

Zitierhinweis

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Nikolaus Faulstroh, Die Balkankrisen von 1908-1914 und die Jugoslawienkonflikte von 1991-1999 im Beziehungsgeflecht der Großmächte. Das Verhalten von internationalen Akteuren bei der Ausbreitung von Konflikten auf dem Balkan, Baden-Baden: Nomos 2015. 381 pp., ISBN 978-3-8487-2675-2, €69.00 (Paperback)

The twentieth-century Balkans indeed offer a variety of possibilities for historians and political scientists to extensively scrutinise wars and battlefields—and they take these opportunities. Unfortunately, diachronic comparisons, such as Nikolaus Faulstroh now presents in his Ph.D. thesis (Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, 2015), rarely appear. He argues that much has already been said on the *Kriegsschuldfrage* (war-guilt question) of 1914, on war crimes during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s and on the humanitarian motivation for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention during the Kosovo war, but that these discussions, mostly value-based, have brought few fresh insights into the issue of the ‘internationalisation’ of these wars. Faulstroh’s contribution to the study of international diplomacy during the crises therefore underscores analogies between the international involvement in the Balkan Wars at the beginning of the twentieth century and the more modest involvement in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s that led to the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The focus of the comparison is on the Balkan crisis and Balkan Wars between 1908 and 1914, on the one hand, and the Yugoslav wars, including the Kosovo conflict, in the years 1991-1999 on the other. While the former precipitated the First World War and a huge international conflict reaching beyond European borders, the latter did not result in military confrontation on

a broader European level. The core question is why this had (not) happened, how wars become international and how conflicts might be calmed down in advance. This is a complex and challenging task, as the author has had to meander through a network of ‘big and small actors’ and their diverse foreign-policy interests.

The structure of the book follows a chronological line, beginning with the Ottoman crisis at the end of the nineteenth century leading to the First World War, and the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. The Second World War is not part of this examination, as this war was ‘international’ from the beginning and the belligerent states were European powers, while it was Germany that ‘introduced’ the conflict into Yugoslavia (28).

The introductory chapter on methodology, consisting mostly of a discussion of the relevant literature, is somewhat disappointing. Furthermore, it refers to the nationality issue in the Balkan region generally, which influenced, and continues to influence to an extent, all subsequent political development. Regrettably, explanation of the internationalisation of conflicts is missing, as is any screening of other theoretical approaches on ‘diplomacy in crises’ within political science according to their value and applicability to the present topic. Nevertheless, in this study, the author uses the devices of historical comparison indirectly. He utilises the essential prerequisites for a comparison, appropriately hinting at the striking similarities and parallel appearances of the topic in question. These are, first, the diplomatic negotiations that the international actors conducted during both war scenarios. Also, there are only a few differences concerning the general conduct and strategies of the wars and the matter of war cruelties. Furthermore, it is the political status of Serbia (and its legal

successor state) and the 'Serbian question' and 'Albanian question', both at issue in the named wars. Another parallel is the common conflict situation: in 1914, Serbia was attacked by Austria-Hungary, and in 1999 by the NATO intervention with air strikes executed by a coalition of European states led by the USA. In both conflicts Russia, allied with Serbia, was against the interventions. Nevertheless, when some hundred Russian parachutists suddenly occupied Prishtina airport on 11 June 1999, the situation did not escalate into a Third World War (260).

The study concludes by summarising mechanisms for sustained peace protection and defence in Europe and with suggestions for the European institutions to address present day conflicts more effectively.

One explanation for maintaining the conflict as regional at the end of the twentieth century was the fact that the security interests of the neighbouring states were not generally affected by the Yugoslav wars. None of the European countries wanted to expand their state borders. They succeeded in confining themselves to their geostrategic interests in the Balkans. Germany, in particular, was now an integral part of the European Union (EU) and NATO, both of which acted on a common agenda. Furthermore, this also did not enable Serbia to engage individual states, e.g. France, Serbia's historical ally, in objecting to the military intervention; also, Russia and its president Boris Yeltsin were at that time more interested in cooperation with the West than in conflict. As the Russian-European contacts have cooled down after 2008, this issue will merit further and deeper observation, especially after 'the Crimea crisis'—a crisis for the EU, but a (regional) war for Ukraine in Crimea and in the Eastern part of Ukraine and a 'hybrid' war for Russia. The concluding remarks thus are devoted to an appeal

for common and effective European foreign, security and defence policies.

From a historian's point of view, the book is stimulating. It shows in many aspects how historical politology may explain political failures in the past and help in avoiding replicating them in future—ideally, with the thought in mind that history never exactly repeats itself.

Katrin Boeckh (Munich/Regensburg)

Mischa Gabowitsch, ed, *Replicating Atonement. Foreign Models in the Commemoration of Atrocities*, London: Palgrave Macmillan 2017. 353 pp., ISBN 978-3-319-65026-5, €124.79 (Hardback)

Learning from (coming to terms with) history—that is what the edited volume *Replicating atonement. Foreign models in the commemoration of atrocities* (2017) is about. Gabowitsch et al. critically engage with the rationale of 'atonement by analogy'. It examines how seven postconflict countries—Argentina, Canada, Japan, Lebanon, Russia, Rwanda, Turkey as well as former Yugoslavia and the US state of Mississippi—have used other countries' records of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* as a point of reference for their own efforts in dealing with a dark past. A concise summary of *Replicating atonement* would be that postconflict societies have instrumentalized foreign models of dealing with a dark past in all kinds of ways—from counterproductive replication to creative adaptation, with everything else in between.

Replicating atonement makes for a very significant academic endeavour for three reasons. First, while the subject of study is not new, Gabowitsch's edited volume is one of the few case-study collections since the so-called 'memory-boom', with