

BULGARIAN-TURKISH RELATIONS IN THE SUMMER OF 1915

INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND

The year 1915 is characterized by the efforts of the two great alliances to make decisive breakthroughs in the Eastern theatres of war so as to assure victory. In February Britain and France began their assault on the Dardanelles. The action ended in the retreat of their troops from the Gallipoli peninsula in January 1916. In May the Germans succeeded in breaking through near Gorlice, initiating a general attack which led in August to the capture of Warsaw, Brest-Litowsk and Kovno.

Concurrent with these important military events, a fierce struggle was being carried on for the allegiance of the neutral states in Southeastern Europe. Special attention was paid to Bulgaria which (together with Rumania and Greece) each side hoped to attract by means of territorial concessions<sup>1</sup>. Despite some small territorial gains, Bulgaria had, together with Turkey, come out of the Balkan wars as the big loser. According to Viscount Grey "there were two powers, Bulgaria and Turkey, hungering for a revanche"<sup>2</sup>. For Bulgaria the issues at stake were Macedonia (the contested and uncontested zones), governed by Serbia; the Greek territories near Serres, Drama and Kavalla; the Dobrudža, which had been taken by Rumania; and that part of Turkish Thrace situated to the west of the Enos-Midya line<sup>3</sup>. There was a controversy — about means, not ends — between the liberal, pro-German coalition government of Radoslavov and the opposition parties leaning toward Russia, France and Britain. "Not against Russia" was the rallying cry of Malinov, a member of the Democratic party<sup>4</sup>; "with the Quadruple Alliance" the motto of Teodorov, a member of the National party<sup>5</sup>. The coalition government of the liberals and Czar Ferdinand decided to fight on the side of the Central powers. Their bias towards Germany and Austria-Hungary required above all an agreement with their former opponent in the Balkan wars, Turkey, to whom Thrace, together with Edirne

1. Basic Literature on Bulgaria's Entry Into the First World War see nos. 6-34.

2. Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916*, New York 1925, Vol. I, p. 254.

3. Radoslawoff (Radoslavov), Vasil, *Bulgarien und die Weltkrise*, Berlin 1923, p. 153.

4. Dunan, Marcel, *L'Été Bulgare, notes d'un témoin, Juillet-Octobre 1915*, Paris 1917, pp. 108ff.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

(Bulg. Odrin) and Kirk-Kilise (now Kirkklareli, Bulg. Lozengrad), had had to be returned in the peace of Istanbul of September 29, 1913. This paper is intended to present a preliminary survey of the history of diplomatic relations between Turkey and Bulgaria in this phase of the war, a theme hitherto not fully explored despite its obvious importance. Without an agreement between these two states, Bulgaria could hardly have entered the war on the side of the Central Powers. At the same time Turkey's rôle as an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary would have been threatened. The entire strategical and political development of World War I, from autumn 1915 onwards, was determined by Bulgaria's entry into the war.

### SOURCES AND LITERATURE

For an explanation of Bulgarian political aims and behavior during the First World War the most important source—now as before—is the published Bulgarian diplomatic documents<sup>6</sup>, although they present only a selection which takes no notice of economic aspects. A good supplement is the selected documents in the bill of impeachment against the former Radoslavov cabinet<sup>7</sup>. The memoirs of the prime Minister exhibit a strongly apologetic character<sup>8</sup>. More useful are the recollections of journalists like Dunan (Temps)<sup>9</sup> and von Mach (Kölnische Zeitung), who did temporary service in the Bulgarian army<sup>10</sup>. Not much more can be gleaned from the memoirs of the Bulgarian diplomatist posted first in London, then in the summer of 1915 in St. Petersburg, Madžarov<sup>11</sup>, from those of the Russian minister in Sofia, Savinskij<sup>12</sup>, or theoretically of supreme interest for our topic, from those of Cemal Paşa<sup>13</sup> and Talât Paşa<sup>14</sup>. Moreover the German, Austrian-Hungarian, Russian, French, and British published documents

6. *Diplomatičeski dokumenti po namesata na Bŭlgarija v Evropejskite vojna*, 2 Bde., Sofija 1920-1921.

7. Dŭrŭzavno Obvinitelstvo (Ed.), *Obvinitelen akt protiv bivšite ministri ot kabineta na D-r V. Radoslavov prez 1913-1918 godini*, Sofija 1921.

8. V. Radoslawoff (Radoslavov), *op. cit.*

9. M. Dunan, *op. cit.*

10. von Mach, Richard, *Aus bewegter Balkanzeit*, Berlin 1928.

11. Madžarov, M. IB., *Diplomatičeska Podgotovka na našite Vojni Spomeni*, Častni Pisma, Šifrovani Telegrami i Poveritelni Dokladi, Sofija 1932.

12. Savinsky (Savinskij), A.A., *Recollections of a Russian diplomat*, London 1927.

13. Djemal Pascha (Cemal Paşa), Ahmed, *Erinnerungen eines türkischen Staatsmannes*, Berlin 1922.

14. Talaat Pasha (Talât Paşa), "Posthumous memoirs", *Current History* XV (1921) 287-295.

should be taken into consideration. Besides numerous memoirs by politicians and soldiers, the writings of Carl Mühlmann, the German officer serving in the Dardanelles, are important<sup>15</sup>. They contain many details of a political and strategic nature.

Historiography hitherto has been based on these sources only in part; there are some results from research in German, Austro-Hungarian, British, and French archives. Still, we lack an interpretation of the results of previous research, in particular one based on Bulgarian archival material.

The essay on Turkish-Bulgarian relations in 1913-15 by Tuše Vlachov is based mainly on published sources (especially Bulgarian and Austro-Hungarian) and on newspapers<sup>16</sup>. His contribution limits itself to pre-war events. In his book about Bulgarian relations with the Central Powers<sup>17</sup> he evaluates the *Diplomatičeski dokumenti* and uses material from the *Voenno-istoričeski arhiv*, Sofia. But the study fails to consider other published sources (German, Austro-Hungarian, French, British, and Russian). The older essays by Arno Mehlan<sup>18</sup> and S.Š. Grinberg<sup>19</sup> take even less cognizance of the pertinent material.

The best work remains the study by James M. Potts<sup>20</sup>; he used not only the published Bulgarian sources, but also the Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian and British collections of documents. Although Potts scarcely utilized the secondary literature, his evaluation is more balanced than Gerard E. Silberstein's essay on Bulgarian policy in 1914-15<sup>21</sup>, which — like his book on the policy of the Central Powers<sup>22</sup> — is based on research in German and Austro-Hungarian archives. He restricted himself in dealing with Bulgarian sources to Radoslavov's autobiography. Germany's policy toward Bulgaria is described in Glenn E. Torrey's dissertation based on

15. Mühlmann, Carl, *Oberste Heeresleitung und Balkan im Weltkrieg 1914-1918*, Berlin 1942. Mühlmann, Carl, *Das deutsch-türkische Waffenbündnis im Weltkriege*, Leipzig 1940.

16. Vlachov, Tuše, "Tursko-bŭlgarskite otnošenija prez 1913-1915 g.," *Istoričeski Pregled* 11 (1955) 3-31.

17. Vlachov, Tuše, *Otnošenijata meždu Bŭlgarija i Centralnite sili po vreme na vojnite 1912-1918 g.*, Sofija 1957.

18. Mehlan, Arno, "Das deutsch-bulgarische Weltkriegsbündnis", *Historische Vierteljahresschrift* 30 (1935) 771-805.

19. S. Š. Grinberg, "Pervaja mirovaja vojna i bolgarskij narod", *Istoričeskie zapiski* 21 (1947) 202-221.

20. Potts, James M., "The loss of Bulgaria", in Dallin, Alexander (and others), *Russian diplomacy and Eastern Europe 1914-1917*, New York 1963, pp. 194-234.

21. Silberstein, Gerard E., "The Serbian campaign of 1915: Its diplomatic background", *American Historical Review* LXXIII (1967) 51-69.

22. Silberstein, Gerard E., *The troubled alliance, German-Austrian relations 1914 to 1917* Lexington 1970.

German archives (Auswärtiges Amt) and on extensive study of the secondary literature<sup>23</sup>. Brigitte Stiefler attempts something similar in her Vienna dissertation; she, however, lacks a thorough knowledge of the literature and tries to explain Bulgarian policy only on the basis of Austro-Hungarian sources—an undertaking doomed to failure from the outset<sup>24</sup>. Much the same can be said about Rudolf Kiszling's essay on Rumanian and Bulgarian policy, which uses only selected Austro-Hungarian sources<sup>25</sup>. Keith Robbins used unpublished British documents (e.g. the Asquith papers) for his study of British policy toward Bulgarian—a wise limitation of the subject<sup>26</sup>. Simeon Damjanov described the French policy toward Bulgaria using the archives of the Quai d'Orsay<sup>27</sup>. Niko Nikov worked on the single question of matériel transport, obtaining new results by research in Bulgarian archives<sup>28</sup>.

All these studies have only a peripheral connection with our topic, namely, Bulgaro-Turkish relations. Nor do Ulrich Trumpener<sup>29</sup> and Frank G. Weber<sup>30</sup> deal directly with this question in their studies of Turkish policies. With the exception of Dörte Löding's Hamburg dissertation (using German sources)<sup>31</sup> and Damjanov's research in Bulgarian and French archives<sup>32</sup>, economic factors are either treated in isolation<sup>33</sup> or are introduced only in

23. Torrey, Glenn E., *German diplomacy in Southeastern Europe 1914-1915*. Phil. Dissertation, University of Oregon 1960.

24. Stiefler, Brigitte, *Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Bulgarien von 1915-1918*. Phil. Dissertation, Wien 1970.

25. Kiszling, Rudolf, "Rumäniens und Bulgariens Politik bei Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkrieges", *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 11 (1967) 9-19.

26. Robbins, Keith, "British diplomacy and Bulgaria 1914-1915", *Slavonic and East European Review* 117 (1971) 560-585.

27. Damjanov (Damjanov), Simeon, "Les efforts de la France pour gagner la Bulgarie à la cause des puissances de l'Entente dans la Première Guerre Mondiale", *Études Historiques* V (1970) 461-488.

28. Nikov, Niko, "Transitът на avstro-germansko oružie za Bŭlgarija i Turcija v načaloto na pŭrvata svetovna vojna", *Bŭlgarsko-Germanski otnošenija i vrŭзки, izsledvanija i materialii*, tom 1, Sofija 1972, pp. 167-243.

29. Trumpener, Ulrich, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire 1914-1918*, Princeton 1968.

30. Weber, Frank G., *Eagles on the Crescent, Germany, Austria, and the diplomacy of the Turkish alliance 1914-1918*, Ithaca/London 1970.

31. Löding, Dörte, *Deutschland und Österreich-Ungarns Balkanpolitik von 1912-1914 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Wirtschaftsinteressen*. Phil. Dissertation, Hamburg 1969.

32. Damjanov, Simeon, "Frŭnskite voenni dostavki v Bŭlgarija v kraja na XIX i načaloto na XX v.", *Izvestija na instituta za istorija* 18 (1967) 5-51, ders.: "Les efforts de la France", *op. cit.*

33. Flaningam, M. L., "German Economic Controls in Bulgaria: 1894-1914", *The Amer-*

the service of Marxist polemic of the naïvest political variety<sup>34</sup>. Thus the study of this problem can rightly be characterized as a whole field awaiting interdisciplinary research.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS

As the first negotiations on frontier adjustments took place in Istanbul on July 8, 1915 (all dates in new style) between the representative of the Turkish government, Halil Bey, and the Bulgarian Minister Plenipotentiary, Kolušev, together with Colonel Žekov, the struggle of the superpowers concerning Bulgaria's entry into the war had entered the decisive stage.

On May 29 Britain, France, Russia and Italy had promised to grant Bulgaria both the territory of Eastern Thrace as far as the Enos-Midya line, and a postwar realignment concerning Macedonia, provided Bulgaria agreed to attack Turkey at once<sup>35</sup>. Bulgaria's reply had been evasive.

Kolušev had already started a series of unofficial talks in May, in the course of which he had confirmed Turkey's readiness to cede certain areas. On this occasion the Grand Vizier's reaction to the Bulgarian demand that Turkey cede land as far as the Enos-Midya line had been very agitated<sup>36</sup>. In Kolušev's report on June 7, 1915 to the Bulgarian Prime Minister Radoslavov (who was also Foreign Minister), we can find the fundamental problems which would be the subject of any further negotiations: Turkey, citing the treaty signed by Talât Bey and Radoslavov on August 19, 1914 which promised arms aid in case of an attack by the Balkan states, no longer demanded that Bulgaria should end its neutrality<sup>37</sup>. In principle, Turkey was prepared to accept changes of frontiers. For any such cession of land, Turkey

*ican Slavonic and East European Review* 20 (1961) 99-108.

Meyer, Henry Cord, "German Economic Relations with Southeastern Europe, 1870-1914", *The American Historical Review* 57 (1951/52) 77-90.

34. Müller, Karl-Heinz, "Die Unterwerfung Bulgariens unter den deutschen Imperialismus am Vorabend des ersten Weltkriegs", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte der UdSSR und der volksdemokratischen Länder Europas* 4 (1960) 265-292.

Kumpf-Korfes, Sigrid, "Die ökonomische Expansion des deutschen Finanzkapitals in Bulgarien von Ende des 19. Jh. bis zum Ausbruch des ersten Weltkriegs", *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 17 (1969) 1427-1441.

35. J. M. Potts, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

36. "Pregovorite s Turcija prez 1915 god. no. 3", *Diplomatičeski dokumenti po namesata na Bŭlgarija v Evropejskite vojna*, Vol. I, Sofija 1925.

Here we can find documents on Bulgarian-Turkish relations on pp. 701-751, nos. 1-72.

Hereafter cited as DD and the number of the document.

37. Dŭržavno Obvinitelstvo (Ed.), *Obvinitelen akt*, *op. cit.*, p. 603f.

claimed some kind of compensation from Bulgaria. The Turkish Council of Ministers had meanwhile been dealing with this problem. The Council had declined to cede Edirne to Bulgaria, but had on principle agreed to cessions along the river Meriç (Bulg. Marica, Gr. Evros)<sup>38</sup>. At this time, Kolušev still maintained that the Enos-Midya line should form the boundary. The German ambassador in Istanbul, Baron von Wangenheim, however, pointed out that the Turks had done their utmost in offering the Meriç line. Kolušev advised his government to take advantage of Turkey's difficult military situation and to insist on their claims being granted in full without giving up Bulgarian neutrality.

On June 12, 1915, Radoslavov gave the envoys in Istanbul the order to start official negotiations with the Porte. These should be based on the requirement for Enos-Midya as the future frontier in return for Bulgarian neutrality. An alliance should by no means be mentioned<sup>39</sup>. One day later, Kolušev presented the requirements of his government to Said Halim Paşa. The Grand Vizier replied that the Turkish government had decided not to negotiate about Enos-Midya. Talks about the Meriç border could only be continued by including the question of an offensive-defensive alliance<sup>40</sup>. Bulgarian inflexibility led to an interruption of the discussions. On June 17, however, Radoslavov informed the Austrian Minister Plenipotentiary in Sofia, Tarnowski, that the claim for Enos-Midya would be a "necessary Manoeuvre" as regards Turkey and Bulgarian public opinion<sup>41</sup>. In his next talk with Said Halim Paşa on June 26, Kolušev no longer insisted on his former claim. He pointed out that there were certain powerful groups in Bulgaria opposing a Bulgarian-Turkish agreement. In his reply the Grand Vizier showed a greater preparedness for concessions. Everything would be easier to solve, if only Bulgaria were prepared to an offensive-defensive alliance<sup>42</sup>.

In the conferences of the Turkish Council of Ministers on June 28 and 29, Halil Bey rebelled against the readiness of the Grand Vizier to cede the right bank of the Meriç. He, Talât and Enver were not willing to make concessions. They demanded instead that an attack be launched against Serbia from Germany and Austria-Hungary. If German troops stood along the Bulgarian frontier, they calculated, Bulgaria would no longer be in a position to make any claims<sup>43</sup>. In spite of this, Halil Bey on June 29 explained to

38. DD no. 8.

39. DD no. 11.

40. DD no. 12.

41. Cited by B. Stiefler, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-71.

42. DD no. 13.

43. DD no. 15.

von Wangenheim that if Bulgaria should join with the Central Powers, they would be ready to cede to Bulgaria the railway line to Dede-Ağaç, (i.e. the right bank of the Meriç) provided Germany would pay for the construction of a new railway line to Edirne<sup>44</sup>. The Aegean port of Dede-Ağaç had a direct railway connection with the Bulgarian network, which, however, led across Kara-Ağaç, the suburban station of Edirne, and thus over Turkish territory<sup>45</sup>. Already on the occasion of the Bulgarian-German loan negotiations in the early summer of 1914, the question of a direct railway connection between the hinterland and an Aegean port had played an important rôle. In the contracts with the Berliner Disconto Gesellschaft dated July 12, 1914, a part of the 500 million franc loan had been earmarked for the expansion of the port of Porto Lagos and for a railway connecting Chaskovo with Porto Lagos. Although in 1914 only 571 ships put into Porto Lagos and Dede-Ağaç (Gr. Alexandroupolis) (in comparison with 10,061 vessels putting into Bulgarian Black Sea ports)<sup>46</sup>, still the increasing sea-trade in turn greatly increased the interest in an Aegean port in 1914. As military events had prevented the development of Porto Lagos project, Bulgarian policy concentrated on the acquisition of the direct railway connection with the port of Dede-Ağaç. The railway station of Edirne, Kara-Ağaç, was for this reason an important topic of negotiation.

Besides Kolušev and Colonel Žekov on the Bulgarian side, and Halil Bey, Talât Bey, Enver Paşa and Said Halim Paşa on the Turkish side, the ambassadors of Germany and Austria-Hungary, von Wangenheim and Palavicini, took part in the informal discussions in 1915. Germany was especially interested in reaching an agreement. The German chief of general staff, von Falkenhayn, telegraphed to Enver in the beginning of July "to do everything within your power to bring about an agreement with Bulgaria as soon as possible". And in view of ceding territory he said: "The victor will dictate how the world will appear in the future"<sup>47</sup>. In his answer, dated July 5, Enver offered the Meriç border under the condition that Bulgaria enter the war<sup>48</sup>.

In the first official negotiations on July 8 Halil Bey offered to the Bulgarian representatives, Kolušev and Žekov, the right bank of the Meriç,

44. G. E. Torrey, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

45. K.-H. Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 278. See also D. Löding, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-131.

46. Rosenbaum, Max, "Streifzüge durch Bulgariens Wirtschaftsleben", *Die Zentralmächte und Bulgarien. Beilage der "Bulgarischen Handelszeitung"*, Sofija 1915, p. 114.

47. Cited by Torrey, Glenn E., *German diplomacy, op. cit.*, p. 250. Silberstein, Gerard E., *The troubled alliance. German-Austrian relations 1914 to 1917*, Lexington 1970, p. 122.

48. Silberstein, Gerard E., *Troubled alliance, op. cit.*, p. 122.

excluding the ring of forts round Edirne; in return he expected a treaty of alliance with Turkey and Germany, the participation of Bulgaria in the war, and a transit permit for ammunition and equipment from Germany. The Bulgarians considered the extent of the areas too small, but they indicated their readiness to solve the transit problem. Kolušev suggested to his Prime Minister that he should renounce Edirne, but instead demand Kirk-Kilise and, furthermore, initiate negotiations in Berlin concerning an alliance with Germany<sup>49</sup>. On July 10 Radoslavov agreed to the claiming of the areas which Kolušev had proposed, but only in exchange for a Bulgarian neutrality and a regulation concerning the transit of matériel. He did not want to have the question of the entry into war negotiated<sup>50</sup>. The areas required by the Bulgarians had already been conquered by them once during the Balkan wars. Their claims, however, could not be justified by the nationality of the population: In 1910 about 159,000 people were living in the sancak of Kirk-Kilise, 53,000 of them Turks and 28,500 Bulgarians. In the sancak of Edirne, out of 287,000 inhabitants, 128,000 were or Turkish and 31,500 of Bulgarian nationality<sup>51</sup>. At the beginning of the century Edirne itself had nearly 90,000 inhabitants, of which 47,000 were Turks and only 2,000 were Bulgarians<sup>52</sup>.

On July 13 Halil Bey declined to consider any territorial concessions without promises of an alliance<sup>53</sup>. Von Wangenheim supported the attitude of the Turks, but drew Kolušev's attention to the possibility of Germany changing its position if Bulgaria entered into the war<sup>54</sup>. The negotiations began to stagnate. The German government let Radoslavov know that it disapproved of the aggressive Bulgarian claims<sup>55</sup>.

On July 18 Prince Hohenlohe, who was en route to Istanbul in order to represent the ailing Wangenheim, endeavoured to act as a mediator in Sofia. Radoslavov, however, only agreed to send a Bulgarian officer to Germany. He declined to make a final decision concerning his country's entry into war. Hohenlohe did not succeed in furthering the Bulgarian-Turkish negotiations<sup>56</sup>. In the middle of July, rumours circulated about new landings

49. DD no. 19.

50. DD no. 20.

51. Pentzopoulos, Dimitri, *The Balkan exchange of minorities and its impact upon Greece*, Paris/The Hague 1952, p. 31.

52. Gökbilgin, M. Tayyib, "Edirne" in Lewis, Bernhard, Ch. Pellat and J. Schacht (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, Vol. II, Leiden/London 1965, pp. 683-686.

53. DD no. 21.

54. DD no. 22.

55. DD no. 29.

56. Pešev, Petr, "Dnevnik. p. 472", in Düržavno Obvinitelsto (Ed.), *Obvinitelen akt*, op. cit., pp. 443-518. von Mach, Richard, op. cit. pp. 226f. DD no. 30.



of English troops on the Gallipoli peninsula<sup>57</sup>. The Turks, due to their lack of ammunition, were compelled to show a greater preparedness for concessions. Halil Bey indicated that they would cede territories in return for benevolent neutrality, which meant cooperation in the transit question<sup>58</sup>. The Secretary of State in the German foreign ministry, von Jagow, had already instructed von Wangenheim to this end of July 1. Jagow had even proposed to supply Turkey from Bulgarian stocks<sup>59</sup>. On October 2, 1914, Rumania had blocked the transit of arms and matériel destined for Turkey<sup>60, 61</sup>. Serbian artillery prevented its transportation down the Danube<sup>62</sup>. Thus the "Balkanstraße", the connection of Central Europe with the Near East, was closed. Russia, on the other hand, was able to obtain some supplies via Greece, Serbia, and the Danube<sup>63</sup>. In autumn 1915 600 to 700 waggons were on the Hungarian-Rumanian frontier, waiting for transit permits to Istanbul<sup>64</sup>. With the beginning of the Anglo-French landing operations at the Dardanelles on April 25, 1915 the question of ammunition became urgent<sup>65</sup>. An Austrian-German campaign against Serbia failed in March due to the attitude of Bulgaria and Austria's wish to start a major offensive against Russia<sup>66</sup>. Serbia declined a special peace with Germany and Austria-Hungary in May<sup>67</sup>. Moreover, the production of artillery projectiles, which had started in Makriköy near Istanbul in June, did not improve the situation<sup>68</sup>, although von Wangenheim exaggerated when he reported on June 9 that a defeat in the Dardanelles could come about within a month<sup>69</sup> (this report was corrected by the Austrian military attaché, Pomiankowski<sup>70</sup>). Still, the

57. Mühlmann, Carl, *Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915*, (=Schlachten des Weltkrieges vol. 15) Oldenburg/Berlin 1927, p. 141.

58. Pallavicini an Burian, *Yeniköy* 19.7.1915, cited by Stiefler, Brigitte, *Österreich-Ungarn und Bulgarien*, op. cit., pp. 63ff.

59. Torrey, Glenn E., *German diplomacy*, op. cit., p. 249.

60. Trumpener, Ulrich, "German military aid to Turkey in 1914: A historical re-evaluation", *Journal of Modern History* 32 (1960) 149.

61. Basic literature on the transport question see appendix.

62. C. Mühlmann, op. cit., p. 102.

63. Gardos, Harald, "Die 'Balkanstraße' im Kriegsjahr 1915", *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 22 (1969) 286. Mühlmann, Carl, *OHL und Balkan*, op. cit., p. 102.

64. Wrisberg, Ernst von, *Wehr und Waffen 1914-1918*, Leipzig 1922, Vol. 3, part II, "Die Unterstützung unserer Verbündeten durch das Kriegsministerium", p. 182.

65. Pomiankowski, Joseph, *Der Zusammenbruch des Osmanischen Reiches*, Wien 1928, p. 128.

66. Mühlmann, Carl, *OHL und Balkan*, op. cit., p. 92.

67. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

68. Pomiankowski, Joseph, *Zusammenbruch*, op. cit., p. 132.

69. Mühlmann, Carl, *OHL und Balkan*, op. cit., p. 116.

70. Pomiankowski, Joseph, *Zusammenbruch*, op. cit., p. 132.

commander of the Fifth Turkish army at the straits, Marshal Liman von Sanders, also reported a lack of ammunition<sup>71</sup>. Turkey was waiting for an attack against Serbia, which would open the "Balkanstraße" again and thus open the way for supplies.

In this situation the Austrians supported the Bulgarian claims for Kirk-Kilise. But Germany strengthened Turkey in its reluctance to yield. When even the Bulgarian negotiator at the German headquarters at Pleb, Lieutenant Colonel Gančev, demanded an intervention regarding Kirk-Kilise by the German chief of general staff, von Falkenhayn refused the request and on August 3 occasioned, through Reichskanzler Bethmann-Hollweg, a *démarche* by Prince Hohenlohe with Czar Ferdinand<sup>72</sup>. The Bulgarian envoys in Istanbul (from July 27 there were now three including Točkov) insisted on their claims, however. Time and again Kolušev emphasized to Radoslavov the need for a rigid attitude, even at the price of an interruption of the negotiations<sup>73</sup>. At the end of July a confidant of Radoslavov's, the merchant Tjufekčiev, who exported textiles on a large scale to Turkey, undertook talks parallel to these stagnating official contacts. After the war Radoslavov and the minister of finance, Tončev, were accused of having granted an illegal export permit for 31 waggons of cloth in August 1915<sup>74</sup>. The published sources do not give exact information about the details of the Tjufekčiev talks. On August 2 he left Istanbul<sup>75</sup>. The official delegates tried in vain to pursue their demands. They only found Turkey steadfast in refusal. It is true that the Turkish government was not far from giving in<sup>76</sup>, but the support of Germany's representatives, Prince Hohenlohe and Fieldmarshal von der Goltz<sup>77</sup>, and also news of a contrary nature from Sofia might have been reasons for their refusal to yield. At the beginning of August Tarnowski had telegraphed Pallavicini from Sofia that the Bulgarian government no longer insisted on getting Kirk-Kilise<sup>78</sup>, information which was also known and made use of by Hohenlohe<sup>79</sup>. But on August 5 Radoslavov instructed his delegates to insist on getting both banks of the Meriç, including Kara-Ağaç and

71. Liman von Sanders, (Otto), *Fünf Jahre Türkei*, Berlin 1919, p. 99. Mühlmann, Carl, *OHL und Balkan*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

72. Torrey, Glenn E., *German diplomacy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 257f.

73. DD no. 41.

74. Düržavno Obvinitelstvo (Ed.), *Obvinitelen akt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 321-323, 821-823.

75. DD no. 40.

76. DD no. 56.

77. DD no. 43. von der Goltz, Colmar Frhr., *Denkwürdigkeiten* (edited by von der Goltz, Friedrich Frhr. and Wolfgang Förster), Berlin 1929, p. 415.

78. DD no. 42.

79. DD nos. 42-43.

Kirk-Kilise<sup>80</sup>. He ordered that Točkov should return to Sofia if the Turks were unyielding<sup>81</sup>. Now, besides the German government, Austria's foreign minister Burian was demanding that Bulgaria should give in on the Kirk-Kilise question<sup>82</sup>. But Pallavicini once more changed his view on August 8 and asked Said Halim Paşa for concessions<sup>83</sup>. Later the Austrian ambassador told Kolušev that the Germans were responsible for Turkey's refusal<sup>84</sup>. On August 9 the Turkish armed forces gained an important victory near Anaforta in the Dardanelles<sup>85</sup>. On the same day Halil Bey confirmed to Kolušev the Turkish government's final refusal of Bulgaria's claim to Kirk-Kilise<sup>86</sup>, whereupon the Bulgarian envoy declared the talks had broken down<sup>87</sup>. Radoslavov ordered Colonel Žekov to come to Sofia, and two days later he telegraphed for Točkov<sup>88</sup>. Kolušev reported on August 13 Turkey's dismay at the rupture of the talks. The Turkish government would try to negotiate in Athens about a treaty against possible Bulgarian attacks<sup>89</sup>. The Turkish-Bulgarian negotiations were continued, but not with the official delegates. It is again Tjufekčiev who arrived at Istanbul with Bulgarian proposals<sup>90</sup>. In correspondence between Enver and Radoslavov the last two open questions, Kara-Ağaç and Kirk-Kilise, were settled<sup>91</sup>. In order to exhaust all possibilities of negotiation, Enver asked von Falkenhayn on August 17 whether a campaign against Serbia would take place even after a failure of the talks with Bulgaria<sup>92</sup>. On August 22 he received Germany's negative reply<sup>93</sup>. At that time Lieutenant Colonel Gančev returned to the German Headquarters at Pleb: An agreement between Germany and Bulgaria was near. On July 28 credit negotiations had already been successfully concluded in Berlin<sup>94</sup>.

In the evening of August 22 Kolušev was told by Pallavicini that Bulgaria finally had given in on their demands for Kirk-Kilise. With the coope-

80. DD no. 45.

81. DD no. 44.

82. DD no. 46. Burian an Tarnowski, 3.8.1915, cited by Stiefler, Brigitte, *Österreich-Ungarn und Bulgarien*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44ff.

83. Pallavicini an Burian, *Yeniköy* 8.8.1915, cited *ibid.*, pp. 63ff.

84. DD no. 56.

85. Mühlmann, Carl, *Dardanellen 1915*, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

86. DD no. 49.

87. DD no. 48.

88. DD nos. 48, 51.

89. DD no. 55.

90. DD no. 57.

91. DD nos. 58-59.

92. Silberstein, Gerard E., *Troubled alliance*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

93. *Ibid.*

94. Torrey, Glenn E., *German diplomacy*, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

ration of the Germans a plan had been worked out<sup>95</sup>. But at the very last moment the Turkish government refused to renounce both banks of the Meriç. Tjufekčiev left Istanbul on August 26, urged by Enver to support a quick ratification of the agreements already reached<sup>96</sup>. On August 29 two officials of the Turkish foreign ministry, Ahmed Zemzi Bey and Zichni Bey, went to Sofia with a map of the new border<sup>97</sup>. They were followed by von Neurath from the German embassy<sup>98</sup>. Berlin urged an agreement. Michahelles, German Minister Plenipotentiary in Sofia, had presented a proposal for a German-Bulgarian treaty, which was expected to be successful<sup>99</sup>. During the last week of August, Duke Johann Albrecht von Mecklenburg and von Rosen from the German foreign ministry arrived in Sofia for further talks, which took place alongside the Turkish-Bulgarian negotiations<sup>100</sup>. The Bulgarian Council of Ministers was for the first time informed by Radoslavov that Turkish territorial concessions would be ceded only after a campaign against Serbia had been undertaken<sup>101</sup>. But it seemed that the whole project would be wrecked by the Turkish opposition to ceding both banks of the Meriç, until on September 2 prince Hohenlohe after talks with Enver, Talât and Halil, persuaded the Turks to give in<sup>102</sup>.

In Sofia on September 3 the Turkish-Bulgarian border agreement was signed by Prime Minister Radoslavov and the Turkish Minister Plenipotentiary Fethi Bey<sup>103</sup>. Bulgaria received Thrace west of Tundža and Meriç, a strip two kilometres wide, west and east of the river Meriç, excluding Edirne but including the railway station of Kara-Ağaç. By this agreement Bulgaria gained the direct railway line to the Aegean port of Dede-Ağaç. The contract was signed on September 6 in Sofia by Radoslavov and Fethi Bey. On the same day the German-Bulgarian treaty and the secret military convention concerning an attack against Serbia was signed.

The „Balkanstraße“ was open again after the successful Serbian cam-

95. DD no. 60.

96. DD no. 62.

97. DD no. 64.

98. DD no. 68.

99. Torrey, Glenn E., *German diplomacy*, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

100. von Mach, Richard, *Balkanzeit*, *op. cit.*, pp. 212, 228.

101. Pešev, Petr, „Dnevnik“, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

102. DD nos. 70-71.

103. DD no. 72. Pešev, Petr, „Dnevnik“, *op. cit.*, p. 477. Text see: Kesjakov, B., *Prinos kŭm diplomatičeskata istorija na Bŭlgarija 1878-1925*, Vol. I, Sofija 1925, (in particular: Konvencija po rektifikacijata na Bŭlgaro-Turskata granica. Tekst No. 29, pp. 74-76). Objasnitelni beležki. Priloženi kŭm tursko-bŭlgarskata konvencija ot 24. avgust 1915 (st.st.), p. 76.

paign. One of the most important Turkish aims during the negotiations was achieved. But the first transport of ammunition arrived only on November 15, 1915 at Uzunköprü<sup>104</sup>. The retreat of the British from the Dardanelles was already decided; during October the Salonica action had begun. In the Dardanelles a decision had already been effected before the supplies from Germany could reach to the straits<sup>105</sup>.

#### THE CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

Let us try to characterize this phase of the history of the First World War in its significance for the parties to the treaty:

I. Obviously the treaty could not satisfy the desires articulated by all Bulgarian nationalists (of whatever party or group). The Turkish cession of areas was too small to achieve this. Even if we can say that Istanbul — or as the Bulgarians would have it, Carigrad — was no longer part of their aspirations (altogether contrary to Russia's wish), we must consider that only the Enos-Midya line would have been enough to satisfy them. The ultimate goal, now as before, was a Greater Bulgaria with boundaries approximating to those of the cease-fire of San Stefano in 1878. Turkey neither ceded all parts of Thrace which Bulgaria had once occupied during the Balkan wars, nor had a revision of the Bucharest treaty of August 10, 1913 and the Peace of Istanbul of September 29, 1913 taken place. It was now, of course, possible to seek a realignment of western borders; indeed, this was intended by the Radoslavov government with regard to Serbian Macedonia and the Northern Greek territories. Nevertheless this agreement with Turkey meant a solution of problems, and indeed one already sought in 1914.

After the experiences of the Balkan wars Bulgaria was very much interested in good relations with Turkey, first of all for purely defensive purposes. By exploiting the difficult situation in which the Ottoman Empire found itself, Bulgaria made a territorial gain which

1. gave Bulgarian linguistic nationals Bulgarian citizenship,
2. gained control of the river Marica (with both banks, vital on military grounds), and
3. brought the railway line to Dede-Ağaç under Bulgarian control.

Especially the possession of the railway line can scarcely be over-estimated as an item of importance for the Radoslavov government. Bulgaria

104. Pomiankowski, Joseph, *Zusammenbruch*, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

105. Mühlmann, Carl, *Dardanelles 1915*, *op. cit.*, pp. 169ff.

had received access to the Aegean two years before, and already in 1914 the government's economic programme aimed at improving the harbor facilities in Porto Lagos and at constructing the railway line Chaskovo-Porto Lagos. This treaty connected the Aegean with the infrastructure in the hinterland; Burgas on the Black Sea was linked by a railway with Dede-Ağaç. Besides the gain in population, Sofia also achieved economic and strategic gains by means of these negotiations.

In addition, this agreement was part of a series of treaties with the Central Powers aimed at preparing for the event of war with Serbia.

As we saw, these advantages had been gained only through hard negotiation and exploitation of the military situation.

II. An improvement of this critically unfavorable military situation was the first and most urgent aim of the Turkish government. Consistently they had attempted to reach an agreement with Bulgaria. Here the limits of the possibilities quickly became evident. The government of the Young Turks owed their prestige in good measure to the recapture of Edirne in the Second Balkan War. Renouncing Edirne would have amounted to a catastrophic display of weakness. Accordingly Enver Paşa and his colleagues agreed only to smaller rectifications, this loss represented a grievous sacrifice for them; yet the Ottoman Empire was multinational and the creation of a Turkish national state (carried out after the war) was not intended in 1915. Surely Turkish war aims, influenced by Turanism, lay rather in the east; we find no clear intent to annex any of the lost areas in Southeastern Europe which were now independent national states. These areas were of no economic significance to Turkey. But renouncing both banks of the Meriç and the railway line to Edirne (Kara-Ağaç) constituted a strategic disadvantage. True, Bulgaria became for the moment an ally, but the accumulated ill-will made these concessions hard. In any event, for the duration of the war there had been won an ally who guaranteed the land connection to the *Deutsches Reich*, the main ally. Turkish ability to conduct war in 1915 depended on this, and the correspondence between Enver Paşa and von Falkenhayn shows that the border agreement was in their eyes the product of a momentary necessity which was to be open to the possibility of a later revision after the hoped-for victory.

III. The precise rôle of various individuals in this decision-making can — without additional research in archives (e.g., the papers of Czar Ferdinand, Radoslavov, Enver Paşa, and the Committee of Union and Progress) — only be presented in the most general terms:

The negotiations were both initiated and in their details subsequently determined by the political leaders of the two countries.

1. a) The chairman of the Council of Ministers and Bulgarian Foreign Minister Vasil Radoslavov decided the Bulgarian course of action. Published materials make no mention of Czar Ferdinand's participation: but without his consent no treaty would have been possible. The Bulgarian cabinet was not informed by Radoslavov before the end of August about the issue of entering into war in return for Turkish territorial concessions. This means that Bulgaria's highest executive organ (after the king), the Council of Ministers — in which the Prime Minister was but *par inter pares* — did not participate as a body in negotiations and could exercise its influence only through individual members. The Narodno Sŭbranie, the Bulgarian parliament, was not informed until it was called upon to give formal approval to a treaty already concluded.

b) Radoslavov served as chief of the Foreign Ministry during the diplomatic deliberations. The Minister Plenipotentiary Kolušev was later supported by Colonel Žekov and Točkov, who was a member of the Macedonian Committee in Sofia. All three of them reported to Radoslavov, although they did not always negotiate together in Istanbul. The rôle of Točkov, who surely as a Macedonian was willing to fight against Serbia, is not clear on the basis of available documentation. All three seem to have been acting as mere instruments who, whenever problems arose, turned to their Minister for further instructions. Kolušev often tried to offer his opinions to Radoslavov (especially in regard to methods of foot-dragging; cf. DD No. 41, 21.VII/3.VIII.1915), but the Prime- and Foreign-Minister ignored these suggestions.

c) Thus a confidant of Radoslavov's, the merchant Tjufekčiev, who was engaged in trade with Turkey, became crucially important in the last phase of negotiations. But precisely with regard to his negotiations the sources say very little. It is to be hoped that this phase —when informal contacts outweighed official negotiations— can be better explained as a result of further archival research.

d) Radoslavov's attempts to obtain German support for his own negotiations —e.g., through the Gančev talks in Pleb— failed, as we saw, totally.

2. Yet this aspect of the negotiations, namely, the cooperation of the allies, was of great importance for the Turkish leaders. And here arises a major problem for historical research:

a) Turkish policy was made by the leaders of the Young Turks, the Committee of Union and Progress. We do not know much about the organization and activities of this committee; our knowledge comes from individuals, on the basis of whose affiliations and general attitude some conclusions can

be drawn. The Minister of War, Enver Paşa, the Minister of the Interior, Talât Bey, and the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Halil Bey, were the Ottoman representatives. Halil Bey was the official negotiator, but as we can see from the sources, all three of them determined the course of negotiations together, with Enver wielding the most influence. Talât Bey, the deputy for Edirne, and also Halil Bey had both had previous experience in negotiating with Bulgaria; in 1913 they had conferred with General Savov and Žekov vainly concerning an alliance. Their political activities during the summer of 1915 were influenced by the pressure of events on the Gallipoli front, from the outcome of which depended not only the fate of the Ottoman Empire, but their own political future as well. And military success was not to be had without prompt and sufficient logistical support from Germany.

b) There was no institution — e.g., a diplomatic service — between the Ottoman leaders and the Bulgarian negotiators. Thus here the representatives of the allies could exercise a considerable influence, albeit one pushed in different directions by variations in personal approach.

Austria-Hungary was represented during the entire war by Ambassador Margrave Pallavicini. Germany's ambassador at the start of negotiations was Baron von Wangenheim, later succeeded by Prince Hohenlohe. Both German diplomatists received detailed instructions from Berlin on how to achieve Bulgarian entry into the war and a supplying of Turkey with weapons. Furthermore, the German Military Mission (not institutionally connected with the Foreign Service) also exercised a considerable influence. Particularly important was the part played by Generalfeldmarschall von der Goltz-Paşa, highly esteemed by the Turks. Since December 1914 he had been in Istanbul. In February 1915 he became advisor to the Turkish headquarters; he participated in the conferences of the General Staff and maintained an office in the War Ministry<sup>106</sup>. In April 1915 von der Goltz-Paşa became commander-in-chief of the First Turkish Army. It was he who supported the Turks in their intransigence with regard to territorial concessions.

Decisive importance can be assigned to the rôle of the correspondence which Enver Paşa carried on with von Falkenhayn. After their contacts and Hohenlohe's important conversation with Enver, Talât, and Halil on September 2, the Turks gave final approval to the signing.

c) How far Fethi Bey, the Turkish Minister in Bulgaria, who signed the

106. Wallach, Yehuda, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe. Die preußisch-deutsche Militärmission in der Türkei 1835-1919*, Düsseldorf 1976, p. 183 (=Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte, Tel Aviv).



treaty in Sofia (and who already in 1913, as a member of the Young Turk Committee of Union and Progress, had supported an agreement with Bulgaria) influenced the negotiations—perhaps in close contact with Radoslavov—, we do not know.

On all these points only archival research in Bulgaria and Turkey can be expected to supply further information.

Cöttingen

## APPENDIX

### *Basic literature on the transport of ammunition to Turkey during 1914 and 1915*

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- Weber, Frank G., *Eagles on the Crescent, Germany, Austria, and the diplomacy of the Turkish alliance 1914-1918*, Ithaca/London 1970 (in particular pp. 115-136).
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- Wrisberg, Ernst von, *Wehr und Waffen 1914-1918*, 3 vols, Leipzig 1922. Vol. 3, part II, "Die Unterstützung unsere Verbündeten durch das Kriegsministerium" (in particular pp. 171-187).