

Anglo-American Views of Gavrilo Princip

Abstract: The paper deals with Western (Anglo-American) views on the Sarajevo assassination/*attentat* and Gavrilo Princip. Articles on the assassination and Princip in two leading quality dailies (*The Times* and *The New York Times*) have particularly been analysed as well as the views of leading historians and journalists who covered the subject including: R. G. D. Laffan, R. W. Seton-Watson, Winston Churchill, Sidney Fay, Bernadotte Schmitt, Rebecca West, A. J. P. Taylor, Vladimir Dedijer, Christopher Clark and Tim Butcher. In the West, the original general condemnation of the assassination and its main culprits was challenged when Rebecca West published her famous travelogue on Yugoslavia in 1941. Another Brit, the remarkable historian A. J. P. Taylor, had a much more positive view on the Sarajevo conspirators and blamed Germany and Austria-Hungary for the outbreak of the Great War. A turning point in Anglo-American perceptions was the publication of Vladimir Dedijer's monumental book *The Road to Sarajevo* (1966), which humanised the main conspirators, a process initiated by R. West. Dedijer's book was translated from English into all major Western languages and had an immediate impact on the understanding of the Sarajevo assassination. The rise of national antagonisms in Bosnia gradually alienated Princip from Bosnian Muslims and Croats, a process that began in the 1980s and was completed during the wars of the Yugoslav succession. Although all available sources clearly show that Princip, an ethnic Serb, gradually developed a broader Serbo-Croat and Yugoslav identity, he was ethnified and seen exclusively as a Serb by Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks and Western journalists in the 1990s. In the past century imagining Princip in Serbia and the West involved a whole spectrum of views. In interwar Anglo-American perceptions he was a fanatic and lunatic. He became humanised by Rebecca West (1941), A. J. P. Taylor showed understanding for his act (1956), he was fully explained by Dedijer (1966), challenged and then exonerated by Christopher Clark (2012–13), and cordially embraced by Tim Butcher (2014).

Keywords: the Sarajevo *attentat* (Assassination), Gavrilo Princip, Rebecca West, A. J. P. Taylor, Vladimir Dedijer, Christopher Clark, Tim Butcher, *The Times*, *The New York Times*

There is a comprehensive literature on the assassin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Gavrilo Princip, in both Serbian and English.¹ In this paper I have focused my attention on the articles published in two leading quality dailies in Britain and the USA: *The Times* and *The New York Times*. I will ad-

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¹ I would like to thank Dr. Lavinia Davenport and Dr. Eric Beckett Weaver for many valuable comments of the original text in English.

ditionally analyse the most important works and travelogues that deal with this issue in Anglo-American historiography and in publicist works.

The Kingdom of Serbia and Britain were allies during the Great War and the same was the case with the United States in the last nineteen months of the war. As a consequence of the alliance and joint sufferings, there was a positive tendency to cover inter-war royalist Yugoslavia in both countries. In Britain a different way of viewing Serbia had developed after the May Coup of 1903. This event, when Serbia's King Alexander Obrenovich and his wife Draga were murdered, deeply shocked the British public. The exploitation of the theme of the Belgrade regicide in Britain made Serbia look like an Oriental state beyond the confines of Europe.²

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Princip and the role of Serbia*

After the Great War this negative attitude coexisted concomitantly with the positive appreciation of the new country – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, although it was substantially less influential.

Both views were united in the condemnation of the act of Gavrilo Princip and could find no sympathy for him. An avid supporter of Serbian aspirations during the Great War was Robert George Dalrymple Laffan (1887–1972), a fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge. In September 1917 he finished his book *The Serbs. The Guardians of the Gate*. The title is a metaphor borrowed from the speech held on August 8, 1917, in the Commons, by David Lloyd George, Britain's wartime Prime Minister who was very sympathetic to the Serbs. Vice Admiral E. T. Troubridge reflected widely held sympathies for the Serbs in Britain when he concluded his preface to Laffan's book with the following lines: "Serbia has indeed well and bravely answered the great question He asked: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'"³ From being regicides in 1903, during the Great War the Serbs became Britain's gallant little ally and "the guardians of the gate". Laffan sketched a review of Serbian history from Karageorge to 1917. A whole chapter out of eleven is dedicated to "The Murder at Sarajevo". In it he demonstrated his understanding for the circumstances that had led to the Sarajevo Assassination, but he also expressed hopes that "whatever the future may bring forth, the Serbs of every country

² D. C. Watt, "The British Reactions to the Assassination in Sarajevo", *European Studies Review* 1 (July 1971), 233–247. Slobodan G. Markovich, *British Perceptions of Serbia and the Balkans* (Paris: Dialogue, 2000).

³ R. G. D. Laffan, *The Serbs. The Guardians of the Gate* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1918), 2. The quote is from the New Testament: Mark 8: 36 (KJV).

will not again have recourse to such useless methods, which alienate from them the sympathies of those who do not deny their grievances.”⁴ He calls the conspirator Nedeljko Čabrinović “a young anarchist”, and Princip has also been listed in the index as “an anarchist”.⁵

In the thirty-page long chapter on the Sarajevo assassination, Princip is given only two and half lines stating that he “stepped off the pavement and with his revolver shot both the archduke and his wife.”⁶ Laffan emphasises that it was dangerous for the Archduke to come to Sarajevo on Vidovdan since there was example of “the hero of ‘Vidovdan’ Miloš Obilić who killed the sultan Murad: “and there would have been nothing astonishing if some young Bosnian Serb of unstable mind had taken it into his head to emulate that feat by putting an end to a representative of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.”⁷

Laffan holds that “nothing could have been more disastrous for Serbia at such a time than to provoke a conflict with a neighbouring Great Power.” He points out Germany’s desire to move defiant Serbia from the route of her advancement from Berlin to Baghdad, and directs his readers towards Hungarian responsibility for the assassination and the responsibility of Viennese circles. He concludes that through the presented arguments “an opinion can be based”:

It is that the murder was the work of one or two fanatics of Serbian race, but of Austro-Hungarian allegiance, who were roused to fury by the unsympathetic treatment of the Orthodox inhabitants of Bosnia-Hertzevovina; that these Serbs or Bosniaks were probably in touch with ‘comitadjis’ of Serbia, who were ignorant of Europe and did not realize with what inflammable material they were playing, that the Serbian government and public services in general did not know what was being prepared; but that the Austro-Hungarian government did know and used the plot as a Heaven-sent means to remove an undesirable heir to the throne and to incriminate Serbia in the eyes of the world.⁸

Laffan’s narrative clearly testifies that even those who were eager to celebrate Serbia, and to contribute to the creation of her new image as a brave ally worthy of British support, had to restrain themselves regarding Princip. It’s not only that Laffan does not know and does not want to know too much about Princip and Čabrinović, he even seems not to be aware of the other conspirators at all.

⁴ Ibid. 166.

⁵ Ibid. 170, 294.

⁶ Ibid. 171.

⁷ Ibid. 170.

⁸ Ibid. 179–180.

Another supporter of Serbia and Yugoslavia in Britain during the Great War was Robert William Seton-Watson (1879–1951). His attitudes were similar to Laffan's. From 1922 he was the first Masaryk Professor of Central European History at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London. He was considered the greatest authority on Central European history in Britain, including the history of South Slavs.⁹ In 1925 he published a special book to explain the origins of the First World War. In it he rejected most accusations against Serbia regarding the outbreak of the war.¹⁰ The sixth chapter is entitled "The Responsibility of the Crime". Seton-Watson was the first British author clearly to notice: "The real initiative for the crime came from within Bosnia itself", and that in addition to the Sarajevo plotters "a large number of other youths were sworn to attempt his [Archduke's] life, and that similar groups existed in Dalmatia and Croatia, eager to emulate their example."¹¹ In this discovery he was influenced by the book of Borivoje Jevtić,¹² but he also had a chance to interview some of followers of the Young Bosnia movement. Summarising the responsibility in the chapter Seton-Watson was led to conclude: "The crime of Sarajevo is an indelible blot upon the movement for Yugoslav Unity. But, unless we are to lose all sense of proportion, we must assign the main guilt to Austria-Hungary, who, by a policy of repression at home and aggression abroad, had antagonised all sections of the Yugoslav race."¹³ At the end of this book he makes the final verdict: "In a word, it is not too much to assert that by deliberate action, often thought out to the smallest details, Vienna and Berlin had by 23 July created a diplomatic situation from which nothing short of a miracle could have saved Europe, and that the main responsibility for the outbreak of war must therefore rest upon their shoulders."¹⁴

As early as 1925, Seton-Watson had warned: "But there are others who insist upon glorifying the assassins, and it is this section of opinion – naturally most vocal in Bosnia itself – which is responsible for the re-

⁹ Wickham Steed, Lillian M. Penson, W. J. Rose, Milan Ćurčin, Lev Sychrava and V. V. Tilea, "Tributes to R. W. Seton-Watson: A Symposium", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 30.75 (June 1952), 331–363. S. v. "Seton-Watson, Robert William", in *The Concise Dictionary of National Biography. From earliest times to 1985*, vol. III (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 698–699.

¹⁰ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo. A Study in the Origins of the Great War* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1925).

¹¹ *Ibid.* 144, 148.

¹² Borivoje Jevtić, *Sarajevski atentat* (Belgrade: "Petar N. Gaković", 1924).

¹³ Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, 155.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 289.

removal of the memorial shrine erected at the scene of the crime, and for the reinternment of the assassins themselves in a special grave of honour at Sarajevo." He suggested that Armistice Day could be more suitable as "a day of national atonement" rather than "an annual celebration of the crime".¹⁵ Only five years after the publication of his book, he was prompted to voice his criticism against the erection of a plaque in Sarajevo in honour of Gavrilo Princip. In his letter to *The Times* he stated: "as one who was specially active in defending Serbia against the charge of precipitating the World War by her deliberate policy, I feel in honour bound to protest as publicly as possible against the decision, announced in *The Times* to-day, to erect a tablet in honour of Archduke's assassin on the scene of the murder in Serajevo." In the letter he bitterly concluded: "That a monument, not to the victims but to the murderer, should now be erected on the spot can only be described as an open affront to all right-thinking people inside Yugoslavia herself, and at the same time to her allies in the war."¹⁶

Two days later, in an editorial *The Times* mentioned that at the ceremony in Sarajevo "neither the Government nor any semi-official organization was represented, and speeches and demonstrations were forbidden by the authorities," but still condemned the Yugoslav Government for allowing "this ill-advised and insulting ceremony to take place at all". *The Times* concludes that "it is probably true that Serb opinion, outside an educated and occidentalized minority, has made heroes out of Princip and his fellows". It also had a recommendation that "even a democratic Yugoslav Government might have understood the inexpediency of shocking public sentiment in many European countries by permitting the public commemoration of an act which was the immediate cause of the Great War, of its attendant horrors, and of the general suffering which has been its sequel." The leading British daily also sent a warning that "this is not one of the cases where those who understand will be prompt to pardon".¹⁷

In the year that followed Winston Churchill (1874–1965), former holder of multiple ministerial offices in British governments, the last of which was Finance (1924–1929), published the fifth volume of his comprehensive work *The World Crisis* (1923–1931), with subtitle *The Unknown*

¹⁵ Ibid. 159.

¹⁶ R. W. Seton-Watson, Letter to the Editor, "The Serajevo Murder", *The Times*, no. 45426, February 1, 1930, p. 13. He reacted to the following article: From our Correspondent, "The Serajevo Murder. Memorial to be unveiled to Assassin", *The Times*, no. 45425, January 31, 1930, p. 13.

¹⁷ Editorial, "The Serajevo Tablet", *The Times*, no. 45427, February 3, 1930, p. 13.

War.¹⁸ Contrary to most Western authors, Churchill dedicated many pages to the Eastern Front, including the Serbian Front and the Salonica Front. He even provided detailed maps of the Battles of Jadar and Kolubara, the Serbian counterstroke in December 1914, and the invasion of Serbia in October 1915.¹⁹ Depictions of the war years in Serbia were given very correctly with sympathies shown for the Serbian Army. Yet Churchill was very reserved regarding two persons: Gavrilo Princip and Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis.

The fifth chapter of Churchill's work is entitled "The Murder of the Archduke" and it makes reference of the Sarajevo Princip memorial plaque. "He [Princip] died in prison, and a monument erected in recent years by his fellow-countrymen records his infamy, and their own."²⁰ For Churchill, Dimitrijević's secret organisation "The Black Hand" was "deadly association", which "nourished a fierce patriotism with the discipline of the early Jesuits and the methods of the Russian nihilists", and "there is little doubt that Dimitriyevitch organised the plot to murder the Archduke during his visit to Bosnia".²¹ Regarding the "mighty cause" of the Great War he mentions the mood of the men, the antagonisms of the Powers and "the clash of interests and deep promptings of self-preservation or self-assertion in the hearts of races". At the same time he singles out three men: the man "who fired the shots that killed the Archduke and his wife", the man who "deliberately, accepting the risk of a world war, told the Austrian Emperor that Germany would give him a free hand against Serbia and urged him to use it", and the man who "framed and launched the ultimatum to Serbia". The three men "took the fatal decisive steps".²² Without naming them, Churchill allocated responsibility for the outbreak of the war to Gavrilo Princip, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II, and Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Count Berchtold. In an article published on St. Vitus Day in 1937 in the Parisian daily *Le Journal*, Churchill attributed main responsibility for the organisation of the Sarajevo assassination/*attentat* to Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis "head of the conspirators".²³

¹⁸ Winston S. Churchill, *The World Crisis*, vol. V: *The Unknown War* (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931). On the spine of this book another title is given "The Eastern Front".

¹⁹ W. S. Churchill, *The Unknown War*, vol. V of *The World Crisis* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 82, 183–18, 238, 240, 243.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 32.

²¹ *Ibid.* 31.

²² *Ibid.* 45.

²³ "chef des conspirateurs", Winston Churchill, "La vérité sur l'attentat qui déclencha la guerre", *Le Journal*, June 28, 1937, 1, 4.

There were people in Britain who openly attacked the Serbian Government for the organisation of the Sarajevo Assassination. The most vocal among them were Mary Edith Durham (1863–1944), and Herbert Vivian (1865–1940).²⁴ The two of them could not make a great impression on British public opinion, although Durham was more influential. She particularly exploited claims made by Ljubomir Jovanović (1865–1928), a high official of Pašić's Radical Party, and Minister of Education in Pašić's government in 1914 who for political feud falsely accused Pašić.²⁵ He claimed that Pašić at end of May or beginning of June "said to us (he conferred on these matters more particularly with Stojan Protić, who was then Minister of the Interior; but he said this much to the rest of us) that there were people who were preparing to go to Sarajevo to kill Francis Ferdinand, who was to go there to be solemnly received on *Vidov Dan*."²⁶ Edith Durham took advantage of this article to accuse the Serbian Government of 1914 of complicity in the Sarajevo Assassination in her public lectures and in her articles in several British journals.²⁷ Two British journals and one American even republished the translation of Jovanović's text, including a very influential *Journal of the British Institute for International Affairs*.²⁸ The authenticity of Jovanović's claims was strengthened in Britain by the fact that he was titled as "President of the S.C.S. [Serbs, Croats and Slovenes] Parliament" which was the duty that he performed in 1924.

Another Serbian publication stirred up debate in Britain and Germany on the role of Serbia in the events of Sarajevo. In 1923, a well-known

²⁴ [Herbert Vivian], *Myself not Least, Being the Personal Reminiscences of 'X'* (London: Thornton Butterworth Ltd., 1925). Herbert Vivian, *The Life of the Emperor Charles of Austria* (London: Grayson & Grayson, 1932). In the last title (p. 39) Vivian asked: "And why seek other culprits when the evidence is as clear as daylight that the murders were committed by agents of Serbian secret societies under the direct patronage of the Serbian Government, with Russia as an accessory before the fact?" He assessed the most famous Sarajevo conspirator as follows (ibid. 46): "Prinzip was emotional and unbalanced, perhaps diseased in mind as well as in body."

²⁵ Ljuba Jovanović published his article in the following collection of papers: *Krv slovenstva. Spomenica desetogodišnjice svetskog rata, 1914–1924* [The Blood of Slavdom. Commemorative edition of 10 years of the World War, 1914–1924] (Belgrade 1924).

²⁶ M. Ljuba Jovanović, "The Murder of Sarajevo", *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, 4.2 (March 1925), 57. Cf. Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, 153.

²⁷ She made the most comprehensive attack on the Serbian Government in her book *The Sarajevo Crime* (London: Edward Arnold, 1925).

²⁸ Ljuba Jovanović, "The Murder of Sarajevo", 57–69. Jovanović's article was also printed in Britain in *The National Review* (April 1925), and in the USA in a prominent Bostonian journal: Ljuba Jovanović, "More Light on Sarajevo", *The Living Age* (May 9, 1925), 305–311.

Belgrade historian and university professor Stanoje Stanojević, a personal enemy of Pašić, published a dubious pamphlet of 54 pages entitled “The Murder of the Heir Apparent Ferdinand. A Contribution to the Question of the Beginning of the World War.”²⁹ In it Stanojević overemphasised the role in the Sarajevo plot of the secret society “Unification or Death”, popularly known as the “Black Hand”, and of its leader Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis.³⁰ The pamphlet was immediately translated into German.³¹

Additionally, there was an influential section of British public opinion that supported the demands of Hungary aimed at alleviating conditions of the Treaty of Trianon (1920). These demands were not essentially anti-Yugoslav but rather pro-Hungarian, yet they aimed to challenge some stipulations of the Versailles Treaties. Harold Sidney Rothermere (1868–1940), an eccentric viscount, media magnate and owner of tabloid *The Daily Mail*, was particularly instrumental in such efforts. His tabloid had been the daily with the highest circulation in the world at the beginning of the twentieth century. He took over the daily in 1922, and since 1927 he personally run a campaign in it for the revision of the Trianon Treaty. That made him extremely popular in Hungary. The campaign of a part of British Press bore fruit and in November 1932, Sir Robert Gower proposed a resolution to the British Parliament demanding revision of the stipulations of the Treaty of Trianon so that the Kingdom of Hungary could gain all its former areas where Hungarians had majority. Two hundred members of the Parliament signed the resolution but its acceptance was prevented by the involvement of the Foreign Office.³²

The claims by Stanoje Stanojević and Ljuba Jovanović bore fruit on American soil as well. In 1929, a professor of Smith College, Sidney Bradshaw Fay (1876–1967), published a very influential book in two volumes

²⁹ Stanoje Stanojević, *Ubistvo austriskog prestolonaslednika Ferdinanda. Prilozi pitanju o početku svetskog rata* (Belgrade: Izdavačka knjižarnica Napredak, 1923).

³⁰ R. W. Seton-Watson, *Sarajevo*, 131, commented on this: “And he then concentrates upon the ‘Black Hand,’ whose importance is thus exalted out of all proportions to the true facts.”

³¹ Stanoje Stanojević, *Die Ermordung des Erzherzogs Franz Ferdinand: ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Weltkriegs* (Frankfurt a. M.: Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei, Abteilung Buchverlag, 1923).

³² For more details see an unpublished Oxonian doctoral dissertation: Eric Beckett Weaver, “Revision and its modes: Hungary’s attempts to overturn the Treaty of Trianon 1931–1938” (2008). Cf. Ignác Romsics, “Hungary’s Place in the Sun. A British Newspaper Article and its Hungarian Repercussions”, in László Péter and Martyn Rady, eds., *British Hungarian Relations since 1848* (London: Hungarian Cultural Centre and School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 2004), 193–204.

entitled *The Origins of the World War*.³³ The first volume ends with the fifth chapter entitled “Balkan Problems, 1907–1914”. It covers 94 pages. In the summary of the chapter Fay claims: “Though M. Pashitch and the Serbian civil authorities did not want or plan war in 1914, they tolerated an agitation which contributed to a series of assassinations which culminated in the tragedy of Sarajevo.” Austria-Hungary did not give democratic rights to her Slav and Romanian subjects. “Instead she chose to see her salvation in a war in which Serbia would be reduced in power by having to cede territory to Bulgaria, Romania and Albania”, and she “welcomed the opportunity for a localized war with Serbia afforded by the assassination of the Austrian Heir to the Throne.” Fay insists that he did not believe that the war “was ‘inevitable’”, but is ready to admit “that, of all the major conflicts of interest which have been alleged as making it ‘inevitable’, the Balkan problems were those most nearly incapable of a peaceful solution.”³⁴

Fay dedicates fourteen pages of his second volume to the revelation by Ljuba Jovanović.³⁵ For him Jovanović’s testimony was “substantially accurate and trustworthy.”³⁶ He was also influenced by a collection of documents published and edited by pro-German Serb, Miloš Bogičević (1876–1938), a former Serbian diplomat who was dismissed in 1915 due to repeated disobedience of the Foreign Ministry of Serbia.³⁷

In Fay’s view, Princip was under the strong influence of the Black Hand and he became “filled with the ‘Black Hand’ ideas of terrorist action by political assassination”.³⁸ For Seton-Watson the idea of the assassination came from Bosnia. Fay, on the contrary, follows M. Bogičević’s account. Voja Tankosić “a Serbian officer and one of the most active ‘Black Hand’ leaders” initiated a meeting in Toulouse in January 1914 attended by Mus-

³³ Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929): vol. 1: *Before Sarajevo: Underlying Causes of the War*; vol. 2: *After Sarajevo: Immediate Causes of the War*. Two years later the book was published in one volume: Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 2nd ed., revised two volumes in one (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931).

³⁴ Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, vol. 1 (1929), 544, 546.

³⁵ Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (1931), 61–74.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 66.

³⁷ M. Boghitschevitch, *Die auswärtige Politik Serbiens, 1903–1914*, vol. 1: *Geheimakte aus Serbischen Archiven* (Berlin: Brückenverlag, 1928); vol. 2: *Diplomatische Geheimakten aus russischen, monetenegrinischen und sonstigen Archiven* (Berlin: Brückenverlag, 1929); vol. 3: *Serbien und der Weltkrieg* (Berlin: Brückenverlag, 1931). A. J. P. Taylor *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918* (Oxford: OUP, 1971, 1st ed. 1954), 582, called this collection “very unsatisfactory”.

³⁸ Fay, *The Origins of the World War*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (1931), 101.

tafa Golubić, Muhamed Mehmedbašić and Vladimir Gaćinović and it was decided there that the Archduke should be killed. Independently of that Princip got orders from Belgrade that the Archduke should be murdered and the initiative for that “came not from Bosnia but from Belgrade from Major Tankositch”.³⁹

A special section is dedicated to the “motives of the assassins.” Fay discusses the “motives” of Princip and Čabrinović since they “may conveniently be considered together.”, and finds them to be threefold. The first is “a feeling of discontent with their own lives, of the desire to be martyrs and heroes after the fashion of Bogdan Zherajitch”. The second motive was “to take vengeance on Austria for the oppressive régime in Bosnia”, and the third, “to kindle further opposition and hatred for the Hapsburg rule.” In conclusion about the motives he states: “But which was the strongest of the three – their personal psychopathic condition, or their desire for vengeance on Austria, or their Serb nationalism – it would be difficult to say.”⁴⁰

Regarding responsibility of belligerent states he concluded the following about Serbia: “Serbia did not want war but believed it would be forced upon her. That Mr. Pashitsch was aware of the plot three weeks before it was executed, failed to take effective steps to prevent the assassins from crossing over from Serbia to Bosnia, and then failed to give Austria-Hungary any warning or information which might have averted the fatal crime, were facts unknown to Austria in July 1914; they cannot therefore be regarded as in any way justifying Austria’s conduct; but they are part of Serbia’s responsibility, and a very serious part.”⁴¹ He holds Austria-Hungary “more responsible for the immediate origin of the war than any other Power”, and he particularly accused Count Berchtold who “deliberately framed the ultimatum with the expectation and hope that it would be rejected... Berchtold gambled on a ‘local’ war with Serbia only, believing that he could rattle the German sword; but rather than abandon his war with Serbia, he was ready to drag the rest of Europe into war.” He also holds Russia “partly responsible for the Austro-Serbian conflict because of the frequent encouragement she had given at Belgrade...” As regards Germany, Fay fully rejects the verdict of the Versailles Treaty that she was responsible for the War as “historically unsound.”⁴² In his interpretation the responsibility for the war rests with Serbia and Austria-Hungary.⁴³

³⁹ Ibid. 105.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 128–132, 134.

⁴¹ Ibid. 550.

⁴² Ibid. 550–551, 554, 558.

⁴³ He repeated this in an article published on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the assassination of Francis Ferdinand in the same Bostonian journal where Ljuba

Upon publication of his book, Fay was made professor at the most prestigious American universities, Harvard and Yale, and his book had a substantial impact on American scholarship dealing with the First World War.

His claims were challenged by another American expert on World War One. In 1930 Bernadotte Schmitt (1886–1969), professor of the University of Chicago, published his book *The Coming of War 1914*,⁴⁴ also in two volumes. This work gradually became a standard American study on this subject. Contrary to Fay, who blamed Serbia and Austria-Hungary for the outbreak of the war, Schmitt found Germany to be the main culprit. In addition to sources in major European languages Schmitt also used sources in Serbian and even quoted in Serbian Cyrillic certain statements of Serbs and titles in Serbian.

For Schmitt, Bosnian students were attracted by Belgrade since they could “breathe the air of ‘freedom’” there. Their ideal was the unity of South Slav peoples in a kind of republic. They “thought that if Austria were thrown into difficulties then a revolution would come. But for such a revolution one must prepare the ground, work up feeling. Nothing happened. By assassination this spirit might be prepared.” Princip was “a revolutionist” who did not lack “in either determination or courage”, and who declared himself a “nationalist” and a “Yugoslav” at the trial in Sarajevo.⁴⁵

Prof. Schmitt was the first editor of *The Journal for Modern History* since its inception in 1929. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Sarajevo Assassination he published an updated version of the findings from his book in this journal. His assessment of Princip was similarly phrased as in his book. Gavrilo Princip and his associates were “caught up in the revolutionary movement *Mlada Bosna* (‘Young Bosnia’) in the annexed provinces”. They were inspired by the ideal of Yugoslav unity, and in Belgrade they got associated with members of the “Narodna odbrana” and “Unification or Death”.⁴⁶ Schmitt accepted Lj. Jovanović’s claims with

Jovanović’s testimony had been printed four years earlier. “Suffice is to say that Serbia must share a deep responsibility, because there is evidence that Mr. Pashich, the Serbian Prime Minister, was aware of the plot several days before Princip... and took no effective measures to prevent it... But Austria-Hungary is also to be condemned for using the assassination as an excuse for presenting to Serbia a stiff ultimatum...” Sidney Bradshaw Fay, “Serajevo Fifteen Years After”, *The Living Age* (July 1, 1929), 379.

⁴⁴ Bernadotte Schmitt, *The Coming of the War 1914*, 2 vols. (New York and London: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1930).

⁴⁵ Schmitt, *The Coming of War*, vol. 1, 211.

⁴⁶ Bernadotte E. Schmitt, “July 1914. Thirty Years After”, *The Journal of Modern History* 16.3 (Sep. 1944), 171.

reservations in his book and in an article he was even more reserved. He did not hold the Serbian government responsible for the plot in any way. As he put it: “whatever the Serbian government may have known, there is no evidence to suggest that it approved of the plot or assisted in its preparation.”⁴⁷ Schmitt’s analysis of then available German and Austro-Hungarian documents led him to conclude that Count Berchtold wanted war with Serbia and that the Germans understood it and moreover “accepted and approved this policy and urged its immediate execution, even at the risk of war with Russia”, or as he phrased it later on in the article: “The crisis of July 1914 was not resolved peacefully because the Austrian demands of Serbia, which were supported by Germany seemed to Russia, and then to France and Britain, designed to establish Austro-German control of the Balkans and of Europe.”⁴⁸

His final verdict on war guilt is the same as in his influential book: “Since Austria would not have acted without German approval and support, the primary responsibility of Germany for the fatal ending of the crisis is clear and overwhelming.”⁴⁹ Winston Churchill was among the first who highly appreciated Schmitt’s work and his statement of the causes of the war. He held that Schmitt “marshalled in masterly fashion the whole series of official and authentic documents in an impressive array.”⁵⁰ Bernadotte Schmitt’s position on German war guilt would be strengthened after the emergence of Fischer’s theses in the early 1960s.

Combined claims made by Jovanović and Stanojević contributed to a general tendency in perceptions of the Sarajevo *attentat* since 1925 both in Britain and the United States, but also in Germany. In all subsequent analyses of the event four questions were crystallised as crucial and answers to them were almost always combined in such a way to offer either a clear pro-Serbian/Yugoslav consideration or anti-Serbian/Yugoslav condemnation. The questions have been the following:

1. Did Nikola Pašić, Prime Minister of Serbia in 1914, know of the preparations of the Sarajevo plot, and if so, how much did he know?
2. Was the role of Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis and his organisation “the Unification or Death” crucial in the conspiracy?
3. Were Princip and other Bosnians involved the real organisers of the murder, or were they only puppets in the hands of Apis?

⁴⁷ Ibid. 172.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 176, 203.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 204.

⁵⁰ Churchill, *The Unknown War*, xii.

4. Was Princip a Yugoslav idealist inspired by Young Bosnia, or a Serbian nationalist indoctrinated by nationalistic networks in Belgrade?

Since 1925, those who found Pašić co-responsible or even chiefly responsible for the outbreak of the war also held that the role of the “Unification or Death” was crucial for the conspiracy, while those who denied his responsibility also minimised the involvement of Apis in the conspiracy. Princip’s role was also seen in a duality. Critics of Serbia’s role considered Princip to be both a puppet of the Black Hand, and a Serbian nationalist inspired by Belgrade propaganda against Austria-Hungary. Those who did not find Serbia responsible for the war considered the assassination to be the principal work of Young Bosnia, and Princip to be a Young Bosnian idealist.

The publications of Lj. Jovanović, S. Stanojević and M. Bogićević evoked such great interest in the West because Yugoslavia was rare among former billigerent countries in that she did not publish a series of diplomatic correspondence aiming at exonerating her pre-war foreign policy – something all other major powers or their successors did. This task, due to a combination of circumstances, was initiated much later, on the 50th anniversary of the Great War (1964), by the Serbian Academy of Sciences. The task was completed another fifty years later, with 42 volumes of diplomatic correspondence of the Kingdom of Serbia for the 1903–1914 period.⁵¹ All major historians who dealt with the issue of the Sarajevo conspiracy expressed their dissatisfaction concerning the lack of published Serbian diplomatic documents regardless of their sympathies.⁵² Faced with the lack of Serbian primary sources, many historians unsurprisingly overestimated the value of the material that became available in the 1920s and therefore took Lj. Jovanović’s testimony and books by S. Stanojević and M. Bogićević too seriously and literally.

⁵¹ Vasilije Dj. Krestić, “A Note on Documents on the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia, 1903–1914”, in Dragoljub R. Živojinović, ed., *The Serbs and the First World War 1914–1918* (Belgrade: SASA, 2015), 459–461.

⁵² S. B. Fay mentions “Serbian Government’s persistent failure to follow the example of other states in disclosing fully and frankly their secret pre-war archives”, in the “Preface to the Second Edition Revised” to his *The Origins of the World War* (1931), vii–viii. R. W. Seton-Watson also repeatedly asked the Yugoslav Government in the mid-1920s to publish documents on Serbia’s foreign policy. He expressed surprise by the lack of readiness of the Yugoslav government to reply to Jovanović’s article. In November 1925 he bitterly noticed (*Sarajevo*, 154): “A *Blue Book* was promised in April, but nothing more has been heard of it.”

Rebecca West on the Sarajevo attentat

The publication of a travelogue written by Cicely Isabel Fairfield, better known under her pseudonym Rebecca West (1892–1983), signalled a shift in the way the British viewed Princip. At the end of 1941, she published a book entitled *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. A Journey through Yugoslavia*.⁵³ Over time this work has gained in prominence. Her obituary in *The New York Times* quotes the American literary critic Diana Trilling. For her R. West “was one of the major literary figures of this century”, and her travelogue on Yugoslavia “surely one of the very greatest books of the last 50 years”.⁵⁴ In this book she gave a new interpretation of the Sarajevo Assassination or *attentat* as she calls it in French echoing the word *atentat* from Serbo-Croat.

One may glean what kind of affinity Rebeca West had for Yugoslavs and Serbs throughout her life from an affair that took place when her Yugoslav travelogue was reprinted in 1977. She undertook a libel action against *The Spectator* that published two attacks on her and her travelogue. The journal agreed to pay substantial damages to her upon which she declared that she “would donate the damages to the Serbian Orthodox Community in London”.⁵⁵

A lengthy chapter of her travelogue is dedicated to Bosnia. There are 15 subchapters in the book of which eight are on Sarajevo. In the seventh she described her visit to the graves of the Sarajevo conspirators. The visit was a proper occasion for her to discuss the image that the plotters enjoyed in the West prior to World War Two.

It is all also that the conspirators were dangerous fanatics of maniacal or at least degenerate type. But actually their behaviour in court was not only completely sane but cheerful and dignified, and their evidence and speeches showed both individual ability and a very high level of culture.⁵⁶

She contrasts Čabrinović, whom she assessed as a pacifist, with Princip who did not share the same views, but she did not hold it against him. It is true that she condemns the act of assassination but she also relativises it by viewing Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia as a tyranny:

⁵³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. A Journey through Yugoslavia*, 2 vols. (New York: The Viking Press, 1941).

⁵⁴ Linda Charlton, “Dame Rebecca West dies in London”, *The New York Times*, March 16, 1983.

⁵⁵ “Libel Damages for Dame Rebecca West”, *The Times*, January 22, 1980, 23.

⁵⁶ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. A Journey through Yugoslavia* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1993), 375.

What these youths did was abominable, precisely as abominable as the tyranny they destroyed. Yet it need not be denied that they might have grown to be good men, and perhaps great men, if the Austrian Empire had not crashed down on them in its collapse. But the monstrous frailty of empire involves such losses.⁵⁷

R. West concluded that conspirators were “contemplating a mystery” which was different for Princip, for Čabrinović, for the other plotters and for peasants and merchants who helped them inadvertently.

But the deed as Princip conceived it never took place. It was entangled from its first minute with another deed, a murder which seems to have been fully conceived by none at all, but which had a terrible existence in fantasy, because it was dreamed of by men whose whole claim to respect rested on their realistic quality, and who abandoned all restraint when they strayed into the sphere of fantasy. Of these two deeds there was made one so potent that it killed its millions and left all living things in our civilization to some degree disabled. I write of a mystery. For that is the way the deed appears to me, and to all Westerners. But to those who look at it on the soil where it was committed, and to the lands east of that, it seems a holy act of liberation; and among such people are those whom the West would have to admit are wise and civilized.⁵⁸

She did not actually reveal what the mystery was about, she only remarked that “Sarajevo *attentat* is mysterious as history is mysterious, as life is mysterious”. She acknowledged that “the more one knows about the *attentat* the more incomprehensible it becomes”. At the end her conclusion on the outcome of the *attentat* is that “moral judgement sets itself an impossible task” because “the soul should choose life”, but “when the Bosnians chose life and murdered Franz Ferdinand, they chose death for the French and Germans and English”, and had the latter nations had their own chance they “would have chosen death to the Bosnians”. She was led to conclude somewhat desperately: “The sum will not add up. It is madness to rack out brains over this sum. But there is nothing else we can do except try to add up this sum. We are nothing but arithmetical functions which exist for that purpose...”⁵⁹

In this way, Rebecca West was among the first Western opinion makers who attributed humane characteristics to the Sarajevo conspirators.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid. 379.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 381.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 382.

⁶⁰ There was another Brit who did it before her and who influenced her. He was a British travel writer and novelist Stephen Graham (1884–1975). In 1930 Graham published a documentary novel on the Sarajevo conspiracy, *St. Vitus Day* (London: Ernest Benn,

From persons of “psychopathic condition”, fanatics “of maniacal or at least degenerate type”, she turned them into healthy and joyous young men who were themselves victims of circumstances. The first review of her book in *The Times* did not fail to notice her sympathies with the conspirators: “Miss West tells about conspiracies and assassinations, often explains what manner of men or women the victims were, in such a way as to make it clear that there was little to be found in their favour and a good deal of excuse for those who removed them.”⁶¹ She preserved a condemnation of the *attentat*, but it is mild, diffused and put into background while the story of the young conspirators emerged as a focal point of her narrative, inspire the fact that their act triggered a war with millions of victims.

After the Second World War her book became obligatory reading for all diplomats from English-speaking countries coming to or dealing with Yugoslavia. Therefore her coverage of the Sarajevo *attentat*,⁶² as well as her

1930). His second wife was Vera Mitrinović, a sister of the leading Young Bosnia writer and ideologue Dimitrije Mitrinović.

⁶¹ “Book of the Week. Balkan Background”, *The Times*, no. 49177, March 6, 1942, 8.

⁶² The event that took place in the Bosnian capital on June 28, 1914 is commonly known in English as “The Sarajevo Assassination” and in Serbian (Serbo-Croatian) as *Sarajevski atentat*. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2001), 68, suggests two meanings of the verb *assassinate*: “1: to injure or destroy unexpectedly and treacherously 2: to murder by sudden or secret attack usu. for impersonal reason.” It adds as a synonym verb *kill*. For the noun *assassin* two meanings have been offered: “1: one of a secret order of Muslims that at the time of the Crusades terrorized enemies by secret murder committed under the influence of hashish 2: a person who murders; especially: one who murders a politically important person for hire or from fanatical motives.” The most comprehensive complete dictionary of the Serbo-Croatian language in six volumes designates *atentat* as: “a murder, or an attempt to murder a (usually politically prominent) person; figuratively an attack on someone’s rights, property or honour” (*Rečnik srpskohrvatskoga književnog jezika* [A Dictionary of Serbo-Croatian Literary Language] (Novi Sad: Matica srpska and Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1967), vol. 1, 106. When English and Serbian meanings are compared some relevant differences are noticeable. From the Merriam-Webster dictionary follows that *assassin* may also be a simple murderer which the word *atentator* could hardly be in Serbian. In English *assassin* could be a person driven by “fanatical motives” while *atentator* is a person encouraged by “political considerations”. *Atentat* in Serbian can be both attempt and assassination. Therefore *atentat* may be a failed attempt to murder someone, and *assassination* is always equal to a murder and therefore may only imply a successfully conducted operation to murder someone. It is of particular importance that alternative use of *assassinate* and *kill* in English may never be applied to Serbian. *Izvršiti atentat* is very different from *ubiti* (to murder). It is also impossible to use synonymously *atentator* and *ubica* in Serbian while in English an *assassin* and a *killer* may mean exactly the same.

For the above reasons the translation of Serbo-Croatian *atentator* as *assassin* and *atentat* as *assassination* does not seem as a very fortunate choice. In using this translation

historical narrative on history and conditions in Yugoslavia are of special importance for Anglo-American perceptions. What one cannot fail to notice is that she interprets historical narratives from a country with conflicting stories of the past, but as a rule adopts the opinion of her Yugoslav travel companion Constantine (in reality he was a well-known Serbian/Yugoslav writer Stanislav Vinaver). That opinion was usually close to the mainstream of Serbian inter-war culture and its understanding of the past.

A. J. P. Taylor on the Sarajevo Assassination

It is clear that the work of Rebecca West influenced the most famous British post-war historian A. J. P. Taylor (1906–1990). Another historian, Lewis Bernstein Namier (1888–1960), professor of the University of Manchester, whose protégé Taylor had been, asked him to write a favourable review of West's travelogue for *Time and Tide*. Taylor did it, and as he himself wrote: "I greatly admired the book, now I think too much so, and gladly obliged."⁶³ Afterwards he befriended R. West. Nine years later he published his masterpiece *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848–1918*, and then an essay entitled "The Outbreak of the First World War".⁶⁴ It seems that his view of the Sarajevo conspiracy, and the role of the plotters and Serbia as regards the Sarajevo *attentat*, is influenced by West's book. He additionally had personal experience of Yugoslavia, which he visited in 1947 when he received a travel award from the Yugoslav authorities for his help in promoting Yu-

from English into Serbo-Croatian one softens implicit overtones of fanaticism and condemnation that this word may include in English. By translating it in this way from Serbian into English one makes the meaning of these words more ominous and terrifying than it is in Serbian. Therefore the practice used by Rebecca West to alternatively employ both *assassination* and *attentat* is certainly better than to use *assassination* only, and I have tried to do it in this paper. This whole remark refers only to sources that have been translated from Serbian into English or vice versa.

Discussing expressive intentions in translations the leading Serbian professor of English language Boris Hlebec, "Stilska adaptacija ekspresivnih intencija", in Anette Djurović, ed., *Freiheit und Verantwortung – Ethik und Moral in Translation* (Belgrade: Philologische Fakultät der Universität, 2002), 15, has noticed: "If a translator translates a surface layer only, and leaves in darkness the underlying substance, the message could be transmitted only partially, and it would even be corrupted." I would like to thank Prof. Boris Hlebec for his comments regarding the translation of these words.

⁶³ A. J. P. Taylor, *A Personal History* (Coronet Books, 1984), 216.

⁶⁴ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848–1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954); A. J. P. Taylor, "The Outbreak of the First World War", *Europe. Grandeur and Decline* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), 183–189.

goslav aspirations to incorporate Trieste.⁶⁵ Unexpectedly, Taylor asked the Yugoslav authorities to organise a tour around Serbian monasteries for him. In his autobiography, he stated that he had done so under the influence of Gabriel Millet's book on Serbian medieval churches. Although he did not mention it in his autobiography, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* cannot but have inspired him to visit the monasteries not only in 1947, but also during his next visit to Yugoslavia in 1969, since West's travelogue contains excellent parts on Serbian medieval monasteries.⁶⁶

In many of his works, Taylor discussed the role of the conspirators, the Sarajevo assassination, and the causes of the Great War. He went into detail about these issues in an essay entitled "The Outbreak of the First World War", first published in 1956 in his collection of essays *Englishmen and Others*.⁶⁷ This essay was later republished in a very popular collection of his short essays *Europe: Grandeur and Decline* (1967).⁶⁸ For Taylor "the plot was the work of six young high-minded national idealists. Two of them are still alive. One is a professor at Belgrade University; the other curator of the museum at Sarajevo."⁶⁹ He rejects ideas of the involvement of the Serbian Government. "No one has ever managed to show that the Serb Government had any connection with the plot, though they may have had some vague knowledge." One person from Serbia who knew about the plot was Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijević. Although he "approved the plans, he did not initiate them, or give much serious help".⁷⁰ Taylor describes the very act of assassination and the motives of the Austro-Hungarian reaction to it:

The plans of such young men are not very skilful. In fact all six of them missed their mark. Princip, the strongest character among them, was standing disconsolately on the pavement about to go home when an open car, with Franz Ferdinand in it, stopped right in front of him. The driver had taken a wrong turning and was now about to back. Princip stepped on to the running board, killed Franz Ferdinand with one shot and, mistakenly, the Archduke's wife with the other – he had hoped to kill the governor of Bosnia. This was the crime of Sarajevo. The Austrian Government were not much concerned to punish it. They wanted to punish a different crime – the crime that Serbia committed by existing as a free national state. The Austrians wanted to prove that they were

⁶⁵ See A. J. P. Taylor, *Trieste* (London: Yugoslav Information Office, 1945). The pamphlet contains 32 pages.

⁶⁶ Taylor, *A Personal History*, 239–240, 320–321.

⁶⁷ A. J. P. Taylor, *Englishmen and Others* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956).

⁶⁸ Taylor, "The Outbreak of the First World War", 183–189.

⁶⁹ Taylor refers to Dr. Vasa Čubrilović and Cvetko Popović.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 186.

still a Great Power and somehow to destroy Serbia. They decided to go to war with Serbia, whatever her excuses and apologies. This was the first decision which brought about the world war. The man who made it was Count Berchtold, a frivolous aristocrat, but the Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary.⁷¹

In this way, as early as the 1950s Taylor formulated his views on the role of the Sarajevo plotters and the responsibility of Austria-Hungary for the outbreak of the Great War. He also held Germany responsible for the war and identified continuity between the Second and the Third German Reichs. In this way, his ideas preceded the famous Fischer thesis. This was most obviously done in his book on German history published at the end of World War Two, under the influence of Eckart Kehr, (1902–1933).⁷² Thus he and Serbian and Yugoslav historians independently reached very similar conclusions regarding the context and meaning of the Sarajevo *attentat*.⁷³

Contribution of Vladimir Dedijer

In 1959 a special monograph appeared on the Sarajevo plot written by Joachim Remak (1920–2001), a German-American historian, and professor at the University of California – Santa Barbara.⁷⁴ Regarding the background and planning of the Sarajevo conspiracy Remak merely explored points made by Sidney Fay. He openly admits that his version of the event “can claim no more than that it is based on the most likely among several stories and on the testimony of the more credible among the witnesses, and must remain open to some amount of doubt”.⁷⁵ After relativising his work in advance Remak follows the line in which Apis “quite possibly, the foremost European expert in regicide of his time”⁷⁶ is the real organiser of the plot. In his opinion Apis belongs to a line “that begins with Robespierre and ends, for time being, with Colonel Nasser”.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Ibid. 186.

⁷² A. J. P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: a Survey of the Development of Germany since 1815* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1945).

⁷³ For Yugoslav views on the Sarajevo Assassination/*attentat* the best review may be found in an encyclopaedic entry by Croatian/Yugoslav historian Bogdan Krizman written for the semi-official *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*: “Sarajevski atentat”, *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, vol. VII (Zagreb: Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod, 1968), 141–143.

⁷⁴ Joachim Remak, *A Story of a Political Murder* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1959).

⁷⁵ Ibid. 54.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 50.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 53.

He admits that he does not know when Apis supposedly decided to murder Francis Ferdinand and insinuates that he might have told the Russian military attaché Artamonov of his plans for assassination.⁷⁸ In describing what Pašić knew he takes Lj. Jovanović's statement literally.⁷⁹

The description of Princip is moderately sympathetic: "Aside from their compulsion to commit treason and murder, they really were good and kindly fellows," and were "remarkably free of bad habits".⁸⁰ Yet, in his interpretation, Princip, Grabež and Čabrinović are merely puppets since it was the Black Hand that decided that the Archduke should be murdered. The title of a subchapter "The Clean Young Assassins" is suggestive enough. The Black Hand intentionally found the Belgrade troika consisting of clean young people to camouflage the real background of the plot. "They were merely engaged in carrying out a sentence and killing an enemy."⁸¹

In a word, Remak only systematised and updated what Fay had already written thirty years earlier. It seemed as if nothing new could be found on the Sarajevo assassination. It is for this reason that the appearance of a new book in 1966 dealing with the assassination of Sarajevo, based on an unprecedented plurality of sources, made a real sensation.

The second book, that after West's travelogue, to hugely influenced Anglo-American experts of Yugoslavia was a work by the Serbian/Yugoslav revolutionary, historian and a semi-dissident Vladimir Dedijer (1914–1990). It was first written and published in English in 1966, under the title *The Road to Sarajevo*. The book was the result of many years of work during Dedijer's professorship in Britain and the United States.⁸² Dedijer first published a summary of his findings in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs* on the 50th anniversary of the assassination. The article is entitled "Sarajevo. Fifty Years After".⁸³ For the British public, Dedijer prepared a slightly condensed version of the article from *Foreign Affairs*. It was published in *The Times* and was signed "Professor Vladimir Dedijer of Harvard".⁸⁴ At that time, Dedijer had an excellent academic career in the West.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 55–57.

⁷⁹ Ibid. 71–72.

⁸⁰ Ibid. 63–64.

⁸¹ Ibid. 66.

⁸² Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966, and London: Macgibbon and Kee, 1967).

⁸³ Vladimir Dedijer, "Sarajevo. Fifty Years After", *Foreign Affairs*, 42.4 (July 1964), 569–584.

⁸⁴ Vladimir Dedijer, "Back to Sarajevo after 50 Years", *The Times*, June 26, 1964, 13.

The fact that a Serb/Yugoslav was given the honour to extensively interpret the Sarajevo *attentat* in English should be attributed to two facts. As a semi-dissident who supported Milovan Djilas, the leading dissident in Titoist Yugoslavia, he was quite famous in Britain and the US. Additionally, his knowledge of the Sarajevo *attentat* was already well-known in the circles of historians and subject specialists in the West. Whatever the reasons, the emergence of Dedijer as a chief expert on the Sarajevo events of 1914 signified a clear shift in Western perceptions of both the assassination and its chief protagonists. Both articles appeared two years before the publications of Dedijer's monumental work and helped him gain a reputation as the leading expert on the Sarajevo assassination even before his book was published. He is one of only six Serbs or persons of Serbian origin whose biographies may be found in the famous British lexicon *Who's Who* who died between 1897 and 2000.⁸⁵

Dedijer's reputation may be gleaned from a letter he sent to *The Times* in April 1966. In the letter he compares the Irish nationalist Patrick Pearse (1879–1916), the leader of the Dublin Uprising in 1916, with Gavrilo Princip and concludes: "One could be against the methods of political struggle of Pearse and Princip, but as men of conviction, self-sacrifice and heroism, they belong to the loftiest category of primitive rebels."⁸⁶ It is difficult to imagine how much more Dedijer could contradict the mainstream British mid twentieth century perceptions of the Irish struggle for independence than by considering Pearse to be the "loftiest" man. In the letter he honoured both Princip and Pearse, and the leading British daily agreed to publish it.

In his article published in *Foreign Affairs* Dedijer clarified the aim of this future book: "The least elaborated side of the Sarajevo story deals with the assassins themselves: their psychological and intellectual characteristics, the social and political milieu in which they grew up, the interrelations between their political and personal motives, and the relations of the secret Bosnian societies with other secret societies among the South Slavs. Therefore, we have to relate the Sarajevo assassination not only to the external relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to the character and

⁸⁵ The other five persons are two American Serbs Nikola Tesla and Michael Idvorsky Pupin, an Oxford professor John Plamenatz, the Serbian diplomat Chedomille Mijatovich, and the writer and diplomat Ivo Andrić. *Who Was Who a Cumulated Index 1897–2000* (London: A. & C. Black, 2002), 18, 216, 566, 654, 670, 805. Both Andrić and Dedijer first appeared in the annual edition of *Who's Who?* for 1963, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Sarajevo *attentat*. *Who's Who 1963?* (London: A. & C. Black, 1963), 71, 789.

⁸⁶ Letter of Vladimir Dedijer, "Ireland's Easter Blood Bath", *The Times*, no. 56604, April 13, 1966, 13.

actions of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, but also to the problems of life and society within the two provinces.”⁸⁷ In the book Dedijer was indeed able to offer very solid and psychologically well-nuanced character sketches of the key participants in the *attentat*, based on rich archival sources and on his conversations with witnesses. In the tenth and rather lengthy chapter of the book entitled “Primitive Rebels of Bosnia”,⁸⁸ Dedijer offered portraits of leading Young Bosnians, including the key conspirators. Among others, he covered: Vladimir Gaćinović, Danilo Ilić, Gavrilo Princip and Nedeljko Čabrinović.⁸⁹ For him, the Young Bosnians “were a kind of primitive rebels, whose restlessness was rooted in the realities of their own society.”⁹⁰ For Dedijer followers of the Young Bosnia movement, including Gavrilo Princip, were some kind of poets. The latter “did not have much talent for poetry, although he wanted very much to be a poet.” On the basis of Princip’s preserved lyrics, written in the souvenir book of a Bjelašnica Mountain hut on the occasion of his visit in 1911, Dedijer was led to conclude: “He was an immensely sensitive boy, acutely aware of the things around him.” Like Gaćinović he felt “the sufferings of people around him as though they were his own.”⁹¹

Dedijer was able to create characters from key conspirators who, in this way, became closer to both scholars and general public. They ceased to be seven participants in the plot devoid of personal biographies, feelings and motives. Instead, they became historical persons deeply rooted in Bosnian and European traditions, rich in ideas and full of political and ideological contradictions. Their involvement with literature, which Dedijer powerfully described, gave a lyrical note to their biographies. The conspirators were, in Dedijer’s interpretation, victims of the ideology of liberal nationalism that they absorbed concomitantly with certain socialist and anarchist ideas. The Young Bosnians were the followers of differing European politicians and thinkers, such as Mazzini, Masaryk, Chernishevsky, and Bakunin. They were enlivened by the finest works of European literature. Friedrich Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell* was an encouragement for their ideas of tyrannicide as well as for their anti-Habsburg feelings. They were inspired by the works of Kierkegaard, Strindberg, Ibsen, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Dostoyevsky, and Maxim Gorky and even translated most of these

⁸⁷ Dedijer, “Sarajevo. Fifty Years After”, 571.

⁸⁸ Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, 175–234.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 177–184 (Vladimir Gaćinović); 184–185 (Danilo Ilić); 185–197 (Gavrilo Princip); 198–202 (Nedeljko Čabrinović).

⁹⁰ Ibid. 233.

⁹¹ Ibid. 193, 195.

authors.⁹² Dedijer was able to take the Young Bosnians and the Sarajevo plotters out of the realm of an impersonalised narrative that placed them within the scope of otherness for Western European readers, and to bring them within epicentre of European cultural identity. He depicted them as the product of the admixture of the social milieu of Bosnia with European political concepts and intellectual ideas. Dedijer may be credited with completing what Rebecca West had initiated. He humanised the characters of the Young Bosnians before a European, American and worldwide readership.

The popularity of this book, and translations of the original English edition into French, German, and Italian meant that details on the key Sarajevo conspirators became readily available to any interested reader in the West. A review by A. J. P. Taylor, in a prestigious fortnightly magazine *The New York Review of Books*, is a testimony of the impression that this book left on most of Dedijer's British and American colleagues. On his competence Taylor remarked: "He has recently taught at Oxford and Manchester, Harvard, and Cornell. To crown all, he is an experienced journalist who knows how to write well. No other man in the world could have written this book with such competence, such mastery of sources, and such profound detachment." He considered this book "as the first to treat the Sarajevo assassination with complete scholarly impartiality and, as often happens when a truly honest historian goes to work, it is likely also to be the last word on the subject."⁹³

Now that the key conspirators had been personalised there was an increasing interest in them including two survivors of the plot. Even before the publications of Dedijer's book, one of the conspirators gave a short statement to *The New York Times*. He was Cvetko Popović, a retired curator of the Ethnographic Museum in Sarajevo. He was accidentally interviewed by David Binder on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination.⁹⁴ After Dedijer's book, more such interviews followed. *The New York Times* published a short conversation with Prof. Vasa Čubrilović in 1973, and *The Times* interviewed another follower of Young Bosnia, Yu-

⁹² Ibid. 161–163, 178–179, 230.

⁹³ A. J. P. Taylor, "The Great Assassination. The Road to Sarajevo by Vladimir Dedijer", *The New York Review of Books*, October 20, 1966.

⁹⁴ David Binder, "Sarajevo Marking First Shot of World War I", *The New York Times*, June 28, 1964, 20.

goslav émigré Ratko Parežanin.⁹⁵ Cv(j)etko Popović became so well known that his death merited a short article published by *The New York Times*.⁹⁶

The publication of Dedijer's book signified a new epoch in which participants of the *attentat* were seen in a different light. The most obvious example of this new approach is an introductory study for the American edition of the book *July Crisis* by German historian Imanuel Geiss, (1931–2012). He was a doctoral student of the famous German historian Fritz Fischer (1908–1999), and he assisted him in formulating Fischer's hugely influential thesis on the responsibility of Germany for the outbreak on the Great War and on the continuity of elites and policies of the Second and the Third Reich. These ideas were gradually accepted in Germany and then in other major historiographies.⁹⁷ Geiss concluded that “the outrage of Sarajevo was by no means the work of the Serbian government”, it was “planned and organised by the extreme wing of Serbian nationalism, the secret society ‘Death or Unification’,” but the idea of the attempt came from the circles of Young Bosnia. Geiss concludes: “In the last analysis, the murder at Sarajevo was thus primarily the deed of Princip himself and can only indirectly be charged to the ‘Black Hand’ and virtually not at all to the Serbian government (let alone the Serbian people).” In his opinion the responsibility for the assassination falls “on the ruling class of Austria-Hungary”:

Less because it sent Franz Ferdinand into an ‘alley of bomb-throwers’ than on account of its inability to satisfy the legitimate struggle of their various nationalities for freedom, equality and social justice (a motive which is generally overlooked in the wholesale condemnation by Germany and Austria of the conspirators of Sarajevo). By their rigid adherence to outdated political and social conceptions, the traditional Powers left no room for the political agitation of the young south Slav intelligentsia who, in their desperation, were finally driven to the crime of political murder. No historical account seeking to do justice to the complicated events of July and August 1914 can any longer afford to ignore this important aspect, neglected for so long in Germany and Austria. It becomes clear that the Austrian and German governments were in fact mistaken in their assumption about the background to the outrage.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Raymond H. Anderson, “1914 Conspirator Recalls Sarajevo Assassination”, *The New York Times*, May 27, 1973; Iain Macdonald, “Sarajevo: When a teenager with a gun sent the world to war”, *The Times*, no. 59125, June 28, 1974, 18.

⁹⁶ “Cvjetko Popovic, 84, Was Jailed In '14 Killing of Austria Archduke”, *The New York Times*, June 10, 1980, 79.

⁹⁷ See on this a special thematic issue of *Journal of Contemporary History*, 48.2 (2013).

⁹⁸ Imanuel Geiss, “Origins of the First World War”, in H. W. Koch, ed., *The Origins of the First World War* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1972), 78. Idem

One can clearly see that many of Dedijer's conclusions had effect on Geiss and he indeed quotes him in his study.

Princip in the 1960s and 1970s

In 1964 Yugoslavia was faced with the dilemma of how to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Sarajevo *attentat*. It decided to organise a series of events in Sarajevo, but also to allocate all duties about it to Bosnia and Herzegovina, a member-republic of the Yugoslav communist federation. In this way, the event would be marked but the federal Yugoslav authorities could defend themselves against possible foreign complaints by claiming that it was a local rather than a Yugoslav event. In comparison with the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which failed to send a single official to Sarajevo to attend the unveiling of the memorial plaque in 1930, and in which a chapel to the "Vidovdan heroes" in Sarajevo was only consecrated in a private ceremony in 1939, communist Yugoslavia did more. Under the communists, Princip and his fellows were commemorated in 1964 more openly, but communist Yugoslavia faced similar dilemmas to those encountered by the Kingdom. Some data suggest that communist Yugoslavia also had to take into account the remaining Western hostility for Princip and his act. The leading Belgrade daily *Politika* announced in March that a model of the statue by Afan Hozić was "temporarily placed on the river bank of Miljacka, exactly opposite the historic site." *Politika's* correspondent was full of enthusiasm, and he reported impressions of a group of citizens of Sarajevo who "were unanimous in their opinion" that "a bronze monument should be placed on the spot from which Princip fired".⁹⁹ When foreign correspondents came in June to Sarajevo they noticed no statue of Princip. It is therefore clear that the model of the statue of Princip was removed and the final version was never erected.

From reports published in *The Times* and *The New York Times* the following picture emerges. Local officials were instructed to minimise the importance of commemorations in Sarajevo. As *The Times* reported: "Some 300 persons gathered to mark and not to celebrate the occasion, as speakers were at pains to emphasize, even if the shots fired at Sarajevo had paved

"Origins of the First World War", in Imanuel Geiss, ed., *July 1914. The Outbreak of the First World War: Selected Documents* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 53.

⁹⁹ Asim Gruhonjić, "Gde postaviti spomenik Gavrilu Principu (Pred 50-godišnjicu Sarajevskog atentata)" [Where to place a monument to Gavrilo Princip. On the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Sarajevo *attentat*], *Politika*, March 14, 1964.

the way for the unification of the south Slavs.”¹⁰⁰ In his text published on the day of the 50th anniversary *The New York Times* correspondent, David Binder, noted that Princip “is now regarded as a hero of the movement to create a South Slav state free of the heels of Austrian and Turkish boots.” He noticed that there was a bridge with Princip’s name in Sarajevo but no statue “nor are there any souvenirs with his image on sale”. Yet, Binder found it appropriate to quote the following statement of a Sarajevo man: “Make no mistake, we are proud of the event, not because it started the war, but because it was the beginning of our liberation.”¹⁰¹

What the Royal Yugoslav Government had failed to achieve in 1930 – when it had to face a series of condemnatory articles in *The Times*, in spite of its efforts to make the unveiling of the plaque to Princip in Sarajevo a fully private affair – the Yugoslav Communist Government partially succeeded to do in 1964. This was in spite of the fact that the commemorations in Sarajevo were attended by the highest communist dignitaries of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Disregarding this, Binder concluded: “The ceremonies were not even acknowledged by the Yugoslav Government, a fact that seemed to indicate that the terrorist acts of June 28, 1914, were distasteful to it.” He was even led to believe that Sarajevo, a city of 200,000 people “virtually turned its back today on the young men who made it famous 50 years ago.”¹⁰² This is exactly how the Communist Government of Yugoslavia wanted the event to be seen in the West.

Yet, Belgrade’s *Politika* informed its readers that on June 28, 1964, a commemorative session was held in Sarajevo and attended by the then Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Džemal Bijedić, and other dignitaries of Bosnia and Sarajevo. It is true that the article also mentions many foreign tourists who came to Sarajevo, but it does not mention any domestic tourists.¹⁰³ This all indicates that the commemoration got the highest possible rank within Bosnia, but that no federal officials appeared and no domestic tourists were encouraged to attend. Another correspondent of *The New York Times* was more investigative, but was not able to decode the confusion. Joseph A. Barry wrote a lengthy article for the Sunday supple-

¹⁰⁰ Our own correspondent, “Sarajevo Shooting Commemorated”, *The Times*, no. 56050, June 29, 1964, 9.

¹⁰¹ David Binder, “Sarajevo Marking First Shot of World War I”, *The New York Times*, June 28, 1964, 20.

¹⁰² David Binder, “Only a Few in Sarajevo mark 1914 Assassination”, *The New York Times*, June 29, 1964, 3.

¹⁰³ Asim Gruhonjić, “Mlada Bosna’ – Borac za jedinstvo srpske, hrvatske i muslimanske omladine” [Young Bosnia – fighter for the unity of Serbian, Croatian and Muslim Youth], *Politika*, June 29, 1964, 5.

ment of *The New York Times*. He noticed that Yugoslav communists found themselves in an uncomfortable position in relation to the commemoration of Princip's act. "They are embarrassed for two reasons. First, the authorities know all too well that although Princip may be a national hero of the common people of Yugoslavia, he is the young madman of World War I to the rest of the world - including the rest of the communist bloc."¹⁰⁴ In Barry's opinion, the Yugoslav Communist Party acted in a similar way to the church. The latter turned a pagan rite into St. Vitus, and likewise "the Communist hierarchy of Yugoslavia had done its best to surround Princip with an acceptable mythology - of a 'Young Bosnia' group".¹⁰⁵

As a man in charge of "discouraging foreign correspondents" Barry identified Murat Kusturica "Sarajevo's Communist Secretary of Information", who gave the impression of being a friendly person. Barry noticed that "most of this month, Kusturitsa has been meeting with municipal officials on how not to help the newspaper men pouring into Sarajevo for the anniversary story."¹⁰⁶ He interviewed one of survivors of the plot, Hamdija Nikšić, and asked him if he knew "the authorities were playing down the anniversary?" He got the following answer: "I know, because of international relations. Kings and queens still exist." He wandered around and visited a workers' café. There he learned that Sarajevo workers supported the idea that their children should be taken to visit Princip's museum.¹⁰⁷

Barry complements Binder and clarifies that the commemoration in Sarajevo in 1964 was not a private act, but also witnessed the uneasiness of the Yugoslav League of Communists regarding the whole event. For Barry, Princip is still a "madman", but things changed in the course of the next ten years. In this shift Dedijer's book played a substantial role. Through Dedijer, followers of Young Bosnia were able to tell their life stories and thanks to him their names became known to interested readers in all major Western European languages. *The Times* honoured Dedijer by asking him to contribute an article on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Sarajevo. Ten years later the same honour was given to a friend of Princip's, one of the survivors of the plot, Ratko Parežanin. In the months preceding the *attentat* Princip had been his room-mate in Belgrade. After the Second World War Parežanin was a political emigrant, and the correspondent of *The Times* interviewed him on the occasion of the publication of his book *Young Bos-*

¹⁰⁴ Joseph A. Barry, "Sarajevo Revisited, 50 Years After", *The New York Times Magazine*, Sunday, June 28, 1964, 15.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 16.

nia and World War One published in Munich in 1974.¹⁰⁸ The conversation was published on the very day of the 60th anniversary of the *attentat* in *The Times*, and Parežanin was introduced as “a retired Yugoslav diplomat”. His own experience from 1914 was that Serbian politicians were against the war since “they were sure it [Austria-Hungary] would fall apart in any case”. Parežanin pointed out that both he and Princip “had no idea that the result of the assassination would be war”. In obvious reference to potential linking of the assassination of Sarajevo with terrorism of the 1970s he felt obliged to offer the following explanation:

Unfortunately today’s violence takes the worst form. Money plays a role, and many of the terrorists are well paid. Princip was a very different type. He was inspired by heroism and love of his country, and was prepared to die. We were poor but idealistic. When I left Princip that day at the river he asked if I could spare what was then about sixpence so that he could buy himself a meal.¹⁰⁹

In the wake of new possibilities, the next occasion to exonerate Princip was to make a high-budget film in Yugoslavia. In March 1974, a special correspondent of *The New York Times* Malcolm W. Browne reported on the plans in Yugoslavia to make a film on Princip, and that “some Sarajevo citizens are wrestling once again with the moral issues of political killing”. The article announces that the director, Veljko Bulajić, would “seek to justify the assassination”.¹¹⁰ Browne’s conclusion on official attitudes to the film was that it “has the tacit blessing of Communist party leaders, although they are clearly still troubled by the problem of whether assassination is justified as a political tool”.¹¹¹

A favourite film director of the Yugoslav dictator, Josip Broz Tito, Bulajić entered his new joint Yugoslav-Czechoslovak project with a huge budget. In addition to actors from the co-producer’s country, he engaged the Hollywood stars Christopher Plummer to play the role of Franz Ferdinand and Maximilian Shell for the role of Djuro Šarac. The film was among twenty-one submitted for nomination for the 48th award of the American Film Academy for the best foreign movie (1976), but it was not nominated. The very fact that the film was submitted for nomination and that it was aired in the USA, Britain, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia demonstrates

¹⁰⁸ Ratko Parežanin, *Mlada Bosna i Prvi svetski rat* (Munich: Iskra, 1974).

¹⁰⁹ Iain Macdonald, “Sarajevo: When a teenager with a gun sent the world to war”, *The Times*, no. 59125, June 28, 1974, 18.

¹¹⁰ The previous Yugoslav film on Princip was made in 1968, under the title “Sarajevski atentat”. It was directed by Fadil Hadžić and Bulajić probably refers to this film.

¹¹¹ Malcom W. Browne, “Sarajevo Hails Assassin but Debates Ethics of Deed”, *The New York Times*, March 30, 1974, 2.

what a great change had happened after the publication of Dedijer's book on the Sarajevo Assassination both in Yugoslavia and abroad. Bulajić wished to repeat Dedijer's success through a film narrative. The film was known as *Atentat u Sarajevu* in Serbo-Croatian, but in English it got a pompous title "The Day that shook the world". Yet, it failed to impress Western viewers. *The New York Times* was rather clear in its verdict. The title of the review was self-explanatory: "A Quaint Film."¹¹²

The new approach in perceiving Princip was partially challenged by the rise of Arab terrorism in the 1970s, when "Black September" conducted a series of bomb attacks and hijackings. Communist Yugoslavia broke off diplomatic relations with Israel in 1967, and supported the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. For this reason the celebration of the 60th anniversary happened in less than favourable circumstances for creating a new image of Princip, who had in previous decades been seen as a terrorist and fanatic by some influential parts of the Western public. All of this found some resonance in a text published by *The New York Times*. The correspondent was probably well aware of Yugoslav-Palestinian links,¹¹³ and therefore he was interested in the official views of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia regarding the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and the celebrations of an act of individual terror by Princip. A Yugoslav official, Vice President of the communist provincial government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr. Marko Šunić, was obviously prepared for this kind of question, and his answers were ambiguous but sympathetic to Princip.¹¹⁴

¹¹² A. H. Weiler, "Atentat u Sarajevu (1975) 'The Day That Shook the World' A Quaint Film", *The New York Times*, January 24, 1977.

¹¹³ Communist Yugoslavia had certain contacts with the Palestinian terrorist group of Abu Nidal which the State Department did not fail to notice. Through WikiLeaks we now know of the assessment of the US State Secretary George P. Shultz of December 1985: "Some countries such as Yugoslavia have been more permissive than others in allowing Abu Nidal members freedom of movement, apparently hoping that this will buy them a modicum of immunity from terrorist acts" (Cable 85STATE371963, "Abu Nidal terrorist organization", December 6, 1985). One should also add that *The New York Times* reported in 1989 that the centres of Abu Nidal's major commercial company were in Warsaw and East Berlin, with branches in eight countries including Yugoslavia. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Abu Nidal is reportedly placed under house arrest by Libyans", *The New York Times*, November 28, 1989.

¹¹⁴ "Revolutionary movements do not condone individual acts of terrorism. Terrorism is the last resort of young people who are disillusioned and can achieve their ends in no other way... The League never approved such acts, although the idea of individual sacrifice for a cause cannot help but inspire admiration. Even today young people are inspired by Princip." Malcolm W. Browne, "Sarajevo hails Assassin but Debates Ethics of Deed", *The New York Times*, March 30, 1974.

Re-evaluation of Princip in the 1980s and 1990s

The Winter Olympics were held in Sarajevo in the year of the 70th anniversary of the *attentat*. They naturally inspired American and other journalists to make historical retrospectives. A reporter of *The New York Times* from Olympic Sarajevo noticed: "No matter who the gold medallists are here, Sarajevo will continue to be known in history mostly for the 1914 assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria that triggered World War I." Having remarked that Princip is "revered here as a hero", Dave Anderson pointed out that shoeprints embedded in the concrete where Princip "the Serbian nationalist" had stood, became "a tourist attraction similar to the shoeprints of movie stars outside a Hollywood theater".¹¹⁵ In a rare article propagating winter tourism in Sarajevo, a New York Times reporter also described his visit to Sarajevo with an unavoidable reference to Princip. As Clifford May pointed out, the first stop in touring Sarajevo "was the Museum of Young Bosnia, situated on the corner where on June 28, 1914, a 19-year-old student and nationalist by the name of Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian and Hungarian crowns".¹¹⁶ In the 1980s Princip's image in *The New York Times* tended to be reduced to a tourist attraction.

An important event from the 1980s unfortunately failed to make an impression in scholarly circles. Thirty years after the genuine transcripts of the Sarajevo trial had been published in Serbo-Croat by Vojislav Bogićević, an English translation of this book appeared with a new preface.¹¹⁷ It received only incidental attention.¹¹⁸ By the second decade of the 21st century when the centenary revived interest in Princip this valuable publication was quite forgotten in the West.

In the 1990s the image of the Serbs suddenly became very unfavourable in the Western European and American press. The personal role of Slobodan Milošević, persecution of political opposition in Serbia, and his role in the Wars of the Yugoslav Succession (1991–1999) have all contributed to this new image. The peak of negative representations of Serbs was reached in 1993–1995, and during and immediately after the NATO intervention

¹¹⁵ Dave Anderson, "Sports of The Times; Snowflakes and Shoeprints", *The New York Times*, February 5, 1984.

¹¹⁶ Clifford D. May, "On and Off the Slopes at Sarajevo", *The New York Times*, November 27, 1988.

¹¹⁷ W. A. Dolph Owings, Elizabeth Pribic and Nikola Pribic, eds. and trans., *The Sarajevo Trial*, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill: Documentary Publications, 1984).

¹¹⁸ Mark Wheeler, "Review of The Sarajevo Trial", *The Slavonic and East European Review* 64 (Oct. 1986), 650–51.

against FR Yugoslavia in 1999. Under such circumstances the American and British media particularly targeted Serbian nationalism. For this reason any linking of Princip with Serbian nationalism of the 1990s meant his automatic ostracism, and the path for the re-emergence of his previously abandoned maniacal image was opened.

Additionally, his image was contested by two major non-Serbian ethnic groups in Bosnia. In 1997 a well-known New York Times reporter for ex-Yugoslavia Chris Hedges, graphically informed his readers about what young Serbs, Croats and Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina had learned about Princip:

‘A hero and a poet,’ says a textbook handed to high school students in the Serb-controlled region of this divided country.

An ‘assassin trained and instructed by the Serbs to commit this act of terrorism,’ says a text written for Croatian students.

‘A nationalist whose deed sparked anti-Serbian rioting that was only stopped by the police from all three ethnic groups,’ reads the Muslim version of the event.

When the Muslims, Croats and Serbs belonged to Yugoslavia under Communism, they were all exposed to the same set of history books. In them Princip was a hero.¹¹⁹

The domestic ethnification of Princip certainly had an impact on both British and American correspondents since Bosnian Serbs were almost always seen as “bad guys”. If Princip was primarily a Serb, then connecting him to contemporary “bad guys” would almost automatically follow. In the 1990s Princip clearly became a Serbian nationalist in the American media. In May 1995, an influential columnist of *The New York Times* Roger Cohen began his article written in Split by reference to “a Serbian nationalist named Gavrilo Princip”. At the end of the column he mentions “Mr. Princip” and his “latter-day followers battling for Serbian national rights in Bosnia”.¹²⁰ In this way an invisible bridge was erected between Princip and the Bosnian Serbs of 1992–1995. In some Western reviews an impression was created that there was an invisible but strong link connecting Gavrilo Princip and the Bosnian Serb army, and the Srebrenica massacre with the Sarajevo assassination. They are linked through Serbian nationalism.

There existed a false consensus in the 1990s about Princip’s identity. Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim national activists all agreed about this, and

¹¹⁹ Chris Hedges, “Sarajevo Journal; In Bosnia’s Schools, 3 Ways Never to Learn from History”, *The New York Times*, November 25, 1997.

¹²⁰ Roger Cohen, “The World: A Small Bite at the Bosnian Bullet”, *The New York Times*, May 28, 1995.

the Western press followed them. For them all, Princip was without reservation only a Serb. Indeed, he was born a Serb and was raised in an area that revered the Serbian epic tradition with poems dealing with the Battle of Kosovo. He himself knew the *Mountain Wreath* of Prince-Bishop Njegoš by heart.¹²¹ But, in the turbulent years following the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serbo-Croat rapprochement began, and this strongly influenced Princip's image. Therefore all those who Serbianised Princip deprived the historic Princip of his identity as he himself defined it in the time of the Sarajevo *attentat*. Asked by the presiding judge of the panel honourable Alois/Luigi von Curinaldi: "Of what opinion are you?", Princip replied: "I am a nationalist, a Yugoslav and I am for the unity of all Yugoslavs into any state form and that they are liberated from Austria."¹²² One should add that Princip belonged to the Serbo-Croat progressive organisation of secondary school pupils that had promoted the common Serbo-Croat identity since its inception in 1911. Cvetko Popović offered valuable details on this phenomenon: "For me 'Serbo-Croats' or progressives were a completely new 'nation', and I found out about them in Sarajevo only. They declared that they were neither Serbs or Croats but both. Up until the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) there were a few of them, merely a dozen members, more Serbs than Croats. We, both Serbs and Croats, attacked them as 'traitors' of their nation... In that group was also Gavrilo Princip."¹²³ From these quotes it clearly appears that since 1912 Princip had a wider identity than just a Serbian one; that he was convinced about the national unity of Serbs and Croats, and that he actually was attracted by a common Serbo-Croat and later by a wider Yugoslav identity.

The centenary celebrations and new dilemmas

On the eve of the centenary new interest in Princip emerged in the English-speaking world. In 2012 a book by a prominent Cambridge professor Christopher Clark (1960–) appeared in which Clark attempted to reveal

¹²¹ Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo*, 259–260.

¹²² Vojislav Bogičević, ed., *Sarajevski atentat. Izvorne stenografske biljeske sa glavne rasprave protiv Gavrila Principa i drugova održane u Sarajevu 1914 g.* (Sarajevo: Državni arhiv narodne Republike BiH, 1954), 62.

¹²³ Cvetko Dj. Popović, *Sarajevski Vidovdan 1914. Doživljaji i sećanja* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 2014) [1st ed.: Belgrade: Prosveta, 1969], 19. Cf. Drago Ljubibratić, "Gavrilo Princip", in Muharem Bazdulj, ed., *Mlada Bosna*, a thematic issue of the journal *Gradac*, no. 175–177 (2010), 139.

why and how Europe went to war in 1914.¹²⁴ The introductory chapter is entitled “Serbian ghosts”. Clark points out that there are no preserved documents on the plot since “virtually all those who took part were habituated to a milieu that was obsessed with secrecy.”¹²⁵ In spite of this correct observation, he could not resist the temptation of trying to make his own reconstruction of the event.

For him Princip, Čabrinović and Grabež “had little in the way of bad habits”, they were “rich in ideals but poor in experience”. Their focus was on the sufferings of the Serbs “for which they blamed everyone but the Serbs themselves”. Sacrifice was “almost an obsession” for them.¹²⁶ In Clark’s narrative, they became the part of a network headed by Dragutin Dimitrijević Apis, the leader of the Black Hand. He issued orders to Tankosić, and the latter to Milan Ciganović, also a Black Hand member. Finally, Ciganović was the “assassins’ handler”.¹²⁷ Therefore for Clark the assassination was the work of the Black Hand. The Sarajevo cell (Mehmedbašić, Cvetko Popović and Vasa Čubrilović) was a mere camouflage “to cover the tracks of the conspiracy” and connections with Belgrade.¹²⁸ Clark accepts the possibility that the Serbian Prime Minister Pašić knew of the conspiracy and that his informant was “probably” Ciganović, but he acknowledges that “this supposition rests on indirect evidence”. If this Ciganović-Pašić link is accepted, then it becomes possible to claim that Pašić “possessed detailed and timely knowledge of the conspiracy”.¹²⁹ Clark holds that “the fissures between the structure of civilian authority and military command substantially infiltrated by the Black Hand now ran all the way from the banks of the Drina to the ministerial quarter in Belgrade.”¹³⁰ In a fragile Serbian democracy “civilian decision-makers were on the defensive”. After more than three decades of involvement in Serbian politics, Pašić was “a product of its political culture: secretive, even furtive, cautious to the point of lassitude”. His attributes helped him to survive in turbulent Belgrade politics, but also made him “dangerously ill-adapted to the crisis that would engulf Serbia after the terrorists had accomplished their mission in Sarajevo”.¹³¹

¹²⁴ Christopher Clark, *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2012).

¹²⁵ Ibid. 47–48.

¹²⁶ Ibid. 50–51.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 53.

¹²⁸ Ibid. 56.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 58.

¹³¹ Ibid. 64.

In his book Clark serbianises Princip and the other conspirators and makes them clear Serbian nationalists. Albeit with reservations, he attributes to the Serbian government shared responsibility for the assassination. Later he modified his views. In an interview for Radio Free Europe, Clark clarified that he did not consider Serbia responsible “since she was not an accomplice in the Assassination”.¹³² He described the Sarajevo conspirators in his first English edition as “terrorists”.¹³³ After many objections from Belgrade, he softened his terminology in the German translation of his work.¹³⁴

Yet, for Clark, the Serbian government is by no means the only or even the main culprit. All key decision-makers during the July Crisis in Berlin, Vienna, Saint Petersburg, London, Paris and Belgrade headed unheedingly into war. As Clark forcefully concludes in his book they were “sleepwalkers, watchful but unseeing, haunted by dreams, yet blind to the reality of the horror they were about to bring into the world.” He insists that the outbreak of the war “is not an Agatha Christie’s drama at the end of which we will discover the culprit standing over a corpse in the conservatory with a smoking pistol. There is no smoking gun in this story; or, rather, there is one in the hands of every major character. Viewed in this light, the outbreak of the war was a tragedy not a crime.”¹³⁵ Therefore, in his final analysis, Clark leads us to the conclusion that all the governments involved in the July Crisis share responsibility for the outbreak of war.

¹³² “Kristofer Klark for RSE. ‘Srbi ne treba da se stide Gavrila Principa’. Intervju Draganu Štavljaninu” [Christopher Clark for RFE. ‘Serbs should not be ashamed of Gavrilo Princip’. Interview by Dragan Štavljanin], Radio Free Europe, June 24, 2014: <http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/kristofer-klark-za-rse-srbi-ne-treba-da-se-stide-gavrila-principa/25432649.html>

¹³³ It is important to note that the occasional references to Princip as a terrorist have also come from Russia. Dmitriy Rogozin, for many years Russian Ambassador to NATO, used Princip as a metaphor during the war in Georgia in 2008. He said that “the current position reminds me of the situation in Europe on the eve of World War One when due to a terrorist major world states came into mutual conflict”, and expressed his hope that Georgian president Saakashvili would not “enter history as a new Gavrilo Princip.” <http://www.newsru.com/russia/26aug2008/matritzareset.html> Cf. Editorial, “The Princip Precedent”, *The Guardian*, August 27, 2008.

¹³⁴ Christopher Clark clarified his revised opinion: “I still think that the organisation ‘Unification or Death’ was terrorist, but Gavrilo Princip was not a terrorist. Under this term one today assumes extremists in Iraq and Al Qaeda as a whole who do not restrain from killing women and children in trade centres and elsewhere. On the eve of World War One the word ‘terrorist’ had a different meaning and adherents of the ‘Young Bosnia’ called themselves terrorists.” “Kristofer Klark for RSE. ‘Srbi ne treba da se stide Gavrila Principa’”.

¹³⁵ Clark, *The Sleepwalkers*, 561.

The key work in English dedicated to Princip on the occasion of the centenary of the assassination was published in 2014. It was written by a former correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph* for ex-Yugoslavia, Tim Butcher (1967–). He covered events in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s. In 2012 he followed Princip's footsteps from his native village of Obljaj in remote South-Western Bosnia, to Sarajevo and Serbia, and back to Sarajevo. His book is a combination of travelogue, an evocation of journalist memoirs from 1990s, and a history of Gavrilo Princip. In a wind shelter on Mount Šator he left a note defining his mission: "British author in search of Princip's ghost".¹³⁶ On his way he is followed by his guide Arnie, a Bosnian Muslim who as a boy survived horrors of war and continued to live in Britain. Contemplating Arnie's fate Butcher wonders who Princip really was. "Did he belong to the few identified by Arnie who exploited nationalism for their own ends, or did he withstand the toxicity and work for something higher?"¹³⁷ He had a similar conversation with Džile who survived the Srebrenica massacre. He was undecided about Princip and asked him: "He was the Serbian guy who shot the Archduke in Sarajevo, right?... Well, if he had anything to do with the sort of Serbs who attacked Srebrenica, then I would say I had to hate him. But did he have anything to do with the guys who attacked Srebrenica?"¹³⁸

Endeavouring to answer all these questions and dilemmas, Butcher followed Rebecca West and Dedijer whose book "had been a foundation stone for researching my journey".¹³⁹ He is both a writer and a researcher. Therefore he sees Princip not only as a historical character, but also as a transformed and distorted historical symbol one century later. Writing very critically on Serbian nationalism from the 1990s, Butcher does not yield to the temptation to project this nationalism back onto the past. He tries to find the genuine Princip by removing from him interpretations laid over him by ideology and politics. At the end Butcher concludes: "He was a dreamer whose short life had exposed him to the same political streams that inspired so many others fighting for freedom from unelected, reactionary structures." Princip had "the dream of liberation", and this dream was shared by various peoples in the Balkans, by Irish nationalists, Russian revolutionaries of Tsarist era and peoples from other continents. Nationalism only later proved to be potentially toxic, but Princip, in Butcher's opinion, had a special ideal that failed. "His goal of south Slavs living together was

¹³⁶ Tim Butcher, *The Trigger. Hunting the Assassin who brought the World to War* (New York: Grove Press, 2014), 91.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 154.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 234.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* 123.

ultimately not strong enough to defeat chauvinism from within his own community.”¹⁴⁰

Butcher may be credited for making an important distinction. He separated contemporary Serbian nationalism from the nationalism of Young Bosnia and Princip that was Yugoslav in nature. In the 1990s all three nations in Bosnia, though for quite opposite reasons, agreed that Princip was a Serb and not a Yugoslav. Western journalists simply took over this idea. With Butcher’s book Princip is back where Dedijer’s superb research placed him. He is a Yugoslav nationalist aiming at the unification of Serbo-Croats and other Yugoslavs.

It was Butcher who was given the honour of publishing his text on the Sarajevo assassination fifty years after Dedijer’s on the centenary of the event. In it he made a parallel between the Chilcot Inquiry, which in Britain attempted to establish how Britain found itself involved in the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and an imagined similar commission that would investigate how the world went to war in 1914. The collapse of the Yugoslav dream created a narrative on Princip that views him through the filter of the events from 1990s such as Srebrenica: “History should rid itself of such filters and focus on the contemporary context when events happen. Chilcot 1914 would surely have found that Princip was not a Serbian nationalist at all but a Yugoslav nationalist, and that Vienna’s claim of Serbian involvement was but a fig leaf by Austro-Hungarian hawks to conceal their desire to invade a neighbouring country regarded as an irritant.”¹⁴¹

The Times, through Butcher’s piece, advocated the removal of filters of contemporary events in viewing the past, but *The New York Times* demonstrated that this is more than a little difficult. Two days before the centenary, the leading New York daily published a piece by John F. Burns. He noticed that Sarajevo had become “the scene of duelling efforts to define Princip’s legacy”. This legacy is viewed differently by three national communities. Serbs regard him “as a heroic fighter against Austro-Hungarian rule on behalf of Serbs first, but also, they say, on behalf of Croats and Muslims and thus as an early standard-bearer for the South Slav kingdom of Yugoslavia.” The issue is seen differently by the two other communities: “Among the largely Catholic Croats and some Bosnian Muslims, many of whom looked to the authorities in Vienna at the time of the assassination for protection against Balkan domination by the mainly Orthodox Serbs, it is more com-

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 296.

¹⁴¹ Tim Butcher, “Was the war to end all wars based on a lie? A Chilcot-style inquiry into the First World War would uncover spin and distortion that caused the death of millions”, *The Times*, June 28, 2014, 26.

mon to condemn Princip as an anarchist or terrorist, as the Sarajevo court did when it sentenced him to 20 years imprisonment.”

Burns could not fail to notice the alternative ways of marking the centenary. “Serb hard-liners have chosen to boycott events financed by the European Union in favor of their own ceremonies, complete with new statues and mosaics of Princip and speeches and banquets in his honor.” Fifty years after *The New York Times* had quoted his father its correspondent had a conversation with the famous Yugoslav film director Emir Kusturica who, for Burns, is “the driving force behind ceremonies honoring Princip” at Andrićgrad, a suburb of Višegrad. Burns reminds us that this town [Višegrad] was the place that “suffered some of the worst Serb atrocities, including mass rapes and incinerations of whole families locked into burning homes, in the first months of ethnic cleansing in eastern Bosnia in 1992.” Through this introduction the author unavoidably makes a parallel between the Princip of 1914 and the imagining of Princip in the 1990s, and therefore the words of Kusturica at the end of the article appear ominous. For Kusturica “political assassinations have been common drivers of history”, and therefore those Westerners “who condemn Princip but supported the hanging of Saddam Hussein or the mob killing of Muammar el-Qaddafi are hypocrites.”¹⁴²

In the period between the Sarajevo *attentat* and its centenary, Princip’s image in the Anglo-American public opinion was the subject of substantial fluctuations. From Princip’s original image of a fanatic and madman in pieces by Laffan, Seton-Watson and Joseph Barry, to an idealist and primitive rebel for R. West and V. Dedijer, he has remained an assassin which in English is not too different from being a simple murderer. In many articles, he is also referred to as a terrorist. He gets a more complicated role in Clark’s narrative. He remained an idealist, but was also a terrorist in the meaning of this word used at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁴³

¹⁴² John F. Burns, “In Sarajevo Divisions that drove an Assassin have only begun to heal”, *The New York Times*, June 28, 2014. The quotes are from the internet version of this article: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/27/world/europe/in-sarajevo-gavrilo-princip-set-off-world-war-i.html?_r=0.

¹⁴³ Clark later showed some sympathies for Princip. A leading Belgrade liberal weekly *Vreme* published on its cover a photo taken by Hitler’s personal photographer Heinrich Hoffman (1885–1957). The photo has immortalised the moment when the German Fuhrer, on April 20, 1941, received the commemorative plaque set up to Princip in Sarajevo in 1930 as a birthday gift. Reacting to this discovery made by Muharem Bazdulj, Clark gave an interview to *Vreme* (“Najbolja slika oba rata. Intervju – Kristofer Klark” [The best photo of both wars – An interview – Christopher Clark], *Vreme*, no. 1192, November 7, 2013) and said: “No, Princip and his company were not sleepwalkers. They were good guys and every mother could be proud of them. They were well-mannered,

At the end, Tim Butcher decoded him as a Yugoslav inclusive nationalist, similar to the one earlier elaborated by Dedijer. In terms of otherness, this meant that from being a radical other in early interpretations, he was regarded by R. West with implicit familiarity, and was upgraded to the level of full identification with him by Tim Butcher.

One is encouraged to quote two observations made by A. J. P. Taylor. Having read Dedijer's work *The Road to Sarajevo* he had a message for historians who had previously searched for conspiracies behind the Sarajevo Assassination: "Nine-tenths of what has been written about the Sarajevo assassination turns out to be unnecessary rubbish, vitiated by the determination to discover an elaborate conspiracy somewhere. Historians apparently find it difficult to believe that some men are prepared to die, without orders or reward, for their beliefs. So it was here. The simplest explanation proves to be the true one. This is often the case."¹⁴⁴ The other remark by Taylor is from 1956, when he drew attention to a very important aspect of the July Crisis: "We know what happened between 28 June and 4 August 1914 in more detail than we know of any other five weeks in history. Indeed, if we cannot understand these events and agree about them, we shall never understand or agree about anything."¹⁴⁵ As this paper may demonstrate, historians and journalists are still occasionally in search of conspiracies and the Sarajevo *attentat* has proved to be an attractive topic for such interpretations. It is for this reason that the second part of Taylor's observation is still a warning. Are historians indeed able to understand or agree about anything? About many things they certainly are. Yet, even a century after the Sarajevo Assassination/*attentat* they do not seem to be able to agree on Princip's role in the five weeks that preceded the fatal four weeks of the July Crisis.

UDC 929Gavrilo Princip
323.2(436:439.5)
316.652(410:73)

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they were not in the habit of getting drunk or running after prostitutes as students usually were. The good guys who were selflessly dedicated to their cause and became part of a tragedy." Since I had to translate both quotes from Christopher Clark's interviews back into English, some of his original wording has certainly been lost.

¹⁴⁴ Taylor, "The Great Assassination.

¹⁴⁵ Taylor, "The Outbreak of the First World War", 184.

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