

choice between an enlarged Serbia and a large Yugoslav state, Le Moal recognises a patient effort to keep balance between the allies, the Yugoslav Committee and the war events. He sees the outcome – the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on 1 December 1918 – as a success of Pašić's politics because the post-war Yugoslav kingdom was based on

pre-war Serbia's nation-building tradition and on her military victories.

In short, this is a book which understandingly but with measure and method portrays the road from "martyrdom to victory" travelled by a small country in the Great War. It will no doubt help alleviate the lack of literature on the history of Serbia in 1914–18 in foreign languages.

JEAN-PAUL BLEDE, *FRANÇOIS-FERDINAND D'AUTRICHE*. PARIS: TALLANDIER, 2012, pp. 367.

*Reviewed by* Veljko Stanić\*

If the name of Franz Ferdinand as the victim of the Sarajevo assassination on 28 June 1914 has impressed itself on the collective memory of the Europeans, the same can hardly be said for the life of the heir-apparent. His life was cut short before he even got the chance to accede to the throne. Yet, his ambitions and activities in almost twenty years he bore the title raise a number of questions of relevance to understanding the last years of Austria-Hungary and international relations prior to 1914. Among the freshly released history books that re-examine the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of the First World War, stands out the biography of heir to the Habsburg throne penned by the French professor Jean-Paul Bled.

For such subject matter as Franz Ferdinand's biography one can hardly hope to find a more competent historian. Emeritus professor at the University of Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), Jean-Paul Bled is a leading specialist in the history of the Habsburg Monarchy. A prolific writer of refined style, Bled is an expert on the history of political ideas, perhaps best known for his noted biographies of some of the central figures of Austrian and German history, to mention but Franz Joseph,

Maria Theresa, Frederick the Great and Bismarck. A German edition of the biography of Franz Ferdinand has been published by the Böhlau Verlag. The author's erudite knowledge accumulated over the years devoted to the historical study of the Habsburg Monarchy is so well known that it need no special mention, but it is worthy of note that this biography is based on a scrupulous analysis of Franz Ferdinand Fonds from the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (HHStA) and the fonds of his Military Chancery deposited at the Kriegsarchiv in Vienna.

In order to clarify the main contribution of this book, we shall sketch the portrait of Franz Ferdinand as it vibrantly and suggestively emerges from the author's narrative. We shall take a look at his political convictions and views on pursuing practical politics both in domestic and in foreign affairs. The plans for a reorganisation of the Monarchy as a possible framework for the course Franz Ferdinand might have pursued in the event of his accession to the throne deserve special attention. Finally, we shall look at Franz Ferdinand's stance on Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy and, in particular, on her

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conflict with Serbia in the years preceding the outbreak of the First World War.

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The life Franz Ferdinand had lived until the death of crown prince Rudolf of Austria, son of Franz Joseph, at Mayerling in 1889, can hardly be described as being unusual in any way. From then on, and officially from the death of Ferdinand's father in 1896, everything changes. The impulsive archduke, often shadowed by a subdued feeling of injustice and discontent, becomes an ambitious and impatient heir to the throne.

In the analysis offered by this book, Franz Ferdinand's family background seems quite important to understanding the overall picture. Born in 1863 to the emperor's younger brother Karl Ludwig and Maria Annunziata von Neapel-Sizilien, he was just one of many archdukes in the ruling House of Habsburg. His father Karl Ludwig, devoted to the family and traditional values, was not engaged in affairs of state. The family's pronounced Catholicism was not a Habsburg privilege, but also a legacy of his mother's lineage, through which Franz Ferdinand was a grandson of king Ferdinand II of the Two Sicilies, nicknamed "Re Bomba" for suppressing the 1848 revolutionary movement in his realm. After his mother's death, his father remarried to Marie Therese von Bragança, and the young archduke developed a close relationship with his stepmother. Although he had been subjected to a rigorous regime of study from an early age, serious gaps in his education would become obvious in his mature years, when he became heir to the throne, a role for which he had not been trained. As custom required, the young archduke embarked on a military career and at the age of fifteen was given the rank of sub-lieutenant. He served at garrisons in Enns, Prague and Odenbourg. Although his military career came

to an end as a result of health problems, he was at the head of his Military Chancery, which would become an influential body in Austria-Hungary. In August 1913, Franz Ferdinand was appointed general inspector of the imperial and royal armed forces, which meant that he would be commander-in-chief of the Austro-Hungarian army in the event of war.

His marriage to Sophie Chotek readily emerges as one of the main elements for creating a picture of Franz Ferdinand's life, not only because of the symbolism of their death together in 1914, but also because their deeper beliefs and life choices. The author paints the portrait of a dedicated family man who pays a dear political price for his love. A descendant of the old but lesser Czech nobility unworthy of a Habsburg, Sophie Chotek is a bone of content between the archduke and the emperor, inflicting even more lasting harm to their already cold relations. The outcome of this affair is the morganatic marriage of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie, which excludes their children from the succession, and condemns Sophie to a lower rank at court and on public occasions. The chapters on the couple's everyday life, residences, personal passions, such as Franz Ferdinand's passion for hunting, his care for cultural heritage and, conversely, less than enthusiastic attitude to modernism in art, convincingly contribute to the comprehensiveness of the biographic and family picture.

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Franz Ferdinand's political ideas betray, not without paradox and ambiguity, a "conservative reformer". Bled explicitly points to the power of Ferdinand's personal prejudices, lack of education and unpreparedness for the role of heir to the throne, which becomes particularly noticeable if he is compared to Franz Joseph's son Rudolf. Like Rudolf, Franz Ferdinand is convinced that Austria-

Hungary, as a multinational empire facing the challenge of political freedoms and national aspirations of its peoples, has serious problems which jeopardise its survival. For this reason he becomes an advocate of the Monarchy's fundamental reorganisation. Unlike Rudolf's liberalism, however, Franz Ferdinand reminds more of the age of Leopold I or the spirit of neo-absolutism in Austria. In his eyes, Austro-Hungarian dualism should make way to a strong unitary Austria. An autocrat with little sympathy for a constitutional system and political parties, Franz Ferdinand is a bitter opponent of liberalism. He is contemptuous of liberals, socialists, German nationalists, freemasons and Jews alike, although his anti-Semitism is of a traditional sort, free from the biological rooting and political consequences encountered in his contemporary Georg von Schönerer or, subsequently, in Hitler. Still, his Roman Catholicism and his pronounced dislike of the Hungarian political factor in Austria-Hungary draw him nearer to the Christian socialists of Karl Lueger. In late 1906, Franz Ferdinand resolutely opposes the introduction of universal suffrage in Cisleithania, and loses the battle, but he makes a u-turn and argues for the introduction of the very same right in Transleithania, calculated to erode and eliminate Hungarian hegemony in that part of the Monarchy.

In the area of international relations, Franz Ferdinand is inclined to a policy of caution and avoidance of diplomatic crises and armed conflicts as potentially fatal for the Monarchy. He advocates a triple alliance of the European conservative monarchies: Austria-Hungary, Germany and Russia, believing that the place in the alliance of the Central powers occupied by Italy, a constant target of his criticisms, belongs to Russia. Here, too, Ferdinand's conservatism, in the tradition of the Holy Alliance of Metternich's times, is a decisive factor. Thus he manages to overcome

his aversion to Prussia, understandable after the wounds Austria sustained at Sadowa in 1866. This tri-imperial alliance he strives for would be a bulwark against nationalism, liberalism and socialism alike, products of modern political culture perceived as a counter to the monarchical principle of old Europe.

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Although the course Franz Ferdinand might have pursued had he acceded to the throne cannot be predicted with certainty, it seems reasonable to assume that he would not have put up with the existing situation in Austria-Hungary, i.e. with dualism. Unlike Franz Joseph, who accepts dualism as a political reality, Franz Ferdinand is a maximalist when it comes to Austrian interests. In the 1890s he thinks of reorganising the Monarchy according to the principle of historic federalism, with the nobility as its mainstay, as the central pillar of the monarchic order. In the early 1900s, however, this idea is abandoned and he, without ever reverting to it, begins to contemplate a tripartite arrangement, with Croatia, Slavonia (previously under Hungarian rule), Dalmatia and the Slovenian lands (previously under Vienna) forming a third unit, alongside Austria and Hungary. This suggests his special attention to the Croat factor, inspired not only by the Croats' traditional loyalty to the Monarchy, but also by its potential role as a counterbalance to Serbian national aspirations. Yet, as in the previous case, Franz Ferdinand does not stick to the idea for long. Disappointed by the resolutions of Rijeka (Fiume) and Zadar (Zara) of 1905 and the policy of Serbo-Croat collaboration within the Monarchy, he abandons the tripartite option. The cold reception he is given in Dubrovnik in September 1906, the Annexation Crisis in 1908 and the Czech opposition to the tripartite arrangement involving South Slavs, make him turn in a different direction.

Nor does he accept the Romanian politician Aurel Popovici's proposal for the United States of Great Austria (*Die Vereinigten Staaten von Grossösterreich*), published in 1906. Based on ethnic boundaries instead of dualism or historic federalism, this proposal envisaged fifteen member states under a strong central authority but enjoying considerable autonomy: a central government headed by a chancellor, five common ministries (interior, foreign affairs, the army and the navy, finance, and Bosnia) and a bicameral parliament for the whole Empire. Franz Ferdinand rejects the proposal as unfeasible, and he also deems it unacceptable to dismantle the historic crown lands (*Kronländer*) by drawing ethnic borders.

Finally, Bled discusses the so-called "Programm zum Thronwechsel", drawn up by one of Franz Ferdinand's aides in 1911. The content of this programme of action after acceding to the throne suggests that a possible direction would not have been the abolition of dualism but its reduction to an ordinary personal union. The Hungarian nobility would have been deprived of much of its prerogatives, and the introduction of universal suffrage in Hungary would have enabled non-Magyar ethnic groups to secure majority in the Diet. Bled points out that Franz Ferdinand did not rule out the military occupation of Hungary in the event of her strong resistance to these changes, a move likely to plunge the country deeper into uncertainty.

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The last segment we shall dwell on concerns Franz Ferdinand's views on Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy. Having lost her spheres of influence in German lands and Italy, Austria-Hungary turned to this part of Europe to reassert its status as a great power; although this was facilitated by the pulling out of the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary had to take

into account the independent national movements of the Balkan peoples as well as the presence of Russian interest in the Balkans. After 1903 Vienna was losing control of Serbia and after the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 relations between the two countries became even more strained. Serbia's active foreign policy, resistance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's majority, Serbian, population to Austro-Hungarian administration as well as the strengthening of the Yugoslav spirit among the South Slavs in the Monarchy were seen as a very serious threat in Vienna.

Unlike Aehrenthal, Franz Ferdinand is not in favour of the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, even though he eventually accepts the new situation. He believes it to involve too great a risk of a larger-scale armed conflict and to inflict serious damage to relations with Russia. This line of reasoning appears as a constant of Franz Ferdinand's political logic, in which he resembles Franz Joseph. Unlike Conrad von Hötzendorf, chief of the general staff, with whom he had a complex relationship ranging from sympathy to confrontation, Franz Ferdinand is against a preventive war both against Serbia and against Italy. On the eve of the Balkan Wars (1912), he still advocates the policy of military non-intervention in Balkan conflicts. A shift occurs after Serbia has scored quick victories, and in December 1912 he demands a military action against Serbia.

In Bled's view, however, the shift is short-lived and Franz Ferdinand soon reverts to his previous position. It is in that light that Bled looks at the famous meeting between Franz Ferdinand and the German emperor Wilhelm II at Kono-piste in mid-June 1914: its topic is Romania, while Serbia or a possible military action against her is not even mentioned. However, the report submitted on 24 June 1914 by Franz von Matscheko reveals a plan of diplomatic measures calculated to

isolate Serbia: Austria-Hungary is supposed to pursue the creation of a new Balkan alliance, with Romania, Bulgaria and Greece, which would be in the Central Powers' orbit and politically directed against the interests of Serbia and Russia. Bled does not think such a plan to have been feasible because of the conflicting interests of these countries.

In 1914 the political conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia is total; military conflict is possible, but not inevitable. Things changed, Bled believes, with the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. Even though the assassination was undertaken by Young Bosnia's national revolutionaries as an act of resistance to the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, without official Serbia's involvement, the strike at the dynasty was seen in Vienna as the strike at the very heart of the Monarchy and could not go unpunished. Franz Joseph, consistently supporting a policy of peace until June 1914, now decides to declare war on Serbia. With the

opposing blocs of powers joining in, the war takes on global proportions.

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Was Franz Ferdinand the "man who might have saved Austria", as Carlo Sforza believed in 1930? Bled does not go thus far. Moreover, his concluding discussion recognises the difficulties that Franz Ferdinand would have faced had he acceded to the throne. An autocrat disinclined to making compromises, a complex personality, disliked by the Hungarians, the Poles and the Czechs too, he would have met with strong opposition inside the Monarchy. Jean-Paul Bled's biography of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne gives a convincing and nuanced portrayal of the personal and political life of Franz Joseph's ill-fated successor. With its fine balance between an individual life and the political climate in which it unfolded this book is also a worthwhile history of the Habsburg Monarchy in the last decades of its existence.

CHRISTOPHER CLARK, *THE SLEEPWALKERS – HOW EUROPE WENT TO WAR IN 1914*.  
LONDON: HARPER, 2012, PP. 697.

*Reviewed by* Miloš Vojinović\*

With the approach of the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, the literature dealing with the greatest conflict the world had seen ever before grows rapidly. The book reviewed here is written by the Australian historian Christopher Clark, professor of German and modern European history at the University of Cambridge. His earlier books mainly deal with German history, and the two of them that stand out are a history of Prussia: *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia*, and a biography of the last German Emperor: *Kaiser Wilhelm II: A Life in Power*.

Clark's book on the origins of the First World War is based on ample source materials. Apart from the archives in London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, he also used, with the help of assistants and translators, materials from archives and libraries in Sofia, Belgrade and Moscow. Clark's interpretation of the origins of the Great War is predicated on two assumptions which are implicitly threaded throughout the fifteen sections of the book, and which he struggles to prop up

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