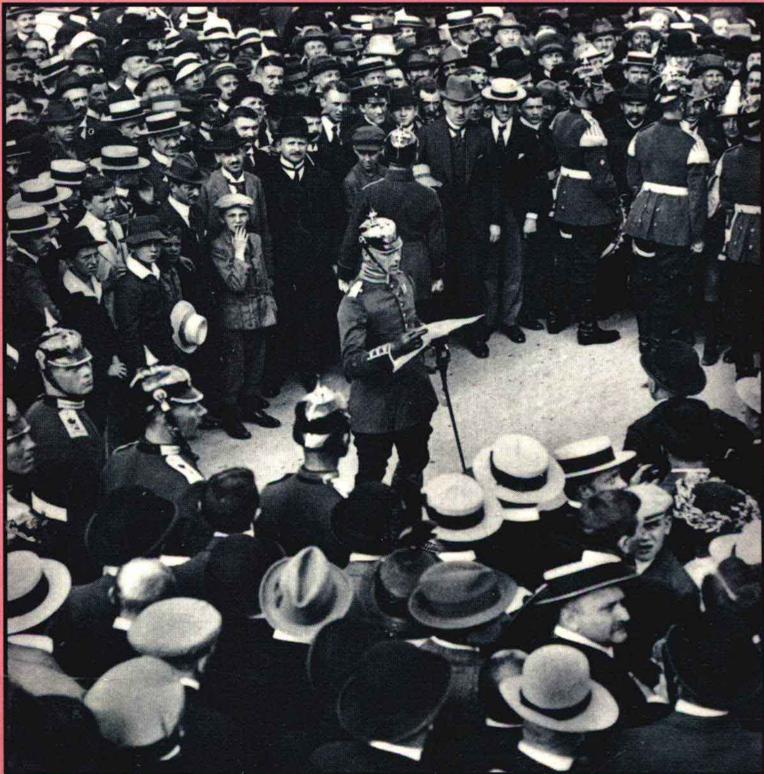
Studies in European History

THE OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

1914 IN PERSPECTIVE

David Stevenson



THE OUTBREAK OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

1914 in Perspective

DAVID STEVENSON
Senior Lecturer in International History
London School of Economics

First published in Great Britain 1997 by
MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS
and London
Companies and representatives throughout the world

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0–333–58327–2

First published in the United States of America 1997 by
ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, INC.,
Scholarly and Reference Division,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

ISBN 0–312–16539–0

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Stevenson, D. (David), 1954–
The outbreak of the First World War : 1914 in perspective / David Stevenson.
p. cm. — (Studies in European history)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0–312–16539–0
1. World War, 1914–1918—Causes. 2. World War, 1914–1918—Europe.
I. Title. II. Series : Studies in European history (New York, N.Y.)
D511.S817 1997
940.3'11—dc20 96–34264
CIP

© David Stevenson 1997

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HE.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his rights to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
06 05 04 03 02 01 00 99 98 97

Printed in Hong Kong

A Note on References

References are cited throughout in brackets according to the numbering in the General Bibliography, with page and chapter references, where necessary, indicated by a colon after the bibliography number.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Richard Overy, the General Editor of this series, for suggesting that I should write this study and for his comments on the text, to Valery Rose of Longworth Editorial Services, and to Simon Winder of Macmillan. My thanks go as ever to my wife, Sue, and to my family for their encouragement and patience. Neil Hart, who taught me A-level history many years ago, kindly provided examples of recent examination questions. My thoughts on the subject owe much to the insights I have gained from teaching an MSc Special Subject at the London School of Economics on 'The Coming of War, 1911–14', and I am greatly indebted to the students who have taken it.

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.

Editor's Preface

The main purpose of this series is to make available to teacher and student alike developments in a field of history that has become increasingly specialised with the sheer volume of new research and literature now produced. These studies are designed to present the 'state of the debate' on important themes and episodes in European history since the sixteenth century, presented in a clear and critical way by someone who is closely concerned himself with the debate.

The studies are not intended to be read as extended bibliographical essays, though each will contain a detailed guide to further reading which will lead students and the general reader quickly to key publications. Each book carries its own interpretation and conclusions, while locating the discussion firmly in the centre of the current issues as historians see them. It is intended that the series will introduce students to historical approaches which are in some cases very new and which, in the normal course of things, would take many years to filter down into the textbooks and school histories. I hope it will demonstrate some of the excitement historians, like scientists, feel as they work away in the vanguard of their subject.

The format of this series conforms closely with that of the companion series of studies in economic and social history which has already established a major reputation since its inception in 1968. Both series have an important contribution to make in publicising what it is that historians are doing and in making history more open and accessible. It is vital for history to communicate if it is to survive.

R. J. OVERY

Abbreviations

NB: see also the list of periodical abbreviations at the beginning of the Bibliography (p. 58).

BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CGT	Confédération générale du travail (French trade-union federation)
ISB	International Socialist Bureau
SFIO	Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière (French socialist party)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social Democratic Party)

Chronology

1871 January: German Empire proclaimed.
May: Frankfurt Peace Treaty; France cedes Alsace–Lorraine to Germany.
1878 July: Treaty of Berlin on Eastern Question.
1879 October: Dual Alliance (Germany, Austria–Hungary).
1881 June: Three Emperors' Alliance (Germany, Austria–Hungary, Russia).
1882 May: Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria–Hungary, Italy).
1887 June: Reinsurance Treaty (Germany, Russia).
1888 June: Wilhelm II becomes German Emperor.
1890 March: Bismarck resigns from German Chancellorship.
June: Reinsurance Treaty expires.
1891 August: Franco-Russian political agreement.
1892 August: Franco-Russian military convention (ratified Dec. 1893–Jan. 1894).
1894 November: Nicholas II becomes Russian Emperor.
1897 May: Austro-Russian Balkan Agreement.
1898 March: German Naval Law.
September–November: Fashoda Crisis (Britain and France).
1899 May–July: First Hague Peace Conference.
1899 October (to May 1902): South African War.
1900 June: German Naval Law.
1902 January: Anglo-Japanese alliance.
November: Franco-Italian neutrality agreement (Prinetti–Barrère).
1903 June: Officers' coup in Serbia.
1904 February (to September 1905): Russo-Japanese War.
April: Anglo-French colonial agreement (*Entente cordiale*).
1905 January: 'Bloody Sunday' massacre initiates revolutionary unrest in Russia.
March: Tangier Incident opens First Moroccan Crisis.

1906 January: Anglo-French military discussions begin.
January–April: Algeciras Conference on Morocco.
February: HMS *Dreadnought* launched.

1907 June–October: Second Hague Peace Conference.
August: Anglo-Russian Entente.

1908 February: German Naval Law.
October: Austria–Hungary annexes Bosnia–Herzegovina.

1909 March: British naval estimates (four plus four dreadnoughts). Secret agreement between German and Austro-Hungarian General Staffs. German ultimatum to Russia ends Bosnia annexation crisis.
June: Bethmann Hollweg replaces Bülow as German Chancellor.

1910 Russian army reorganisation.
November: Wilhelm II meets Nicholas II at Potsdam.

1911 July–November: Second Moroccan (Agadir) Crisis.
September (until October 1912): Italo-Turkish War.

1912 January: Poincaré becomes French Prime Minister.
February: Haldane Mission.
March: Serb–Bulgarian treaty begins formation of Balkan League (Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro).
June: German Navy and Army Laws.
July: Austro-Hungarian Army Law.
October: First Balkan War begins (Balkan League vs Turkey).
November: Adriatic port crisis. Anglo-French consultation agreement (Grey–Cambon letters).
December: Ambassadorial Conference opens in London. Potsdam 'War Council'.

1913 January: Poincaré elected French President.
April–May: Scutari Crisis.
May: London Treaty ends First Balkan War.
June–July: Second Balkan War (Bulgaria vs Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Romania, Turkey).
July/August: Passage of German Army Law and French Three-Year Law.
August: Bucharest Treaty ends Second Balkan War.
October: Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia over Albanian frontier.
November (to January 1914): Liman von Sanders affair.

1914 January: Franco-Russian railway loan agreement.
March: German–Russian press war.
June: Anglo-Russian naval discussions.
28 June: Sarajevo assassinations.
5–6 July: German 'blank cheque' to Austria–Hungary.
7 July: Russian 'Great Programme' becomes law.
20–3 July: French state visit to Russia.
23 July: Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia.
25 July: Serbian reply and mobilisation. Austria–Hungary breaks off relations.
26 July: Russia begins pre-mobilisation measures. British conference proposal.
28 July: Austria–Hungary orders partial mobilisation and declares war on Serbia. Wilhelm II proposes halt in Belgrade.
29 July: Bombardment of Belgrade. German warnings to Russia and France. British warning to Germany. German neutrality bid. Nicholas II authorises partial mobilisation.
29–30 July: Bethmann Hollweg attempts to restrain Austria–Hungary.
30 July: French attempt to restrain Russia. Nicholas II authorises general mobilisation.
31 July: Russia begins general mobilisation. Germany declares state of danger of war and sends ultimata to Russia and France.
1 August: Germany declares war on Russia. French and German general mobilisations. Anglo-German 'misunderstanding'.
2 August: Germany invades Luxemburg and sends ultimatum to Belgium. British Cabinet decides to protect French coast and Belgian neutrality.
3 August: Germany invades Belgium and declares war on France. Italy proclaims neutrality.
4 August: Britain declares war on Germany.
6 August: Austria–Hungary declares war on Russia.

Map 1 Europe in 1914

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.

Map 2 The Balkans in 1914

Contents

	A Note on References	vi
	Acknowledgements	vii
	Editor's Preface	viii
	Abbreviations	ix
	Chronology	x
	Maps	xiii
	Introduction	1
1	Austria-Hungary and Serbia	2
2	Germany and the Blank Cheque	8
3	Russo-French Response	20
4	Towards World War	28
5	The Search for Understanding	39
	Conclusion: The Vision of War	55
	Bibliography	58
	Index	68

Introduction

As this study was being written, images of Sarajevo flickered nightly across Western television screens, and commentators recalled that events there eighty years ago had started a world war. Although global politics in the 1990s have so far been less perilous than in the early twentieth century, with the break-up of the familiar framework provided by the Soviet–American Cold War they may not remain so. The most likely future is one of a return to a world of several competing Great Powers, manoeuvring in a hazardous environment of ethnic conflict, rivalry for markets and resources, and armaments races. If this happens, it will be more relevant than ever to examine why the pre-1914 Balkan tension so disastrously escalated.

What follows aims to introduce the student and the general reader to the vast historical literature on the origins of the First World War. It deliberately avoids a narrative account, which can easily be found elsewhere [9; 25; 27], although the principal events appear in the Chronology. The first four chapters focus on the July Crisis of 1914, examining the contribution made to it by each government, though setting the decision-making within a longer-term context. The fifth chapter is more general and interpretative. The Conclusion looks ahead to the decisions taken after the war broke out, which turned it into a long and devastating total conflict.

1 Austria–Hungary and Serbia

The First World War began over a local war, launched by the Dual Monarchy of Austria–Hungary against Serbia. The local war led almost instantaneously to a confrontation between the two blocs into which the six European Great Powers were divided (see Map 1). The Triple Alliance, dating from 1882, linked Austria–Hungary with Germany and Italy. The Triple Entente was based on the Franco-Russian Alliance, formed in 1891–4, with which Britain normally co-operated. Although Italy opted to stay neutral, Germany encouraged Austria–Hungary to attack Serbia, and was willing to risk and fight a general war rather than settle the issue peacefully. Russia was prepared to fight the Triple Alliance rather than see Serbia crushed; France to fight rather than repudiate its alliance with Russia; and Britain to fight rather than see France overwhelmed.

The Austro-Serb conflict was triggered by the murders of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, on 28 June 1914. Bosnia was part of Austria–Hungary, which was ruled by the Habsburg dynasty, and the Archduke was the heir to the throne. In an ultimatum on 23 July the government in Vienna accused Serbia of harbouring terrorist organisations that aimed to deprive the Habsburgs of Bosnia and their other territories inhabited by South Slavs. Serbian officials, it alleged, had helped organise the assassinations. Besides the punishment of those implicated, it demanded that anti-Habsburg publications and organisations should be suppressed, anti-Habsburg books and teachers eliminated from the schools, suspect officers and civil servants purged, and that Austrian representatives should take part in a judicial inquiry. The Serbian reply, on 25 July, unequivocally rejected only the last point, and accepted almost all even of the ultimatum's most extreme requirements [3: nos 37, 72]. None the less, Austria–Hungary at

once broke off diplomatic relations, declared war on 28 July, and bombarded the Serbian capital, Belgrade, on the following day.

If the assassinations had not taken place, or if the ultimatum had been accepted unconditionally, there would have been no Austro-Serb war in the summer of 1914. We need to look at Serbia's responsibilities under these two heads. The Sarajevo conspirators – including Gavrilo Princip, who fired the fatal shots – were Bosnian Serbs and therefore Habsburg subjects. They belonged to a revolutionary movement, Young Bosnia, which indeed aimed to liberate Bosnia–Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia from Austro-Hungarian rule (see Maps 1 and 2). It was true that Serbian officers and officials had given them bombs and revolvers in Belgrade and helped them cross the frontier. The problem was that the Serbian Government did not control its own intelligence services. Colonel Dimitrijević, or 'Apis', the military intelligence chief, was also leader of the Black Hand, an underground organisation dedicated to uniting all Serbs. He appears to have viewed Franz Ferdinand (mistakenly) as the head of the Austro-Hungarian war party, and hoped by removing him to hinder an attack. He had not consulted the Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić, and there was bitter enmity between the two men. When Pašić learned of the operation, he foresaw that it might provoke a war rather than prevent one, but it was difficult for him to repudiate it. He sent an ambiguous warning, which the Austrians failed to understand, and the security surrounding Franz Ferdinand's visit was lax [162; 163; 165].

Research into the tangled history of the assassinations has confirmed that the Serbian authorities must bear much of the blame. In addition, although Pašić and his Ministers toned down their reply on Russian advice, they were resolved to fight rather than completely submit, and if the Austrians insisted on a war they would be given one. But although both Apis and Pašić regarded an eventual showdown as inevitable, neither wanted it now. Serbia had only a tenth of Austria–Hungary's population. In the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 it had doubled its size, but for the moment its conquests were a liability that needed to be garrisoned against guerrilla resistance. Casualties had been heavy, there were shortages of shells and rifles, and the treasury was empty. Rejecting the ultimatum was a desperate gesture of defiance [28: ch. 3].

It was the Austrians rather than the Serbs who wished to force the issue. Because they knew a Balkan war was almost certain to expand into a wider conflict, it is extremely unlikely that they would have started one without the assurance on 5–6 July of German support, the so-called 'Potsdam blank cheque'. Once they had it, however, their Joint Council of Ministers agreed to impose 'such stringent demands ... that will make a refusal almost certain, so that the road to a radical solution by means of a military action should be opened' [3: no. 9]. To understand the Austrians' conduct we must consider both the Balkan and the European dimensions of their predicament, and how they came to harden their minds against moderation.

Under Ottoman Turkish rule for centuries, Bosnia and Herzegovina had been administered by Austria–Hungary since 1878, and annexed by it, causing an international crisis, in 1908, with the aim of blocking South Slav unification. In fact, the annexation intensified unrest. Young Bosnia and the Black Hand were formed in reaction, attacks began on Habsburg officials, and in 1913 the military governor suspended the Bosnian assembly. Violence was sporadic, however, and most of the population remained indifferent [164]. The South Slav problem caused such anxiety less because of the situation on the ground than because of the Dual Monarchy's peculiar internal make-up and the threat of outside intervention. Under the *Ausgleich*, or 'Compromise', of 1867, the two halves of the Monarchy shared a ruler – Franz Joseph was Austrian Emperor and King of Hungary – but had separate governments, parliaments, and budgets. The dominant nationalities (German-speakers in the Austrian half and Magyars in the Hungarian) accounted together for less than one in two of the total population. By 1914 conflict between Czechs and Germans had stalemated the Austrian legislature and the authorities ruled by decree. In Hungary the Magyars kept control only by discriminating against minorities such as the Croats and Romanians, who were increasingly alienated [64]. The drive for national self-determination seemed one of the dominating trends of modern European history, and it was natural to assume that a South Slav breakaway would set the dominoes tumbling.

Yet in 1914 there were still few demands for independence, and the army and civil service remained loyal. The real problem was that to domestic vulnerability was added the collapse of the

试读结束：需要全本请在线购买： www.ertongbook.