

"THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN OF 1878 AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
AS A PROBLEM IN EUROPEAN POLICY"
INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF SCHOLARS IN MAINZ, 11-15 OCTOBER, 1978

One hundred years after the Congress of Berlin (1878, June 13-July 13), historians from Europe and America were invited to discuss the decisions of the representatives of the six Great Powers (Russia, Great Britain, France, Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Italy), decisions which created a new map for the Balkan peninsula. This map proved a short time later to be impracticable (cf. the annexation of Eastern Rumelia by the Bulgarians in 1885). The consequences brought about by the Congress of Berlin for the Balkan peoples proved to be earth-shaking since it resulted in clashes between them, especially in Macedonia and in the well-known Balkan Wars, because of conflicting interests of Russia, England, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Today the general lines of the policy of the above mentioned European powers who signed the Treaty of Berlin are well-known (cf. the reprinting of the related documents: *Der Berliner Kongress 1878. Protokolle und Materialien*, herausgegeben von Imanuel Geiss, Boppard am Rhein, Harald Boldt Verlag 1978, pp. 460).

Nonetheless, many details, somewhat essential ones, which led to the definitive statement of the final decisions, still remain unknown since the diplomatic documents which are preserved unpublished in the archives of the various European states had not been studied. It had long been understood that the organization of a scholarly Congress of historians of the modern period would doubtless result in a wider study of circumstances which led to the Congress of Berlin of 1878, and would define more clearly the consequences of European policy on the unfolding of events in the Balkan lands. Such a Congress was successfully organized by the Institute of European History at Mainz at its own university in cooperation with the "Association Européenne d'Histoire Contemporaine".

This meeting can be considered as a continuation of the International Congress which took place in Sarajevo in 1975, in celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the revolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the beginning of the Eastern Crisis 1875-1878 (cf. *Balkan Studies* 16^a (1975) 229-232).

Moreover, at the meeting of Mainz, historians, coming as much from the Eastern as from the Western world, as well as the Balkans, declared their interest. I am not certain whether the time-space of one hundred years is sufficient for the historians of the same, or even from different countries, to judge the work of the diplomats of a country objectively. As at Sarajevo, so at Mainz, one could detect, albeit for only a few moments, a certain irrational tone and a characteristic emotionalism in the interpretation of events. The general effort, nonetheless, stayed within the boundaries of strict scholarly research. The discussions also were kept on a high level and contributed to a calm and friendly atmosphere.

The official opening of the meeting occurred on the morning of October 11 with a visit to an exhibition of *memorabilia* and printed material (books, pamphlets, diplomatic documents, photographs, et al.) relating to the Congress of Berlin of 1878, which was housed in the building of the Regional Parliament of Rhenish-Palatinate (cf. the detailed and informative description in the catalogue entitled, *Der Berliner Kongress 1878*, Berlin 1978, pp. 82). The exhibition was sponsored by the Foundation for the Cultural Heritage of Prussia in West Germany. Because of this presentation by the above mentioned foundation, comprised of Prussian emigrés from East Germany, it was assumed that they had participated in the organizing committee of the Congress. This was categorically denied by the director of the Institute Karl Otmar Freih. von Aretin who was the Chairman of this Committee.

Nonetheless, the delegation of Soviet historians in a telegram dated October 7, 1978, announced that it was withdrawing its participation in the Conference at Mainz after a "change" had been observed in the organizing Committee, in other words, because of the exhibition presented by the Prussian Foundation. This decision by the Soviets was also followed by the Poles, the East Germans, the Hungarians and the Bulgarians (cf. the related news story in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of October 12 and 13). Our colleagues from Romania and Yugoslavia stayed on and took part in the Congress.

After the official welcoming remarks a lecture was delivered by Dr. Lothar Gall, Professor of modern history at the University of Frankfurt a.M., on the topic "Die europäischen Mächte und der Balkan im 19. Jahrhundert". The papers presented at the Congress dealt with various facets on seven main topics. All the papers were photo-offset and had been distributed to the participants before the works of the Congress had started. Thus the material and the views of the historians who did not participate, as mentioned above, were available, but it was regrettable that their authors were not present at the conference to add a wider dimension to the discussions.

The first topic was "The Congress of Berlin—South-Eastern Europe in International Politics" with the following papers: Henryk Batowski (Cracow): "Die territorialen Bestimmungen von San Stefano und Berlin - ein Vergleich". ~ Konstantin Kossev (Sophia): "Die Orientpolitik Preussen-Deutschlands in den 60er und 70er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts und die Befreiung Bulgariens". ~ Fernand L'Huillier (Strassbourg): "Les rapports franco-allemands de la veille du Congrès de Berlin à son lendemain". ~ V. N. Vinogradov (Moscow): "Great Britain, Russia, and Historic Processes on the Balkans in 1875-1878". ~ Krumka Šarova (Sophia): "Die bulgarische Frage in der Politik Russlands und Englands 1856-1878". ~ Aleksej L. Naročnickij (Moscow): "Die russische Diplomatie und der Berliner Kongress". ~ Imanuel Geiss (Bremen): "Der Berliner Kongress - eine historische Retrospektive".

The second topic dealt with "The Eastern Question as a Problem of the Internal and External Politics of the European States", with the following papers: Andreas Hillgruber (Cologne): "Südosteuropa in Bismarcks Aussenpolitik 1875-1879". ~ Bruce Waller (Swansea): "Wirtschaft, Machtkampf und persönliche Rivalität in der Aussenpolitik Bismarcks vom Berliner Kongress bis zum Abschluss des Zweibundes". ~ Heinz Wolter (Leipzig): "Der innenpolitische Aspekt revolutionärer Gefahrenbeschwörung als Grundzug der Diplomatie Bismarcks in der Endphase der Orientkrise 1875-1878". ~ Richard T. Shannon (Norwich): "Gladstone and British Balkan Policy". ~ Ju. A. Pisarev/L. J. Naročnickaja (Moscow): "Die Orientkrise in der russischen öffentlichen Meinung". ~ Barbara Jelavich (Bloomington, Indiana): "Romania and the Congress of Berlin: Problems of Peacemaking". ~ Nikolae Fotino (Bucharest): "La reconnaissance de l'indépendance de la Roumanie et le Congrès de Berlin". ~ Roderic Davison (Washington D.C.): "The Ottoman Empire and the Congress of Berlin".

The third topic was devoted to "The Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Balkans" and consisted of the following three papers: Horst Haselsteiner (Vienna): "Zur Haltung der Donaumonarchie in der orientalischen Frage". ~ Istvan Diószegi (Budapest): "Die Anfänge der Ostpolitik von Andrassy". ~ Jean-Paul Bled (Strassbourg): "La question de Bosnie-Herzégovine et la fin de l'Ère libérale en Autriche".

The fourth topic dealt with "The Significance of the Eastern Question in the European Liberation Movement". The papers on this topic were: József Buszko (Cracow): "Die polnische Frage und die Orientkrise 1876-1878". ~ Marian Zgórnjak (Cracow): "Die polnische Emigration und ihre Stellung zum Balkanproblem nach 1864". ~ Jože Pirjevec-Pierazzi

(Trieste): "Die italienischen demokratischen Strömungen und ihre Beziehungen zu den Balkansklaven in der 2. Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts".

The fifth topic, "The Problems of Modernization in South-Eastern Europe: State and Society in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century", included the following three papers: Dimitrije Djordjevic (Santa Barbara, California): "The Role of the Military in the Balkans in the Nineteenth Century". ~ Hans-Jürgen Kornrumpf (Mainz): "Die Territorialverwaltung der europäischen Türkei 1864-1878. Die Reformen seit Midhat Pascha und ihre Ergebnisse". ~ Dan Berindei (Bucharest): "Die Modernisierung von Staat und Gesellschaft Rumäniens 1849-1877".

The sixth general topic presented "Social Change and National Movements in South-Eastern Europe", with the following papers: Kemal H. Karpat (Madison, Wisconsin): "The Social and Political Foundations of Nationalism in South East Europe 1878: A Reinterpretation". ~ Keith Hitchins (Urbana, Illinois): "International Aspects of the Rumanian National Movement in Hungary, 1867-1900". ~ Milorad Ekmečić (Sarajevo): "Serbian Policy in Bosnia and Hercegovina and Agrarian Revolutions, 1848-1878". ~ Fikret Adanir (Frankfurt/Main): "Zum Verhältnis von Agrarstruktur und nationaler Bewegung in Makedonien 1878-1908". ~ Manol Pandevski (Skopje): "Macédoine dans les décisions du Congrès de Berlin 1878". ~ Evangelos Kofos (Athens): "Hellenism and the Settlement of the Berlin Congress".

The seventh and final topic covered the "Economic Development and Industrialization of South East Europe" with the following papers: Emil Palotás (Budapest): "Die Rolle der wirtschaftlichen in der Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns". ~ Virginia Paskaleva (Sophia): "Anfänge des deutschen wirtschaftlichen Einflusses auf dem Balkan und in der Türkei in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts". ~ Peter Sugar (Seattle): "Railroad Construction and the Development of the Balkan Village in the Last Quarter of the 19th Century". ~ Danica Milić (Beograd): "Die ökonomische Penetration des Balkan und der Türkei durch die Industriestaaten".

The above listing of titles illustrates the variety of interests of the topics discussed at the Congress and the publication of the papers by the Institute for European Studies will be a very positive contribution to the literature on the History and Culture of that period. This same Institute, wishing to emphasize the dynamic personality of the first chancellor of United Germany Otto von Bismarck, the president of the Congress of Berlin in 1878, issued a special edition entitled *Bismarcks Aussenpolitik und der Berliner Kongress*, herausgegeben von Karl Otmar Freiherr von Aretin, Wiesbaden 1978, pp. 165, a very interesting work on the subject.