], began to be published in 1889, containing information on the Ottoman fleet and maritime activities, was changed to *Risale-i Mevkute-i Bahriye* [Naval Magazine Issued on Certain Days]. First five volumes of the periodical, published as of 1914, cover the World War I era.⁵³

Ottoman Ministry of War, with the aim of informing the public opinion about the victories gained and heroism displayed at the war as well as enhancing the morale and perseverance of troops and public alike

Ranking Officers Who Had Taken Part in World War I] Vol: II. Ankara: ATASE, 2009. pp.265-266.

Col.Hasan Cemil (ÇAMBEL) translated the first volume of German Chief-of-Staff Fled Marshal Alfred Graf von Schlieffen's *Cannae Battle* into Turkish in 1911. Second volume of von Schlieffen's work was translated into Turkish by Mehmed Nihad Bey of Bursa in 1925.

⁵² AS, Efdal. "Türkiye'de Askeri Tarih Çalışmalarında Kullanılabilecek Süreli Askeri Yayınlar" [Military Periodicals to be Used in Turkey in the Field of Military History]. IInd International History Education Symposium. Trabzon. June 14-16, 2012.

⁵³ YILDIRIM, Hüseyin. *Risale-i Mevkute-i Bahriye, Deniz Mecmuası, Donanma Dergisi, Deniz Kuvvetleri Dergisi Makaleler Listesi* [List of Articles Published in Naval Magazine Issued on Certain Days, Navy Magazine, Fleet Review, Journal of Naval Forces]. Ankara: Deniz Kuvvetleri Komutanlığı Karargah Basımevi [Naval Forces Command Headquarters Printing House], 1994. pp.17-21.

The volumes containing twelve issues each respectively cover the years: Vol: I (1914-1915), Vol: II (1915-1916), Vol: III (1916-1917), Vol: IV (1917-1918), Vol: V (1918-1919).

began publishing a periodical titled *Harb Mecmuası* [War Magazine] as of November 1915. However, the periodical survived for almost three years, until its twenty-seventh issue published in June 1918. As every issue continued its pages where the previous issue left off, the periodical is of 432 pages in total.⁵⁴

As some issues of the *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi* [Journal of Military History Documents]⁵⁵, published by the Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Research (ATASE), contain facsimiles and translations of the documents dating to World War I era; it can, consequently, be counted as one of the valuable sources that should be exploited and evaluated in the writing of war history.⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

World War I, when the Ottoman State was compelled to fight at various fronts for four years, gave rise to undesirable consequences for the future of the state, ranging from military, social, and economic strains to the signing of treaties with unbearable stipulations – Mouðhros Armistice and the

⁵⁴ *Harb Mecmuası (Kasım 1915 – Haziran 1918)* [War Magazine (November 1915 – June 1918)]. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu [Turkish History Society], 2013, p.ix

⁵⁵ *Journal of Military History Documents* was first distributed under the name of *Harp Tarihi Vesikaları Dergisi* [Journal of War History Documents] as a supplement to the *Ordu Dergisi* [Army Magazine], as of issue 163, printed in September 1952.

⁵⁶ Some of the issues of the journal are dedicated to important events in military history. Issue 84 is titled “6th Army Command: 1916-1918”; Issue: 88, “Çanakkale Battles”; Issue: 90, “6th Army’s Iraq Campaign in World War I (1914-1917)”; Issue: 117, “Combats Engaged in Iraq: 1915-1920”; Issues: 122, 123, and 124 “30th Division: Sarıkamış Campaign Journals”; Issue: 132, “Documents of Çanakkale Naval Battles”. Moreover, lots of documents pertaining to World War I can also be found in the other issues of the journal.

Treaty of Sevres. It can be argued that the Ottoman State's enduring throughout the Great War, notwithstanding the severe limitations in every aspect of life, was only made possible owing to its soldiers who fought in strict loyalty and adherence to the state, who ran from one front to another to prevent the country from invasions and from facing greater dangers, and to its young, dynamic, and idealist cadres of officers who were well-educated and trained in compliance with the recently employed reforms at the military schools in the last phase of the Ottoman State. This cadre of officers formed the future bases of the country by not only training and educating themselves in the field of military and technology, but by also learning of foreign languages and employing their intellectual capacities. The Ottoman command cadres brought up with such a notion aimed at informing people behind the firing line and conveying the developments in waging war properly to the future generations, attached great importance to the writing of war history and archiving studies and hence founded the *Harb Tarihi Şubesi* [Department of War History] in 1916. Works accomplished by the Department of War History, the memories and studies written by the soldiers and commanders, who had had taken active part in the war, have increased our understanding of World War I by transferring exact information to the present. Appointment of some of the commanders as directors to the Department of War History in the following years can be taken as an indicator of the immediate concern with the writing of history. Activities of the Department of War History undertaken in writing history during the World War I continued ceaselessly in the following years. The Department of War History, later renamed as "General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies" [ATASE], is preparing to celebrate

its centennial in 2016, is continuing its efforts in writing of history and its archiving activities with all its cadres and capacity.

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FRIDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2014

LUNDI, LE 5 SEPTEMBER

Prof. Allon Klebanoff (Israel)

The Muses did not Fall Silent: World War I in Art and Culture

A hundred years have passed since the outbreak of World War I. It did not take too long, inside the conflict, for the opposing nations to realize this war was different from any previous armed struggle in the history of mankind.

Throughout history, art has fulfilled more than one role. The spiritual, recreational and entertaining sides of the various forms of art are familiar and acknowledged by all, but art has another role as well. Art is the best representative of the "Zeitgeist" the German term which is used in other languages as well – the spirit of the age.

As a major historical event, which has influenced every aspect of human existence in the 20th century, the First World War is reflected in a major way, not only in the culture of every nation which participated in the war, but in almost every language and culture on the planet, however geographically remote from the theatres of war, including in Asia, South America etc.

The various aspects of World War I are widely represented in every form of culture – visual arts (painting and sculpture), performing arts (music, theatre and cinema) and literature (poetry and verse).

This huge, boundless wealth of artistic creativity, is outside the scope of this paper. Indeed, some of the most iconic works of art associated with the First World War and its legacy, like Erich Maria Remarque's "Im Westen nichts Neues", Blaise Cendrars's "La main coupée", D.H. Lawrence's "Lady Chatterley's lover", Alexander Solzhenitsyn's "August 1914", Dalton Trumbo's "Johnny got his gun" and Benjamin Britten's "War Requiem" – have all been composed after the war.

Many of these great works of art reflect the impact this conflict has had upon almost every aspect of life, already with the perspective of time.

This paper intends to deal with a completely different sphere of relationship between art and society. Throughout the war, artists and writers reflected in a precise and terrible manner the changing attitudes and the perception, dawning upon everybody, this is not going to be the short and glorious path towards victory. Thus, art provides us with a powerful instrument of understanding what was happening to people and societies all over the world.

One must add another element. The First World War also plays a major role in the history of literature. Never before in history, there were so many poets and writers working simultaneously on the same subject. Only in Britain, there were over 2000 writers and poets active during the war, with countless more elsewhere. Soldiers, both combatants and non-combatants, civilians, women, dissecting and dealing with every aspect of the experience of war. More than anything, even more than painting, theatre, film or verse – it is poetry which forms the terrain of World War I memory. Today, a hundred years after the war, we do not simply read First World War poetry. This poetry has moved beyond cultural history or literary memory, into almost a structure of feeling.

The outbreak of war was a culmination of many processes. Nationalism, born in its modern form during the French Revolution, and spread throughout Europe during the Napoleonic era, has been simmering and becoming more and more powerful as a force, ever present in the developing collective identity of nations and in their artistic oeuvre. Romanticism in art included, among other things, a strong nationalistic element.

The rising levels of education in Europe in the decades leading up to the 20th century

meant that in all the western countries, for the first time in history, both soldiers and public were literate. Moreover, the proliferation in book publishing meant a ready audience was available for every kind of literary activity. Art and literature were also very effectively harnessed to the romantic ideals, especially the aspiration for independence and/or the formation of national identity.

From Goya's "May 3rd, 1808", through Friedrich's "Old oak", Adam Mickiewicz's "Pan Tadeusz" and Sándor Petőfi's poems to the musical works of Smetana, Chopin and Liszt, to mention but a few.

The spirit of strong nationalism was not limited to aspiring nations.

It attained other forms in politics as well as in popular culture, from "Manifest destiny" in the USA, to Jingoism in Britain (and later on in the US as well).

Almost all the poems composed and published during 1914 represent this spirit and they are very patriotic and militant. Poets like Rudyard Kipling were quick to set the tone, in a poem like "For all we have and are", which contains lines like:

*For all we have and are,
For all our children's fate,
Stand up and take the war.
The Hun is at the gate!*

*Our world has passed away,
In wantonness o'erthrown.
There is nothing left to-day
But steel and fire and stone!*

This spirit was not limited to England. The call went out and wide, and a young volunteer from Melbourne called James Drummond Burns wrote enthusiastically:

*The bugles of England were blowing o'er the sea,
As they had called a thousand years, calling now to me;
They woke me from dreaming in the dawning of the day,*

The bugles of England – and how could I stay?

*The banners of England, unfurled across the sea,
Floating out upon the wind, were beckoning to me;
Storm-rent and battle-torn, smoke stained and grey,
The banners of England – and how cold I stay?*

*O England, I heard the cry of those that died for thee,
Sounding like an organ-voice across the winter sea;
They lived and died for England, and gladly went their way-
England, O England – how could I stay?*

Not all 1914 poems were militant. Rupert Brooke, a young and already very promising young poet, wrote during the same time one of the most famous and most beautiful idealistic, almost naive poems of the time:

The Soldier

*If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;*

*And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.*

The painters followed almost similar phenomenon. Early paintings have been both patriotic and academic. Academic artists around Europe followed traditions of paintings unchanged from the classical battle depictions of the Napoleonic or the Crimean wars.

The modern technology, like aircraft, found its way into these paintings too, but the times were changing. The complete breakdown of tradition, much more prevalent in the sphere of visual arts than of literature, became manifest in the sphere of War art. Without going into all the forms and trends of the early 20th century, one should only quote Marc Chagall, the great Russian-Jewish painter, who said: "The war was another plastic work that totally absorbed us, which reformed our forms, destroyed the lines, and gave a new look to the universe".

Already, alternative voices were beginning to be heard. Isaac Rosenberg, a sensitive and talented son of Jewish immigrants from Tsarist Russia, who had already written what could be described as a dissenting voice among the patriotic poems of 1914 called "On Receiving News of the War". Rosenberg was critical of the war from its onset.

The great hope and enthusiasm of 1914 was over. The mood that was felt by so many people when war broke out, summed up so admirably by poems like Rupert Brooke's sonnets had changed. Both Brooke and Burns died in 1915. The innocence was ebbing away fast. When the war descended into the second phase, the horrific trench warfare – not only the mood, but also the poems began changing. The slaughter was becoming present on the minds, and in the poetry.

The first important poet was Charles Sorley, who was also killed in 1915, and whose last poem was found in his kit upon the recovery of his corpse. Sorley may be seen as a forerunner of Sassoon and Owen, and his unsentimental style

stands in direct contrast to that of poets like Brooke. Sorley embodies the disillusion. He bitterly writes about the war as "The blind fighting the blind".

To Germany

*You are blind like us. Your hurt no man designed,
And no man claimed the conquest of your land.
But gropers both through fields of thought confined
We stumble and we do not understand.
You only saw your future bigly planned,
And we, the tapering paths of our own mind,
And in each other's dearest ways we stand,
And hiss and hate. And the blind fight the blind.*

*When it is peace, then we may view again
With new-won eyes each other's truer form
And wonder. Grown more loving-kind and warm
We'll grasp firm hands and laugh at the old pain,
When it is peace. But until peace, the storm
The darkness and the thunder and the rain.*

Sorley combines humour and bitter sarcasm, even cynicism in his poems. He views the madness of it all:

*All the hills and vales along
Earth is bursting into song,
And the singers are the chaps
Who are going to die perhaps.*

*O sing, marching men,
Till the valleys ring again.
Give your gladness to earth's keeping,
So be glad, when you are sleeping.*

*Cast away regret and rue,
Think what you are marching to,
Little live, great pass.
Jesus Christ and Barabbas
Were found the same day.
This died, that, went his way.
So sing with joyful breath.
For why, you are going to death.
Teeming earth will surely store
All the gladness that you pour.*

*Earth that never doubts nor fears
Earth that knows of death, not tears,
Earth that bore with joyful ease
Hemlock for Socrates,
Earth that blossomed and was glad
'Neath the cross that Christ had,
Shall rejoice and blossom too
When the bullet reaches you.
Wherefore, men marching
On the road to death, sing!
Pour gladness on earth's head,
So be merry, so be dead.*

*From the hills and valleys earth
Shouts back the sound of mirth,
Tramp of feet and lilt of song
Ringing all the road along.
All the music of their going,
Ringing swinging glad song-throwing,
Earth will echo still, when foot
Lies numb and voice mute.
On marching men, on
To the gates of death with song.
Sow your gladness for earth's reaping,
So you may be glad through sleeping.
Strew your gladness on earth's bed,
So be merry, so be dead.*

*Such is Death: no triumph: no defeat:
Only an empty pail, a slate rubbed clean,
A merciful putting away of what has been.*

*And this we know: Death is not Life, effete,
Life crushed, the broken pail. We who have seen
So marvellous things know well the end not yet.*

*Victor and vanquished are a-one in death:
Coward and brave: friend, foe. Ghosts do not say,
"Come, what was your record when you drew breath?"
But a big blot has hid each yesterday
So poor, so manifestly incomplete.
And your bright Promise, withered long and sped,*

*Is touched, stirs, rises, opens and grows sweet
And blossoms and is you, when you are dead.*

*When you see millions of the mouthless dead
Across your dreams in pale battalions go,
Say not soft things as other men have said,
That you'll remember. For you need not so.
Give them not praise. For, deaf, how should they know
It is not curses heaped on each gashed head?
Nor tears. Their blind eyes see not your tears flow.
Nor honour. It is easy to be dead.
Say only this, 'They are dead.' Then add thereto,
'Yet many a better one has died before.'
Then, scanning all the o'ercrowded mass, should you
Perceive one face that you loved heretofore,
It is a spook. None wears the face you knew.
Great death has made all his for evermore.*

We can't escape the awareness of Sorley's fate, nor can we ignore the perfect sonnet form he follows so religiously. Therefore - this poem operates on that fine threshold where poetic form and personal tragedy meet.

Exactly during the same time, a Jewish soldier in the Austrian-Hungarian army, was wallowing in the mud and the blood in the heavy fighting in Serbia, which saw not only defeat and humiliation for the Habsburg army, but also heavy casualties.

He composed a poem called "Remembrance", although the accurate translation should be the Jewish term - "Remembrance of souls".

*Deep is the hour in the bottom of time
And like in a purist religion the inner side of man is revealed.
Beyond the external, in the twilight
Praying hard – to attain the form of flesh.
Ah!! If only I could bear the bitterness
Of the cup I had to raise with upturned eyes
For my brother soldiers with whom I reached the Sava River,
Who fell with their feet up into the iron entanglements,
And so short was the wail of their agony,
They died so dark then.
And I stood there, like the last fighting man on earth
And saw my brothers growing up upside down, feet up,
Until reaching upward, in death kicking the heavens.
And the moon I have seen, rubbing its silvery face
On the worn nails of the shoe-soles of upturned soldiers.
And this terrible glow on the shoe nails of the heaven kicking dead
Electrified my life with a frightful death glow.
And in my fear I saw divinity, and the fall of man in the eyes of flesh.
And I cried then like the last crying man,
And never cried again like that time, on the waters of the Sava River.*

The name of this young poet was Uri Zvi Grinberg. He would later become one of Israel's greatest poets. This is one of his most powerful and moving poems, and I believe it is the first English translation, done by me for this paper. This is emotional intensity like almost never before. This is the transcript of tragedy and trauma into a poetical form. As the violence and tragedy is unprecedented, the poetical forms are also pushed beyond every previous limits and boundaries. It almost reminds one of the famous words of Theodor Adorno –

"There is no poetry after Auschwitz". We feel here the desperate effort of the poet to share a horror which can not be shared.

Indeed, no other country produced the profusion and diversity of poetical expression like Britain, but the phenomenon of War Poetry was not limited to the British Empire. Other languages produced daring rebels like German poets like August Stramm and Georg Trakl, who capture the desolation and terror in poems like Trakl's "Im Osten" ("On the Eastern Front"):

Im Osten

*Den wilden Orgeln des Wintersturms
Gleicht des Volkes finstrer Zorn,
Die purpurne Woge der Schlacht,
Entlaubter Sterne.*

*Mit zerbrochenen Brauen, silbernen Armen
Winkt sterbenden Soldaten die Nacht.
Im Schatten der herbstlichen Esche
Seufzen die Geister der Erschlagenen.*

*Dornige Wildnis umgürtet die Stadt.
Von blutenden Stufen jagt der Mond
Die erschrockenen Frauen.
Wilde Wölfe brachen durchs Tor.*

On the Eastern Front

*The winter storm's mad organ playing
is like the Volk's dark fury,*

*the black-red tidal wave of onslaught,
defoliated stars.*

*Her features smashed, her arms silver,
night calls to the dying men,
beneath shadows of November's ash,
ghost casualties heave.*

*A spiky no-man's-land encloses the town.
The moon hunts petrified women
from their blood-spattered doorsteps.
Grey wolves have forced the gates*

Other German poets were more traditionalist, but generally subscribed to the same line of representing the horror and futility of war, such as in the moving poem "[Requiem for the Dead of Europe](#)" by Yvan Goll, a German poet of Jewish origins.

French poetry also changed forever, mainly due to the influence of the war on figures like Guillaume Apollinaire and Andre Breton. Apollinaire, already a central figure of modernism in French literature, joined the French army in 1914, volunteering to defend his adopted country. Although initially a member of an artillery division that was relatively safe from active combat, he soon volunteered to fight at the front with the infantry. He suffered a head wound in 1916 and was sent back to Paris, where he saw the staging of his drama *Les mamelles de Tiresias: Drame surrealiste (The Breasts of Tiresias)*. This play, the subtitle of which was later adopted by a group of artists and writers known as the Surrealists, established a model for advanced avant-garde theater and influenced such authors as Tristan Tzara, the titular leader of the Dada movement, and Andre Breton. In 1917 Apollinaire delivered the lecture "L'esprit nouveau et les

poetes," a modern art manifesto in which he called for pure invention and a total surrender to inspiration. Apollinaire, weakened by the wound from which he never fully recovered, died of influenza two days before Armistice Day. One of the most influential French writers was Henri Barbusse, whose 1916 novel, *Le Feu: journal d'une escouade* (Under Fire: The Story of a Squad). Barbusse was a French journalist who served as a stretcher-bearer on the front lines and his book had sold almost 250,000 copies by the end of the war and read by servicemen of many nations

Among the Italians, the most important was Giuseppe Ungaretti, who holds a unique position among Italian poets, as a person who combined the poetic style of the "poètes

maudits" (especially the broken verses without punctuation marks of Guillaume Apollinaire's "Calligrammes") and his personal experience of death and pain as a soldier.

Soldati

Si sta come

d'autunno

sugli alberi

le foglie

Soldiers

Here we are

like leaves on

trees, in Autumn

Russian poetry was also strongly influenced by the war, as well as Turkish poetry.

Sorley, Grinberg and quite a few others, like Ivor Gurney and Edward Thomas to mention but a few, prepare us for the next stage - the poets who reached their poetic maturity in the high moment of tragedy and slaughter – from late 1915 until early 1918. Poetry was now taking on another form. It was there to unsettle, to provoke, to expose the terrible reality and strip away propaganda or conventions.

Isaac Rosenberg, whom I have mentioned earlier, now came into his own. In June 1916, he was sent with his Battalion to France. He continued to write poetry while serving in the trenches, until he was killed in April 1918.

Break of Day in the Trenches

*The darkness crumbles away.
It is the same old Druid Time as ever.
Only a live thing leaps my hand,
A queer sardonic rat,
As I pull the parapet's poppy
To stick behind my ear.
Droll rat, they would shoot you if they knew
Your cosmopolitan sympathies.
Now you have touched this English hand
You will do the same to a German
Soon, no doubt, if it be your pleasure
To cross the sleeping green between.
It seems, odd thing, you grin as you pass
Strong eyes, fine limbs, haughty athletes,
Less chanced than you for life,
Bonds to the whims of murder,
Sprawled in the bowels of the earth,
The torn fields of France.*

*What do you see in our eyes
At the shrieking iron and flame
Hurl'd through still heavens?
What quaver---what heart aghast?
Poppies whose roots are in man's veins
Drop, and are ever dropping,
But mine in my ear is safe---
Just a little white with the dust.*

Dead Man's Dump

*The plunging limbers over the shattered track
Racketed with their rusty freight,
Stuck out like many crowns of thorns,
And the rusty stakes like sceptres old
To stay the flood of brutish men
Upon our brothers dear.*

*The wheels lurched over sprawled dead
But pained them not, though their bones crunched,
Their shut mouths made no moan,
They lie there huddled, friend and foeman,
Man born of man, and born of woman,
And shells go crying over them
From night till night and now.*

*Earth has waited for them,
All the time of their growth
Fretting for their decay:
Now she has them at last!*

*In the strength of their strength
Suspended---stopped and held.*

*What fierce imaginings their dark souls lit
Earth! have they gone into you?
Somewhere they must have gone,
And flung on your hard back
Is their soul's sack,
Emptied of God-ancestralled essences.
Who hurled them out? Who hurled?*

*None saw their spirits' shadow shake the grass,
Or stood aside for the half used life to pass
Out of those doomed nostrils and the doomed mouth,
When the swift iron burning bee
Drained the wild honey of their youth.*

*What of us, who flung on the shrieking pyre,
Walk, our usual thoughts untouched,
Our lucky limbs as on ichor fed,
Immortal seeming ever?
Perhaps when the flames beat loud on us,
A fear may choke in our veins
And the startled blood may stop.*

*The air is loud with death,
The dark air spurts with fire,
The explosions ceaseless are.*

*Timelessly now, some minutes past,
These dead strode time with vigorous life,
Till the shrapnel called 'an end!'
But not to all. In bleeding pangs
Some borne on stretchers dreamed of home,
Dear things, war-blotted from their hearts.*

*A man's brains splattered on
A stretcher-bearer's face;
His shook shoulders slipped their load,
But when they bent to look again
The drowning soul was sunk too deep
For human tenderness.*

*They left this dead with the older dead,
Stretched at the cross roads.
Burnt black by strange decay
Their sinister faces lie
The lid over each eye,
The grass and coloured clay
More motion have than they,
Joined to the great sunk silences.*

*Here is one not long dead;
His dark hearing caught our far wheels,
And the choked soul stretched weak hands
To reach the living word the far wheels said,
The blood-dazed intelligence beating for light,
Crying through the suspense of the far torturing wheels*

*Swift for the end to break,
Or the wheels to break,
Cried as the tide of the world broke over his sight.*

*Will they come? Will they ever come?
Even as the mixed hoofs of the mules,
The quivering-bellied mules,
And the rushing wheels all mixed
With his tortured upturned sight,
So we crashed round the bend,
We heard his weak scream,
We heard his very last sound,
And our wheels grazed his dead face.*

Siegfried Sassoon was also of Jewish origin, but of much more wealthy background than Rosenberg. Motivated by patriotism, Sassoon joined the British Army just as the threat of a new European war was recognized. Already showing great literary talent, he was also extremely courageous and was highly decorated in 1916. He wrote poetry from the very early stages of the war, gradually moving from more conventional lines, to an increasingly discordant music, intended to convey the ugly truths of the trenches to an audience hitherto lulled by patriotic propaganda. Rotting corpses, mangled limbs, filth, cowardice and suicide are all trademarks of his work at this time, and this philosophy of 'no truth unfitting' had a significant effect on the movement towards modernist poetry, not unlike French, German and Italian poetry.

*Soldiers are citizens of death's grey land,
Drawing no dividend from time's to-morrows.*

*In the great hour of destiny they stand,
Each with his feuds, and jealousies, and sorrows.
Soldiers are sworn to action; they must win
Some flaming, fatal climax with their lives.
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds and wives.*

*I see them in foul dug-outs, gnawed by rats,
And in the ruined trenches, lashed with rain,
Dreaming of things they did with balls and bats,
And mocked by hopeless longing to regain
Bank-holidays, and picture shows, and spats,
And going to the office in the train.*

*October's bellowing anger breakes and cleaves
The bronzed battalions of the stricken wood
In whose lament I hear a voice that grieves
For battle's fruitless harvest, and the feud
Of outraged men. Their lives are like the leaves
Scattered in flocks of ruin, tossed and blown
Along the westering furnace flaring red.
O martyred youth and manhood overthrown,
The burden of your wrongs is on my head.*

Suicide in the Trenches

*I knew a simple soldier boy
Who grinned at life in empty joy,
Slept soundly through the lonesome dark,
And whistled early with the lark.*

*In winter trenches, cowed and glum,
With crumps and lice and lack of rum,
He put a bullet through his brain.
No one spoke of him again.*

*You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you'll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.*

*At dawn the ridge emerges massed and dun
In the wild purple of the glow'ring sun,
Smouldering through spouts of drifting smoke that shroud
The menacing scarred slope; and, one by one,
Tanks creep and topple forward to the wire.
The barrage roars and lifts. Then, clumsily bowed
With bombs and guns and shovels and battle-gear,
Men jostle and climb to meet the bristling fire.
Lines of grey, muttering faces, masked with fear,
They leave their trenches, going over the top,
While time ticks blank and busy on their wrists,
And hope, with furtive eyes and grappling fists,
Flounders in mud. O Jesus, make it stop!*

The General

*"Good morning, good morning," the general said,
When we met him last week on our way to the line.*

*Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
"He's a cheery old card," muttered Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.
But he did for them both by his plan of attack.*

A large number of poets and writers indeed create a downpour, a flood of outrage against the senseless slaughter. One of the most famous poems not only of the World War I, but of all times, was written on an impulse by a Canadian military surgeon, called John McCrae, a field surgeon in the Canadian artillery who was in charge of a field hospital during the second battle of Ypres in 1915. When a young officer, who was a friend and former student of McCrae was killed in the battle he was rocked to his foundations. The burial of this friend inspired this poem, written on May 3, 1915.

In Flanders fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

The conclusion of this paper, must be dedicated to the poet who became to symbolize the high mark of poetical genius, snuffed out by the tragedy and the terrible waste of the war. Heavily influenced by his friend and mentor Siegfried Sassoon, he wrote shocking, realistic war poetry on the horrors of the trenches, the immense slaughter and even gas warfare. Owen was killed in action on November 4, 1918, exactly one week (almost to the hour) before the signing of the armistice. His mother received the telegram informing her of his death on Armistice Day, as the church bells were ringing out in celebration.

"Anthem for a Doomed Youth"

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

No mockeries for them from prayers or bells,

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,-

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of silent minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

"Dulce et Decorum Est "

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! -- An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under I green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, --
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.

The Parable of the Old Man and the Young

So Abram rose, and clave the wood, and went,
And took the fire with him, and a knife.
And as they sojourned both of them together,
Isaac the first-born spake and said, My Father,
Behold the preparations, fire and iron,
But where the lamb for this burnt-offering?
Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
and builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretchèd forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.

But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

Owen himself referred to his poems in the words: "Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity".

Labhras Joye (Ireland).

The Irish experience of World War One and the Decade of Commemoration (2012-2022) in Ireland

Introduction.

From 1912 to 1922 the Irish people endured ten years of intense military activity, including participation in a World War, an urban insurrection, a Guerrilla War and finally a bitter Civil War. The result was a new nation bearing both the hopes of many of its citizens, and the pain left by the wars that had brought it into being. During this period the Irish Army was established developing from a small volunteer paramilitary force into an army of 10,000 capable of fighting a guerrilla war from 1919-21 with GHQ based in Dublin.

Early in the 20th Century, Irish men and women began to create paramilitary units to support their political objectives. By the summer of 1914 a quarter of a million people, Ulster Volunteers and Irish Volunteers were preparing for the confrontation they believed to be imminent. When in January 1913 the British government started to move towards 'Home Rule', a form of greater autonomy for Ireland, northern Protestants created a new military force to defend their interests. Led by retired British Army officers and numbering about 85,000, the Ulster Volunteers quickly began training for possible conflict. In response to the UVF, on 25th November 1913 the Irish Volunteers were established at a meeting in Dublin attended by 7,000 people.

Within 7 months, with the support of the Irish Parliamentary Party led by John Redmond, 150,000 Irish men and women had joined and begun to train, even in the absence of uniforms and weapons. While Ireland was getting ready for a civil war in the summer of 1914, world war broke out on 4th August and Ireland (as part of the British Empire) was automatically involved. Over the course of the war, about 200,000 Irishmen volunteered to fight in the British

Army and 35,000 were killed. John Redmond MP, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, argued that Irishmen should support Britain's war effort to ensure Home Rule and 80,000 men were to follow in the first 9 months of the war. At the same time, a minority of the original Volunteers, about 12,000, continued to oppose British rule, retaining the title of Irish Volunteers and were led by Eoin MacNeill.

August 1914

The first shots of the British Army on the Western Front were fired on August 22nd outside of Mons, Belgium by a Corporal Thomas, who was originally from Nenagh, County Tipperary, of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards. The British Army was quickly forced to retreat with the French armies in what became known as the Retreat from Mons and a stalemate ensued with all the armies settling down to trench warfare. The western front was now 700 km long of which the British Army was responsible for 100 km and this is where they fought all their famous battles such as the Somme and Ypres. The small professional British Army was unable to cope with the demands of the World War and new divisions of Volunteers were raised, including three Irish Divisions – the 10th (Irish), 36th (Ulster) and the 16th (Irish).

The Irish Soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force in Irish regiments in 1914 were forced back to the overwhelming numbers and firepower of the Germans. Using hedgerows, farm buildings and other natural defences, they fired their Lee-Enfield rifles so rapidly and accurately that the Germans thought they were facing machine guns. Nevertheless, this was a very different kind of fighting than colonial warfare, and these regulars suffered heavy casualties as they learned the new rules of war. One of these Irish regiments was the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Munster Fusiliers were surrounded at the village of Etreux during the retreat and made a last stand there on 27th August. 99 Irish officers and soldiers were killed and are buried there today in the military cemetery

maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. In total this particular battalion lost 775 soldiers during the war from 1914-18.

1915

During 1915 the Irish soldiers were heavily involved in the Gallipoli campaign and 3,500 Irish men were killed. On the first day of battle on 25th April 1915 two Battalions of Irish Regulars were chosen to be part of the hazardous attack. Soldiers of the Royal Munster Fusiliers and Royal Dublin Fusiliers were packed into the converted collier, River Clyde, and into open boats rowed by sailors. As they tried to land on the tip of Gallipoli (at a place designated V Beach) the soldiers were slaughtered by the fire of the Turks manning the high ground. Their casualties were so great that the two reduced battalions were jointed together, and became known as the 'Dubsters'. In August 1915, less than a year after the being formed, the 10th (Irish) Division commanded by Irishman Bryan Mahon landed at Sulva Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula. Poor staff work, inaccurate intelligence, piece meal commitment of the division created chaos on the landing beaches. The troop fought bravely, but failed to capture the high ground needed to break the stalemate and the 10th Division was essentially destroyed within two months.

1916 Rising in Dublin.

The crucial event of Ireland's ten year ordeal was the Easter Rising in April 1916. A relatively small but determined group of Irish men and women took the opportunity offered by Britain's conflict with Germany to strike a blow for Irish independence. The Rising was organised by a small group of secret revolutionary organisation called the Irish Republican Brotherhood who had infiltrated the Eoin Mac Neill led Irish Volunteers. At the same time there was the Irish Citizen Army a paramilitary offshoot of the militant labour union, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, formed primarily to defend union

members during the great lock-out of 1913. With the coming of World War I, James Connolly, the union leader, transformed this force into a small but well-trained military unit and decided to co-operate with the Irish Volunteers. Eventually Mac Neil was informed of the planned insurrection which had been decided as Easter 1916 and first gave his support and then withdrew issuing a countermanding and most of the fighting took place in Dublin.

The Easter Rising began when the 1,500 insurgents seized half a dozen key buildings around Dublin. About 200 women who participated in the Rising. Most served as nurses, cooks and couriers but a few Citizen Army women fought alongside the men. During the Rising many Irish Regiments of the British Army became involved in stopping the Rising and on the first day of the Rising Irish men were fighting Irish men. These included 467 men of the 10th (Commercial) Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers were based at Royal Barracks (now Collins Barracks where our museum is based) and fought against the insurgents at Mendacity Institute. The British Army and administration were taken by surprise by the Rising however reinforcements were rushed to Dublin from England and by the end of the Rising, there were around 20 British Army troops for every rebel fighter.

A week of urban warfare left 450 people dead and 2614 wounded, over 200 buildings destroyed and the damage has been estimated at £2 million. The main shopping street, O'Connell Street had become a ruin, and the General Post Office, one of Dublin's grandest buildings and the insurgents HQ, was now a burnt-out shell. Following the surrender the British Authorities decided to execute 90 of the leaders and 14 of the leaders were executed by firing squad, an act that turned them into martyrs in the eyes of much of the Irish population, both at home and overseas. James Connolly was the last to die, shot propped up in a chair because of his wounds from the Rising. British Politicians realising their mistake stopped any further executions however Irish History had changed for ever.

The summer of 1916 in France

On 1st July 1916 the 36th Ulster Division attacked the German positions at Thiepval during the first day of the Battle of the Somme. By the end of day over 5,000 Ulstermen were dead, wounded or missing, out of an original strength of 12,000 soldiers. The shattered division was taken out of the line, but the Battle of the Somme dragged on for another five months. In September the last Irish Division to go the war, the 16th, fought their first battle at Ginchy as part of the drawn-out campaign on the Somme. This Division was led by Major General William Hickie who commanded it throughout the war. After the war he was elected to the Irish Senate in 1925 and devoted himself to the interest of the Irish ex-servicemen as President of British Legion in Ireland. The 16th took the village of Ginchy at a cost of over 4,000 dead and wounded. Among the dead was Irish MP, poet and nationalist Tom Kettle, who had been a Professor at University College Dublin and a Member of the British Parliament supporting both Home Rule and the Irish Volunteers. When war broke out, Kettle decided to join the British Army and he initially toured Ireland as a recruiting officer but by 1916 he volunteered for active service and was sent to France. Just before he died wrote that 1916 Rising insurgents would ‘go down in history as heroes and martyrs’, while he would go down, if at all, as ‘a bloody British Officer’.

1917-18

In 1917, two Irish Divisions fought side-by-side, in victory and then in defeat. In June 1917, the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Irish) Divisions benefited from careful preparation and good luck to eject well-entrenched German forces from the important Messines Ridge. However two months later, the same two divisions suffered terrible casualties in assaulting concrete fortifications amid the mud of an unusually wet autumn. Despite warnings from his officers, the Army commander, Irishman Hubert Gough, insisted the attacks go ahead. An observer later wrote: ‘The two Irish divisions were broken to bits, and their brigadiers

called it murder'. When the war finished after 4 years and 4 months 35,000 Irishmen had died in battle or disease.

War of Independence, 1919-21.

In the aftermath of the First World War, Irish nationalists resumed their struggle with the British forces, now widely seen as an army of occupation. Acting as the military arm of the newly-proclaimed Irish government, they embarked on a campaign of harassment and guerrilla activity. The British trained many of their opponents without realising it. After the 1916 Rising, the British government conveniently imprisoned many of the rebels together at Frongoch camp in Wales. There they exchanged ideas and planned strategy for the struggle to come and many were to help establish GHQ of the Irish Republican Army as the Irish Volunteers had become known as. At the same time, other nationalists were serving in the British Army, learning the basics of military operations.

In November 1917 Michael Collins was given the job to reorganise the Irish Volunteers which he did with great energy. The War of Independence (January 1919 to July 1921) remained essentially a guerrilla war that followed a format that we saw throughout the 20th Century. The war started slowly in 1919, developing momentum in 1920 and violent explosion in 1921. From **late 1918 to 1919** the war involved comparatively small-scale attacks on the police with the destruction of minor outposts and sporadic assassinations of policemen. **1920** saw larger scale attacks by the IRA and the arrival of the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries. In **1921** the conflict entered its most brutal phase and no side could be said to be winning as the year went on. Each side had its success however civilian deaths increased dramatically to 707 killed and it was in this last period that the war ended with a Truce on 12 July 1921.

Civil War 1922-23.

After 30 months of guerrilla war, both the British government and the leaders of the IRA sought to bring this ugly conflict to an end. However when Michael Collins signed a treaty accepting something less than complete independence for all of Ireland (26 instead of 32 counties), he prophesied that he was probably signing his death warrant. The signing of the Treaty triggered a short but bitter Civil War, during which 900 Irish people died, including Collins and Liam Lynch commander of the anti-treaty forces. To a great extent the division was between those who had worked with Michael Collins and been influenced by his charismatic personality, and those fighters far from Dublin who had followed other leaders with different views. Few of the IRA commanders in the field supported the treaty, and the majority of rank and file men followed their local commander.

The Civil War began in Dublin with set battles, but very quickly it turned into a guerrilla war based mainly in the South of Ireland. A new National Army was created by the government and reached its highest strength with 48,176 men in March 1923. The soldiers on both sides were very young however the National Army troops were better equipped and more numerous. During the Civil War, both the Free State and the anti-Treaty IRA took actions they believed to be justified, but which the other side considered to be inexcusable. The memory of these very personal betrayals divided friends and relatives, and contributed to a long-lasting schism in Irish society, which is only now being healed. The National Army was quickly reduced in size when the Civil War ended in April 1923 and the modern Irish Defence Forces in August.

Remembering 1912-22.

In the 1920s and 30s many Irish men and women were struggling to cope with the personal losses inflicted by ten years of war. During these years the new nation celebrated the achievements of fighters of 1916. Most Irish citizens could

applaud and embrace their gallant actions, whereas any celebrations of the War of Independence would inevitably evoke the divisions of the Civil War that followed. In contrast, Irishmen who had served the “Great War” often felt the disapproval of their neighbours – many attempted to conceal their military history. For them was no warm welcome home and it was not until the 1990s that their role in Irish History was appreciated. Therefore for most of the 20th Century it was the 1916 Rising that was remembered and not World War One or the War of Independence and there was no discussion of the divisive Civil War.

The National Museum of Ireland also followed this approach having a series of exhibitions from 1932 to 1991 about the 1916 Rising and the executed leaders but avoiding the War of Independence. In 1935 the museum established what is known as the Easter Week Collection which consists of over 5000 documents, uniforms, photographs and weapons relating to the Rising. The complicated story of Irish men following Nationalist politicians into the British Army was overlooked and the Irish Civil War not discussed in these exhibitions. All the exhibitions from 1932 to 1991 suffered from the fact that they focused on one part of Irish History from 1848 to 1916, and not the period from the 1600, or the economic or social history which would fully tell Ireland’s history. It was only with the development of the “*Soldiers & Chiefs*” exhibition in 2006 that the important role of Irish soldiers in World War One was highlighted. The approach in the exhibition was to highlight the 3 Irish Divisions, 10th, 16th and 36th and the war they fought.

In 2014 the museum is opening on 25th October “*From the Battle of Mons to Gallipoli – Stories of Irish Soldiers at War*” Exhibition which looks at the first 2 years of the war focusing on the stories individual Irish soldiers and the 72 Irish battalions. The main battles that will be discussed are the Battle of Etreux in 1914 in Northern France and the summer battles in Gallipoli in 1915. More importantly we are looking at Irish soldiers who fought in other Armies; Australian, South African and Canadian Armies as well seeing what happened to

the French army during this period. For 2016 a new history gallery will be built examining Irelands political, economic and social history from 1600 to 1916. So a hundred years after the events of 1912-22 a more inclusive and balanced history is discussed and the myths of the foundation of modern Ireland revisited.

BG Dr Dani Asher (Israel)

Allenby's Deception Operations in the Conquest of Palestine (1917-1918)

“All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out bait to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him.”¹

On General Allenby's operations during the conquest of Palestine and the final offensive at the Battle of Megiddo, the English military historian Liddell Hart noted that "victory was achieved mainly by strategic means" and "the part that fighting played was negligible."² "Many other historians accept this approach. Regarding the Battle of Megiddo, Gardener stated that "the attack was over before it began³." During these operations Allenby proved himself an outstanding military planner who exploited every element in the art of war to achieve victory, to present Jerusalem as a gift to the Allies before Christmas 1917, and to complete the conquest of Palestine and continue north in September 1918. Wavell summed it up best, "This was not a soldiers' battle, but a commander's."⁴

In every stage of the war Allenby perceived all of the advantages in planning and organizing an attack, which he then exploited to the maximum. He acted out of devotion to mission, combining all the available combat arms (infantry, cavalry, artillery, air and sea), concentrating the main force at the exact

¹ Son Tsu

² B. Lidel Hart, **the Indirect approach**, p 191.

³ Brian Gardiner, **Allenby**, London Cassel, 1946, P 102.

⁴ A Wavell, **Allenby soldier and Statesman**, London, 1946, p 229.

time and place, guarding his flanks, attacked, and quickly seizing the initiative. Above all, he sought to catch the enemy by surprise. To accomplish this as effectively and easily as possible, he devised deception plans based on his joint forces for each of the battles⁵.

Deception

Deception directs all the initiatives, actions and methods toward conveying information to the enemy by various means in order to elicit the intelligence assessment desired by the operator. The enemy's flawed assessment due to deception has to produce significant gains at a relatively low cost. Deception must be an inseparable part of the war effort, that is, it must be organically part of the operational plans.

A vast array of means is needed for deception to succeed in befuddling the enemy's situation assessment. It must convince the enemy of its credibility, be absorbed into his intelligence estimate through the greatest number of sources, and affect his preparations and operational activity⁶.

At the operational level the main goal of a deception plan is to support the assaulting forces' mission in two key areas:

1. Convincing the enemy to take operational steps that facilitate the mission of the planning force.
2. Covering up the planner's weak points in the different stages of planning and mission implementation.

Deception and cunning in conjunction with military moves have been recorded since biblical times. One of the depictions of deception is that of the Hebrew judge Gideon, in his war against the Midianites in the thirteenth century

⁵ A Kearsy, **A summary of the Strategy and Tactics of the Egypt and Palestine Campaign**, Alderstone, P 63 - 69.

⁶ L Bittman, **The Deception Game**, Syracuse V. Research, NY, 1972.

B.C.E. (Judges 7: 17-22). Gideon ordered his 300 men to sound the ram's horns, produce a diversionary cacophony, and create the impression of a massive attack force. In the following century the Trojan horse was exploited to trick the defenders of Troy into opening city's gates which led to the fall of the city. Hannibal, the "father of military deception," employed denial and deception tactics in the war against the Romans in the battles of Lake Trasimene and the Battle of Cannae, making mincemeat of the Roman army⁷.

Frederick the Great, the King of Prussia, was fully aware of the importance of deception in planning and implementing combat operations. His instructions to his generals: "deception often succeeds if and when violent contact is destined to fail. The rule is to exploit both of them." He recommended "on more than one occasion the force has to resort to the path of cunning." Frederick the Great defined the range of deception tactics as being "unlimited but their ultimate aim . . . is to force the enemy to make the wrong move, that we set for him, so that we can mask our true intention, and foster illusions in the enemy's heart regarding the nature of our intentions."

My paper recaps Allenby's plans and the British army's accomplishments under his command in the conquest of Palestine.

Deception in the "Third Battle of Gaza"

In early June 1917, in the wake of two British failures to take Gaza from the Turks, and following the British War Cabinet's decision to reinforce the "Egyptian Expeditionary Force" (the "EEF) and capture Palestine, General Edmond Allenby was sent to the area and assumed command of the forces on June 28. Allenby came to the Middle East after commanding the British Third Army in France, and winning a smashing victory near Ypres. Prime Minister

⁷ The Editors of the Army Times, **the Tangled Web**, NY, 1963, P 72.

Lloyd-George ordered him "to capture Jerusalem and present it as gift to the British people for Christmas."

The strategic goal was to defeat the Turkish army in southern Palestine, lure the Turkish reserves away from the Aleppo area, and thus neutralize the threat of a large Turkish force being sent to the Mesopotamian front. The operative goal was to open a line of advance into the heart of Palestine via Gaza, which Allenby's predecessor General Sir Archibald Murray had failed twice to accomplish (March 25-26, April 17-20, 1917), and advance north, with coastal support and the Jaffa-Jerusalem rail line. At this stage, however, Gaza's fortifications were still too strong to surmount in a frontal attack.

Turkish Forces 3ed Gaza Battle



After studying the problems, he crystallized a plan to take Gaza in a flanking movement only after he seized Beer Sheva. The plan was based on General Sir Philip Chetwode's ideas and included the following stages:⁸

- A. Maintaining maximum secrecy of the force (four infantry and two mounted divisions) attacking the Turks' eastern flank in the Beer Sheva sector.
- B. Capturing the Beer Sheva locality, securing freedom of maneuver and water sources in the eastern area.
- C. Rapidly assaulting the Turkish fortification layout on the western flank and pushing the enemy back to the Gaza line.
- D. Executing a cavalry flanking movement, capturing the water sources in Wadi Hesi and blocking or harassing the Turkish forces in retreat from Gaza.
- E. Pursuing the offensive and penetrating the heart of Palestine.

Appended to the attack plan was a comprehensive deception plan designed to dissemble Allenby's true objectives by:

- A. Presenting the Gaza layout as the primary goal of the breakthrough.
- B. Capturing Beer Sheva by surprise in order to prevent reinforcement of the sector; thwarting the Turks' demolition of the wells so as to safeguard the city's water sources.
- C. Dissimulating the date of the attack (not earlier than November).

While carrying out the initial steps of the deception plan, the main moves were designed to conceal the size and scope of the preparations for capturing Beer Sheva⁹.

Most of the Allied forces remained in the Gaza sector, opposite the city, almost until the moment the attack was launched, and only then were they swiftly

⁸ Kearsy, P 67.

⁹ Kearsy, P 67. Wavell, P 94 -95.

and unobtrusively transferred to the Beer Sheva sector. The XX Mounted Desert Corps (tasked with seizing Beer Sheva) moved to the assembly area east of Wadi Shallala under cover of darkness. Once there, a handful of troops stayed on in the previous camps and feigned regular activity. The plan to extend the railway line (to provision the forces on their move east to Beer Sheva) was put off until the final stage of preparations. Equipment and supplies were concentrated with all due speed in a small area. British intelligence deception riveted the attention of the Turkish command and its reserve forces on the Gaza sector.

The cavalry division continued its routine patrols near the earthworks surrounding Beer Sheva for two reasons: to study the lay of the land and to lull the enemy into a false sense of security by the business as usual pattern. Telegrams that were dispatched in phony code but with accurate reports of the patrol activity were intended to dupe the Turks regarding the time and place of the attack. Thus the British hoodwinked Turkish intelligence into believing that the patrols had nothing to do with preparations for the attack in the Beer Sheva sector.

The Third Battle of Gaza – the deception plan



At the same time, rumors were spread that the British fleet (that maintained uncontested superiority in the Mediterranean) was preparing to land north of Gaza. The fleet's auxiliary vessels intentionally revealed depth measuring activity in littoral waters (an action that could easily be interpreted as preparation for a landing). In addition, a fleet was assembled at Dir al-Balah (14 kilometers south of the city of Gaza) in a sham effort at transporting a landing force. According to Allenby's timetable, a systematic naval bombardment on Gaza's fortifications would begin a week before "D" day - the attack on Beer Sheva.

In the second stage - after the capture of Beer Sheva and re-organization for continuing the attack on the Turks' eastern flank – the XXI Corps would play an integral part in the deception plan by attacking part of the fortifications on Gaza's western flank.

The EEF headquarters intelligence branch, headed by Colonel Richard Henry Meinerzhagen, set a decoy plan in motion to mislead the Turkish forces with false messages conveyed in telegrams using phony codes and with bogus documents that "accidentally" fell into Turkish hands.

In the first stage of the plan Meinerzhagen let the Turks collect documents in regular code. Later, his officers transmitted telegrams in the same code but with false information in order to trick Turkish intelligence into thinking that the British had no intention of launching an attack before November 4. One of the messages inquired where a certain British colonel "would be going and for how long?"

The answer was: "Commander travelling to Suez, October 29. Will return approximately November 4."¹⁰

¹⁰ **the Tangled Web**, P 72.

Since force concentration in the eastern assembly areas would have quickly exposed the plans to capture Beer Sheva, this aspect had to be the main effort in the deception stratagem.

The target for the ruse was Captain Schiller, a German officer who headed Turkish military intelligence in the area¹¹. Meinerzhagen intended to lead the German officer into assessing the wrong date and location of the attack. British wireless operators allowed Schiller's listeners to pick up a report from a Mounted Desert Corps unit stating that the mountainous area was too difficult for the cavalry. Daily messages from September 24 to October 31 described British activity in the Beer Sheva area as routine and the attack itself as merely a large-scale patrol and nothing out of the ordinary. The German-Turkish listening layout received and interpreted these reports as Allenby hoped.

The EEF's chief of field intelligence recorded Meinerzhagen's famous deception plan in his diary, dated October 10, 1917:

"I spent the day outfoxing the enemy. Recently I prepared a phony staff officer's notebook containing all kinds of rubbish about a plan and its complexities. Today I took it out to a field north-west of Beer Sheva with the intention of letting it fall into the enemy's hands without arousing suspicion. After crossing Wadi Gaza I headed northwest in the direction of Sheria. I rode hard and near Garab I came upon a Turkish patrol that immediately gave chase. I took off at a full gallop for about a mile, and they halted. So I stopped, dismounted and fired at about 600 yards. That rankled them and they immediately renewed the pursuit, returning ineffective fire the whole time. This was the moment of truth. As I remounted my charger, I loosened my pouch and canteen and dropped my rifle that I stained with fresh blood from my horse. In effect, I did everything to let them think that I'd been wounded, and then I got the hell out. In the meantime they managed to get quite close to me, and as I galloped

¹¹ **the Tangled Web**, p 82 - 83.

away I let go of the pouch containing the notebook, various maps, and my lunch. I saw one of the Turks stop and pick up the satchel and rifle, whereupon I sped home like the wind. I quickly evaded them, very pleased with what I'd done and the ruse's success. If only they act according to what's written in the notebook, then we're destined to do great things. Altogether, three notebooks were intentionally dropped. The first on September 21 by Captain Achewood Neil, but the Turks didn't find it. The second on October 1 by an Australian captain, and this too was a disappointment because the Turks didn't give chase. And my attempt was the third. Allenby, Damlani, Bols and Guy Donnet were the only ones who knew about the deception. Immediately after returning from dropping the satchel I informed the Desert Mounted Brigade Headquarters of the loss, to which they responded to my negligence with extreme rudeness. I asked them to send out a patrol to retrieve the lost pouch. Then I reported to Allenby who told me that he received a furious message from Desert Mounted Brigade requesting not to employ "young inexperienced officers such as these on patrols" anymore and that I had caused inestimable damage by my carelessness and stupidity."

In addition to the money and food in my pack, there was also a letter from the rider's wife in which she tells him about the birth of their son in England. The letter was filled with details of the newborn child. Another document included personal instructions of an officer from Allenby's right flank, in whose opinion the attack would probably begin in late November. Also included were acrimonious notes regarding Allenby's staff officers (an attack prior to the rainy season would be sheer folly). Another note described the scanty activity near the Beer Sheva sector, the officer writes that the morale among the officers in the sector is low because Allenby has been cutting back on the daily supplies to their canteen [recreational facility], limited to what only one camel can carry.

In the bag was a general order printed in early September to every officer to familiarize himself with the fortification system that had been built in Abu-

Sitta that was the model of the Turkish fortification system on the Gaza coast. There were additional maps and documents in the pouch, as well as a telegram from Allenby's headquarters to the Desert Corps regarding the dispatching of officers to the right flank in order to check the physical barriers around Beer Sheva that could prevent movement. A more important paper contained a number of letters of the alphabet in code in order to facilitate the Turks' interpretation of British radio messages in the coming days.

A few hours after Meinerzhagen verified that the Turks had picked up the "lost" satchel, the documents were on Schiller's desk, the German intelligence office. The next day the British troops received notification that a staff officer had lost his pouch while on patrol and whoever finds it must return it without opening to Allenby's staff. This order was used as wrapping paper for a "stupid" British officer's lunch and a Turkish patrol had found it.

That same day the Turks deciphered another coded telegram that stated, "when the satchel is found, it must be immediately returned without opening to General Allenby's staff." From the contents of the pouch German-Turkish intelligence learned the date of the attack – probably late November - and the attack sector – Gaza.

Schiller was finally convinced of the truth of the findings when two British prisoners were interrogated and revealed that they had been ordered to search for an important satchel and return it to general headquarters without opening it.

British air superiority was a contributing factor to the success in conveying the deceptive messages and having them absorbed by intelligence assessors on the German-Turkish side. Britain's new combat aircraft and the pilots' abilities that surpassed those of the German pilots provided the Allies with "clean skies." British anti-aircraft fire forced the Germans to observe only from high altitudes where they failed to discern changes in the British deployment. As

the day of the attack approached, British combat planes were kept aloft lest German pilots discover the Allies' intentions on the ground.

The forces designated to attack from Beer Sheva's eastern flank gradually deployed in a "sidestep maneuver" in the southeast after having been positioned in the Gaza sector for as long as possible. At the same time the rail line in the direction of Beer Sheva was completed.

To conceal their concentration from Turkish intelligence, the Mounted Desert Corps and the XX Corps' divisions moved into their staging and deployment areas over the course of several nights. Two-thirds of the force was concentrated in the main effort sector and only the XXI Corps (three divisions) was left opposite Gaza.

Thus, Turkish defensive deployment was influenced by intelligence estimates based on the deceptive messages that had been picked up. Only one-third of the Turkish Third Corps' divisions remained in the Seventh Army area, which was responsible for the Beer Sheva sector, whereas five divisions of the Turkish XX and XXII Corps were deployed in the Gaza sector that the Eighth Army was responsible for.

Later, a captured Turkish order revealed that on October 29 Turkish intelligence still believed that six British divisions were facing them in Gaza, and that Beer Sheva had nothing to worry about except for the movement of one infantry and one mounted division (the official Turkish history of the war claims that they had exact knowledge of British movement). In light of the information that the Turkish commanders received, fortification activity slacked off in the Beer Sheva sector, units were sent back to the coastal area,¹² and the Seventh and 19th Divisions (that formed the XV Corps) were transferred to the coast as reserves. The Gaza layout was reinforced with a chain of artillery batteries, machineguns, and motorized units.

¹² **the Tangled Web**, p. 86.

Allenby's deception campaign continued even during the attack. On October 27 the British commenced a massive barrage on Gaza. British and French battleships took part in the shelling that was only a decoy to mask the main effort.

A handful of British troops remained in the camps facing Gaza to give the impression that routine activity was being carried out. Turkish air photos show horses in the camps. These were dummies. A number of Egyptian mules had been left and were used to stir up clouds of dust around the camps.

Most of Allenby's army (a quarter of a million troops) had transferred to the right flank by stealth.

The Battle of Beer Sheva began at 05:55 on October 31 as part of the Third Battle of Gaza. Infantry assault forces arrived at approximately 0800 after a night journey to the outskirts of Beer Sheva from Bir Asluj and Halasa (40 and 56 kilometers respectively), and caught the Turks by surprise. The mounted troops completed the encompassment of the city before enemy reinforcements could reach the area. The conquest of the city was completed during the day. The water sources so vital for the later stages of the battle were captured without the Turks having time to sabotage them. They did manage to set off a few dynamite charges whose effect was negligible.

In summing up the battle, Colonel Meinerzhagen called it a magnificent success:

"The enemy concentrated all of his reserves in the wrong places and expected the attack at the end of [November], not [October]. The conquest of Beer Sheva was complete, and Gaza too was abandoned by the Turks at dawn November 7, thus opening an advanced line into Palestine. Allenby's forces fought a battle of advance and pursuit whose goal was Jerusalem.

The conquest of Jerusalem and ceasefire of 1918

On November 6 the Allies pursued the Turkish forces up the southern coastal plain. After securing the coast they turned east and ascended the Judean Hills with the aim of capturing Jerusalem. The British movement north turned into a rout that fully exploited the Turkish lines' collapse. The EEF advanced so fast that there was no time to employ a deception plan.

Only when the first attempt to capture Jerusalem failed (November 24) did Allenby order a brief ceasefire. A deception effort was made in the Turkish Eighth Army's sector in the northern coastal area. The Anzac (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Division was tasked with seizing a bridgehead across the Yarkon River to prevent Eighth Army troops from coming to the aid of the Turkish Seventh Army that was responsible for defending the Jerusalem area.

The New Zealand Mounted Brigade crossed the river and established bridgeheads at Khirbet Hadara (Ten Mills) and Sheikh Munis. But on November 25 the Turks mounted a counterattack and dislodged the British from the bridgeheads.

On December 11, after three days of fighting at the gateway to Jerusalem, the Turks withdrew and General Allenby entered the city.

The crossing of the Yarkon on the night of December 20 - the last action of 1917 – surprised the Turks because of its timing. They had assumed the river impossible to ford in mid-winter. This time, however, the British action was not accompanied with a deception campaign at the EEF Headquarters level.

To completely knock Turkey out of the war, the British would have to vigorously pursue their advance in Palestine. Allenby realized that his forces would have to recuperate and reorganize to achieve this.

In January 1918 his staff headquarters began formulating a master plan for the continuation of the conquest of Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon. The plan was organized in the following stages:

- A. Expanding the eastern front beyond the Jordan River and cutting the Hejaz rail line in the Amman area.
- B. Advancing to the Haifa-Tiberias line via the coastal plain and opening Haifa's port for absorption of supplies.
- C. Moving north along the coast, then through the Houran to Damascus, and then capturing Aleppo.

The rough draft of a deception plan later became more detailed and accompanied the EEF in all stages of the preparations of the final operation for conquering Palestine. The crux of the plan was to conceal Allenby's breakthrough in a main effort in the western sector.

In February 1918 the EEF captured the southwestern part – the main part - of the Jordan Valley. The territorial gain and seizure of the bridges spanning the Jordan River enabled the EEF to carry out raids on the Turkish lies in Transjordan and the Amman area.

On March 26 Allenby launched a series of forays attack into Transjordan – the first of two major operations in this relatively quiet period between the conquest of Jerusalem and the final offensive. Were they only raids (as Allenby defined them) or unsuccessful opening operations of a much broader attack in Transjordan designed to swiftly reach the railroad junction and crossroads at Dara'a¹³.

If they were merely raids, then they succeeded in the deception effort of a meticulously prepared plan. They riveted the Turks' attention to the eastern flank while the main effort (as we know) was intended in the coastal sector (or western flank)¹⁴.

In planning the "raid" on Amman (March 21-April 2) the trick lay in concealing the primary area for crossing the Jordan River. In order to avoid

¹³ C Falls, **Armageddon**, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964, P 30.

¹⁴ Brian Gardiner, **Allenby**, London, 1965, P 172.

detection, the force split up into smaller groups and crossed in a wide front at many points along the river. Motor boats transported forces across the northern part of the Dead Sea. Only one effort (the 180th Brigade) surprised the Turks on the Jordan line when the brigade crossed the river on a bridge that was built near Deir Hajla (close to today's Allenby Bridge) that escaped Turkish observation¹⁵.

As for deception tactics in the al-Salt raid (April 24) little is known, which may be the reason for its relative failure. The Turks secretly transferred their forces from the west of the Jordan River to the east, surrounded the British and caused them heavy losses.

Deception during the final attack

World events in 1918 had a direct impact on the Palestine Theater of Operations. Allenby's expeditionary force was supposed to continue its chain of victories parallel to the Allies' termination of the war.

During 1918 the defense line in Palestine stabilized from the Mediterranean - north of Arsuf through the Sharon Plain and Samarian Hills to Wadi Auja and the Jordan River north of Jericho. The terrain enabled a main attack effort in either of two flat areas – the coastal plains in the west or the Jordan Valley in the east. Turkish forces in Palestine were deployed as Army Group F (in the past: the Yildirim Army Group) under the command of Otto Liman von Sanders, whose headquarters were in Nazareth. This force numbered three armies (the 4th, 7th and 8th). The 8th Army under the command of Jabad Paha had responsibility for the entire Mediterranean coastal area. The 7th Army under the command of Mustafa Kemal, who was based in the Samarian Hills, was responsible mainly for the defense of the Jerusalem-Ramallah line. The 4th Army under the command of "Little" Jamal was in charge of Transjordan. In sum, the Turkish force consisted of fourteen divisions, but, in effect, less than 40,000

¹⁵ Kearsy, P 65.

troops were deployed on the front, their fighting capability was poor, and their motivation desultory. The opposition to the British advance was perceived as weaker than in Gaza and Beer Sheva. The German-Turkish defense plan was based on the simple rule of "sticking to the line" – the force deployed on the first echelon was without almost any reserves. Thus, Allenby's troops faced a thin, weakly held line that would be easy to penetrate. Much thought went into planning the breakthrough stage, and deception played a key role in it.

The basic principle in Allenby's "final attack" was to maintain contact with and suppress the enemy on the right (eastern) flank and concentrate the main effort on the left (western) flank in the coastal area.

The deception plan that was part and parcel of the operational plan and designed to prevent the enemy from catching wind of the effort on the left flank and give the impression that the main offensive effort would come on the right flank in the Jordan Valley.

An analysis of preparatory operations in this stage shows that despite the EEF's absolute superiority in combat units, mounted troops, weapons, equipment, and morale, Allenby devoted prodigious efforts in dissimulation. His deception tactics were designed to cover up the weak points in the plan and mission implementation, convince the enemy to transfer his forces to the secondary sector, conceal the attack plan in the coastal area, and give the impression of force concentration and an offensive effort on the EEF's right flank in the Jordan Valley and points further east.

Camouflaging force concentration and concealing the preparations for the attack on the coastal plain

As the "opening door" operation approached, the bulk of the EEF was concentrated in the coastal area – the XXI Corps under the command of General Delfin with five infantry divisions, and the Desert Mounted Corps under the command of General Chauvel, with three cavalry divisions. Before hostilities

commenced, three divisions (the Yeomanry Mounted Division, the Australian Mounted Division, and the 60th Infantry Division), an artillery battery, and many other units had to be transferred from the Jordan Valley and Judean Hills to the coastal plain. In order to camouflage the force concentration, the number of core participants was limited, written orders were dispatched to a limited number of officers, and force movement from east to west was carried only under cover of darkness. In addition, the forces were kept hidden in olive orchards and citrus groves in the coastal plain (4th Division in the Lod area; and 5th Division in the Salama area, today's central Tel Aviv)¹⁶. The troops hiding in the groves were forbidden to light fires. The British soldiers warmed their food in alcohol fueled stoves to prevent columns of smoke rising from the kitchens. No new tent camps were set up. During the summer the forces were spread out so that the deployment areas could absorb more units without erecting additional tents and structures. All of the units, including the artillery batteries were camouflaged so that enemy spotter planes couldn't see them. "Tests" were carried out by air reconnaissance photos, and units that were detected moved to better locations.

Full use was made of British air superiority to prevent Turkish and German reconnaissance flights. A bridge construction school was established on the Yarkon River and operated for a long period. Building and dismantling bridges became routine. Four new bridges built at the school enabled the attacking forces to cross the water obstacle. In Jaffa, British intelligence circulated bogus reports that the EEF would not be moving out until spring.

A mock force concentration and offensive effort in the Jordan Valley and transfer of units to the coastal plain in order to preoccupy Turkish attention on the Jordan Valley demanded of Allenby's staff a detailed deception plan. Only "Force Chetwode," consisting of a relatively small number of troops, including Anzac units, remained in the valley. Their part in the deception plan was to set up

¹⁶ Kearsy, P 66.

fake camps in the Jordan Valley and deploy a sham layout of horses: fifteen thousand straw horses were placed in the stockyards while mule-drawn sleds kicked up blankets of dust to obstruct the Turkish lookouts in the Shunet Nimrin area. The impression created was that of robust military activity in the camps.

A phony force concentration was made in the valley. "British West Indian battalions" marched from dawn to dusk for several days from Jerusalem east to the Jordan Valley and were ferried back by truck at night in order to replay the forced march the next day. Lest this activity go unnoticed, the Royal Flying Corps allowed German reconnaissance planes to fly over the air without interception.

Additional bridges were erected across the Jordan to give the impression that the attack force would be made in this sector. Deception tactics also included bogus radio activity from the former headquarters of the Desert Mounted Corps in Ma'ale Adumim (after the corps had been transferred to the coastal plain). Preparations were carried out for transferring Allenby's general headquarters from Bir Salim in the coastal region (a few kilometers southeast of Tel Aviv) to Jerusalem¹⁷. Communications lines were paved and military authorities evacuated all the guests and civilians from a Jerusalem hotel on the pretense that the premises would be needed for headquarters for an unlimited period.

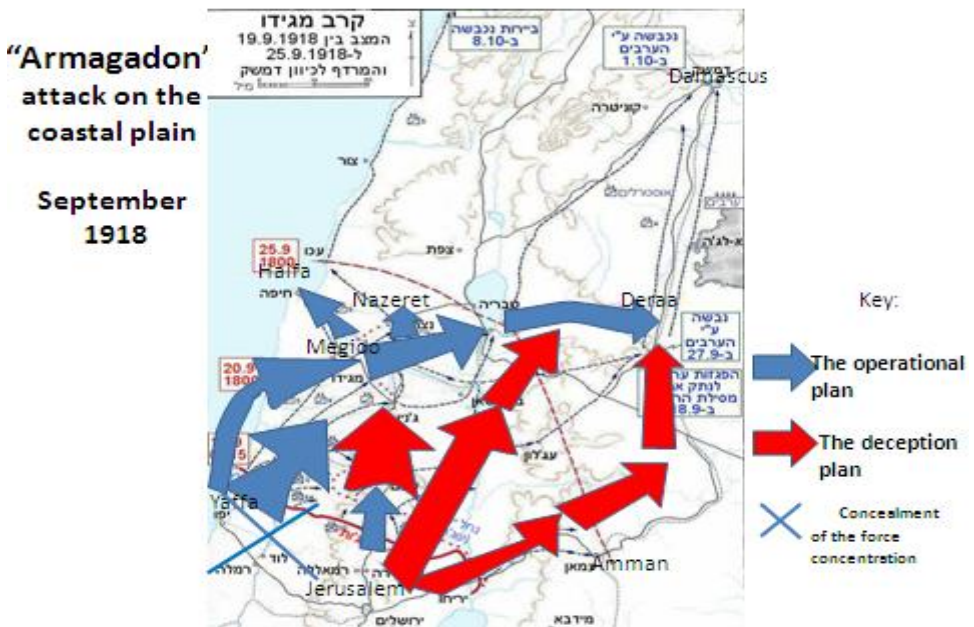
Lieutenant Colonel T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) sent agents to Amman and environs with instructions to negotiate the procurement of large quantities of fodder for horses in preparation for large-scale cavalry activity.

Deception tactics, concealment, and dissimulation combined to give the impression in the winter of 1918 that raiding activities were continuing east of the Jordan River and that an elite unit – the Anzac Division – had deployed in the Jordan Valley. These facts pointed to the direction and intention of the main offensive. While there's no clear proof that Allenby's deception ploys caused the

¹⁷ Allenby, **A Brief Record of the advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force** July 1917 - October 1918, HMSO, 1919, 18.9.1918.

transfer of Turkish forces from the west to east of the Jordan, the Turks took no special measures to meet an offensive in the coastal area.

A Turkish-German intelligence map found in Nazareth testifies that the September 17 intelligence assessment, on the eve of the British offensive, had not identified the force concentration on the coast. In other words: the deception plan succeeded. The only report the Turks received was from a reconnaissance plane stating that "a number of cavalry units appear on his left wing." Concentrated in this area were 301 artillery pieces and not the 70 that had been there earlier. A Turkish patrol identified Allenby's headquarters in the coastal region as the headquarters of two infantry battalions. EEF aircraft attacked headquarters and communications junctions in order to keep the Turks glued to their situation estimate, and to spread confusion and misconception in the Turkish-German headquarters.



A little after sunrise RAF planes bombed 7th and 8th Army headquarters structures, the corps' headquarters tent camps and the Turkish army's main telephone center in Afula (in the center of the Jezreel Valley). Some of the telephone lines were severed by the Arab troops. Turkish telephone communications between Tulkarem (the sector headquarters where the main effort was taking place) and the army's headquarters was destroyed at 07:00; 8th Army's wireless station was also put out of commission¹⁸.

Allenby concentrated a 35,000 man force, 900 cavalymen, and 383 cannons against 8,000 Turkish troops and 130 cannons in the coastal plain sector, which was one-quarter of the front. "In effect, the battle was decided in our factor," General Wavell wrote, "before a single shot was fired." On September 16, King Faisal's forces and RAF aircraft attacked east of the Jordan River in the direction Dara'a. The breakthrough to the coast took place at dawn, September 19. The previous evening witnessed preliminary action east of the Nablus Road whose objective was to improve the positions in the sector and serve as a decoy in the main deception effort. "Force Chetwode" implemented the deception and succeeded in pinning down the 4th Army which remained the only Turkish force in the Jordan Valley (the eastern flank of the operation).

The roar of artillery in the coastal plain that began at 04:30 and lasted a quarter of an hour announced the opening of the offensive. Infantry units broke through barbed wire barriers and captured the Turkish fortifications. The cavalry divisions had already taken advantage of the coastline at the start of their expedition in order to attain a swift conquest. On September 21 Nazareth fell to the EEF; Damascus on October 1; and Aleppo on October 26. In effect, Allenby's offensive accomplished all of its goals. The battles in this theater were over on October 30, 1918 with the signing of a ceasefire between the Allies and Turkey.

¹⁸ Liman von Sanders, **Five Years in Turkey**, Annapolis, 1927, P 275.

Conclusion

After the war a British officer wrote that "the British attacked the Turks like a tiger."¹⁹ There's nothing to be ashamed of about winning with superior forces. From the commanding general's point of view this was a great victory with little investment. Even a plan less sophisticated than Allenby's probably would have succeeded in toppling the Turkish layout in each of the battles – but, at a much higher price. Allenby achieved his battlefield objectives by making full use of the following operational lessons and means²⁰:

- A. Preparations were meticulous.
- B. The use of deception, force concentration, large-scale decoys.
- C. Every success was exploited.
- D. Supervision – absolutely reliable subordinates and the knowledge that your orders are being carried out.

At each step that Allenby took to achieve complete victory, he employed deception, decoys, and camouflage. He exploited operational deception with all available means to assist the assault echelon, and employed deceptive tactics in almost every stage of planning, preparation, and implementation.

In drawing up his plans for the conquest of Palestine, he wielded all the elements of deception: foreseeing developments, force assessment, control of firepower, battle supervision, and overall responsibility. He integrated deception and diversionary tactics into the operations, and sometimes made them the key factor in major military moves.

His use of deception disrupted the enemy's intelligence estimates of the EEF. He hoodwinked the Turks, and blocked them from putting together a situation picture in the areas where his forces were concentrated for the main battles. Thus, he was able to exploit maximum battle strength against the enemy

¹⁹ Falls, **Armageddon**, P 49.

²⁰ Gardner, P 145.

while preventing the other side from doing the same. He applied deception in his battle planning, and carried it to fruition by using almost all the methods and means available. At the tactical level passive deception was employed to allow the enemy to collect misleading information by occasionally permitting Turkish observation planes to fly over areas where the deception was being carried out. Camouflage systems were used to conceal installations, forces, and equipment. Active deception tried, via various channels, to leak false information to the enemy, especially visual decoys, such as bogus force concentrations integrated with a smattering of real forces. Allenby's skillful use of dissimulation in every stage of the conquest of Palestine led many to conclude that "this was not a battle of troops but of a commander," a commander who brilliantly exploited the advantages of deception.

Dr. Vadim Abolmasov (Russia)

Socio-political consequences of the First World War for Great Britain

The First World War had a great influence on the development of most European states, and Britain was not an exception. During the First World War Great Britain participated in the naval hostilities, and had warfare on the continent together with the French Army. As a member of the Entente it happened to be a part of the winning countries. In accordance with the Versailles Treaty, a great part of German and Turkish colonies was allocated to Great Britain, moreover it got the leading position in the League of Nations in the postwar settlement.

However, like many other countries, Great Britain went through recession in the postwar period. Economy was weakened by the war. Human casualties were about 748 thousand of dead and 1,7 million of wounded. Britain lost 70 percent of merchant fleet. National debt grew up 12 times. Traditional external economic links were destroyed. Great influence on the economic situation of England was that after the revolution in October 1917 Russia fell from the scope of application of the English capital, which had previously served as its traditional partner. England lost huge revenues from mining, oil, coal and gold mining. The traditional Russian market of industrial goods faded. This forced the British government to take an active part in the military intervention of the Entente against Russia, but this action wasn't successful. All these events caused that Living standard dropped essentially.

A former major foreign investor, Britain turned into one of the world's greatest debtors. Its interest payments were about 40 percentage of the state spending. Inflation rate increased by more than 2 times during the period from 1914 to 1920 (when the inflation peaked). The pound purchasing power dropped 61,2 percent. Foreign private outlays were sold during the war and made about 809

550 million pounds of profit. On the other hand the amount of new investments made up 250 million pounds. ¹Financial loss was comparatively small, and the most significant loss was that of 40 percent of the merchant fleet, that was destroyed by Germany submarine forces during the war. The number of ships was completely restored by the end of the war. Making a conclusion about the economic damage, and its influence on the post war period many scientists pointed out that the Great War didn't damage Britain economy critically, the war just crushed the British psychologically. And social relationships were damaged also.

The casualties and economic turmoil made deep psychological “scars” in the British society. The 19-th century optimism disappeared completely and the youth having come through the battle fields went down in history as “A lost Generation”. Population census of 1921 showed the post-war demographic situation in the country and reflected a significant decrease in employable population²

Besides, increase in the masses' political activity became a very important consequence of the war, which lead to extension of workers' influence on political parties' activities. Struggle between employees and employers became quite sharp in the British society with its ancient parliament traditions. Employees made claims for their economic rights from the employers, and businessmen demanded to cancel state management of the economy, introduced during the war, but to continue state subsidy.

Adverse effects of the war brought about a split in the English society. One part of it was striving for coming back to the old times, being sure that deviation of the traditional values caused problems in the country. The other part of the population thought fairer principles of state structure must be established

¹*Ian Beckett. The Great War. (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2007). P. 394—395*

²*Ibid. P.341-343.*

in the post war England. The former part of the population was represented by the Conservative Party, the latter – by the Labour Party.

Some fundamental and authoritative works of British researches of party system history point out that the First World War was a turning point in the political development of England. They focused on the economic changes in the country that showed discrepancy between its liberal values, and led to the liberal course collapse.³ On the other hand, they marked the significance and consequences of the electoral reform of 1918 for the parties and dynamic progress of the Labour in their policy. The researches didn't pay enough attention to the effect of war on the Conservative. Although it was the main factor that changed Tory's political course, behavior and their further destiny. The war markedly affected the political situation in England, it changed the disposition of political forces. The original opposition between Tory's military points and Liberal's nominal peacefulness came to the end with the victory of Tory. Germany's aggression became the acknowledgement of the Conservatives' intuition. Its prognoses about Germany's potential threat of war came true. Anti-German mood of Tory's tariff campaign, their pre-war appeal to strengthening of naval forces and increase in budget for the military and civil services were also justified. The beginning of the war allowed to change the image of the party, its public image of a vain opposition striving to delay the realization of liberal government social projects. Having gained some psychological advantage over their competitors – the liberals, the conservatives gained a moment to activate their political work. Military actions in the country gave the Conservatives a chance to demonstrate their initiative. The war helped Tory to make their behavior more positive and to show their potential.

Military crisis consequences pinpointed the Conservatives' success and the Liberals' failure. Herbert Asquith retirement and coalition of Lloyd George's

³ *Cornelli Barnett. The Collapse of British Power.* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2002). 424—426

liberal group with Tory meant the split of the Liberal Party. Herbert Asquith created the party of National Liberals and Lloyd George's group got the name of "coalitional". The latter were less popular and less numerous. Lloyd George's action was valued as treason of their leader and the whole party, because their later collaboration with Tory was leading to increasing violation of liberal policy principles.⁴

The Liberals' position got still worse after the war. In June 1918 the Labour Party took a historical decision to become an independent party with its own programme at the post-war elections. By the end of the war Tory strengthened their political status a lot - the party took the leader position at the Cabinet, took the opportunity to pursue the policy of their programme and have the authority over the society.

By the end of the war there appeared another, equal with the other two traditional parliamentary parties, political force - the Labour Party. Political authority of the Labour increased dramatically during the war. The first reason for that was that the members of this party participated in the military cabinet and gained a reputation of a trustworthy party. Secondly, labour influence over workers grew a lot. Proclamation of the party's independence and the increase in its membership showed that Tory and Liberals got a new rival. Tory felt the increase of competition from the Try even during the war.

Traditionally the Conservative Party ensured their support by workers through creation of divisions of workers' representational offices. An example of such a strategy was the National Democratic Congress, a workers' branch of the conservative organization. Tory usually provided the leaders of these working groups with seats in the Parliament. Members of Parliament from the workers representing the Union party were to draw the attention of the workers as a part of the electorate. However the number and activity of National Democratic Party

⁴*John Ramsden* The Age of Balfour and Baldwin 1902-40. (London.: Longman, 1978.) P.72.

reached its bottom-rock: in 1918 only 8 representatives of this part of the party participated in the electoral campaign instead of usual 28-32 people. The reason for this outflow of unionists was their interest in the Laborites who could embody their interests better.⁵

To prevent the tendency of switchover of workers from Tory to Laborites, Tory chose the tactics of disruption of the Labour movement. Their trump card was patriotic appeals and national slogans. The Conservative Party undertook some actions that attracted the attention of patriotic workers and they criticized “the treacherous position” of some representatives of the socialist movement and the left part of the Labour Party.

The reform of the electoral system in 1918 confirmed the transformation of the political system. The majority of researches notice that conversion of electorate lines, women participation in elections, and preservation of disproportionate representation produced a positive effect for Tory. According to the new electoral law Tory had at least 38 percent of votes, that took 250 seats out of 615. That meant that no other party could take the majority of votes. The Conservative Party transformed from the party of natural minority into the party of national unity.

After the First World War women gained the right to vote as, they had had to make jobs for what were previously categorized as ‘men’s jobs’, thus showing the government that women were not as weak and incompetent as they thought. Also, there were some developments in medicine and production technologies as the injured had to be cared for and there were several new illnesses that medicine had to deal with.

To conclude, it was the First World War that determined the opportunity for the Conservatives to dominate in the political system of Great Britain. The

⁵. *Ian Beckett. The Great War, 564.*

Liberals who had been the main engine of the party-political system found themselves split and were later hustled away from the political scene.

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Dr. Paolo Formiconi (Italy)

The offensive that never was

Italy, the Triple Alliance and the “Cosenz Plan”

With the Kingdom of Italy’s adhesion to the Triple Alliance with Austria and Germany in 1882, Italian military leaders, once the possibility of a conflict between Italy and Austria had deflated, mainly focused their attention on defending the Tyrrhenian coast and the alpine border from possible actions by the French in the event of an Italian-French-German war. The Italian commands were however convinced that in the event of a conflict, the attention of France would be focused on the Rhine front, and that they would adopt a defensive or mildly offensive stance on the Alps.

When the Triple Alliance treaty was first renewed in 1887, the parties also included in the alliance a military cooperation agreement, which, in the case of Italy, bound the latter to engage as much as possible the French forces in order to take them away from the German front, according to a scheme which had already proven effective against Austria in 1866.

The Italian Chief of the Army general staff, Enrico Cosenz, however believed that their geographical features did not provide opportunities for an offensive on the Alps against France. In this connection, old plans made in the 1870s existed, which provided for an attack on Nice and a possible landing at Toulon; however, Cosenz was fully aware that the French side of the border had for long been equipped with numerous strongholds, and that it would be impossible to deploy and supply a sufficient number of troops on the Alps, given the lack of roads and the inclement climate.

Having established that the Italian participation in the war would be useful only as long as it would be able to effectively engage the French forces, the only feasible alternative consisted, according to Cosenz, in sending to

Germany the highest possible number of Italian troops, in order to be able to participate in operations in the main and decisive sector of the war¹.

Cosenz's plan was enthusiastically accepted by King Humbert I, and also in Vienna and Berlin it was positively received, as a sign of Italy's willingness to actively fulfil the alliance's obligations². Cosenz hence drafted a plan which was officially translated on 28th January 1888 into a "Military agreement" with its Austrian and German counterparts, and established that six army corps and three cavalry divisions would be sent to Germany³.

The Italian troops would arrive through three railway lines, gathering in the cities of Strasbourg, Schlechtstadt and Colmar, with the German 14th and 15th army corps. For transportation, 1,200 ordinary railway carriages were needed, and Italy would provide 106 locomotives and auxiliary railway personnel.

Studied more in depth by Cosenz's successor, General Tancredi Saletta, and amended in some sections, the plan became part of the German planning against France until the end of the century. In 1897, during his trip to Venice, Humbert I introduced General Pelloux to Kaiser Wilhelm I saying "Voilà le commandant de l'Armée du Rhin"⁴.

General Pollio between the alpine option and the amphibious landing

The accession to the throne of Victor Emmanuel III following his father's assassination in 1900 marked a gradual change in the course followed by Italian foreign policy. Just as his father had strongly encouraged the alliance with

¹ MARIANO GABRIELE, *La frontiera nord-occidentale dall'Unità alla grande Guerra. (1861-1915). Piani e studi operativi verso la Francia durante la Triplice Alleanza*. Roma, USSME, 2005, pp. 134-136.

² The prince of Bismark had said about the Italian contribution on the Rehin front: "exactly correspondent with our intensions". Ivi, p. 135.

³ AUSSME, Fondo H-5, B. 45, fasc. "1914", "64OM Indice cronologico delle fasi per cui passarono gli accordi con la Germania e con l'Austria per il trasporto della 3^a Armata".

⁴ M. GABRIELE, *La frontiera nord-occidentale*, cit., p. 309.

Austria and Germany, Victor Emmanuel was resolutely in favour of the need to limit military cooperation with the two German-speaking powers, questioning, owing to cuts in military expenditure, that Italy could deprive itself of such a large number of forces to send them to the Rhine. Victor Emmanuel meant to comply with the wishes of a part of the Italian political world that wanted to re-establish good relations with France which, at the time, was sending out signs of détente, confirmed by the arrival in Rome of the new ambassador Barrère, with whom the conditions were created to put an end to the twenty-year old customs war between the two countries.

In 1901, the Italian Army general staff hence called for the suspension of the obligation to send to Germany the Italian contingent; this, without being excluded, was subordinated to situations related to entry into war. The Austrian-German allies took stock of the decision.

Italian-German military cooperation was restored in the 1904, but the German Chief of the Army general staff, general von Schlieffen, stated that in the event of a war, he would not expect of Italy anything more than a “drummer and a bearer with a standard”.

This situation continued until the Italo-Turkish War of 1911-12, which, in addition to making the relations between Italy and France worse once again, had the consequence of causing the Royal Army forces to be severely dispersed on the two shores of the Mediterranean, at a time when a new conflict was breaking out among the Balkan nations, behind which the shadow of Austria and Russia loomed.

On 22nd November 1912, General Alberto Pollio, who in 1908 had succeeded Tancredi Saletta, was requested to meet his German counterpart Moltke. The latter clearly informed him that in the event of a war between Austria and Russia, Germany would intervene, and this would no doubt mean a war with France; he asked therefore what the Italians meant to do with reference to the 1888 Agreement, given that the renewal of the Triple Alliance was

upcoming. Pollio answered that, given its engagement in the Libyan War, Italy was unable to send troops to the Rhine; however, he committed to undertaking offensive actions in the alpine sector. Moltke asked for a commitment in writing, added that France was unlikely to send large forces against Italy in the event of a German attack, however he declared himself to be satisfied, provided that the Italian forces engaged in the attack, wherever it might take place, were sizeable. On 5th December 1912 the Triple Alliance was renewed.

1913 and the new Rhine hypothesis

In the summer of 1913, Pollio was present at the exercises of the German army, at the end of which, in the month of September, he was invited in Salzbrunn to a conference in the presence of Kaiser Wilhelm and the German and Austrian Chiefs of the Army general staff. On that occasion, Moltke asked for the details of the future Italian action against France. The Italian General replied by illustrating the possibility of an offensive against Nice, and added that he could send to Germany two cavalry divisions. The idea was warmly welcomed⁵.

Upon returning to Italy impressed by the German exercises, Pollio was convinced that the best option was to take up again the old Cosenz plan on the deployment of the Italian army in Germany, but had to take into account the opposition of the King. The General proposed the Minister of War Spingardi this idea in two notes dated 12th and 19th October 1913⁶. Illustrating a possible Italian offensive on the Alps and its difficulties, resulting from the difficult terrain and the enemy fortifications, the Chief of the Army general staff compared it to the “terrible albeit short war” planned by Germany, and suggested the idea that peace would be made without Italy having contributed to the war. He ended by saying: “we must find a way to deploy, other than on the Alps, a part of our forces whose

⁵ M. GABRIELE, *La frontiera nord-occidentale*, cit., p. 308-310.

⁶ Ivi, pp. 309-318. Vedi: AUSSME, Fondo H-5, B. 45, fasc. “1913”, “Conferenza. Sedute del 19 e 20 dicembre 1913”.

size will be small or large depending on the season". If sending an army were to be considered untimely, at least the cavalry could be sent to Germany, since on the Alps it was surely not needed.

The proposal at any rate was put forth at the right time, because the end of hostilities with Turkey made most of the troops engaged in Libya available again, and the relations with France had strongly deteriorated⁷.

The general's idea therefore was accepted, despite the King's diffidence, and the agreements on sending the two cavalry divisions to Germany were concluded with the Germans during a meeting which took place between 19th and 20th December. On the 18th, Pollio had submitted the decision to the army commanders convened in Rome. All expressed themselves in favour of considering anew the idea of sending an army. This measure was strongly welcomed by Moltke, who sent Pollio a confidential message of appreciation.

The Chief of the Army general staff therefore continued to work to ensure that the largest possible share of the Italian divisions would be sent to the Rhine, proposing in February 1914 to its Austro-German counterparts a reduced version of the 1888 Agreement, concerning three Army Corps instead of six. The contingent, called 3rd Army, would be under the command of General Zuccari, and would reach Germany as soon as the Austrian mobilization came to an end. General Conrad, the Austrian Chief of the Army general staff, who was notoriously anti-Italian, quickly expressed himself to be in favour of the idea, adding that he could make available railway transport for the transit a week after the beginning of mobilization. Moltke was extremely satisfied.

The details of the agreement, which did not provide for the obligation for Italy to send an army to Germany, but which specified every point in case this were to occur, were established in Berlin on 10th March 1914. Within the tenth day of mobilization, the two cavalry divisions would reach Strasbourg, placing

⁷ MASSIMO MAZZETTI, *l'Esercito Italiano nella Triplice Alleanza*, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1974, pp. 352-354.

themselves under the orders of the German command. Upon the arrival of the 3rd Army, at least one of the two divisions would be returned to the Italians, whose operational sector would be that of the High Moselle: from the Belfort stronghold close to the Swiss border to that of Épinal. To conquer the French fortifications, the Germans would provide excellent 150-mm howitzers, and, in the event the two cities were besieged, also 210 mm mortars, the same that the following summer would subdue the Belgian strongholds of Antwerp and Liège.

The Agreement was signed in Vienna on 10th April 1914. It set the railway termini (Trent, Cividale and Cervignano) where troops would be embarked, defined the number of carriages transporting fodder for horses and foodstuff for soldiers, regulated manner and timing for the meals to be provided to the Italian units in transit, and went as far as establishing the type of carriage to be used for military transport in place of the passenger carriage. Further details were to be decided during a further meeting among the Army general staff officers of the branches involved.

As a whole, it was decided to bring to the Rhine, as of the 21st day of mobilization, 143,263 men and 43,621 quadrupeds, with 485 trucks and 4,423 motorcycles and high wheelers, for a total of 663 trains and 67 supply-trains. Out of these, 13,565 men, 11,252 quadrupeds, 154 lorries, and 1,688 high wheelers and motorcycles would arrive with the two cavalry divisions within the second week of mobilization with the first 101 trains⁸.

The positioning of the Italian divisions was established as follows: “The Italian Army shall be employed as the left wing of the German Army, in close connection with the same, with the main aim of defeating the French army”. The appointed commander would be General Zuccari.

The 1st Italian Army Corps would attack in the direction of St. Dié, cross the Meurthe at St. Leonard and the Vologne at Laveline, to occupy a position

⁸ AUSSME, Fondo H-5, Busta 45, fasc. “1914”, “Allegato A. Convenzione militare per il *casus foederis*. Formazione organica”.

between the cities of Bruyères and Granges, to the south-east of Épinal; the 2nd Corps would on the other hand proceed towards Gerardmer and La Bresse, then positioning itself on the Moselle at St. Amé, Bagney and Saulxures; the 3rd Corps would aim at reaching the Meuse at Le Thillot and St. Maurice, in a position allowing it to outflank from the north the stronghold of Belfort, while a cavalry division would cover the southern flank between Giromagny and Masmunster/Masevaux⁹.

Reasons for disagreement however abounded. The Austrians in fact had reserved the right not to allow the Italian troops to pass through their country in the event the war only involved France, Italy and Germany. Moreover, despite Italy's insistence, the Germans refused to provide the 150 mm howitzers before the Italian troops reached the lines, and subjected the provision of eight 210 batteries to the siege of the strongholds of Épinal and Belfort¹⁰.

The Germans in fact expected to have only the Italian cavalry on time for the decisive battle on the western front, which should take place within the third week of war, while the arrival of the Italian Army would only take place in the following days. They therefore did not intend to deprive themselves in advance of artillery that may be useful elsewhere.

As everybody knows, the Germans intended to defeat France with a single decisive blow at the beginning of the war, to then move part of their troops to the east against Russia. As illustrated in the "1914-125 Deployment Plan" by the German Army general staff, only then would the arrival of the Italian troops prove useful to maintain pressure on what was left of the French army, and attack its position in the southern sector, where it may retreat to reorganize itself, protected by the Massif Central and the Vosges. Although Moltke was undoubtedly very pleased about the Italian contribution, which allowed him to

⁹ AUSSME, Fondo H-5, Busta 45, fasc. "1914". Map attached.

¹⁰ AUSSME, Fondo H-5, Busta 45, fasc. "1914", "Allegato B. Convenzione militare". Comparative plan of German and Italian proposals. P. 1.

considerably strengthen the left wing of its formation, a constant source of worry to him, the Italian contribution remained secondary and subject to the success of the German weapons.

In May, Pollio suggested to Moltke the possibility of sending other troops in Germany further on, insisting that German artillery be provided to the Italians earlier and in greater amounts, so as to make sure that operations would be more decisive. However, in this situation General Conrad put forth a request for Italian troops to be sent to the Galician front. Sending more of them to France, he claimed, would be superfluous after the German victory, while they would be much more useful against the Russians¹¹. Pollio refused: under no circumstances would Italian soldiers be placed under Austrian command.

Pollio, who mistrusted Conrad to the point of communicating with him only verbally and never in writing, did not mention this harsh exchange of views, which however appears in the minutes, but left a significant note on 24th June, in which he pointed out that on the eastern border, the Austrian one, defence was insufficient. On the same day he received a request from the Service Branch which required him to analyze the details relating to the transportation of the Army to Germany. He answered: “No. Under no circumstances. This fact must be known by the smallest number of officers as possible. I shall provide further directions when the time comes”¹². He then left to inspect the works at the French border, and died four days later. How did he die? He died.

On the same day in Sarajevo, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand opened a crisis that would lead to the outbreak of the Great War.

¹¹ M. GABRIELE, *La frontiera nord-occidentale*, cit., p. 330-331.

¹² AUSSME, Fondo H-5, B. 45, fasc. “1914”, “Promemoria per l’Ufficio Mobilitazione” of 24 June 1914.

Conclusion

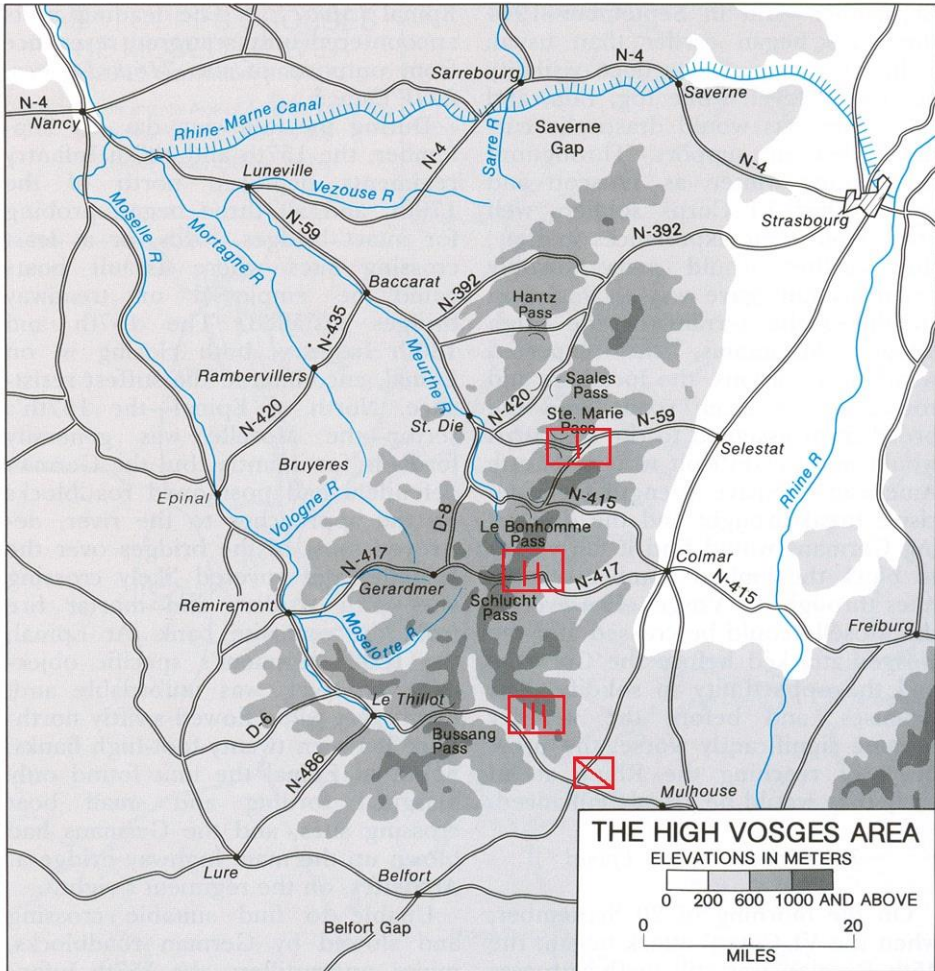
When Pollio died, he was succeeded by General Luigi Cadorna, who was considered by the Austrians to be a friend of the French. Taking office as Chief of the Army general staff on 27th July, the same day of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, Cadorna immediately supervised the Army's mobilization towards the north-western border, and accelerated the preparations for the gathering of the 3rd Army, rejecting new requests for it to be sent to Galicia put forth by Conrad, who affirmed, unreliably, to have been verbally assured of the same by the late Pollio. On 1st August, the King approved a "Note" by the same Cadorna which proposed sending to Germany additional Army Corps immediately, and all the troops available in the future. On 3rd August Italy however declared itself neutral. Having been informed, Cadorna asked the Premier Minister Salandra: "Does this mean that the war against France will be not anymore?"¹³. He received a positive answer and the offensive against France was no longer discussed.

In the Summer of 1914, to what extent France was favoured by the suspension of the Italian intervention? Opinions are numerous and discordant. Undoubtedly, in 1914 Italy was not well prepared for a conflict, and Cadorna himself would recognize so in his post-war memoirs, adding, however, that the Italian offensive in France would have taken place at all costs, and that he would have guaranteed it himself, nor are there reasons to doubt he would have done so, although the outcome is clearly difficult to conjecture¹⁴. On the opposite side, the absence of the Italian contribution did not significantly change the plans of the Germans, nor did it take away a significant part of the Austrian troops from the Italian border, where they came back only at the beginning of 1915.

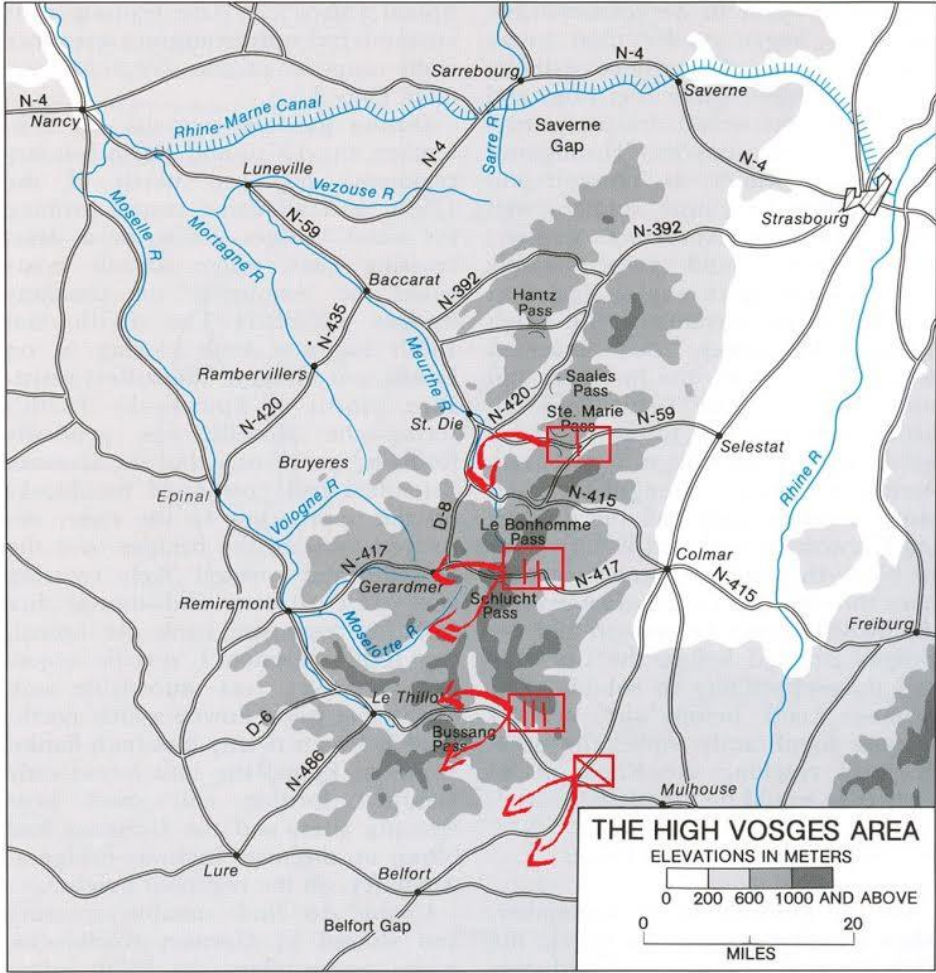
¹³ M. GABRIELE, *La frontiera nord-occidentale*, cit., p. 336.

¹⁴ "Dicono che non avremmo marciato! Avremmo marciato e come! Io me ne sarei incaricato: e poi, alle prime vittorie, tutti sarebbero stati felici e avrebbero dimenticato ogni prevenzione. Dicono che saremmo morti di fame. Può darsi che avremmo patito un mese: ma in capo a un mese la campagna era vinta. Avrebbero bombardato o preso qualche nostra città. Sul Reno ci saremmo fatti ridare tutto." GIANNI ROCCA, *Cadorna*, Milano, Mondadori, 2004, p.53.

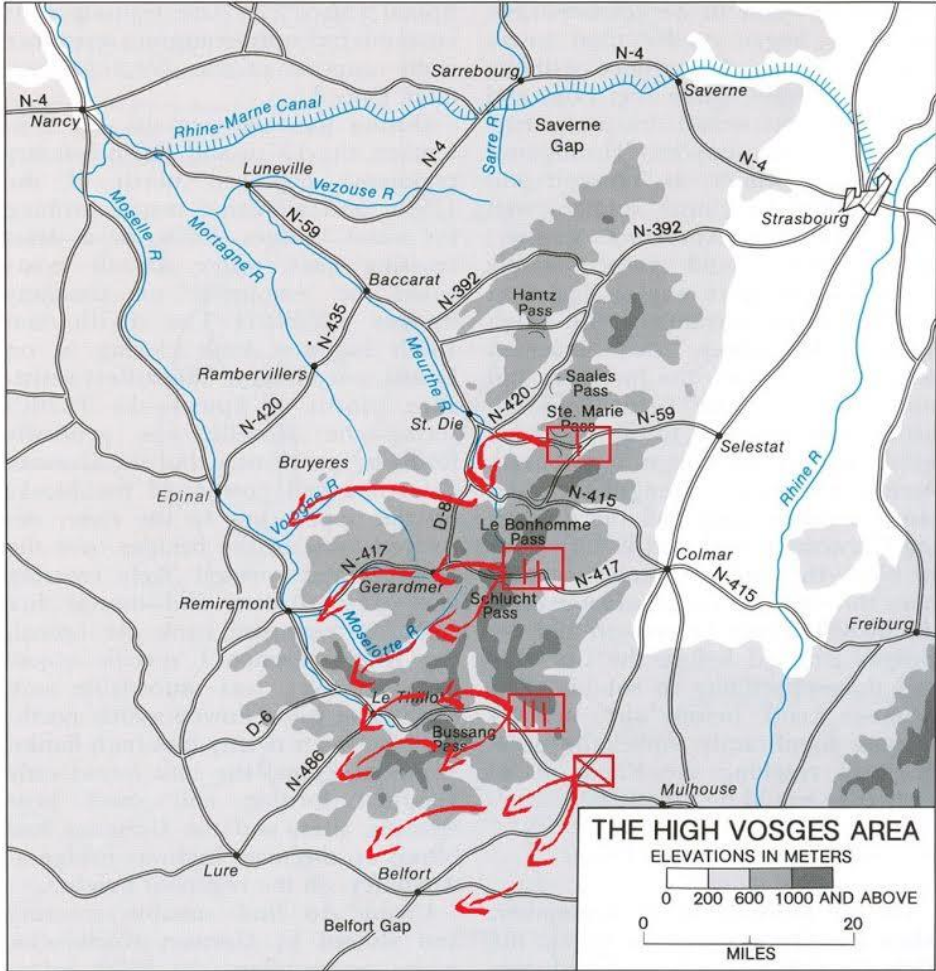
On the contrary, it is certain that during the crucial year of 1914 France was able to transfer – rapidly and without any risks – to the north-eastern front almost all of its forces deployed on the Alps and in North Africa. Whether these forces were decisive in tipping the scales in its favour on the Marne a few months later, hardly we shall never know.



MAP 14



MAP 14



MAP 14

Prof. Dr.Sc. Petr Akulshin (Russia)

***The First World War and the transformation of the armed forces of
Russia
in the XX century***

The First World War led to the downfall of the Romanov monarchy. Together with it perished the Russian Imperial army.

Russian historiography traditionally focuses on the break of continuity in the development of the armed forces and other state institutions during the revolution in 1917. In studies of the Soviet period it was considered as a natural process of eliminating the old army as part of the bourgeois state apparatus. New Soviet state during the Civil war and opposition to foreign intervention creates a new army to defend the Socialist Fatherland. In the post-Soviet period, these processes were seen otherwise. Mostly they are valued as a social disaster, which killed the legacy of the Russian Empire, including the officer corps of the Imperial army. But the historical facts allow us to conclude that the development of the armed forces of the pre-revolutionary and Soviet Russia retained significant succession. The First World War played an important role in creation and development of the Red Army.

The first world war forced the Bolshevik party to abandon its major requirement to replace the "regular army" with "total arming of the working people", before they came to power in Russia in 1917. This didn't happen at once. The first months of the armed forces of the Soviet state were represented as detachments of the Red guard. These were improvised units, which has resulted in the successful seizure of power by the Soviets throughout the country. Attempts to implement the concept of "total arming of the working people" were

made during the Civil war. In April 1918, Soviet Russia established the system of "Universal military training of workers" (Vsevobich, universal military training). Its structure was actually separate from the Red Army military organization. The culmination of attempts to implement the concept of "universal arming of the people" was the appearance in September 1918 the plan of the organization of 131 "red reserve division" in "proletarian" centers: 35 divisions - in the Moscow military district, 32 Yaroslavl, 16 - in Orel, 15 - in Volga, 13 - Urals and 4 - in Belomorsk¹. This ambitious plan in terms of the time was absolutely impossible. "Total arming of the working people" did not allow to create an efficient military mechanism for the new Russian state. In the conditions of sharp class and political struggle in the country with a predominantly peasant population "the total arming of the working people" created preconditions for mass insurgency. The concept of "total arming of the working people" could not provide effective protection of the geopolitical interests of the Soviet state from military and political intervention of the Triple Alliance and the triple Entente.

The Soviet state in 1918-1920 was on the path of creating a massive regular army based on universal military service. The military reforms of the mid-nineteenth century in the Russian Empire were not completed. This was the

¹ Кляцкин С.М., *На защите Октября. Организация регулярной армии и милиционное строительство в Советской республике.1917-1920.* (Москва 1965) 266-268. This plan was created and implemented by the Commissioner of the Moscow city military Commissariat a former warrant officer Alexei Petrovich Shtrodach (1894-1956), a member of the party since 1912, 1919-1922, a student of the Academy of the General staff and participant in the Civil war as chief of staff of the division. His desire for a Grand, but few reasonable organizational projects he showed in the period of collectivization as Chairman of the Ryazan district Executive Committee, 1929-1930. See: *История рязанской власти: руководители рязанского края, 1778-2008 / под ред. П.В. Акульшина* (Рязань 2008) 328-331. Senior military leader of Vsevobich former general-major General Dmitry I. Gurko (1872-1945), a former military agent of Russia in Switzerland (1908-1911) had an attitude to this project. In his memoirs (*Генералами рождаются* (Москва 2002) D. I. Gurko, involved in the white movement and emigrated from Russia, brings the story up to 1916 and never talks about his part in the attempt to implement the concept of "universal arming of the people" in the first year of sushestvennee state of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

result of the retained estates remnants. They were finally eliminated during the revolution of 1917. The Most comprehensive Russian embodiment of a standing army based on universal military service was the Red Army that won a victory in the Great Patriotic War, and the Soviet Army during the postwar period.

The Worker-Peasant Red Army emerged as a direct result of Russia's participation in the First World War. The end of the First World War for the Soviet state was traditionally associated with such dramatic events as the onset of the German-Austrian troops in February and the signing of a peace Treaty in Brest on 3 March 1918. But the fighting forces of Germany and its allies against the RSFSR was not completed in early March at the time of signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Using military weakness of Soviet Russia, they continued hostilities in the southern strategic direction, occupied the Crimea, took part of the territory of the Voronezh and Kursk provinces and the Don region, including such an important center as Rostov-on-Don. The agreement on cessation of hostilities on the Kursk direction was signed on 4 May, Rostov - on 17 June 1918. At the end of May, the German troops began occupation of Georgia, the troops of the Ottoman Empire invaded Baku on 15 September. Having signed the Brest peace treaty, the government of the RSFSR continued to consider the occupied during 1914-1918 land, with the exception of Poland and Finland, temporarily lost territories. After the capitulation of Germany and withdrawal of its allies from the warfare in the autumn of 1918, the Red Army moved west, restoring or establishing the Soviet power with support of part of the local population. This process was accompanied by a struggle with the forces of the Entente and its allies: the white armies and military forces of the new States that emerged on the ruins of the four European empires. The struggle of the Soviet state for the recovery of the Russian geopolitical space in 1918-1922 was kind of embedding in Washington-the Versailles system of international relations. During this battle, which was part of the end of the First World War, the Red Army was formed.

The Council of People's Commissars, headed by V.I. Lenin, who took power in Russia after the October armed uprising of 1917 in Petrograd, announced the demobilization of the «old» army. But a unilateral withdrawal out of a world war is impossible. It was necessary to hold the front line in the course of difficult negotiations for a separate peace. SNK faced a formidable challenge to output the First World War, which required large armed forces to deter Germany and its allies. In this regard, in December 1917, the Soviet government took measures to create new regular units on the basis of the "old army". According to instructions from the General Headquarters, dated 29 December 1917, it was necessary to select efficient revolutionary nucleus for the "national-socialist (narodno-sochialisticheskaj) guard out of the demobilized members of the "regular army". It was assumed that each army corps will be comprised of 3 regiments from the "national-socialist guard"². In practice, these measures were carried out only in the Northern and Western fronts, which had been tolerant to the power of the CPC and the orders by the appointed commander-in-chief warrant officer N.V. Krylenko. This attempt was not completed due to the German attack in February 1918.

In spring, these voluntary formations, played an important role in shaping parts of the veil (zavesa). That was another name for the armed units which were to cover the demarcation line with the territories occupied by the German-Austrian troops after the signing of the Brest peace. In May 1918 the units of the veil of 21 regular infantry divisions started to be formed³. This plan

² Инструкция по формированию революционных батальонов народно-социалистической гвардии в районах дивизионных резервов и в частях, расположенных в прифронтовой полосе, in: *Октябрьская революция и армия. 25 октября 1917-март 1918 г.* (Москва 1973) 327-329. See: Крыленко Н.В., *О соображениях по формированию армии на основах добровольчества* // *Ibid.* 324-326; *Постановление фронтового совета армий западного фронта с проектом формирования народной революционной армии* // *Ibid.* 322-323.

³ About army of the veil (zavesa) see: Егоров Н.Д., *Создания и действия войск завесы обороны в 1918 г.* (Москва 1989); Стрекалов И.И., *Строительство Красной Армии в войсках завесы (май-октябрь 1918 г.)* (Москва 2004).

was not fully implemented. But these forming units became an important source of replenishment of troops of the Eastern front in the summer-autumn 1918, fighting with the Czechoslovak corps and the White units. During these battles the Red Army began to acquire the image of regular armed forces.

During the formation of the Red Army some parts and units of the "old army" directly entered it (the Latvian rifle division, the regiments of the 39th infantry division of the old army who fought in the First World War on the Caucasian front, the foundation of the 16th rifle division of the Red Army, which bore the name of its first commander V.I. Kikvidze, was comprised of the South-Western front of the old army)⁴.

In the "white" armies in the Civil war 1918-1920 precedents save combat core units of the old regular army almost was not. In the South of Russia (in the Armed forces of South Russia and the army of the Ukrainian state Hetman Skoropadsky) attempts were made to recreate the regiments of the Imperial guard and some army cavalry and infantry regiments of the army. But, despite the preservation of traditional names and numbers, the presence of the initiative groups of officers to soldiers and even regimental relics, these were new units⁵. Until the end of World War II the basis of the command of the Red Army were members of the First World War. The experience and the traditions of the Imperial army of the era of the First World War had a great influence on all aspects of life in the Red Army. But it was an inevitable burden inherited from

⁴ See: *История латышских стрелков (1915—1920)* (Рига, 1972); *Латышские стрелки и красногвардейцы в первый год Советской власти* (Москва 1975); *Революционные латышские стрелки (1917—1920)* (Рига 1980). About defense of the village Lechanka 154 Derbent regiment of the 39th infantry division from the Volunteer army see: Гребенкин И.Н., *Добровольцы и Добровольческая армия: на Дону и в «Ледяном» походе* (Рязань 2005) 117. About the 16th rifle division of the Red Army see: [Стрекалов И.И., Дивизия Киквидзе: от красногвардейского отряда до регулярного соединения Красной Армии](#), in: *Россия: идеи и люди. Сборник научных трудов. Выпуск II.* (Москва 1998)76-88.

⁵ See: Волков С.В., [Белое движение в России: организационная структура](#). (Москва 2000); Волков С.В., [Возрожденные полки Русской армии в Белой борьбе на Юге России](#). (Москва 2002).

the old society and the old army. This may explain many characteristics of the Red Army in the prewar period and wartime, which drew the attention of foreign observers. This also concerns the harsh measures to maintain combat readiness and discipline in the years of the Great Patriotic War. They repeated the experience of the First World War. But while holding their hand the Soviet military and political leadership was stronger and more energetic than decaying monarchy of the Romanovs.

Up to 1943, infantry tactical training of the Red Army was based on the revised experience of the Imperial army of the First World War. This was due not only to personal experience of the officers and non-commissioned officers involved in this war. An important factor in its preservation and dissemination was the activity of military schools. One of the examples can be the role of a former Colonel of the Imperial army, and Lieutenant-General of the White army A.A. Slashev. In 1921 he returned to Soviet Russia and in 1922-1928 taught tactics at the Higher Tactical Infantry Command Staff School of the Red Army after Comintern "Shot (Vistrel)". "Taught [slashes] brilliantly, lectures to the people there, and the tension in the audience was sometimes in battle. Many commanders-the listeners fought with Wrangel, including on the approaches to the Crimea, and former white guard general spared neither stinginess, nor ridicule, examining a particular operation of our troops"⁶. His controversial ideas about the advantage of a single rifle cells explain many features of the infantry tactics of the red Army in the initial period of the Great Patriotic war⁷.

The Imperial army entered the First world war in the moment among the officer corps was dominated by the military-theoretical representation of a bygone era of the wars of the nineteenth century. This generation military figures of the war was the combination of two phases. First - this intense, but short battle

⁶ Батов П.И., *В походах и боях* (Москва 1974). 22.

⁷ See: Слащёв Я. А., *Ночные действия* (Санкт-Петербург 1913); Слащёв Я.А., *Ночные действия*. (Санкт-Петербург 1913); Слащов Я.А., *Мысли по вопросам общей тактики*. (Москва-Ленинград 1929).

the opposing armies. It followed a relatively quiet time "March", when the majority of combatants to be in the field, army daily peacetime. War as a permanent process, the conduct of hostilities, requiring all participants, ongoing activity was realized only during the First world war. Such a section of the Russian military science as "operational art", the intermediate link between tactics and strategy emerged in the flow of the First World War in Russia. This theoretical interpretation and the first attempts to apply it in practice were not too popular in the specific conditions of the Civil War. In combat composition of the compound (brigade, division and corps) of the opposing sides at this time corresponded to the regiment of the First world war. Theoretical understanding and practical mastery of operational military art in the Red Army took place already in the interwar period on the experience of the First World War.

During the Civil war the Red Army acquired the experience of the First World War was primarily in the form of the use of new military equipment and tactics to handle it. These were the first attempts to organize anti-tank defense, since the collision with the French troops in Odessa in the spring of 1919, and the use of armored vehicles to support attacks of large masses of cavalry⁸. In 1918-1920 the Red Army received considerable combat experience in the use of aircrafts in maneuvering war and the organization of air defense of large cities and naval bases (the defense of Petrograd and Kronstadt and Astrakhan in 1919 from the raids of the British aircrafts)⁹. The experience to organize position defense during the First World War, was first used on a mass scale by the Red

⁸ See: Коломиец А., Мощанский И., Ромадин С., *Танки Гражданской войны*. (Москва 1999); Свирин М.М., *Броня крепка. История советского танка. 1919-1937*. (Москва 2005); Коломиец М.В., *Броня русской армии. Броневые автомобили и бронепоезда*. (Москва 2008).

⁹ See: Эгар. А.В., *Операции английского флота на Балтике в гражданскую войну*, in: *Морской сборник. 1929. № 1*, 129-150; Титушкин И.С., *Морская война на Балтике. 1918—1919 гг.* (Санкт-Петербург 2002); [Корнатовский Н.А.](#), *Борьба за Красный Петроград*. (Москва 2004); Хайрулин М.А., Кондратьев В.И., *Военлеты погибшей Империи. Авиация в Гражданской войне*. (Москва 2008).

Army in the battles for Kakhovka foothold in August-October of 1920 against the Russian army's P.N. Wrangel. The experience gained during the World War of the onset of long-term defense in November 1920 was in demand during the breakthrough of the fortifications troops of P.N. Wrangel in the Crimea¹⁰. This operation involved a specially organized military formation, shock-fire (udarno-ognevaj) brigade, part of the 51st infantry division of V.K. Blucher¹¹.

After the Civil War, higher military educational institutions began intensive lessons learned from the First World War. They were based not only on the experience of the Imperial army, but also actions of the armies of Germany and the Entente. The Red Army was preparing for the "great European war", which seemed to be a continuation of the First World War, complicated by the massive use of new military equipment. This trend was most vividly seen at the eve of, and during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, when those military leaders, who continued to follow the experience of the Civil war were publicly criticized.

¹⁰ See: Триандафилов В.К., *К пятилетней годовщине ликвидации Врангеля*, in: *Война и революция. 1925. № 7-8*; Триандафилов В.К., *К пятилетней годовщине ликвидации Врангеля*, in: *Военная мысль. 2008. № 5*. During combat troops of Wrangel in 1920 was the first major defeat of the Red Army associated with massive use of enemy aircrafts and armored vehicles. See: Ефимов Н.И., *Действия 2-й конной армии в 1920*. (Москва 1926); Душенькин В.В., *Вторая Конная: Военно-исторический очерк*. (Москва 1968).

¹¹ See: Сергеев П., *Оборона Каховского плацдарма 51-й дивизией (14 октября 1920 г.)*, in: *Военно-исторический журнал. 1939. № 3*. Since both regiments of the brigade acted together with the 152nd infantry brigade 51 infantry division, its actions (including the capture of the enemy tank) is usually ascribed to the parts of this division. The commander the shock-fire brigade was the former captain of the Imperial army Ivan Aleksandrovich Rink (1886-1938), awarded for these fights are the order of the Red banner. This biography of a forgotten military leader in some aspects similar to the biography of M. Tukhachevsky. Released from the Vilna military school in 1910 he received 3 awards (St. Anne's 4 and 3 degrees, of St. Stanislaus 3rd degree) through 1914 during, was in German captivity, after the return of which came in the Red army, in which he rose to the rank of divisional commander in 1935. See: [Черушев Н.С., Черушев Ю.Н., *Расстрелянная элита РККА \(командармы 1-го и 2-го рангов, комкоры, комдивы и им равные\): 1937-1941. Биографический словарь*. \(Москва 2012\). 267-268](#), Shock-fire brigade was disbanded in 1922 and its units were included in the 2nd separate Caucasian infantry brigade.

Lessons learned from the First World War were also reflected in the strategic views of the Soviet military-political leadership. The struggle of two strategic approaches - waging war till "exhaustion"(istoshenie) or "destruction" (sokrushenie) ended at the predominance of the first view¹². Soviet military and political leadership was preparing for a long European war, considering it in the spirit of the theoretical views of the former Major General of the Imperial army A.A. Svechin¹³.

Following this theoretically correct strategic installation caused one of the mistakes made on the eve of the great Patriotic war. "New imperialist war" (the term used in the USSR for military operations in Europe, 1939-1940) was supposed to be a long struggle in Europe, Anglo-French and the German wars. Blitzkrieg Germany in spring 1940 was the unpleasant surprise for the Soviet leaderships. But in the end this strategy war of «attrition» of the enemy has triumphed as the Soviet-German front, and on the entire European theater of World war II. The German "blitzkrieg" strategy "crush" eventually led the Third Reich to crash.

¹² See: *Против реакционных теорий на военно-историческом фронте: Критика стратегических и военно-исторических взглядов профессора Свечина.* (Ленинград 1931); Никифоров Н.И., *Свечин - Тухачевский: К истории противостояния*, in: *Новый часовой. 2000. № 10.*

¹³ See: *Против реакционных теорий на военно-историческом фронте: Критика стратегических и военно-исторических взглядов профессора Свечина. Л., 1931;* Никифоров Н.И., *Свечин - Тухачевский: К истории противостояния // Новый часовой. 2000. № 10.*

Gen. Basilio Di Martino (Italy)

Douhet, Caproni and the Italian Bombing Force (1915-1918)

Even if bombing from the air was part of the experience gained by the Italian Army during the 1911-12 Libyan campaign, 1914 war instructions still assigned a scouting role to the airplane, leaving the offensive action to the airships, due their greater payload and autonomy. Nevertheless the very same year, Major Giulio Douhet, commanding officer of the *Battaglione Aviatori* (Flyers Battalion) and a strong believer in the future of military aviation, encouraged and supported Gianni Caproni, a young entrepreneur who had already designed some interesting aircraft, to complete the construction of a twin-boom biplane with a peculiar layout that included three [Gnome rotary engines](#): a 100 hp housed in the central nacelle driving a [pusher propeller](#) and two 80 hp mounted on the fronts of the two booms driving [tractor propellers](#). The prototype flew on 20 November 1914 and on 26 December a first batch was ordered by the Italian Army, with the 12 aircraft to be equipped with the more powerful Fiat A.10 100 hp engine. However Douhet had gone too far in supporting his friend Gianni Caproni, acting without any authorization from the War Ministry, and by the end of the year he was removed and posted as chief of staff to an infantry division.

Thanks to Douhet and Caproni in 1915 Italy had an airplane expressly designed as a bomber and these two men had still a lot to say in the history of air warfare. Meanwhile on 19 August 1915 the first two Caproni Ca.1, with their three 100 hp engines, were ready for action at Aviano, the airfield near Pordenone that for the next two years was to be the home of the bomber force. The following day the two aircraft took off at dawn to bomb the airfield at Aisovizza, hitting the same target again on August 21 in response to an enemy raid against the city of Udine, in this way establishing a pattern that remained to

the end of the war, with the Italian Army Supreme Command conscious of the “collateral damage” problem as most cities and towns within reach, like Gorizia, Trieste and Trento, were Italian in culture and language.

Nine Capronis were at the front at the start of the 3rd Battle of the Isonzo, in October 1915, and the number slowly increased. They were used to bomb railway stations and logistic terminals, as well as airfields, headquarters and staging areas, acting at tactical and operational level. On 11 November the *Ufficio Servizio Aeronautici* (Office for Aeronautical Services) stated that the bomber was a “strategic” weapon, under the direct control of the Supreme Command. Since July it had been stated that their attacks were to be aimed against targets likely to affect the general course of operations, planned at the highest level of command and executed with as many aircraft as possible to compensate for limited bomb load and poor precision.¹ While anticipating the modern principles of centralized planning and concentrated effort, the *Ufficio Servizio Aeronautici* had recommended also attacking at night to reduce the effectiveness of anti-aircraft fire. Italian airfields however were not equipped for night operations and aircrew were not trained to fly in the darkness, therefore until late 1916 all bombing was carried out in daylight at an altitude of 2,000 meters.

As winter weather reduced operations allowing time for recovering and refitting, the Supreme Command and the *Direzione Generale d'Aeronautica* (General Directorate of Aeronautics), encouraged industry to rationalize and increase production, despite the problems in securing raw materials. While the number of squadrons was steadily growing, field organization, with reconnaissance and fighter units assigned to the armies and the bomber component controlled by the Supreme Command, was in line with the lessons

¹ Comando Supremo, Reparto Operazioni, Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici, *Norme per l'azione offensiva con aeroplani*, n. 201 Av. dated July 8, 1915, AUSSMA, Comando Supremo, Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici, 2^a Sezione, Circolari 1915.

coming from the Western Front. On 29 February 1916 the Air Corps lined up 8 Farman and 2 Voisin reconnaissance and combat squadrons, each with two or three three-aircraft flights, 7 Caproni offense squadrons each with three aircraft, 5 Caudron G.3 artillery squadrons with three three-aircraft flights plus a reserve machine, 2 fighter squadrons, each with ten Nieuport Ni.11s, and 3 more with half a dozen Aviatiks, bringing the total to 175 aircraft in addition to 5 FBA seaplanes of the Garda 1st Seaplane Squadron.² Although bombers and fighters were ordered in large numbers, the development of a large and effective bomber component being a unique aspect of the Italian Army Air Corps, reconnaissance and artillery spotting were of the greatest interest for the Supreme Command due to their importance in trench warfare. Most of the bomber squadrons, together with some air defence units, were directly controlled by the Supreme Command, through the *Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici*, while reconnaissance and artillery squadrons, together with some fighter units, were assigned to the armies.

In 1916 Austro-Hungarian army and navy air services still held the initiative. The raids against Rimini on 11 January, Ravenna on 12 February, Milan on 14 February, although aimed at legitimate targets like railway stations and industrial plants, caused damage to houses and churches and inflicted some civilian casualties prompting the Supreme Command to order a reprisal attack on the Lubiana railway station on 18 February. Of the ten Capronis, with about 200 kilograms of bombs each, three were forced to return by engine troubles, five completed the mission, one was shot down by two Fokker fighters that severely damaged another one. The deadly monoplanes had quite an easy task: the bombers were not flying in formation and were not escorted, and each plane had only one machine gun that, placed in the nose, could not cover the tail. Following the Fokker encounter, the Caproni were therefore equipped with a second machine gun to cover the rear and upper sectors, and the standard crew was

² Direzione Generale d'Aeronautica, *Relazione sui servizi aeronautici al 29 febbraio 1916*, March 1916, AUSSMA, Direzione Generale d'Aeronautica, 1916-1917.

raised to four: two pilots, one observer and one gunner. Late winter and spring saw the bombers attacking in small numbers against counter-air and interdiction targets such as airfields, railway stations, depots and staging areas, and a pattern was set on 16 May when seven Capronis, with their rear machine guns beating off enemy fighters, dropped 1,100 kilogram of bombs on the Ovcia Draga and Kostanjevica railway terminals and on the Lokvica and Segeti depots. It was a clear sign that the Italians were reversing the odds.

In summer 1916 the bomber arm, with a few dozen Ca.1s and some Ca.2s, which had the center FIAT 100 hp engine replaced by an Isotta-Fraschini 150 hp, was strong enough to be used for something more than battlefield interdiction and offensive counter-air. On 1 August 1916, per a Navy's request, the Supreme Command launched 24 Capronis to bomb the Whitehead torpedo factory, the Danubius shipyard and the oil refinery in Fiume. Five had engine troubles and turned back, but the others, flying unescorted in loose five or six airplane formations, crossed the Gulf of Trieste and the Istria Peninsula to drop 142 25-kilogram and 2 50-kilogram bombs, causing some severe damage to the torpedo factory. The anti-aircraft fire was ineffective, but on the way home one bomber was shot down by a seaplane piloted by Lieutenant Gottfried de Banfield, soon to be an ace of the Austro-Hungarian naval aviation. Nevertheless the raid was a clear success and a shock for the enemy public opinion.³ The Fiume operation allowed the Italian aviation to define the kind of support that would be used for raids across the Adriatic Sea, with torpedo boats and destroyers deployed along the route to help the airmen to maintain their course and to rescue aircrew forced to ditch, and with combat air patrols to cover the

³ Comando Supremo, Ufficio Informazioni, *Effetti della nostra incursione aerea su Fiume in data 1 corr.*, Notiziario n. 2594 M. dated August 10, 1916, Diario Storico Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici, AUSSMA.

bombers approach.⁴ After this interlude battlefield interdiction was to be the main task for the bomber arm during the Isonzo battles, with the Capronis to suffer few losses thanks to the defensive armament and the Italian air superiority.

At the end of 1916 raw materials shortages, mainly steel and aluminum, and the need to replace worn out machines at the front (with a monthly rate between 33% and 50%) implied that the 76 squadrons fleet planned for spring 1917 was still largely on paper. The order of battle listed 46 squadrons, but the good news was a constantly growing production, more so with regard to engines. Gianni Caproni was designing more powerful bombers, including a giant triplane that proved too slow and heavy, with engine integration problems, and was tasked to produce a variant of his biplane powered by three 150 hp Isotta-Fraschini engines, the legendary Ca.3.

Although Caproni bombers were already playing a significant role, Colonel Giulio Douhet, in 1916 chief of staff of XII Corps in a quiet mountainous sector of the front, was not satisfied with the way the war was conducted. Convinced by November 1914 of the aircraft's potential as a strategic weapon, he had continued to write newspaper articles to stress the need to win command of the air. He had then been removed as commander of the *Battaglione Aviatori* for exceeding his authority in authorizing Caproni to build the Ca.1 and in conducting the acceptance test, and posted as chief of staff of 5th Division in Val Camonica. In July 1915 he had proposed the creation of a huge fleet of heavy bombers to attack military and industrial centres, railroad junctions, arsenals and ports. It was a proposal that, although sound in theory, was not practical at the time. Transferred to XII Corps in Carnia, Douhet had kept promoting the bomber arm, increasingly convinced that only the airplane could break the deadlock of trench warfare. In September 1916 he wrote a memorandum addressed to a

⁴ Comando Supremo, Reparto Operazioni, Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici, *Azione offensiva sulla città di Fiume*, n. 4263 Av dated Augusto 1, 1916, Diario Storico Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici, AUSSMA.

member of the government, Leonida Bissolati, criticizing the Italian war effort and most of all the strategy of the commander-in-chief, General Luigi Cadorna. Entrusted to a member of the Parliament, Gaetano Mosca, the paper was forgotten on a train and found by the military police. Douhet was court-martialed and sentenced to one year of detention in a fortress.

From January to April 1917 the air arm gradually grew. Each army had its own air element, and on 10 April an Aeronautical Command dealing with all operational, logistics and administration aspects related to assigned squadrons and balloons sections was created within each army headquarters. The Supreme Command maintained direct control of the bomber force along with a few fighter and long range reconnaissance squadrons stationed between Udine and Pordenone. In April 1917 there were two bomber groups, IV and XI, with thirteen Caproni squadrons.⁵ During the 10th Isonzo Battle, while carrying on the usual battlefield interdiction missions, together with a swarm of reconnaissance two-seaters they attacked artillery positions in the Hermada region and on the Bainsizza plateau, as well as supply and reinforcement columns, providing some sort of close air support to the attacking infantry. Though the attacks' lack of precision limited material results, the moral effect was important and prisoners reported panic among Austro-Hungarians troops. Several aircraft were hit by ground fire, but none crashed in enemy territory even if some could not make it to their home field.

In June 1917 only the weather prevented the Air Corps from fully supporting 6th Army's attempt to regain terrain lost on the Asiago plateau in the May 1916 Austro-Hungarian offensive. In the "Battle of the Ortigara" (10-25 June) the 6th Army air component was strongly reinforced and the bomber force was tasked to attack the enemy rear as it had done during the 10th Battle of the

⁵ Comando Supremo, Ufficio Ordinamento e Mobilitazione, *Nuovo ordinamento dell'aeronautica in guerra*, n. 5092 dated April 5, 1917, AUSSMA, Diario Storico Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici.

Isonzo. On the opening day of this offensive 141 sorties were flown in a well-balanced mix of 32 bombers, 53 reconnaissance planes and 56 fighter sorties. But very few aircraft could penetrate the cloud cover. On the morning of 19 June, when a second assault was launched following a 24-hour artillery bombardment, air support was provided by 30 Capronis, 61 fighters, 54 two-seaters - only 30 of these allotted for reconnaissance and artillery spotting tasks. Thirty Capronis and 24 two-seaters were organized into three attack groups that one after the other appeared over the battlefield to drop 424 bombs (5.5 tons of ordnance) on billeting and logistics areas in the immediate rear. The ground gained on the Ortigara was lost on June 25 and the offensive was called off on 29 June, but the battle confirmed Italy's superiority in the air.

At the same time the bomber arm raided logistic centres and railway stations in the rear of the Isonzo front with 10-12 aircraft at a time, operating both at day and at night, and the number of Ca.3s available allowed the Supreme Command to consider targets more in line with a strategic use of air power. In the afternoon of 7 July 12 Caproni bombed the power station and the mercury mines at Idria, without encountering any opposition in the sky, and the raid was repeated on 28 July by 25 Ca.3s that were well protected by their escort fighters. While harassing the main logistic centres on the Isonzo front in the Chiapovano area with an efficacy that was confirmed by defectors and prisoners, IV and XI Group were ordered to attack the main Austro-Hungarian naval base. On the night of 2 to 3 August 36 Capronis took off at one-minute intervals to bomb Pola. The cloudy sky and the usual engine troubles forced 16 Ca.3s to turn back, but 20 arrived over the well defended base and dropped six tons of bombs. Intense anti-aircraft fire damaged 10 bombers and engine problems forced three more to make emergency landings once back in Italian territory. The raid was repeated the following night, with 27 out of 29 bombers dropping 8.5 tons of bombs, and again on the night of 8 August by 25 out of 28 Ca3s, with 8 tons of bombs.

Three Caproni were forced to head back by their faulty engines and two crash-landed before reaching their airfield.

Pola was then set aside to concentrate the bomber force against battlefield interdiction targets in preparation for the 11th Battle of the Isonzo. Chiapovano and several railway terminals were attacked daily by 10-12 Capronis usually escorted by X Group fighters. Target list included the railway junction and the ammunition factory at Assling (now Jasemice) in Slovenia, that on 14 August was raided without losses by 12 bombers in the morning and by 11 in the afternoon. As in May, all squadrons supported the infantry attacks. On 19 August 228 aircraft flew 288 sorties (reconnaissance, artillery spotting, infantry liaison, combat air patrols, escort and ground attack) with the loss of a single two-seater. In the 92 ground attack sorties 24 tons of bombs were dropped by Capronis and reconnaissance aircraft, many of them going down to 200 meters altitude to strafe enemy troops and the guns crews. The following day, the pattern was the same, with 261 aircraft of all types flying 326 sorties and dropping 14 tons of bombs for the loss of one fighter, while 14 Ca.3s dropped four tons of bombs on the railway station at Tarvisio in a failed attempt to stop the flow of reinforcements and supplies for the Isonzo front. On 21 August 338 sorties were flown by 245 aircraft, with 13 tons of bombs dropped on battlefield interdiction and close air support targets, with similar numbers for the days to come: 250 aircraft, 283 sorties, 11 tons of bombs on 22 August, 215 aircraft, 273 sorties, 15 tons of bombs on 23 August, 168 aircraft, 233 sorties, 15 tons of bombs on 24 August. Several machines were damaged by ground fire but only two, including a Caproni, were missing at the end of these four days of battle.

With the end of the August offensive the bomber force could again be used in a strategic role, while still keeping under pressure the enemy railway and logistic system. Pola was raided by 28 Capronis on the night of 3 September, by 10 the following night and, after a few weeks interval, by 9 on 27 September, by 7 on 28 September, by 9 on 29 September, always at night. By then the summer

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effort had reduced the number of available bombers and the defence was better organized: several aircraft were hit by anti-aircraft fire and on 29 September a Caproni was shot down by a seaplane. The available ordnance, with 25, 50 and 75 kilogram bombs, could not seriously damage heavily armoured battleships, therefore a scheme was devised to use torpedoes and therefore, after several successful trials, one of the 15 bombers that attacked Pola on the night of 3 October was armed with a 700-kg torpedo. Although well planned, this “first” ended as a failure: during the target run the aircraft was caught by enemy searchlights and the blinded pilot broke away dropping the weapon at sea. To make things worse two Capronis failed to return, but the idea of the torpedo-bomber was not rejected, although not to be tried again before the end of the war.

The following night the bomber force was able to complete another outstanding feat. On 4 October 12 Capronis with 300 kilograms of bombs each took off from Gioia del Colle and flew more than 200 kilometers over the sea in poor weather to bomb the Cattaro naval base. Although little damaged was caused, this achievement was duly celebrated by the press. Overall the Italian bombing effort so impressed the American Bolling Commission that it concluded: *“In Italy alone, of all allied countries, do the conceptions of this subject appear at the present time to be on sufficiently broad and sound lines”, with “real and effective airplane bombing planned and in course of application”*.

For the breakthrough in the Caporetto sector of the front in the air as on the ground the Austro-Hungarians were supplemented by German forces, with fighter and reconnaissance units soon joined by bomber squadrons. The air war intensified as soon as the weather, which was awful on 24 October, allowed flight operations to resume. While their airfields were hastily evacuated, Italian aviators carried out repeated ground attacks in the effort to stem the tide, suffering heavy losses since bombers and reconnaissance two-seaters were often sent unescorted into the fray. From a report to the Parliamentary Inquiry Committee it can be estimated that between 100 and 120 aircraft were dropped

from the inventory from 25 October to 20 November.⁶ Since on 24 October the combat ready aircraft on the whole Italian front were 411 the attrition rate was 25%, although most machines destroyed on the ground were not in flyable conditions.⁷ It is easier to assess the number of aircraft lost in combat and quantify the effort produced by the squadrons. According to an official after action report, from 25 October to 14 November 18 bombing missions were flown and 70 air-to-air combats occurred with 39 kills claimed, while 7 bombers, 5 reconnaissance aircraft and 4 fighters went missing with 26 pilots, 8 observers, 7 gunners. The navy lost one of its few Capronis, and two reconnaissance aircraft that crashed near the Italian lines can also be added to these numbers, raising the total to 19. From 22 October to 21 November, 17 enemy aircraft were shot down in Italian controlled territory.

It is possible to divide the Caporetto air campaign into three phases. Initially, in the first two days, all available aircraft were used in a massive interdiction effort that implied heavy losses. From 27 October, while Italian troops redeployed behind the Tagliamento, most reconnaissance squadrons were withdrawn and bomber and fighter squadrons, together with the most modern fuselage two-seaters, were concentrated at La Comina and Aviano, near the new front line, to carry out day and night attacks against advancing enemy columns and their supply lines while, at same time countering enemy aviation with combat air patrols. Austro-Hungarian and German aircraft failed to attack the retreating columns, not even when they were crossing such choke points as the

⁶ Comando Supremo, Comando Superiore di Aeronautica, *Relazione alla commissione d'inchiesta sulla organizzazione, efficienza, funzionamento e dislocazione dei mezzi aerei sulla nostra fronte nel periodo 1° ottobre-15 novembre 1917*, March 1918, AUSSMA, 1^a Guerra Mondiale, Comando Aeronautica 3^a Armata, Commissione d'Inchiesta su Caporetto.

⁷ Comando Supremo, Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici, Sezione Segreteria, *Rapporto riassuntivo circa l'attività aerea nostra nella giornata di ieri 24 Ottobre 1917*, n. 30958 dated October 25, 1917, AUSSMA, I primordi, b.34, Diario storico Ufficio Servizi Aeronautici.

Tagliamento bridges. This was due to the defensive counter-air scheme put in place by the Italians, but also because the enemy air units had to move their operating bases forward. When the Italian Army regrouped behind the Piave, the air war intensified as the enemy air units had now moved forward and redeployed on the abandoned Italian airfields. Losses increased again until in November the weather forced a pause and allowed to rest and reorganize.

At the end of December 1917 when the situation was stabilized the air component under direct control of the Supreme Command included three bomber groups (IV Group, 1st, 8th, 13th squadron, at S. Pelagio, XI Group, 4th, 5th, 6th squadron, at Ghedi, XIV Group, 2nd, 7th, 9th, 10th squadron, at Padova) and one fighter group (X Group, 70th and 82nd squadron at Istrana, 91st at Padova). The newly formed XVIII Group, with three Caproni squadrons (3rd, 14th, 15th) was dispatched to France to take part in the bombing offensive against German lines of communication and industrial plants.

In 1917 250 Ca.3s had been built, with 20 more to come in 1918, while the overall numbers for the Ca.1 and the Ca.2 version stay at 166 and 8 respectively, but in those days the expansion plans were based on the Ca.5 version with three 200 hp Fiat A.12 engines, a machine that had severe “teething” problems. The emphasis on heavy bombers also had doctrinal implications, even if there was not yet an officially recognized doctrine. Giulio Douhet and Gianni Caproni through the year had urged creation of a fleet of strategic bombers that could destroy the enemy industrial base and cripple enemy morale. Caproni had written three separate memoranda to the Allied headquarters, to French President Poincaré and to the United States Air Service to stress the importance of a bombing campaign that could destroy the enemy fleet within its bases and most of all cripple the enemy war machine by hitting some vital element of the industrial structure. Meanwhile from the fortress of Fenestrelle, where he was detained until 15 October 1917, Douhet had called for a combined Allied air fleet that could carry on a decisive effort against the German industrial centres. In his essay “The Great

Aerial Offensive” Douhet underlined the effect on morale of the German raids on London of June 1917, the inadequacy of anti-aircraft defences, and the necessity of applying massive force.

On 10 January 1918 Douhet assumed the position of *Direttore Centrale di Aviazione*, Central Director for Aviation, within the *Commissariato Generale per l’Aeronautica*, General Commissariat for Aeronautics. The commissariat was formed on 1 November 1917 with the aim to centralize and streamline all activities required to provide the air arm with material and personnel. Douhet’s first task was to revisit the production program for 1918 as decisions taken the previous summer had to be revised after the autumn disaster. The basic criteria were still valid: “*to ensure an unchallenged domain of the air*”, which accentuated the trend that emerged in the second half of 1916 “*to create a bomber force that could effectively advance the victory through repeated and massive raids into the enemy territory*” and to replicate on a grander scale the attacks against targets like Idria mining complex, the arsenal of Pola and the naval base at Cattaro. The new aircraft due to enter service in 1918 would have allowed a significant leap in quality and at the same time, thanks to the expansion of aircraft factories, the creation of a much larger air fleet. The program agreed on in July 1917 between the Supreme Command and the General Directorate for Aeronautics aimed to have by June 1918 30 reconnaissance squadrons, 15 fighter squadrons, 5 escort squadrons, 26 defence squadrons, 19 bomber squadrons, 15 single-engine bomber squadrons and 3 seaplane squadrons. However, according to Douhet, this program missed the true nature of air warfare and therefore on 24 January he proposed his own program, supported by a doctrinal document titled *Impiego dell’Arma Aerea* (Using the Air Arm). The key concept was that “*The main goal of the air arm is to win the domain of the air, all other goals are of secondary interest and can be achieved without difficulty once you have the domain of the air.*” Such a fundamental point was widely acknowledged but it was not clear how one could gain air superiority or how to exploit it. The idea to

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use the fighter to win the domain of the air was inherently wrong, since the fighter, with its limited radius of action, was essentially a defensive weapon. The air arm was instead, by its very nature, an offensive weapon and to be used as such. The solution was the “battle aircraft”, with a balanced mix of speed, armament, protection and range, that to the fighter would have been what a battleship was to a torpedo-boat, capable of conducting all types of missions so reducing the number of aircraft models required. The “battle aircraft” would pave the way to the bomber force, that would have attacked industrial and population targets with the aim to destroy both the capability and the will to fight of the enemy.

Having fixed this conceptual frame, Douhet argued that the “battle aircraft” was not a dream and that in 1918, with a few changes to the design of the twin-seat SIA9B, Italy could have deployed that kind of machine. The bomber squadrons were instead to be equipped with the 600 hp Ca.5. This program helped to shape the future, but in the months to come Douhet had to face reality. The industrial potential was not capable of carrying out such an ambitious project, and both the SIA9B and the Ca.5 would never have met expectations, their development hampered by technical shortfalls that prevented these planes from playing any significant role. Although 250 Ca.5 were completed, most of them were delivered after the armistice. Disappointed and disillusioned, on 4 June 1918 Douhet resigned from his post and retired from active service.

Due to the Ca.5’s difficulties, the bomber force would operate the Ca.3, together with an handful of underpowered and cumbersome Ca.4 triplanes (38 of them were built) and some unreliable SIA9Bs until the end of the war. Since Ca.3 production was stopped to concentrate on the Ca.5, the total strength of the Caproni squadrons would not exceed 50-60 aircraft. The guidelines for their use were coherent with the trend that had been consolidated during 1917 which left aside the most audacious visions of the air power as incompatible with the available resources. Thus interdiction and offensive counter-air absorbed most of

the bombing effort, with a mix that depended on the overall situation. Offensive counter-air was top priority in January and February when the German AEG bomber squadrons from Aviano conducted night raids against Padova, Mestre and Treviso before being recalled to the Western Front. Interdiction targets jumped at the top of the list in April and May when the Italian Army was rallying to face the expected spring offensive. Given the limited number of fighters for escort duties most raids were carried out at night, usually with moonlight. This approach remained unchanged for the rest of the war, with only one concession to the doctrine of the "battle in the harbour", conceived by the navy to attack the enemy fleet within its bases. On 17 July a force of 18 Ca.3s escorted by 6 SVAs and supported by 9 SIA9Bs dropped 6,290 kilograms of bombs on Pola. There was no plan for strategic bombing of industrial centres, in accordance with a realistic assessment of the related difficulties. The Alps screened the targets of interest, which were located deep inside the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and one could not ignore the existing limitations in terms of bomb load, speed, range, navigation and weapon aiming.

The basic concepts of air power were fully defined at the end of World War One. The nations at war had exploited its fundamental characteristics of altitude, speed, radius of action, flexibility to achieve strategic, operational and tactical objective. Within this context the Italian Supreme Command used aircraft in a pragmatic way and in spite of the doctrinal dispute about the opportunity to attack the enemy's industrial cities, the bomber force was routinely and effectively sent against counter-aviation and interdiction targets at operational if not at strategic level. The Great War experience was nevertheless fundamental to build up an "aeronautical identity" and what we may call an "environmental competence" which, together with the ideas of Caproni and Douhet, were to pave the way for the creation of an independent air force.

Reference Note: this work is based on Basilio Di Martino, *L'aviazione italiana nella Grande Guerra*, Mursia Ed., Milano, 2011. The referenced documents are from the Archive of the Air Staff Historical Department (*Archivio Ufficio Storico Stato Maggiore Aeronautica - AUSSMA*)

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***Military Learning in World War I: The Development of
German Land Warfare Tactics***

“Lions led by donkeys” – this popular British figure of speech sums up what is still today considered incompetent military leadership during World War I. In blatant ignorance of the impact of modern automatic weapons, generals consistently sent thousands of their soldiers to be slaughtered along the frontline in futile mass attacks from 1914 onward; this is the most common allegation expressed by the media and the general public. Yet, if one follows recent research on the so-called learning curve in the British Armed Forces between 1914/18, the explanation for the military elites’ conduct of warfare is not quite as simple as that. In fact, senior officers were willing to learn from their mistakes and from the methods used by the enemy. The art of warfare was purposefully developed in theory and practice. In essence, the aim was to achieve optimum interaction between all branches in combat. This included the elementary tactical level that concerned military small groups as well as the conduct of major operations involving entire armies. After all, the intention was to get the trench warfare going again in order to bring it to a victorious conclusion as it had got bogged down towards the end of 1914. In view of the public mood at home, however, it was also important to limit the number of losses. Any party intending to conduct future attack and defense actions with as few losses as possible had to achieve better coordination of the elements technical equipment, fire and movement. There can be no doubt that wrong decisions continued to claim high numbers of bloody losses. But, in the end, tactical learning in the British Army was a key element in the offensives on the western front in 1918, which were

decisive for the outcome of the war because tanks and air forces were consistently integrated.

What was the situation of the German opponent who was forced to accept an armistice in November 1918? Had the army that was arguably Europe's most effective military machinery at the beginning of the war also learned from the bitter experiences of the 1914 offensives, which, on the western front alone, accumulated to the loss of 650,000 men?

The way to the battle of materiel

Traditionally, the education and tactical-operational thinking of German officers were characterized by the guiding idea of using offensive mobile warfare to envelop and defeat the enemy in rapid maneuvers on the battlefield. The point was to keep any war as short as possible due to the strategically unfavorable central location and the resource poverty of the German Reich. The Schlieffen Plan was also based on this so-called strategy of annihilation. This, so the German General Staff believed, would bring about a swift decision in the main war theatre in France. But the operation failed already in early September 1914, when the German troops retreated at the Marne. The transition to static trench warfare in autumn 1914 did indeed confront the German military elites with unforeseen tactical challenges. The concept of frontal breakthrough caught up and was more or less on an equal footing with the envelopment concept, a commonly-received notion before the war. To be able to make the transition to the desired mobile warfare, the attacker first had to break through the lines of an enemy entrenched in field fortifications; and he needed to achieve this before the enemy was able to move up his reserves behind the frontline. For any attack to be successful, achieving surprise and neutralizing hostile machine guns and artillery were essential preconditions but not the only ones. Rather, success would depend on developing rapidity. Yet, troops lacked the necessary mobility mainly because of insufficient motorization. Moreover, the dense transport network in the west

would allow a defender to rapidly move troops by railway to those sections of the front which were threatened by enemy offensives. Even if an attacker had succeeded in breaking through the forward lines of a defender, any attack risked to get bogged down after only a few kilometers.

A return to mobile warfare was illusionary in those circumstances. Circumstances on the eastern front were different. Its immense geographical expansion in conjunction with a lower concentration of troops still allowed mobile warfare to be conducted to a limited extent. In May 1915, the German Supreme Army Command (ObersteHeeresleitung - OHL) near Tarnów-Gorlice in Galicia attempted for the first time to use artillery fire to neutralize the destructive impact of machine guns in the wider operational framework of an army. The concentrated hails of shells fired by artillery guns were to morally shake the defender and clear the way for the own infantry to break through the enemy's positions. Another aim was to avoid unnecessary losses. This was imperative if a prolonged war against the Entente with its far superior resources was to be sustained. German troops had successfully tested this *modus operandi* in trench warfare on the western front near Soissons during a local tactical attack in January 1915. It was considered the brainchild of Colonel Hans von Seeckt, who was Chief of the General Staff of Colonel General August von Mackensen's 11th Army, deployed at Tarnów-Gorlice. On the one hand, Seeckt painstakingly coordinated the local and chronological cooperation of infantry and artillery in the practical conduct of operations. At the same time, troops were given specified attack lines which they had to reach. On the other hand, orders were formulated so as to prevent that local subordinate commanders were tied too closely to a fixed scheme. After all, tactical schematization was contrary to the spirit of established German procedures. Hence Seeckt's orders allowed the subordinate command level a certain freedom of action so that the offensive momentum arising from favourable opportunities in combat could be exploited as the situation required.

The call for autonomy was in keeping with German officers' education to apply decentralized mission command (Auftragstaktik). It had been the prevailing leadership principle in the army since the turn of the century. Establishing mission command was a reaction to the unpredictability of combat action in warfare. Besides, as early as the second half of the 19th century, the effects of modern weapons had forced the military to disperse their troops on the battlefield. Henceforth, direct command and control of troops was only possible to a limited extent, especially as technical communication assets such as radio communication were not yet widely used. Even during World War I orders often took several hours before they reached the troops. The principle of mission command meant that a recipient of orders would act autonomously within the scope of the military leader's intent. This type of command inevitably implied downward delegation of responsibility. It required, however, a high-standard of training and trust in subordinate personnel. Seeckt's targets successfully merged mission command with innovative technical warfare. In the battle of Tarnów-Gorlice the indispensable coordination of superior command posts went hand in hand with the initiative displayed by on-scene commanders. The close cooperation of infantry and artillery enabled German forces to successfully turn the frontal breakthrough into an expansive major offensive. Admittedly, the opposing Russian force was taken by surprise and had very little fighting power, while its command staff got bogged down in organizing the deployment of reserves. Nonetheless, both the defending and the attacking forces suffered disproportionately high losses. This happened mainly because infantry troops still had insufficient fire power as they were armed with rifles only.

Verdun 1916

The tactical lessons learned at Soissons and Tarnów-Gorlice then found their continuation in mid-February 1916 when the 5th Army attacked the Verdun fortress. The offensive technique used by the Germans was based on exploiting

the surprise effect on the enemy, on the mass use of ammunition and the artillery, and on the close cooperation between artillery and infantry. For the first time, aircraft and airships were extensively integrated in operational planning. This meant separate reconnaissance missions, interception flights against enemy air reconnaissance, but it also meant close air support of friendly ground forces. It was at Verdun where assault or storm troop tactics (*Stosstrupptaktik*) were introduced as a form of combat to improve mobility in trench warfare. Initially, units on the western front had evolved such a concept as early as in autumn 1914. Special elite test forces, termed assault battalions as of mid-1916, began to specifically advance storm troop tactics for the army in spring 1915. The intent was to disperse infantry skirmish lines and, adjusted to the terrain, create smaller and more mobile combat squads equipped with more effective weapons. The increased use of team weapons such as flamethrowers and later also light machine guns, led to the separation of firing and striking power. With the concept of combined arms combat being transferred to the elementary tactical level, non-commissioned officers and junior officers were employed as autonomous junior leaders and gained considerably in importance. Gradually, they came to be the backbone of frontline warfare. Ludendorff later termed this process “the individualization of tactics“.

Yet, in 1916 this new complex cooperation in combined arms combat was by no means common knowledge among German officers. Tactical lessons learned at the front had not yet found their way into new standardized service regulations. The 5th Army integrated the front divisions into distinctly centralized command and control structures, especially as regards artillery operations. Despite vehement objection by many commanders, hardly any room was left for autonomy in the interest of mission command. However, it turned out that strict guidelines were absolutely necessary. Many officers still followed the common training practice in use before 1914 and were more interested in honor and glory for their own troops than in cooperation with other branches. Also the sometimes

strong resentments between Prussians and Bavarians on account of their different regional affiliation proved to be quite encumbering. Moreover, with the first attacks at Verdun it became obvious that the unrestrained offensive spirit of the pre-war period still existed in the minds of many officers. And for many commanders, high numbers of losses still reflected the “merits” of a unit. After all, it was also about personal prestige and about decorations; this persuaded many officers to ignore that personnel was scarce and to virtually sacrifice soldiers on the battlefield. Typically, lessons-learned reports from the front, which were distributed to the troops at Verdun, also pointed out that the interaction of arms had to be improved in order to reduce own losses.

Elastic area defense and offensive operations 1917/18

By late 1916, the major battles at Verdun and on the Somme, both of which incurred high losses, had weakened the German army to a worrying extent in terms of personnel and morale. Hence, Hindenburg and Ludendorff as the new 3rd OHL issued the guideline that commanders were to spare their own forces while wearing down the opponent in order to have enough forces available for launching an offensive to bring about a decision in the land war. The army was to fight more effectively and at the same time be more economic with the available “human material” as it was cynically put. Essentially based on the troops’ lessons learned on the front, the OHL developed new standardized regulations, which the army then applied in the decisive battles of 1917 and 1918. Through an extensive network of schools, training areas and courses, the OHL had the training of leaders and troops expedited along the lines of the advanced doctrine. This simultaneous top-down and bottom-up modernization process focused mainly on the highly mechanized trench warfare on the western front. Nonetheless, combat experience gained on other fronts such as the capture of Riga or the breakthrough at Flitsch-Tolmein in the Alps also played an important role. For quite some time, even the enemy’s experiences had been taken into consideration.

Ludendorff's intention was to establish a mass army that was qualified as broadly as possible and thus combat-effective.

Initially, the focus was on the further development of the defense to enable German forces to successfully counter any allied offensives in the west expected for 1917. Defense was frowned upon among German military elites since it was contrary to their acquired offensive spirit. And, according to the general opinion, no "glorious" battle decisions could be brought about in defensive operations. Previously, infantry forces had conducted the defense mostly in static lines. Soldiers would stand beside each other in trenches. The motto was clearly to fight for every inch of enemy land, for a withdrawal would have been considered a morally unacceptable defeat. To break down any resistance, enemy forces would often sustain preparatory artillery fire over several days before launching an infantry attack, and the defenders suffered high losses as a consequence. Thereupon, in the course of 1917, the defense was gradually reorganized into ever deeper echelons to ensure elastic area defense. Eventually, the defense consisted of several zones and was replete with individual and firmly positioned pockets of resistance equipped with heavy machine guns. The soldiers in the trenches were permitted to move forward or sideways so that they were at least occasionally able to avoid the attacker's withering artillery fire.

The defense had its focus on autonomous counterblows by local infantry reserves or on planned counterattacks by infantry reserves echeloned in depth, which would receive cooperative and mission-related support by artillery groups. The intention was to bring about a decision in defense operations by use of offensive means against an attacker who was worn down in the depth of the area. A division would henceforth have single command and control responsibility. It was to be what the German Army called the battle unit ("Schlachteinheit der Front"): infantry mixed up with other branches and aircraft, ready for modern combined arms combat. The infantry would form small combat teams within the

divisions and conduct mobile operations while using storm troop tactics more extensively. At the same time, troops were equipped with strong-fire team weapons, mainly light machine guns which allowed the reduction of personnel strengths. Machines replaced men in combat. In the struggle for survival on the front, the small groups depended on one another for better or worse. On the battlefield, the “individualization of tactics” took place. The central meaning of initiative and autonomy was revived up to the medium command level of a division.

The concept was initially intended to be used for the defense, but in early 1918 the OHL also applied it to offensive actions in training and combat. Unlike the enemy on the western front, however, the OHL did not rely on tanks for a change to mobile warfare. The military command did not consider tanks an effective offensive weapon compared to aircraft and submarines. It appeared to be more promising to optimize the elements that were tried and tested in combat. These included surprise, artillery mass fire and close cooperation between infantry, artillery and air forces in combination with the “art of leadership”— and mission command. A new fire control procedure meant that the usual tell-tale adjustment of gunfire over several days had become obsolete. Preparatory artillery fire would be reduced to a few hours, yet become much more intensive due to the greater ammunition expenditure. Surprise attacks supported by concentrated gunfire and, if necessary, aided by poison gas were to paralyze the enemy’s artillery and command structures. Protected by an exactly timed progressing artillery bombardment, referred to as rolling barrage, the forward infantry divisions would then break through the defender’s weakest points. Normally, the infantry should operate in *Stosstrupps* closely assisted by artillery, engineers and aircraft. Reserves were kept close by to sustain the attack. The aim still was the transition to mobile warfare in which a decision would be sought and in which the German military elites traditionally considered themselves superior to the enemy. It was naively hoped that any potential frictions could be overcome

by great willpower and by local commanders who would boldly seize any opportunity. In other words, in line with mission command the OHL demanded that all command levels take a proactive approach, regardless of the inevitably strict guidelines issued from above.

The German military remained ambivalent towards the implementation of the doctrine for elastic area defense and attack operations that was further developed in 1917/18. This was due mainly to the outright rejection of tactical schematization which continued to be reflected in the new procedures. The new guidelines still allowed enough flexibility to combine innovative and traditional approaches in many ways. Thus, in training and in combat alike, there was room for inflexible persistence but also for the flexible use of innovations, and officers could not completely disregard the latter. To the same extent as there were decorations to be awarded in the event of success, there was the embarrassing threat of being relieved of a command position in the event of failure; Ludendorff was known to have personally used this form of pressure repeatedly. As a consequence, it was little surprise that the direct conduct of war on the front continued to be characterized by numerous tactical hybrids. In addition to innovative elastic area defense, the traditional static line defense was often used. And despite innovative storm troop tactics, the infantry still attacked in dense skirmish lines on many occasions in spring 1918. Likewise, inconsistency existed with regard to the propagated mission command. Many front commanders regarded the mass army with suspicion as a poorly trained militia force which did not compare to the pre-war army. They simply had no confidence in the soldiers' ability to put complex fighting methods into action and were even afraid that troops might escape if they were admitted to withdraw in elastic defense. There was skepticism even vis-à-vis the military abilities of junior officers of the general staff. This resulted in pedantic control of the lower command levels, frequently deadening the very autonomy that had been demanded.

Conclusion

The debacle surrounding the initial battles of 1914 gradually brought home to the military leadership that successful modern warfare is to be understood as the improved interaction of various branches. And there was also the insight that in future unnecessary losses should be avoided as resources were scarce. Doctrines had yet to be adapted within the shortest time possible, taking into account the forces' rapid augmentation to an army of millions. Moreover, it had to be considered for the coordination of units that warfare had become immensely more complex because units were often equipped with new types of weapon systems and ammunition, such as flamethrowers and poison gas. Some officers swiftly accepted these challenges in practice, many though struggled, and others apparently never grasped the tactical transition to modern mechanized combined arms combat. Reservations about the military skills of mass army soldiers, status mentality between the branches, antagonisms between regions, inertia, and above all wide-spread ignorance about resources and losses turned out to be great obstacles. Yet, despite all the obstacles, the modernization of tactics helped the German army to uphold considerable effectiveness in combat far into 1918. This was proved by the troops' successful defense against allied mass attacks in 1917 and its huge territorial gains in spring 1918. In view of the extreme shortage of horses and vehicles, however, the hope of a transition to mobile warfare turned out to be an illusion, and not the only one. Also Ludendorff's guideline for a warfare designed to save human resources could hardly have been maintained with the over 200,000 losses the 4th Army had suffered in the 3rd Battle of Ypres in 1917. In mid-1918, human resources on the German side had dwindled to nothing. In the end, it was the side able to use its superior resources for strategic warfare that kept the upper hand. War in the industrial age was not decided by progressive tactical-operational doctrines but by strategic advantages in the form of human reserves and "industrial productivity".

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Closing Address

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***The First World War and the Fundamental Problem
of Breaking through the Front***

The First World War is particularly associated with the bloody offensives on the Western front. Only a few months after its outbreak, the war got stuck in an unprecedented stalemate. The various armies tried to break through the front with new and heavier weaponry, but systematically, offensives ended in a failure with tens of thousands of casualties. This article considers the reasons for this by analysing the various ways by which attack and defence were organized. We also look at how the Germans almost achieved a breakthrough in Spring 1918 and how it was finally to the Allies to win the war.¹

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE EMERGENCE OF MASS ARMIES

The relationship between the Industrial Revolution and military technique is fairly clear. The possibilities from a whole series of inventions were used to bring a new dimension to the business of war. In addition, the Industrial Revolution was closely linked to the emergence of the nation-state and hence to another distinctive aspect of warfare in the 19th and 20th centuries: nationalism.

¹ A smaller and popular version of this article already appeared in the catalogue of the national exhibition '14-18: It's our history!' (Brussels, Museum of Europe, 2014). We thank our esteemed colleagues Prof. Dr. Michael Epkenhans (Germany), Prof. Dr. Massimo de Leonardis (Italy), Dr. Erwin Schmidl (Austria) and Dr. Dmitar Tasic (Serbia) for providing comparative elements to our own study work on the Western front and on the military operations in Belgium in particular.

The combination of industrial developments and nationalist aspirations brought mass armies onto the battlefield and changed the face of war radically.

The French in the age of Napoleon were the first to create a mass army. The use of military conscription meant that the army contained a significant proportion of non-professional soldiers. In response to their heavy defeat at Jena (in 1806), the Prussians introduced almost universal conscription in 1813. That same year, together with their Russian and Austrian allies, they defeated the French at Leipzig, in the first decisive encounter between two mass armies. In 1870-1871, there was a further confrontation between the two great powers, in which the French again tasted defeat. The loss of Alsace-Lorraine led to a strong current of revanchism against the newly formed German empire.²

From the turn of the century, tensions in Europe grew, and both France and the German empire prepared for a war with mass armies. Alliances were forged, and by 1914 all that was needed for was the fuse to the powder keg to be lit. This happened in the Balkans, where Austria-Hungary and Russia had been trying to win influence at one another's expense for half a century. To this came the role of the newly independent countries, which had emerged following the retreat of the Ottoman Empire, and which pursued their own nationalistic ambitions.³

The war in 1914 started as the 'Third Balkan War', but this soon took on wider dimensions as Austria-Hungary had allied itself with Germany and Russia with France. Germany felt surrounded and a two-front war seemed inevitable. The German Schlieffen-plan first aimed at delivering a decisive battle in the West, followed by attacking the Russians in the East. The Franco-German border

² LUC DE VOS, *Strategie & Tactiek. Inleiding tot de moderne krijgsgeschiedenis*, Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2006, p. 141-149.

³ HANS ANDRIESEN, *Historici en hun hardnekkige mythes over de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Soesterberg, Aspekt, 2013; MANFRED RAUCHENSTEINER, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und das Ende der Habsburgermonarchie 1914-1918*, Wenen-Keulen-Weimar, Böhlau Verlag, 2013.

was so heavily defended that the only possibility to attack France went through neutral Belgium.⁴

The British had a different policy. Their military strength was based mainly on the Royal Navy, which controlled the world's seas, and an empire that on the eve of the First World War covered a quarter of the world, including subcontinents such as India, Australia and Canada. By the turn of the century, German political, industrial, maritime and colonial ambitions were increasingly driving the British into the arms of their former enemies, the French.⁵ Along with the other powers of the time (France, Russia, Austria and Prussia) Britain had in 1839 guaranteed the imposed armed neutrality of the newly independent buffer state of Belgium, and this gave it direct influence in European politics.⁶

When Belgian neutrality was violated, the British had only a small intervention force of 100,000 highly trained professional soldiers to send in. They too now began to form a mass army. To this end, more than 600,000 volunteers joined up in 1914 and 1915, but in 1916 the British too found it necessary to introduce general military conscription in order to maintain the supply of military manpower.⁷

In the aftermath of Waterloo, the Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz set out the military ideas of his time in his work '*Vom Kriege*' ('*On War*'). He saw the total defeat of the enemy as the ultimate goal of war. If any concession was made to the loser, the victory became nothing more than a *Halbding* – an unfinished job. This notion dominated military thinking in 1914 and made the development towards total war inevitable. For states driven by nationalism and

⁴ HANS EHLERT, MICHAEL EPKENHANS, GERHARD GROSS (eds), *Der Schlieffenplan. Analysen und Dokumente*, Paderborn, Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006.

⁵ HANS ANDRIESSEN, *Historici en hun hardnekkige mythes ...*, p. 72-79, 127-131.

⁶ LUC DE VOS, TOM SIMOENS, DAVE WARNIER, FRANKY BOSTYN, *14-18: Oorlog in België*, Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2014.

⁷ CHARLES MESSENGER, *Call-To-Arms. The British Army 1914-1918*, London, Cassell, 2005.

with mass armies at their disposal it became, as the German Kaiser and King of Prussia Wilhelm II put it in August 1914, a question of *Sein oder nicht sein* ('To be or not to be'). All civil and military achievements of the Industrial Revolution had to be deployed, and as a result, technology, science and industrial production attained new heights.⁸

Ironically, the German Empire was unable to get its battleships – the very pinnacle of its industrial achievement – out of port, due to the rapid imposition of a blockade by the Royal Navy. Technically speaking, this was not a blockade, but an imposition of Contraband control.

In Admiral Tirpitz's plans, the German battleships were intended as a (political) tool of dissuasion. By putting the dagger-at-the throat of Britain, Germany hoped to force the British to make concessions in the distribution of the remaining parts of the world. But prior to the war, this policy wasn't very successful and it also failed in 1914. As the British refused to give battle near the German coast, the German navy was limited to submarine warfare.⁹

The German mass army of 3,800,000 men (6% of the population) seemed initially as if it would be able to repeat the success of 1870. The French had created an almost equally large army, representing 9% of the population, but it was far less well equipped and also lacked an extensive rail network to move troops and equipment quickly into position. The invasion through Belgium also enabled the Germans to use the extensive Belgian railway network. The Belgian forts were quickly put out of action, among other means through the use of revolutionary 42 cm and 30,5 cm artillery, and the road to Paris seemed to be open. But the Belgian army (200,000 men after mobilisation) offered far more resistance than expected.

⁸ JEAN-CLAUDE LAPARRA, *La machine à vaincre. L'armée allemande 1914-1918*, Mercuès, Imprimerie France Quercy, 2006; MARKUS PÖHLMANN e.a. , *Der Erste Weltkrieg 1914-1918. Der deutsche Aufmarsch in ein kriegerisches Jahrhundert*, Bucher, 2014.

⁹ WERNER RAHN, "The German Naval War 1914-18. Strategy and experience" in: *Facing Armageddon. The First World War Experience*, Pen & Sword, Barnsley, 2003, p. 121-133.

After the Battle of the Marne and the race to the sea the Belgians, British and French were finally able to bring the German advance to a halt.¹⁰

DEADLOCK ON THE WESTERN FRONT

The military operations of the First World War can be evaluated on three levels: strategic (policy, large-scale planning), operational (manoeuvres involving army units, especially at divisional level) and tactical (the actual combat). On the political and strategic level, it is astonishing that such an enormous war started actually without any significant war aims. Real war aims and increasingly greedy ones, only emerged gradually, paradoxically at times when the military chances for their implementation became more and more unreal. At the same time, in the development towards total war in which countries' entire governmental systems came to be almost wholly given over to the pursuit of the conflict, strategy was often reduced in scope to operational strategy, a term which had previously been used by Napoleon. Meanwhile, faulty tactics led to an accumulation of operational failures, causing a bloody stalemate on the Western front.¹¹

Although in the last decades before the war a profound revolution had occurred in the field of armaments, during the opening months of the war most armies still used early 19th-century tactics. Close order formations were maintained with a predominantly linear arrangement that gave the officers control over the troops. The emphasis was on *feu* ('fire power') and *choc* ('mass assault'), with the bayonet charge regarded as the final word in warfare.¹² Thus in October 1914, not only did the inexperienced German 'student volunteers' of

¹⁰ LUC DE VOS, TOM SIMOENS, DAVE WARNIER, FRANKY BOSTYN, *14-18: Oorlog in België*, p. 83-205.

¹¹ MAX HASTINGS, *Catastrophe 1914. Europe Goes to War*, London, Knopf Press, 2014.

¹² MICHEL GOYA, *La chair et l'acier. L'invention de la guerre moderne (1914-1918)*, Paris, Tallandier, 2004, p. 76.

Langemarck perish, but on 11 November 1914 the elite Prussian Guard also failed to force a breakthrough at Ypres.¹³

The British regular army was the exception to the rule. Some of its soldiers and many senior officers were veterans of the Boer War in South Africa, and had learned not just about ‘fire’, but also about the importance of movement and taking cover. With his Lee Enfield rifle, a trained professional soldier could shoot up to fifteen well-aimed rounds per minute (the so called ‘mad minute’), and through the use of a spread-out formation in woods, hedges and ditches many German assaults were mown down. However the British paid a heavy price themselves: between August and November 1914 the elite British Expeditionary Force lost more than half its strength, including quite a few officers of noble descent.¹⁴

With the arrival of volunteers, the British Army too rapidly turned into a mass army, which together with the French numbered about as many men as the Germans and fought with similar weapons and logistics. So in the course of 1915, the **fundamental problem of breaking through the front** emerged: the front had ceased to move, and neither side was able to make any significant advance.¹⁵

Similar developments occurred in Serbia, where the Serbs managed to push back three Austro-Hungarian offensives in 1914, and on the Eastern front , where hundreds of thousands perished in the bloody Carpathian battles of the winter 1914-15, without achieving a breakthrough in either direction. In 1915-17, this experience repeated itself on the Italian Isonzo (Soca) valley, where the Italians for more than two years were unable to reach Trieste- a distance one can

¹³ BRUCE GUDMUNDSSON, *Stormtroop Tactics. Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918*, London, Praeger, 1989, p. 7-8, 17.

¹⁴ PADDY GRIFFITH, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front. The British Army's Art of Attack 1916-18*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1996, p. 49.

¹⁵ JOHN TERRAINE, *White Heat. The New Warfare 1914-18*, London, Guild Publishing, 1982; TONY ASHWORTH, *Trench Warfare 1914-1918. The Live and Let-Live System*, London, Pan books, 2000.

easily cover in half an hour by car today. In this period the Italians lost about 300.000 soldiers and the Austrians about the same number.¹⁶

Initially, attempts were made to break the deadlock with more firepower and new technology. From 1916, the Germans in particular gave much thought to tactical solutions, but it was not until 1918 that these were implemented everywhere at the front. It was this combination of 19th-century tactics and 20th-century technology (weapons) that led to the wholesale slaughter for which the First World War remains etched in the collective memory.¹⁷

THE DEFENSIVE DEPLOYMENT

The defensive deployment developed in the same way as the offensive. In the first months of the war it was linear in character, with an emphasis on firepower and control.¹⁸ By the end of 1914, the war on the Yser front had come to a halt due to the flooding. The Belgians were on the defensive from the start, and hence had already begun to construct several lines in the early stages of the war. Behind the frontline trenches a second line was added a few hundred meters behind the Nieuport-Dixmude railway line in December 1914, followed soon after by a third line on the canal of Loo.¹⁹

On the Ypres front the two sides long persisted in the belief that a decisive breakthrough was possible. As a result, the structure of the front was initially limited to a few hundred metres on either side of no man's land, which in some places was less than 100 metres wide. In the course of 1915, the Germans

¹⁶ JOHN R. SCHINDLER, *Isonzo. The forgotten sacrifice of the Great War*, Westport, Praeger Publisher, 2001; ANTONIO SEMA, *La Grande Guerra sul fronte dell'Isonzo*, Gorizia, Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2014.

¹⁷ STEPHEN BULL, *Trench Warfare*, London, PRC Publishing, 2003, p. 149.

¹⁸ ROBERT T. FOLEY, "The Other Side of the Wire. The German Army in 1917" in: PETER DENNIS, JEFFREY GREY (eds.), *1917. Tactics, Training and Technology*, Australian History Military Publications, 2007, p. 155-178.

¹⁹ LUC DE VOS, TOM SIMOENS, DAVE WARNIER & FRANKY BOSTYN, *14-18: Oorlog in België*, p. 247-250.

began work on a second line of defence.²⁰ The following year one of the most important changes of mentality of the war occurred when the Germans were the first to become aware that on the Western front a long war of attrition was likely, and that it was therefore better to put everything into defence. In the meanwhile, they would try to achieve a decisive victory against the Russians on the Eastern front. The French and the British, by contrast, continued to believe with each new offensive that they could force a breakthrough in the West, even though they tried 'indirect approaches' with the Gallipoli landing and by bringing Italy in the war in 1915.²¹

As they developed their defence in depth, the Germans quickly realised that a less visible network of strategic heights, ruins and other defensive outposts was much harder to put out of action than dense continuous trenches. Eventually, in the Ypres Salient, they built six lines located one behind the other, with the *Flanders I-Stellung* largely being constructed with concrete bunkers. When the British artillery stopped firing and the infantry launched an attack, the German defenders would crawl out of these bunkers and set up their machine guns so that they could accurately cover one another, with dire consequences for the attackers.²² Reinforced concrete was another product of the Industrial Revolution that was especially highly developed in Germany. Although the Belgian forts of 1914 contained a lot of concrete, they had hardly any reinforcement, making the forts quite easy for heavy artillery to destroy.²³

²⁰ STEPHEN BULL, *Trench Warfare*, p. 85-86.

²¹ MARTIN SAMUELS, *Doctrine and Dogma. German and British Infantry Tactics in the First World War*, Westport, Greenwood press, 1992; JONATHAN B. A. BAILEY, "The First World War and the Birth of Modern Warfare" in: *The Dynamics of Military Revolution. 1300-2050*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 132-153.

²² JAMES E. EDMONDS, *History of the Great War based on Official Documents. Military Operations France and Belgium. 1917 Vol. II*, London, MacMillan, 1940, p. 143-144.

²³ F. T'SAS, "A Liège, Namur et Anvers en 1914. Le rôle de l'artillerie lourde allemande à grande distance (puissance)" in: *Revue Belge d'Histoire Militaire*, december

In the new defensive system of 1916-17, the Germans also created a rotation system between front line troops and reserves, in which certain divisions were referred to as *Eingreifdivisionen* ('intervention divisions'). These had to keep out of range of the British field artillery in order to be in position within a few hours to carry out a counter-attack. The *Eingreifdivisionen* operated increasingly on the principle of stormtrooping, described later on.²⁴

During the Battle of Passchendaele, in 1917, the British were only able to advance with the greatest difficulty. For an eventual toll of 245,000 British and 215,000 German dead, wounded and missing, they gained just eight kilometres over a final stretch of front of three kilometres around the village of Passchendaele. The British breakthrough attempt was prevented by machine gun fire from well-positioned concrete bunkers on the slopes of the Passchendaele ridge.²⁵ In addition to the defence of the Ypres Salient the Germans also worked on a defensive system with concrete bunkers on the Belgian coast, and subsequently even along the Belgian-Dutch border. The German coastal defences were so successful that during World War II they became the model for the construction of the Atlantic Wall.²⁶

After the confrontation with the German *Abwehrschlacht* or 'defensive battle' in 1917, the British themselves finally began, in the winter of 1917-18, to work on a solid defence in depth. Although the British lines never became truly operational and their strength could not match that of the Germans, the new

1970, p. 621-654; PETER OLDHAM, *Pill-Boxes on the Western Front*, London, Leo Cooper, 1995, p. 11-13.

²⁴ BRUCE GUDMUNDSSON, *Stormtroop Tactics*, p. 94; JAMES E. EDMONDS, *Military Operations France and Belgium. 1917 Vol. II*, p. 143-144.

²⁵ FRANKY BOSTYN e.a., *Passchendaele 1917. The Story of the Fallen and Tyne Cot Cemetery*, Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2007, p. 199-201.

²⁶ HANS SAKKERS e.a., *De Hollandstelling van Knokke tot Antwerpen. Stille getuige van de Eerste Wereldoorlog*, Antwerpen, Witsand Uitgevers, 2011; ALEKS DESEYNE, *De Kust bezet 1914-1918*, Brugge, Provincie West-Vlaanderen, 2007.

approach did help to stop the German Spring Offensive of 1918.²⁷ By the summer of 1918, the Germans were exhausted, and retreated to what remained of their old positions of 1917. Despite the Allies' numerical superiority during the Final Offensive, the Belgians, British and French also suffered heavy losses in September and October 1918 against these lines and no real breakthrough could be achieved. The German Army retreated, but didn't collapse before 11 November 1918.²⁸

A slightly different situation existed in the East, where larger operations occasionally occurred- such as the German and Austro-Hungarian breakthrough at Gorlice and Tarnów in spring 1915, or the Brusilov offensive in 1916 and in the Middle East and other more exotic, but not less important, theatres of war. In the mountains along the Austrian-Italian border, in contrast, a special form of trench or siege warfare developed, with troops fighting for mountain peaks, and surviving in harsh Alpine winter conditions.²⁹

FIREPOWER AND THE PROBLEM OF BREAKING THROUGH THE FRONT

In 1815, Napoleon's 'Grande Batterie' used around 24,000 artillery shells at Waterloo. During the Battle of Sedan in 1870, the Prussian army fired 33,000 shells.³⁰ Between 12 and 31 July 1917, the British artillery, in preparation for the

²⁷ PETER OLDHAM, *Pill-Boxes on the Western Front*, p. 94-114; Martin SAMUELS, *Doctrine and Dogma*, p. 156-170.

²⁸ GERHARD P. GROSS, "Der lange Weg zurück. Der Deutsche Rückzug im Westen 1918" in: *Quand les canons se taisent. En toen de kanonnen zwegen...*, Brussel, Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2010, p. 69-88; ROBERT BACCARNE, JAN STEEN, *Van het Vrijbos tot Roeselare. Eindoffensief 1918*, s.l., Eigen beheer, 2002, p. 67-134; M. WEEMAES, *Van de IJzer tot Brussel. Het bevrijdingsoffensief van het Belgisch leger 28 september 1918*, Brussel, Imprimerie P. François, 1969.

²⁹ MANFRED RAUCHENSTEINER, *Der Erste Weltkrieg ..*

³⁰ MARK ADKIN, *The Waterloo Companion. The complete guide to History's most famous Land battle*, London, Aurum Press, 2001.

Battle of Passchendaele, fired 4,200,000 shells.³¹ The First World War was thus characterised by a massive increase in firepower, in terms of both quantities of ammunition fired and steadily increasing calibres. One major problem with the artillery pieces was that they recoiled after each shot and so had to be repositioned. Around the turn of the century, new guns appeared in which the barrel moved along the gun carriage on which it was mounted by means of a recoil mechanism. Reference now began to be made to 'old' and 'modern' guns. In 1914, the French artillery had 4,000 modern 75mm guns and 7,500 old pieces of the *De Bange* type. The German artillery mostly had modern guns.³²

Large numbers of artillery did not automatically make the enemy easy to dislodge. The accuracy of fire was poor and - in the early years - such was also the quality of ammunition. Barbed wire and bunkers also proved to be difficult obstacles to deal with.³³ The more than 33 million shells fired by the British into the German positions during the Battle of Passchendaele did not in the end destroy the German defence, but utterly churned up the terrain over which the attack then had to be made. In the well-watered region of the Passchendaele ridge all drainage facilities were so shot to pieces that men, animals and machines became bogged down. The terrain was so badly affected that one in three shells penetrated the ground without its percussion fuse being activated by the impact. This is why in the Yser-Ypres area an average of 200 tonnes of unexploded munitions is still being found every year and dealt with by the Belgian bomb disposal. Thus the artillery did not bring the hoped-for breakthrough, but on the contrary contributed to further deadlock at the front. Two-thirds of all casualties

³¹ JAMES E. EDMONDS, *Military Operations France and Belgium. 1917 Vol. II*, p. 133-139.

³² MICHEL GOYA, *La chair et l'acier*, p. 148.

³³ ROBIN PRIOR, "The Western Front" in: *The Cambridge History of the First World War. Vol I*, Cambridge, 2014, p. 204-233.

were caused by artillery fire.³⁴

The most important weapon of trench warfare was probably the machine gun, which was effective at a distance of 2,000 to 3,000 metres. In 1914 the Germans possessed 12,000 machine guns of the MG 08 type, and by 1918 they had nearly 100,000. Like the MG 08, the British Vickers gun was based on a design by the American Maxim. Due to their weight water-cooled heavy machine guns were essentially defensive weapons. They played a crucial role during the battles of the Somme and Passchendaele.³⁵

Over the course of the war, lighter machine guns were also developed, such as the German MG 08/15, the British Lewis gun and the French Chauchat (which was also used by the Belgians). These were more offensive weapons, and their deployment played a key role in the development of new assault tactics. Towards the end of the war, the Germans also introduced the revolutionary *Maschinenpistole 18* (Bergmann), the first fully automatic weapon that could actually be used by one man alone. Although the distribution of these weapons was limited, they were nevertheless a defining attribute of the German storm troops in the final year of the war.³⁶

Mortars are an ancient form of ballistic trajectory weapon which launch a projectile high into the air, for it to fall back to the ground a few hundred metres away. They were typical of past siege warfare, and by 1914 were virtually obsolete. Only the Germans had modern mortars (*Minenwerfer*). However, the Western Front soon acquired the character of a gigantic medieval siege operation, and this made mortars an absolute necessity, since the enemy was so close to

³⁴ ROB THOMPSON, "The God of War and the Vale of the Passion. British Artillery during the Third Ypres Campaign" op colloquium *Dead Reckoning*, Ieper, 2007.

³⁵ PAUL CORNISH, *Machine Guns and the Great War*, Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2009; ROBERT BRUCE, *Machine Guns of World War I*, London, Windrow & Greene, 1997, p. 6-31, 58-75.

³⁶ PAUL CORNISH, *Machine Guns and the Great War*, p. 77-96; ROBERT BRUCE, *Machine Guns of World War I*, p. 76-89, 108-124.

one's own trenches that they could not be fired upon by field artillery without causing casualties on one's own side.³⁷

In the winter of 1914-15, while waiting for new mortars to arrive, the French reintroduced the *M 1839 Louis Philippe* mortar, which was literally taken out of forgotten arsenals and museums. After this, all the combatant countries developed mortars, with the Belgian 70 mm Van Deuren mortar being worthy of special mention. The big advantage of trench artillery was that it could be set up among the infantry. Light mortar pieces could also easily be brought forward during an attack.³⁸

Another weapon scarcely being produced in 1914 was the hand grenade. In 1914 the British had just one type of hand grenade. A year later, they had about ten types, and during the war as a whole they produced about 105 million units, of which nearly 70 million were *Mills bombs*. These were particularly effective in the almost daily trench raids, especially for putting enemy positions out of action. In order to increase the range, a whole series of rifle grenades was also introduced, which were usually fired with a rod in the barrel of the rifle. In 1918 these had a range of up to 400 metres.³⁹ The *Stielhandgranate* was the most typical German explosive device of the First World War, and a variant of it was used in the Second World War.⁴⁰

³⁷ ANTHONY SAUNDERS, *Reinventing Warfare 1914-18. Novel Munitions and Tactics of Trench Warfare*, London, Continuum, 2012, p. 194-220.

³⁸ FRANKY BOSTYN, *Trench Mortars 1914-1918*, in preparation.

³⁹ RICK LANDERS, NORMAN BONNEY, GARY OAKLEY, *Grenade. British and Commonwealth Hand and Rifle Grenades*, Dural, Landers Publishing, 2002; PATRICE DELHOMME, *Les grenades françaises de la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Hégide, 1982

⁴⁰ PATRICE DELHOMME, *Les Grenades allemandes de la Grande Guerre*, Paris, Hégide, 1982; ANTHONY SAUNDERS, *Reinventing Warfare 1914-18*, p. 164-193.

TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF BREAKING THROUGH THE FRONT

In the trench warfare of 1915-1917, attempts were made to break the deadlock at the front in Flanders through the use of technical innovations, including mines, gas, flamethrowers and tanks. Military aviation also progressed at great speed.

In early 1915, the Germans started detonating underground explosive charges on the Western front. Mine warfare marked a new phase in the conduct of the war, in which the two parties tried to undermine each other's positions. However, the technique was not in itself entirely new, as sapping had already been used as a siege technique during the Middle Ages. The underground war rapidly became a game of cat-and-mouse, with mines and countermines. After a mine explosion there was usually fierce fighting around the resulting crater, leading to the front shifting a few dozen metres, after which a fresh start was made on tunnelling.

On 1 July 1916, the Battle of the Somme opened with the explosion of 17 deep mines. Mine warfare was also not limited to the Western front. In the Alpine warfare between the Habsburg and Savoy monarchies, 24 enemy positions were mined by both sides, including the famous blowing up of the 'Col di Sangue' (Bloody Mountain') by Italian sappers on 17 April 1916.

In Flanders, towards the end of 1915 British, Australian and Canadian Tunnelling Companies started work on a *magnum opus*, aiming to undermine at great depth the most strategic points in the salient to the south of Ypres, around Messines and Wytschaete.⁴¹ From Zillebeke to Ploegsteert, a total of twenty-four charges were placed from deep shafts and tunnels which could be several hundred metres long. However, the Germans got wind of what was going on and

⁴¹ FRANKY BOSTYN, *De Vergeten Oorlog onder de Salient: De Tunnelling Companies in Vlaanderen 1915-1918*, Leuven, Onuitgegeven licentiaatsverhandeling, 1998; SIMON JONES, *Underground Warfare 1914-1918*, Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2010.

tried to intercept the British from a series of countermine shafts up to 50 metres deep. On 7 June 1917, 19 of the 24 charges were finally detonated simultaneously, representing a total of 500,000 kilograms of explosive, which together caused the largest manmade earthquake to date, the force of which was not surpassed until the dropping of the two atomic bombs on Japan in 1945. The German defenders were totally shattered and abandoned not only the front line, but also their second line through the villages of Wytschaete and Messines, and subsequently fell back to the third line. This prologue to the Battle of Passchendaele was one of the best prepared operations of the entire war, and demonstrated like no other the power of surprise.⁴²

Poison gas was the second new weapon, first introduced on 22 April 1915. On the initiative of the German chemist and future Nobel Prize winner, Fritz Haber, 6,000 cylinders of chlorine gas were released from Steenstraete to Langemarck. The attack was so successful that the road to Ypres lay open, but the Germans had regarded the attack as more of an experiment, and lacked sufficient troops to take advantage. A few days later, all parties already had primitive gas protection, so the gas weapon was no longer able to create a breakthrough.⁴³

Nonetheless, gas continued to be used and new types of gas were developed. Its use was also not limited to the Western Front. For example, gas played a major role in the breakthrough of Austrian-Hungarian and German troops at Caporetto (Kobarid), in the 12th Isonzo (Soca) battle, in October 1917. Contrary to what is sometimes thought, by the end of the war the Allies, including the Belgians, used as much gas as the Germans. The only difference

⁴² PADDY GRIFFITH, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front*, p. 34; FRANKY BOSTYN, *De Vergeten Oorlog onder de Salient*, pp. 145-226; FRANKY BOSTYN "Zero Hour: Historical Note on the British Use of Explosives in the Underground War in Flanders" in: *Fields of Battle. Terrain in military history*, Kluwer, 2002, pp. 225-236.

⁴³ LUC DE VOS, TOM SIMOENS, DAVE WARNIER & FRANKY BOSTYN, *14-18: Oorlog in België*, p. 209-228; OLIVIER LEPICK, *La Grande Guerre chimique: 1914-1918*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1998.

was that they did not focus on research into new products, but on the development of new weapons for dispersing gas, such as the British Livens projectors, by means of which a dense gas cloud could be created easily and efficiently.⁴⁴

On 12 July 1917, an innovative type of defensive ‘gas’ was introduced on the Ypres front: ‘mustard gas’, in many countries still called ‘Yperite’. This was in fact not a gas at all, but an oily liquid which was dispersed with artillery shells and caused severe burns and subsequent disfigurement. Little protection was available against it. However, the product sometimes remained active for several days, making it unsuitable for offensive operations. As the war progressed, still other and more deadly types of combat gas were deployed, but these developments were always – except for mustard gas – followed by improvements in gas protection. Ultimately, therefore, only 1% of the total number of deaths in the First World War were caused through the use of gas.⁴⁵

The third new weapon that the Germans tried out was the flamethrower. For the third time in a row, the first major attack happened on the Ypres front, at Hooge on 30 July 1915. The flamethrower troops of the Garde-Pionier-Regiment carried out 653 attacks in the course of the war, but never achieved a real breakthrough. Towards the end of 1917, a portable device was introduced, the *Wex*, which played an important role in the Spring Offensive of 1918, as the first flamethrower that could be carried and used by a single soldier.⁴⁶ The French also set up flamethrower units. The British likewise experimented with

⁴⁴ DONALD RICHTER, *Chemical Soldiers: British Gas Warfare in World War I*, London, Leo Cooper, 1994; EMILIO FALDELLA, *Caporetto. Le vere cause di una tragedia*, Bologna, Cappelli, 1967.

⁴⁵ OLIVIER LEPICK, *La Grande Guerre chimique: 1914-1918*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1998; MICHAEL FREEMANTLE, *Gas! Gas! Gas! Quick, Boys! How Chemistry changed the First World War*, Stroud, The History Press, 2012.

⁴⁶ THOMAS WICTOR, *German Flamethrower Pioneers of World War I*, Atglen, Schiffer Military History, 2007.

flamethrowers, but finally rejected them due to doubts about their effectiveness.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, soldiers considered flamethrowers 'unfair' weapons-and flamethrower operators rarely survived capture in battle.

The fourth and last new weapon was a Franco-British innovation: the tank. This came at a time when the Germans no longer believed in a technical breakthrough and were already focussing on tactical innovation. As a result, the Germans hardly developed any tanks of their own, although they did try to keep this weapon under control by developing anti-tank guns. The first French tanks were ready in September 1916, as was the British Mark I, which was immediately sent out to take part in the Battle of the Somme. The best known First World War tank is undoubtedly the British Mark IV, more than 1,000 of which were delivered to the front from the summer of 1917 onwards.⁴⁸

In response to the demand for a lighter tank, the French Renault FT 17, first used in 1917 (3,700 units), was among the tanks developed. It was also deployed during the Final Offensive in Flanders, and many countries were still using it at the outbreak of the Second World War. The Belgian army did not use tanks at any point during the First World War.⁴⁹

In November 1917, the Battle of Cambrai demonstrated the possibilities of the tank. Previously, tanks had been ineffectively used in the Battle of Passchendaele, as they need solid ground and do not work well in swampy terrain. One point of debate was whether the tank should support the infantry or whether the infantry should follow the tank. Few people realised that here –

⁴⁷ ANTHONY SAUNDERS, *Weapons of the Trench War 1914-1918*, Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999, p. 145-151; PATRICE DELHOMME, "Les lance-flammes français (1915-1918)" in: *14-18. Le Magazine de la Grande Guerre*, 2010.

⁴⁸ DAVID FLETCHER, *The British Tanks 1915-19*, Ramsbury, The Crowood Press, 2001, p. 80-88.

⁴⁹ BRUNO JURKIEWIECZ, *Les Chars Français au Combat 1917-1918*, Louviers, Ysec, 2008; STEVEN J. ZALOGA, *The Renault FT Light Tank*, London, Osprey Publishing, 1988.

provided suitable tactics were used – was the weapon of the future.⁵⁰ Apart from tanks, armoured cars also played a role in various theatres of war. So did armoured trains, a development of colonial operations before 1914. But both armoured cars and trains were not suitable for the war on the Western front.

In addition to the development of new weapons, military aviation also underwent spectacular development. In 1903, the American Wright brothers succeeded in making the first heavier-than-air, machine-powered flight. By 1914, most armies had only a few dozen operational aircraft in service. From then on, aircraft construction underwent very rapid qualitative and quantitative development. Initially the focus was exclusively on two-seaters used for observation and directing artillery. Later, the observer also operated a machine gun for firing at other aircraft. Once Roland Garros, Anthony Fokker and Constantinescu had perfected the principle of firing through the propeller, single-seat fighter aircraft were built.⁵¹

The importance of air superiority was depicted over Verdun in 1916, where both sides concentrated a few hundreds of planes. On the eve of the Battle of Passchendaele, the Allies in Flanders had almost 1,100 aircraft, roughly twice as many as the Germans. This led to an almost endless series of heroic aerial duels or ‘dogfights’. Pilots who had brought down more than five aircraft became ‘aces’, with famous names such as the Frenchman Georges Guynemer and the German Manfred von Richthofen, who were killed in 1917 and 1918 respectively.⁵²

⁵⁰ DAVID FLETCHER, *The British Tanks 1915-19*, p. 89-112; HENRI ORTHOLAN, *La guerre des chars 1916-1918*, Paris, Barnard Giovanangeli Editeur, 2007.

⁵¹ LEE KENNETT, *The First Air War 1914-1918*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1991; JOHN H. MORROW, *The Great War in the Air. Military Aviation from 1909 to 1921*, Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2009.

⁵² BERNARD DENECKERE, *Above Ypres. The German Air Force in Flanders 1914-18*, Brighton, Firestep Press, 2013.

As well as observation and aerial combat planes, there were also bombers. German Gothas bombarded England and gradually replaced the much larger Zeppelins, which were proving increasingly vulnerable to fighter aircraft. From France, cities in Germany were also bombarded. Behind the front in Flanders too, supply routes and railway junctions were bombed, causing many civilian casualties. A final innovation in military aviation was the provision of fire support from the air to advancing infantry, a technique applied in particular by the Germans with great success in the Spring Offensive of 1918. Alongside the tank, the aircraft was also a weapon of the future.⁵³

THE SEARCH FOR A TACTICAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF BREAKING THROUGH THE FRONT

The quest for a tactical solution to the problem of achieving a breakthrough did not come from the military leadership, but from below. In 1915, the German officer Willy Rohr formed *Sturm-* or *Stosstruppen* ('stormtroops') which no longer attacked in close order, but in smaller mobile formations with light weapons. Strength, speed and surprise were of key importance. Instead of officers pushing the men forward, NCOs and junior officers now had to lead their men with great autonomy and flexibility in the execution of their mission. Rohr achieved some remarkable results, prompting the German senior commander Ludendorff to set up a *Sturmbataillon* ('storm battalion') in every army.⁵⁴ Young officers such as Heinz Guderian and Erwin Rommel gained experience which was to prove very useful later on.⁵⁵

⁵³ LEE KENNETT, *The First Air War 1914-1918*; JOHN H. MORROW, *The Great War in the Air*.

⁵⁴ BRUCE GUDMUNDSSON, *Stormtroop Tactics*, p. 48-49, 71, 84.

⁵⁵ LUC DE VOS, *Strategie & tactiek. Inleiding tot de moderne krijgsgeschiedenis*, Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2006, p. 52-55.

At a later stage, training focused on infiltration techniques, in which stormtroops penetrated enemy lines as deeply as possible, bypassed the enemy's strong points and attacked them from behind. Elite soldiers thus began to be developed.⁵⁶ By 1918, Ludendorff had trained a quarter of his divisions – the best ones, naturally – as *Angriffsdivisionen* ('assault divisions'), while also within the *Stellungsdivisionen* storm troops were formed at all levels.⁵⁷ The German Spring Offensives of 1918 became the ultimate operation for dissolving the stalemate as Ludendorff wanted to force a decision on the Western Front before the Americans arrived. The new tactics proved highly effective, and in several places a breakthrough was achieved. However, the innovation came too late as by then, German logistics were already broken by the long war of attrition. The operations failed due to a lack of ammunition and supplies.⁵⁸

France was the first other country to go along with the tactical developments, and platoons rather than regiments became the linchpin of combat. The use of new weapons, especially light machine guns like the *Chauchat*, also created a revolution, with independently operating *Groupes de Combat* ('combat units').⁵⁹ In 1917, the platoon also became in the British army a fully-fledged tactical unit with four specialised sections: one with grenadiers, a second with Lewis guns, a third with riflemen and a fourth with rifle grenades or trench mortars. Specialisation was an important feature of the new breakthrough tactics, although it never came to the creation of true elite troops on the German model.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ BRUCE GUDMUNDSSON, *Stormtroop Tactics*, p. 66, 103-105.

⁵⁷ BRUCE GUDMUNDSSON, *Stormtroop Tactics*, p. 145-151; IAN MALCOLM BROWN, *British Logistics on the Western Front 1914-1919*, Westport, Praeger, p. 179-204.

⁵⁸ CHRISTOPH MICK, "1918. Endgame", in: *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, Vol. 1, pp. 133-171.

⁵⁹ MICHEL GOYA, *La chair et l'acier*, p. 379, 398; CHRIS MCCARTHY, "Queen of the Battlefield: The Development of Command. Organisation and Tactics in the British Infantry Battalion in the Great War" in: *Command and Control on the Western Front. The British Army's Experience 1914-18*, Strand Spellmount, 2007, p. 173-193.

⁶⁰ PADDY GRIFFITH, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front*, p. 76-78.

The Germans also came up with new insights into the use of artillery. Instead of destroying the enemy, the artillery had to neutralise the enemy artillery (counter-battery) and pin down the infantry.⁶¹ A key figure in this development was Georg Bruchmüller ('Durchbruchmüller'), one of the creators of the *Feuerwalz* or creeping barrage, an advancing line of rolling fire which moved according to a strict timetable, and behind which the infantry followed.⁶² Although the British and the French also used creeping barrages and even optimised their use, a number of commanders continued to cling stubbornly to the use of large-scale preparatory artillery bombardments, which lacked the element of surprise and often churned up the terrain of attack.⁶³

A more operational element was the choice of the type of attack: major offensives versus operations with a limited objective. During the Battle of Passchendaele, the British Commander-in-chief Douglas Haig first relied on General Hubert Gough for a major attack on a broad front, but when this foundered he entrusted the offensive to General Herbert Plumer, who was able to resume progress through step-by-step, bite-and-hold tactics. These used several waves of assault, in which the battalions were deployed behind one another on a brigade front, with successive lines of objectives. Throughout the attack, the infantry was preceded and supported by the artillery and further advance was only possible after the moving forwards of guns and logistics.⁶⁴

A common mistake in connection with offensive action was that of failing to consolidate successes, but instead consolidating failures (by continually sending in reinforcements), after which the offensive was continued and

⁶¹ BRUCE GUDMUNDSSON, *Stormtroop Tactics*, p. 51.

⁶² BRUCE GUDMUNDSSON, *Stormtroop Tactics*, p. 65, 113.

⁶³ PADDY GRIFFITH, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front*. p. 142.

⁶⁴ JOHN LEE, "Command and Control in Battle: British Divisions on the Menin Road Ridge, 20 September 1917" in: *Command and Control on the Western Front. The British Army's Experience 1914-18*, Strand, Spellmount, 2007, p. 119-139.

degenerated into a series of local battles with no outcome.⁶⁵ The contrast between major offensives and operations with limited objectives was only overcome by the Germans in 1918 by combining the best of both worlds: launching major offensives while breaking through enemy positions with small combat groups in particular places.⁶⁶

The failure of countless offensives brings us to another aspect of operational command: the war of attrition, bleeding the opponent to death. The Germans tried this against the French at Verdun, and after the war, Haig too claimed that this was his aim at Passchendaele. The Battle of Passchendaele did indeed have a decisive influence on the course of the war as a *Materialschlacht* ('battle of material'): German logistics broke down at Passchendaele, whereas the Allies remained able to resupply. However, it is clear that Haig was aiming for an operational-strategic breakthrough, and only presented the outcome in this perspective afterwards.⁶⁷

In any case, the question arises of how a war with equal numbers of men and quantities of material, in which any form of diplomacy had long since failed, could end up as anything other than a war of attrition. In March 1918 the Germans broke through the British lines on the Somme. But in vain, French and newly arrived American troops solved the problem. Despite their new and superior tactics, the Germans still lost the war in 1918 due to logistical exhaustion and revolutionary unrest in their country.

⁶⁵ PADDY GRIFFITH, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front*, p. 10-11, 15, 98.; STEPHEN BULL, *Trench Warfare*, p. 164-166.

⁶⁶ DAVID T. ZABECKI, *The German 1918 Offensives: A Case Study in the Operational Level of War*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2006; STEPHEN BULL, *Trench Warfare*, p. 148-164.

⁶⁷ TIM TRAVERS, *How the War was won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918*, London, Routledge, 1992, 174.

FROM 1918 TO THE *BLITZKRIEG* OF 1940

The question of who won the war in 1918 is not easy to answer. On a human level, there were only losers. Germany lost 2 million soldiers out of a population of 65 million. France (and colonies) lost 1.4 million out of a population of 39 million. Regional recruitment and the high death toll caused the population in certain areas to be decimated. During the First World War, nearly 70 million soldiers were deployed, of whom 8,5-10 million eventually lost their lives and 21 million were injured. Belgium came through relatively unscathed, with approximately 41,000 military and 23,000 civilian deaths as a result of the war. In material terms, a large part of Belgium and France lay in ruins.⁶⁸

The price of war in Eastern and Southeastern Europe was even higher. In the Russian Empire, it is estimated that by late 1915, there were already 3,3 million civilian refugees and displaced persons and more than six million in 1917 (over 5 per cent of the total population). In addition to the soldiers killed, disabled and traumatized for the rest of their lives, millions had become prisoners of war. Some of them, especially from Russia, only returned home in 1921-1922, if at all. The 'totalization' of war ensured that in most European countries, the whole population had been affected and suffered enormously. Besides its casualties, Belgium lost some 18% of its national wealth in terms of infrastructure, land, machinery and money.⁶⁹

The peace treaties of 1919-1920 were all dictated by victors. This was very much in the spirit of Clausewitz, in which the settlement was intended to destroy the enemy's potential as far as possible. Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine and had impossible reparations imposed on her, resulting in the later occupation of the industrialised Ruhr area. The Germans and their allies were so badly humiliated that the seeds of a new war were planted.

⁶⁸ LUC DE VOS, TOM SIMOENS, DAVE WARNIER & FRANKY BOSTYN, *14-18: Oorlog in België*, p. 519-520.

⁶⁹ LUC DE VOS, TOM SIMOENS, DAVE WARNIER & FRANKY BOSTYN, *14-18: Oorlog in België*, p. 520.

In the East, three large multinational empires did not survive the war: first, the Russian Empire fell in 1917, followed by Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire in 1918. Although unliked and even hated by many of their subjects, these empires had nevertheless also provided a degree of stability. In its place appeared new quarrels, rivalries and territorial conflicts. The big guns may have fallen silent in 1918, but the fighting continued in many places well into the 1920s, with huge human suffering and loss of life. The Russian civil war is the best known, but not the only one of these conflicts. Some contemporary conflicts, such as in Ukraine (itself created only in 1917-18 as a result of the war) and in the Middle East, can be traced back to the First World War and its aftermath.⁷⁰

But the biggest loser of the war was perhaps Great Britain. To achieve victory it had been obliged to throw its entire empire into battle. But by proving their skills on the battlefield, many of Britain's dominions quickly evolved into independent nations. Even in their own backyard, the British had to tolerate most of Ireland becoming independent. What remained of the British Empire was finished off after the Second World War. Britain's leading world role was gradually taken over by the Americans, who in 1918 had contributed significantly to the Allied victory with 1.8 million men, without being worn down by the fighting.⁷¹

The war had also created a revolution militarily. The fundamental problem of breaking through the front was solved in 1918 by a profound change of tactics. The importance of classic infantry decreased: in 1914, the French army was still 70% infantry, but this had fallen to 50% by 1918. Cavalry went already

⁷⁰ MANFRED RAUCHENSTEINER, *Der Erste Weltkrieg ...*

⁷¹ LUC DE VOS, TOM SIMOENS, DAVE WARNIER & FRANKY BOSTYN, *14-18: Oorlog in België*, p. 519-525; BILL RAWLING, *Surviving Trench Warfare. Technology and the Canadian Corps 1914-1918*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1992, p. 216-217.

obsolete during the first months of the war, but in its place came motorised reconnaissance vehicles and light tanks.⁷²

Although technical solutions had proved unable to achieve the breakthrough, several new weapons combined with appropriate tactics had nonetheless demonstrated great potential for the future. Foremost among these were tanks and air support for ground troops, but new small arms were also important, such as the Bergmann semi-automatic pistol that formed the basis for the MP 40 of the Second World War. The first industrialized war in history also underlined the importance of logistics: mass armies needed mass supplies and massive automotive transport to bring them up to the front.

The Germans would take the lessons of the First World War to heart. Most of the commanders in May 1940 were veterans of the previous war, including Adolf Hitler himself. The key to the success of the new *Blitzkrieg* lay in a combination of mobile and well-equipped elite units trained in infiltration techniques and rapid tracked vehicles, plus an effective air force, supported by a mass army advancing in the rear. The French had understood the lessons of World War I less well and hid away behind their Maginot Line, the ultimate version of trenches, cast in concrete and steel. The war on the Western Front was therefore decided within a few weeks. Other factors, however, ensured that once again, the conflict did not go the Germans' way...⁷³

The legacy of the First World War determined military thinking until far into the 20th century. Numerical strength gradually became less important, being supplanted firstly by technology and secondly by guerrilla warfare, in which fighters mix up with the civilian population, challenging the military tacticians once again to come up with a response to avoid a new deadlock.

⁷² MICHEL GOYA, *La chair et l'acier*, p. 219.

⁷³ FRANKY BOSTYN, TOM SIMOENS, FRANK HOSTEN, *De Korte Twintigste Eeuw. Sporen van Drie Oorlogen in het West-Vlaamse Heuvelland*, Tielt, Lannoo, 2014.

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FRANKY BOSTYN (°1974) studied history at the University of Louvain and was founder and curator of the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917. He wrote a number of books on the military aspects of the First World War and actually works for the Historical Branch of the Belgian Ministry of Defence.

TOM SIMOENS (°1978) is an officer of the Belgian Army and PhD student at the Royal Military Academy in Brussels and at the University of Ghent. He specializes on the Belgian army in World War I.

The three authors recently published '14-18: Oorlog in België', the ultimate reference work on the military operations in Belgium during the First World War.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

Friday, August 29

Arrivals

Saturday, August 30

- 12.00-18.00 Registration of participants and accompanying persons
(Office of the Secretariat – *Cotis Boardroom*)
- 14.00-18.00 Executive Bureau meeting (*Odris Boardroom*)
- 18.00-20.00 Light dinner in a restaurant Golden sands resort

Sunday, August 31

- 10:00-12:00 Meeting of the Executive Board of the ICMH (Office of the President ICMH – *Odris Boardroom*)
- 10:00-12:00 Meeting of the Bibliography Committee (Office of the Ex. Board ICMH *Orpheus Boardroom*)
- 10:00-12:00 Meeting of the Military Archives Committee (Office of the President BCMH – *Spartak Boardroom*)
- 10:00-12:00 Meeting of the Educational Committee (Office of the Secretariat – *Cotis Boardroom*)
- 12.00-18.00 Registration of participants and accompanying persons
(Office of the Secretariat - *Cotis Boardroom*)
- 14:00-17:00 Bus tour Varna City center.

18.30-20.30 A welcome drink in Melia Hotel. Dinner in the hotel facility

Monday, September 1

09:00-10:30 Opening Session (*Hermitage Hall*)

Chair: Prof. **Dimitar Minchev**, President of the Bulgarian Commission of Military History

1. Address on behalf of the President of Republic of Bulgaria, H.E. **Rosen Plevneliev**
2. Welcome by the Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Dr. **Dobromir Totev**, Permanent Under-Secretary of Defense, Bulgarian MoD
3. Address by the President of the International Commission of Military History, Drs. **Piet Kamphuis**
4. Keynote speech: Prof. Dr. Sc. **Ivan Ilchev**, Rector of Sofia University:
"The Balkans in the First World War".

10:30-11:00 Coffee/Tea

11:00-12:30 Working Session 1: *Theory and Art of War. Part One* (*Hermitage Hall*)

Chair: Prof. Dr. **Massimo de Leonardis** (Italy)

1. Prof. Dr. **Michael Epkenhans** (Germany): *"Germany's Military leadership and the outbreak of World War I"*.
2. LTC Dr. **Vincent Arbarétier** (France): *"Une comparaison entre deux chefs d'état-major généraux de la Première Guerre mondiale : Maréchal Joffre et Felmarschall Conrad von Hötzendorf"*
3. Dr. **German Segura** (Spain): *"Looking for the complete battle: Schlieffen and the spirit of Cannae"*

12:30-14:00 Lunch at the Conference Venue.

14:00-15:30 Working Session 2: *Theory and Art of War. Part Two* (Hermitage Hall).

Chair: Prof. Dr. **Jordan Baev** (Bulgaria)

1. **BG Marco Ciampini** (Italy): "*The System of Alliances at the eve of 1914 and the logic of 'Complexity'*"
2. Prof. **Marcos da Cunha e Souza** (Brazil): "*Max Hoffmann: La Guerre des Occasions Manquées*".
3. **Captain (N) Dr. Denis Kozlov** (Russia): "*Russian Armed Forces in the First World War: Achievements and Problems*"

14.00-15.30 Working Session 3: *The Balkans at War. Part One.* (Lizimah Hall)

Chair: Prof. **Tadeusz Panecki** (Poland)

1. Col. **Antonino Zarkone** (Italy): "*Italian volunteers for the Serb Army in 1914*"
2. Prof. Dr. **Recep Boztemur** (Turkey): "*The Ottoman Empire during the First World War*".
3. Dr. **Efpraxia Paschalidou** (Greece): "*Greece confronts the conflict; assuming benevolent neutrality*".

15:30-16.00 Coffee / Tea

16:00-17:30 Working Session 4: *The Balkans at War. Part Two* (Hermitage Hall).

Chair: Prof. **Esat Arslan** (Turkey)

1. Dr. **Zisis Fotakis** (Greece) "*Greece and the First World War: Perceived and actual role and performance*".

2. Francine **Saint-Ramond** (France): “*Combattre les Bulgares (1915-1918)*”
3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Ivan Petrov** (Bulgaria) “*Spring Offensive of Entente Forces in Macedonia in 1917*”.

16:00-17:30 Special Panel : *National and Military Archives (Lizimah Hall)*.

Chair: Dr. **Hans S. Pawlisch** (USA)

1. **Michael Steidel** (Germany): “*Internet Access to Archival Records of the First World War*”
2. **Trudy Peterson** (USA): ‘*Hunting for History: Understanding Military Records*’
3. **Svetlin Radev** (Bulgaria): “*First World War records at Bulgarian State Military History Archive in Veliko Tarnovo*”.

09:00-17:00 “*Centenary of Bulgarian Military History Studies*”:
Books exhibition.
(organized by the Bulgarian National Commission of
Military History & Military History Library)

Accompanying persons program:

10.30-13.00 Visit to the Roman Thermi

13.00-14.30 Lunch in Melia hotel

14.30-17.30 Visit to the Delphinarium and the Sea Garden

17:30-21:00 Visit to the Archaeological museum, Varna. Concert on the occasion of the opening of the Congress in the "English" garden of the museum. A cocktail party

Tuesday, September 2

09:00-12:30 Meeting of the Full Board of the ICMH (Office of the Executive Board - *Orpheus Boardroom*)

09:00-10:30 Working Session 5: *Asia at War* (*Hermitage Hall*).

Chair: Col. Dr. **Victor Gavrilov** (Russia)

1. Sr. Col. **Chunqiao Ke** (China): "*The Historical Status of World War I in the World Military History*".
2. Prof. **Tomoyuki Ishizu** (Japan): "*Japan and the First World War*".
3. **Sang Mun Suh** (Republic of Korea): "*Universal history beyond a national history: An Evaluation on gains & losses of japan's entry into the first World War*".

09:00-10:30 Working Session 6: *The Iberian Peninsula at War* (*Lizimah Hall*)

Chair: Dr. **Christine Van Everbroeck** (Belgium)

1. Col. **Diego Gimeno** (Spain) : "*La Première Guerre Mondiale 1914-1918: Évaluation et conséquences pour L'Espagne*".
2. **Antonio Jose Telo** (Portugal): "*Portugal in the First World War*".
3. Col. **Manuel Gracia** (Spain): "*L'action humanitaire de l'Espagne pendant la Première Guerre mondiale*".

10:30-11:00 Coffee / Tea.

11:00-12:30 Working Session 7: *South America* (*Hermitage Hall*).

Chair: Sr. Col. **Chunqiao Ke** (China)

1. BG **César Augusto Nicodemus de Souza** (Brazil): "*Brazil in World War I*".

2. **Davide Borsani** (Italy): “*Key to Pacific*” no more. *The 1914 Falklands battle and the 20th Century Strategic Decline of the Islands*”
3. Dr. **Gianluca Pastori** (Italy): “*The First World War and the role of Italian colonies*”.

11:00-12:30 Working Session 8: *Air Forces at War* (Lizimah Hall).

Chair: BG Dr. **Dani Asher** (Israel)

1. Col. Prof. Dr.Sc. **Dimitar Nedyalkov** (Bulgaria): “Bulgarian Aviation in the First World War”.
2. Dr. **Erwin van Loo** (The Netherlands): “*The buildup of a Dutch Air Defense-organization 1914-1918*”.
3. Amb. **Dr. Dumitru Preda** (Romania): “*Romanian Neutrality (1914-1916). The Economic and Military Preparedness*”

12:30-14:00 Lunch at the Conference Venue.

14:00-15:30 Working Session 9: *Eastern Front* (Hermitage Hall).

Chair: Dr. **Claudia Reichl-Ham** (Austria)

1. Prof. **Matitiahu Maizel** (Israel): “*The Problem of Russian Men-power and Russian Losses in WWI*”.
2. Prof. **Tadeusz Panecki** (Poland): “*La question polonaise pendant la premiere guerre mondiale*”.
3. Prof. **Jesse Kauffman** (USA): “*The German Occupation of Poland 1915-1918 and its Legacy*”.

14.00-15.30 Workshop for PhD Candidates, Part One (Lizimah Hall).

Moderator: Prof. Dr. **Rudolf Jaun** (Switzerland).

1. **Christian Jentzsch** (Germany): *"The German Executive Officer Corps and the preparation for war"*
2. Commander **Todor Dimitrov** (Bulgaria): *"Defence of the Bulgarian sea coast during the First World War"*
3. **Lukas Mayrhuber** (Austria): *"Crossing the Isonzo by racecar – Alfred Jansa experiencing the First World War"*.

15:30-16:00 Coffee / Tea.

16:00-17:30 Working Session 10: *Land and Naval Forces at War* (Hermitage Hall);

Chair: **Col. Dr. Winfried Heinemann** (Germany)

1. Col. Dr. **Benny Michelsohn** (Israel): *"The Tanks as the Decisive Weapon of WWI"*.
2. Captain (N) **Marco Sciarretta** (Italy): *"Italian Naval Operations in the Eastern Mediterranean during World War I"*
3. Captain (N) ret. **Jose Maria Blanco Núñez** (Spain): *"Pertes de la marine marchande espagnole pendant la Première Guerre mondiale"*

16.00-17.45 Workshop for PhD Candidates, Part Two (Lizimah Hall)

Moderator: Prof. Dr. **Michael Epkenhans** (Germany); Prof. Dr. **Jan Hoffenaar** (The Netherlands)

1. **Ecem İnceoğlu** (Turkey): *"Speculation on Food Prices in Turkey during the First World War"*
2. **Lea Moliterni Eberle** (Switzerland): *"Asking for grace during World War I. Swiss court-martial convicted and their letters for mercy"*

3. **Piotr Poplawski** (Poland): *“Narew-Biebrza line fortifications in 1915 and 1939 Campaign”*
4. **Giacomo Innocenti** (Italy): *“Enrico Caviglia – the forgotten Italian. A Life as Soldier, Writer, serving his Country”*

Accompanying persons program:

09.00-21.00 Visit the Roman Mosaic Museum in the town of Devnja and the fortress of Ovech. Lunch in Vila Marciana

18.00-21.00 Visit to Vladislav Varnenchik Park & Museum of Combat Friendship 1444. Learning about the struggle of the European nations. Musical programs by Varna bands. Cocktail party.

Wednesday, September 3

09:00-18:00 All day trip to the ancient town of Nessebar (UNESCO site) for all participants and accompanying persons

Free Evening.

Thursday, September 4

09:00-10:30 Working Session 11: *Africa at War. Part One* (Hermitage Hall)

Chair: Captain (N) ret. **Jose Maria Blanco Núñez** (Spain)

1. Général de Brigade **Omar EL OUADOUDI** (Morocco) : *"Les origines des Spahis marocains de la grande guerre"*.
2. Prof. **Mor Ndao** (Sénégal) : *"L'Afrique Occidentale Française dans la Première guerre mondiale"*.

3. Prof. **Andre Wessels** (South Africa): "*A European war in Southern Africa: South Africa's Conquest of German South-West Africa, 1914-1915*"

09:00-10:30: Working Session 12: *Economic and Social Studies* (Lizimah Hall).

Chair: Col. **Jarl Kronlund** (Finland)

1. Prof. **Igor Grebenkin** (Russia): "*Russian army officers and soldiers as sides of social conflict*".
2. Prof. **Tarik Ajja** (Morocco) : "*L'expérience marocaine en matière d'enseignement supérieur d'histoire militaire* "
3. Dr. **Alexander Sokolov** (Russia): "*The money system of Russia on the eve of the First world war*"
4. Prof. **Issa Babana El Alaoui** (Morocco) : "*L'élément déclencheur de la Grande Guerre (Juillet 1914)*"

10:30-11:00 Coffee / Tea.

11:00-12:30 Working Session 13: *Africa at War. Part Two* (Hermitage Hall).

Chair: LTC Dr. **Vincent Arbaretier** (France)

1. Commandant **Samir Chemi** (Tunisia) : "*Recrutement et mobilisation des Tunisiens pendant la première Guerre mondiale*"
2. Prof. **Abdoul Sow** (Sénégal): "*L'apport de la religion dans l'effort de guerre au Sénégal, 1914-1918*"
3. Prof. **Mohamed Salah Dahmani** (Tunisia) : "*Situation économique et sociale des soldats tunisiens démobilisés au lendemain de la première Guerre mondiale*" .

11:00-12:30 Working Session 14: *Northern Europe Neutrals and the Pacific at the War* (Lizimah Hall).

Chair: **Col. Matteo Paesano** (Italy)

1. BG **Michael H. Clemmesen** (Denmark): "*The Danish Armed Services 1910-1914 views of the conditions for neutrality of the Straits and the developing reality during the war*".
2. Prof. Dr. **Wim Klinkert** (The Netherlands): "*Prepare to deter: Dutch neutrality defended, 1912-1914*"
3. Major **Edi Bawono** (Indonesia): "*Indische Partij: The First Indonesia Political Party which Waged Struggle for Equality of Indonesian People 1912-1913*".

12:30-14:00 Lunch at the Conference Venue.

14:00-15:30 Working Session 15: *Middle East at War* (Hermitage Hall).

Chair: BG **Michael H. Clemmesen** (Denmark)

1. LTC Dr. **Saif Bedwawi** (UAE): "*Mesopotamia Operation: A Study in the British Policy toward the Arab Gulf States 1914-1918*"
2. LTC Dr. **Saeed al Kalbani** (UAE): "*World War I and its economic impact on the Arab Gulf States*"
3. LTC **Cris Quanten** (Belgium): "*The Belgian contribution to the campaign in German East Africa during the First World War (1916-1917)*"

14:00-15:30 Working Session 16: *The Balkans at War: Part Three* (Lizimah Hall).

Chair: Dr. **Efpraxia Paschalidou** (Greece)

1. Gen. (ret.) Dr. **Mihail Ionescu** (Romania): *"The Crisis of July-August 1914 and the options of Romania. The analysis of a decision"*.
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Nikolai Prodanov** (Bulgaria): *"Bulgarian Military Intelligence service in the First World War"*
3. Captain **Hakan Bacanli** (Turkey): *"Ottoman Activities Related to the Writing of War History During World War I and the Ottoman Archives of World War I"*.

Accompanying persons program:

09:00-13:00 Visit Aladja Monastery; Lunch in Melia hotel

16:00-18:30 Visit to "Nikola Vaptsarov" Naval Academy, Varna.

18.30-21.30 Program by Navy military bands. Cocktail Party

Friday, September 5

09:00-10:30 Presidents' Meeting (Office of the Ex. Board ICMH - *Orpheus Boardroom*).

09:00-10:30 Working Session 17: *World War I Culture and Art* (Hermitage Hall).

Chair: **Willard Snyder** (USA)

1. Prof. **Allon Khlebanov** (Israel): *"The muses have not fallen silent – World War I in art and culture"*.

2. **Labhras Joye** (Ireland): "*Exhibiting World War One during the Decade of Commemoration*".

09:00-10:30 Working Session 18: *World War I Outcomes* (Lizimah Hall).

Chair: Gen. (ret.) Dr. **Mihail Ionescu** (Romania)

1. BG Dr. **Dani Asher** (Israel): "*Allenby's Deception Operations in the Conquest of Palestine 1917 - 1918*".
2. Dr. **Vadim Abolmasov** (Russia): "*Socio-political Consequences of the First World War for the United Kingdom*".
3. Dr. **Mikhail Zholudov** (Russia): "*The International Policy of British Liberal Party in the Inter-war Period*".

10:30-11:00 Coffee /Tea.

11:00-12:30 Working Session 19: *World War I Historiography* (Hermitage Hall).

Chair: Gen. **Dominique Juillard** (Switzerland)

1. Prof. Dr. **Jean D. Avenel** (France): "*l'année 1914 dans la presse française*".
2. **David Vestenskov** (Denmark), "*Victory without battle*"
3. Dr. **Paolo Formiconi** (Italy): "*The offensive that never was*"

11:00-12:30 Working Session 20: *Lessons Learned* (Lizimah Hall).

Chair: Dr. **Richard Steward** (USA)

1. Prof. **Peter Akulshin** (Russia): "*The First World War and the Transformation of the Armed Forces of Russia in the XX Century*".

2. Gen. **Basilio Di Martino** (Italy), "*Douhet, Capponi and the Italian Bombing Force*"
3. LTC Dr. **Christian Stachelbeck** (Germany): "*Military Learning in WW I: The development of German ground warfare tactics*".

12:30-14:00 Lunch at the Conference Venue.

14:00-14:30 Closing Address, by Prof. Dr. **Luc de Vos** (Belgium), Honorary President of the ICMH "*The First World War and the fundamental problem of breaking through the front*" (Hermitage Hall).

14:30-16:30 General Assembly (*Hermitage Hall*).

Accompanying persons program:

08:30-13:30 Visit to the Palace and the Botanical Garden in the town of Balchik and the Kaliakra Fortress!

13:30-14:30 Lunch in Melia hotel

19:00-22:00 Dinner in a folk-style restaurant with a rich program

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings take place in the Melia Grand Hermitage Hotel, Golden Sands