

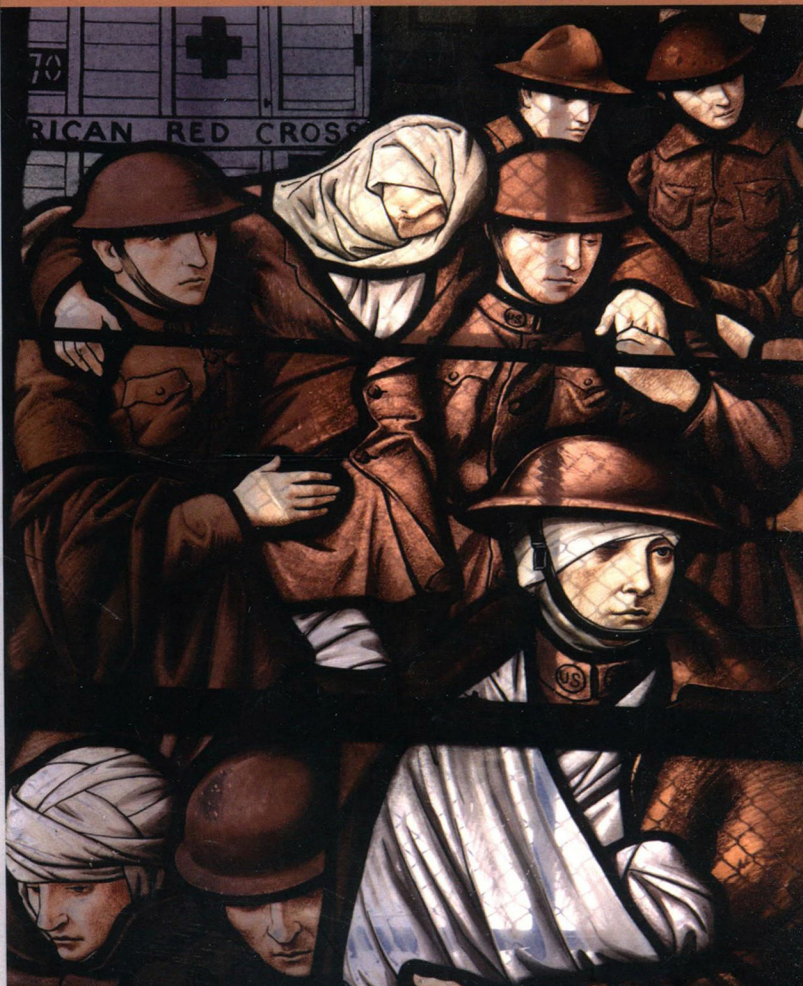
*Documents in Modern History*

# The origins of the First World War

Diplomatic and military documents

Edited and translated by

**ANNIKA MOMBAUER**



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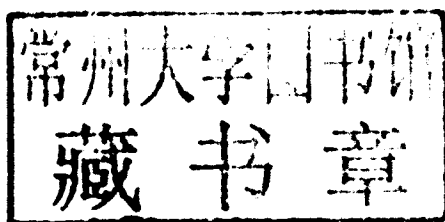
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Documents in Modern History

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# The origins of the First World War

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# Acknowledgements

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## Acknowledgements

cannot be contained within the originally agreed word-limit. George Pitcher has improved the manuscript enormously with his judicious and good-humoured copy-editing.

When I embarked upon this project, I underestimated the complexities that copyright permissions would pose. Thankfully a great number of individuals, publishers and institutions were happy to allow me to reproduce material first printed in other publications. Among them, Imanuel Geiss was particularly generous in allowing me to reproduce some of the English translations of documents published in his seminal document collection *July 1914*, and was gracious enough to encourage me to improve on those translations which both he and I found wanting.<sup>1</sup>

I would like to thank Her Majesty the Queen for the permission to include documents from the Royal Archives in this volume. The National Archives allowed me to cite from documents under Crown copyright in their collection, as did the Churchill Archive Centre Cambridge, the Bodleian Library Oxford, the Bayerisches Haupt-Staatsarchiv in Munich, the Bundesarchiv (Berlin and Koblenz), Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg, the Haus-Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna, Bundesarchiv Bern and the National Library of Scotland.

Thanks are also due to a number of publishers who allowed me to reprint documents which were previously published elsewhere, including Cambridge University Press, the Koehler Verlag, Chicago University Press, Stanford University Press, Edizioni scientifiche italiane, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Oldenbourg, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Sutter Verlag, Peter Lang, Bedford St. Martin's and Random House. Some publishing houses and copyright holders were impossible to trace, particularly for German inter-war publications where publishers have often ceased to exist. Every effort has been made to trace the owners of the works reproduced, and if any copyright was inadvertently infringed, I will gladly endeavour to rectify this.<sup>2</sup>

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1 See also below, 'Note on translations'.

2 Please see also below, 'A note on copyright' and the Appendix.



## A note on translations and editing

If not otherwise stated, all translations from German into English are mine. Where I have used a previously published translation, I have checked every one against the original, wherever possible, and where I have amended parts of the translated text this will be indicated in the references.<sup>1</sup> For some Italian and French translation I was ably assisted by Anna d'Andrea and Christine Guilfoyle respectively. For the finer nuances of translations, and for identifying office-holders and matching up many names with their rightful positions I was lucky to benefit from John Röhl's patience and encyclopaedic knowledge.

While I have perhaps ironed out an archaic translation or spotted a mistake in one or other document in this way, I have tried to stay as truthful to the original text as possible. However, as everyone who translates from foreign languages knows, translation is not a science, and different styles and interpretations might lead to slightly different end results. Of course, on occasion, the nuances or words used in a document (translated or not) can be of huge importance. An example of this is the famous conversation between the British Ambassador Sir Edward Goschen and the German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg on 4 August 1914 in which the latter allegedly referred to the treaty guaranteeing Belgian neutrality as a mere 'scrap of paper' (418). Much was made of Bethmann

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1 For example, many French and Italian documents are available in English translation in the English editions of the so-called coloured books and other collections. However, when checked against the original texts, these official translations turned out to be largely paraphrasing the original text (and are also, understandably, rather archaic in style), rather than rendering an exact translation. Wherever possible, I have instead provided a literal translation of these documents, based on the official document collections, rather than the coloured books. (On the somewhat dubious nature of the Coloured Books, see also below, Introduction, pp. 2ff.)

Hollweg's (and, by implication, Germany's) callousness based on this comment. And yet, we do not know for certain if the conversation was conducted in German or English and which exact phrase the Chancellor used. It is possible that the German phrase 'ein Stückchen Papier', which means literally a small piece of paper, or even more innocuously 'ein Blatt Papier', meaning simply a piece of paper, might have been wrongly, but pointedly, translated as a 'scrap of paper' by the Ambassador, with the much more derisory connotation this entails. In the ensuing international controversy which this document sparked much was made of Bethmann's dismissive summary of the Treaty that guaranteed Belgium's independence – but did he actually use those words?<sup>2</sup> This example highlights not only the pitfalls of translated sources, but of relying on primary source evidence in the first place, particularly when – as was so often the case – conversations were recorded that were held in different languages.<sup>3</sup> All the obvious disadvantages of translated texts notwithstanding, however, given that the original-language documents are often inaccessible to English-language readers, this is at least a good compromise which will allow access to documents which would otherwise be unavailable.<sup>4</sup>

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2 For a detailed analysis of the evidence around the 'scrap of paper', see Thomas G. Otte, 'A "German Paperchase": the "scrap of paper" controversy and the problem of myth and memory in international history', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 18, 1, 2007, pp. 53–87.

3 The difficulty of using primary sources to explain the origins of the First World War is further explored in Annika Mombauer, 'The Fischer Controversy, Documents, and the "Truth" about the Origins of the First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2013, forthcoming.

4 In some cases, though, this means that documents have in fact been translated into more than one language, and while the contents of the document will still reflect the original meaning, it is probably advisable not to read too much in the nuances of the text. This is particularly the case in the Russian documents which I have translated from Otto Hoetsch's *Die Internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus*. These documents were translated into German in the 1930s (from the original Russian or French), and I have now translated them from German into English. However, at least in this particular example we can be fairly certain that Hoetsch's rendering of the text was accurate, as he collaborated closely with the Russian editor of the documents, M.N. Pokrovsky. It had been agreed that all Soviet editing, footnotes and introductions could not be changed for the German edition, and the editions were published simultaneously in German and Russian, and even printed in Germany. For more details see Derek Spring, 'Russian Documents on the Origins of the First World War', in Keith M. Wilson (ed.), *Forging the Collective Memory. Governments and International*

This book is divided into two Parts, and consists of eleven chapters. A number of introductions locate the documents within their historical context, relate them to each other and provide the necessary background for interpreting them. The documents are arranged in chronological order, and they have been presented with all the available original information about dates, the times a telegram or despatch was sent and received (abbreviated as D. and R.), and the original telegram and despatch numbers. The documents are numbered for easier cross-referencing, and brief headings give information about the date the document was written, to whom it was sent, and by whom. Numerous cross-references have been provided throughout the volume. In addition, each document is preceded by a short summary of the most important points contained in it.

A glossary of names of the key characters precedes the documents. Details of first names, ranks and offices held, titles and so forth have only been provided in footnotes where this was strictly necessary.<sup>5</sup>

Spellings of names and places have been standardized: Sarajevo instead of Serajevo; Sazonov instead of Sazonoff or Sasonov; Rumania instead of Roumania; Serbia instead of Servia (and Serbian, Pan-Serbian, etc.); Isvolsky instead of Izvolsky; Pašić instead of Pasitsch or Pachitch; Bucharest instead of Bukarest, Saverne as Zabern, and so forth. Russian and Polish names can be found in a number of different transliterations in the literature, depending on when their names were recorded and by whom. Russian names have been standardized according to the Library of Congress system of transliteration. Spelling is rendered in British English, rather than American, if translations were adopted from American English. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected unless they were of significance. Omissions in the text have been indicated in square brackets, and only text which was unimportant or tangential (either because it concerned a different topic or repeated a point already made, for example) has been omitted. All salutations have been cut unless their wording might be considered significant (for example in the case of a particular familiarity of the greeting). To distinguish between different emperors, in translated text Wilhelm II is *Kaiser*

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*Historians through two World Wars*, Berghahn, Providence, RI and Oxford, 1996, pp. 63–86, pp. 74ff.

<sup>5</sup> For example if a person occupied a different position before and during the July Crisis.

*A note on translations and editing*

Wilhelm, Nicholas II is *Tsar* Nicholas, and Franz Joseph is *Emperor* Franz Joseph. Where English original texts have been included the original title of Emperor for each of these monarchs has been retained. Similarly, in translations the German spelling for Wilhelm and Franz Joseph has been adopted throughout in texts, but left if their original English rendering (William and Francis Joseph) in English-language sources. Where it is difficult to translate ranks and offices held by individuals because there is no literal rendering in English, or because of different usage, the original title has been included in italics.

# Abbreviations

AA	<i>Auswärtiges Amt</i> (the German Foreign Office)
AA-PA	<i>Auswärtiges Amt, Politisches Archiv</i>
AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg
Bay. HStA-KA	Bayerisches Haupt-Staatsarchiv Kriegsarchiv, Munich
BD	British Documents on the Origins of the First World War
BHST-MA	Bayerisches Haupt-Staatsarchiv-Militärarchiv
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
D.	Despatched
DD	<i>Die deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch</i>
DDF	<i>Documents diplomatiques français 1871–1914</i>
DDI	<i>I documenti diplomatici italiani</i>
DSP	<i>Dokumenti o spolnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije</i>
FO	British Foreign Office
GP	<i>Die Grosse Politik</i>
HHStA	Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna
Int. Bez.	Otto Hoetsch, <i>Die Internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus</i>
KD	Kautsky Documents
MGM	<i>Militärgeschichtliche Mitteilungen</i>
ÖUA	<i>Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der bosnischen Krise bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914</i>
PA/AA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes
R.	Received
RA	Reichsarchiv
RA, Kew	Royal Archives, Kew
SHAT	Service historique de l'Armée de Terre, Château de Vincennes
Tel.	Telegram
TNA	The National Archives, Kew
TNL	The National Library of Scotland
WO	War Office

# Glossary of names

This list includes names of people who feature prominently in one or more of the documents. For others, please consult the index.

- Aehrenthal**, Alois Lexa Count von, Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, 1906–1912
- Albert I**, King of Belgium, 1909–1933
- Aliotti**, Carlo Count, Italian Minister in Durazzo, Albania, 1911–1922
- Andrian-Werburg**, Leopold Baron von, Head of Austro-Hungarian General Consulate in Warsaw, 1911–1914
- Apis**, see Dragutin T. Dimitrijević
- Asquith**, Herbert Henry, British Prime Minister, 1908–1916
- Avarna di Gualtieri**, Giuseppe Duca di, Italian Ambassador in Vienna, 1904–1915
- Balfour**, Arthur James, 1st Earl of Balfour, British Conservative politician, Prime Minister 1902 to 1905, and Leader of the Conservative Party until November 1911
- Ballin**, Albert, Director of Hapag shipping company
- Barck**, Peter L., Russian Finance Minister, 1914–1916
- Barclay**, Sir George, British Minister in Belgrade, 1911–1913, British Minister in Bucharest, 1913–1919
- Barrère**, Camille, French Ambassador in Rome 1897–1924
- Below Saleske**, Klaus, German Minister in Brussels
- Benckendorff**, Alexander Count von, Russian Ambassador in London, 1903–1916
- Berchtold** von und zu Ungarschitz, Leopold Count, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in St Petersburg 1906–1911; Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister and Chair of the Joint Ministerial Council 1912–1915
- Berens**, Captain, Russian naval attaché in Berlin
- Beresford**, Charles William de la Poer, Baron Beresford, British Admiral and MP
- Bergen**, Carl-Ludwig Diego von, Counsellor in the German *Auswärtiges Amt* (Balkans' desk), 1911–1919
- Bergen**, von, Counsellor of the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in Berlin

## Glossary of names

- Berthelot**, Philippe, assistant political director at the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- Bertie**, Sir Francis, British Ambassador in Paris, 1905–1918
- Bertrab**, von, Generalmajor, *Chef der Landesaufnahme*, in 1914 the most senior *Oberquartiermeister* in the German General Staff
- Bethmann Hollweg**, Dietrich von, Counsellor (*Legationsrat*) at the German Embassy in Vienna
- Bethmann Hollweg**, Theobald von, Imperial German Chancellor and Prussian Minister President, 1909–1917
- Biedermann**, Erich Freiherr von, Saxon *Legationsrat* in Berlin
- Bienvenu-Martin**, Jean-Baptiste, French Minister of Justice 1913–1914 and acting Premier/Foreign Minister from 15 to 29 July in 1914
- Bigge**, Sir Arthur (Lord Stamfordham), Private Secretary to Queen Victoria and George V
- Biliński**, Leon Ritter von, Austro-Hungarian Joint Minister for Finances and Administrator for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1912–1915
- Bollati**, Ricardo, Italian Ambassador in Berlin 1913–1915
- Bonar Law**, see Law
- Braham**, British journalist with *The Times*
- Bratiano**, Joan J.C., Rumanian Minister President and Minister of War, 1914–1918
- Bronevski**, Arkadi Nicolajevitch, Russian Chargé d’Affaires in Berlin
- Broqueville**, Charles de, Belgian Prime Minister and Minister for War, 1912–1917
- Buchanan**, Sir George William, British Ambassador in St Petersburg, 1910–1917
- Bunsen**, Sir Maurice William de, British Ambassador in Vienna, 1913–1914
- Burián von Rajecz**, István Freiherr, Hungarian Minister in Vienna, 1913–1915
- Čabrinović**, Nedeljko, Serbian suspect in enquiry into assassination plot
- Cambon**, Jules, French Ambassador in Berlin, 1907–1914
- Cambon**, Paul, French Ambassador in London, 1898–1920
- Capelle**, Eduard von, Under-Secretary of State of the German Naval Office (*Reichsmarineamt*), 1914–1915
- Carlotti di Riparbella**, Marquis, Italian Ambassador in St Petersburg, 1913–1918
- Carlowitz**, Adolf von, Saxon Minister of War, 1914
- Carol I**, King of Rumania, 1881–1914
- Cartwright**, Fairfax, British Ambassador in Vienna, 1908–1913
- Cassel**, Sir Ernest, British banker
- Chambrun**, Charles de, First Secretary at the French Embassy in St Petersburg in 1914
- Churchill**, Sir Winston, British Home Secretary, 1910–1911; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1911–1915

## Glossary of names

- Ciganović**, Milan, Serbian government official implicated in assassination plot
- Claparède**, Alfred de, Swiss Minister in Berlin, 1904–1917
- Class**, Heinrich, President of the Pan-German League, 1908–1939
- Clemenceau**, Georges, French Premier and Minister of the Interior, 1906–1909
- Clerk**, George R., Chief Clerk of the Eastern Department of the British Foreign Office in 1914
- Collon**, Major, Belgian military attaché in Paris
- Conrad von Hötzendorf**, Franz Freiherr, Austro-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff, 1906–1911 and 1912–1917
- Crackanthorpe**, Dayrell Eardley Montague, British Chargé d’Affaires in Belgrade
- Crowe**, Sir Eyre A., Assistant Under-Secretary of State in the British Foreign Office
- Czernin von und zu Chudenitz**, Count Ottokar, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Bucharest, 1913–1916
- Davignon**, Julien, Belgian Foreign Minister, 1907–1916
- Delcassé**, Theophile, Minister of the Navy in 1912, French Ambassador in St Petersburg 1913–1914
- Diamandy** (Diamandi), Constantin, Rumanian Minister in St Petersburg, 1913–1914
- Dimitrijević**, Dragutin T. (Apis), Serbian General Staff Officer involved in the preparation of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, founder member of the ‘Black Hand’
- Dobrorolski**, Sergei K., Russian General, Chief of the Mobilization Section of the Russian General Staff 1914
- Doumergue**, Gaston, French Minister of Foreign Affairs before the July Crisis
- Dumaine**, Alfred, French Ambassador in Vienna, 1912–1914
- Dupont**, Colonel, Chief of the *Deuxième Bureau* of the French General Staff
- Durnovo**, Peter N., Russian Minister of the Interior 1905–1906
- Eckardstein**, Herrmann Freiherr von, Secretary in the German Embassy in London
- Eisendecker**, Karl, Prussian Minister in Karlsruhe, 1884–1914
- Esher**, Lord Reginald Baliol Brett, 2nd Viscount of Esher, British courtier and politician
- Eulenburg**, Prince Philipp, German Ambassador in Vienna, 1894–1907, and close confidant of Kaiser Wilhelm II
- Falkenhayn**, Erich von, Prussian Minister of War, 1913–1915; Chief of the General Staff 1914–1916
- Fascotti**, Carlo, Italian Minister in Bucharest
- Ferry**, Abel, French Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1913–1914



## Glossary of names

- Fisher**, Sir John Arbuthnot (from 1909 Lord), First Sea Lord of the British Admiralty 1904–1910 and 1914–1915
- Fleuriau**, A.J. de, 1st Secretary at French Embassy in London, sometimes Chargé d’Affaires in London, 1904–1921
- Flotow**, Ludwig Freiherr von, German Minister in Brussels, 1910–1913; German Ambassador in Rome, 1913–1915
- Forgách von Ghymes and Gács**, Johann Count, *Sektionschef* in the Austrian Foreign Ministry, 1913–1914
- Franz Ferdinand**, Archduke and heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne
- Franz Joseph I**, Austrian Emperor (Kaiser) and Hungarian King, 1848–1916
- French**, Sir John, Chief of the British General Staff, 1911–1914
- Ganz**, Hugo, Vienna Correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*
- Gavrilović**, Dragutin, Serbian military officer
- Gebattel**, Ludwig von, Bavarian military attaché in Prussia
- George V**, British King, 1910–1936
- Giesl von Gieslingen**, Wladimir Baron von, Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade, 1913–1914
- Giolitti**, Giovanni, five times Italian Prime Minister between 1892 and 1921
- Goltz**, Pasha Colmar Freiherr von der, Prussian General; German military instructor in Turkey, 1883–1895; vice-president of the Turkish supreme War Council, 1909–1913
- Goremykin**, Ivan Logginovitch, Russian Prime Minister 1906, 1914–1916
- Goschen**, Sir William Edward, British Ambassador in Berlin, 1908–1914
- Grabez**, Trifko, Bosnian Serb conspirator in the assassination of Franz Ferdinand
- Granville**, George Leveson-Gower, 3rd Earl Granville, British diplomat, attaché, inter alia, in Berlin in 1911, Paris in 1913
- Grey**, Sir Edward, British Foreign Secretary, 1905–1916
- Grigorowich**, Ivan K., Admiral, Russian Naval Minister, 1911–1917
- Gruić**, Slavko, Serbian General Secretary in the Foreign Office
- Guillaume**, Baron Jules, Belgian Minister in Paris 1910–1916
- Haefen**, Hans von, Prussian Officer in the General Staff, military writer
- Haldane**, Viscount (from 1911) Richard Burdon, British Minister of War, 1905–1912
- Hankey**, Sir Maurice, British Civil Servant, CID Secretary from 1912
- Hanneken**, Constantin von, German entrepreneur in China, close friend of Erich von Falkenhayn
- Harcourt**, Lewis V., British Minister for Colonies, 1910–1915
- Hardinge**, Sir Charles, permanent Under-Secretary of State in the British Foreign Office, 1906–1910
- Hartwig**, Nicolai, Russian Minister in Belgrade, 1909–1914
- Haymerle**, Franz Josef Freiherr von, *Botschaftsrat* in Austrian Embassy in Berlin
- Hedeman**, Jules, French journalist