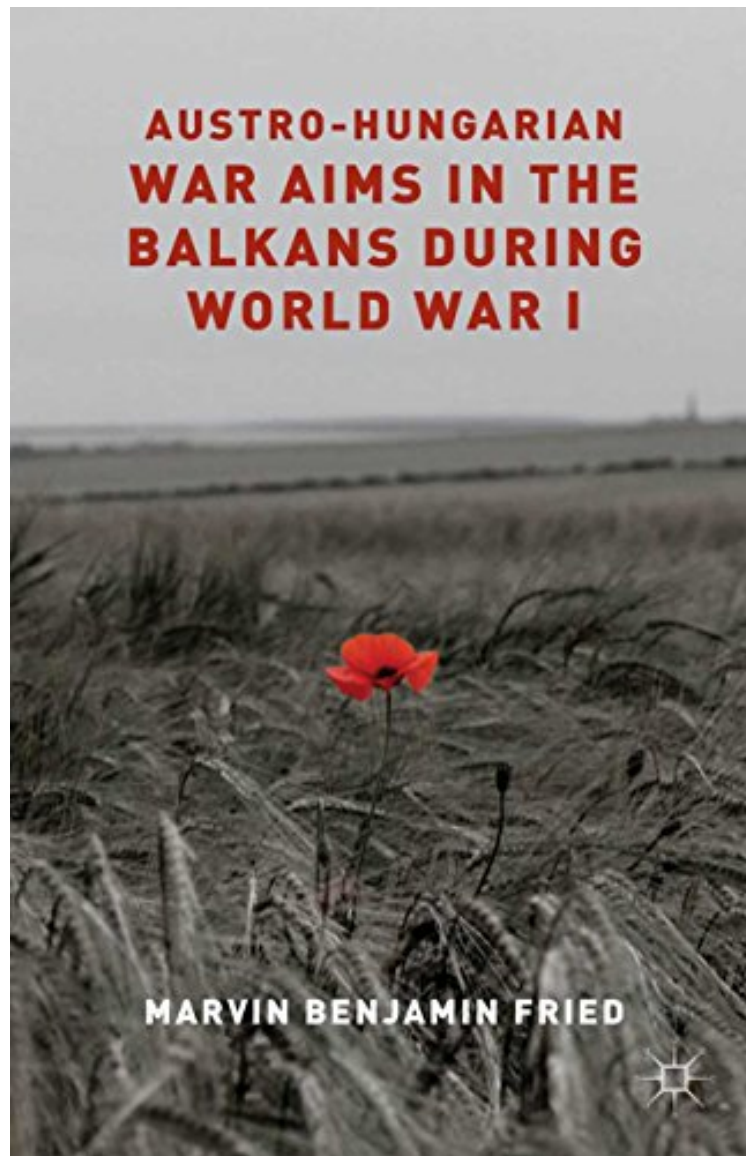


(Download) Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the Balkans during World War I

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Von M. Fried

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Von M. Fried : Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the Balkans during World War I before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the Balkans during World War I:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Timely book with excellent research Von History Reader Marvin Benjamin Fried's well researched book expands on three basic points: first, that Austro-Hungarian war aims were more offensive, expansionist and annexationist in the Balkans and

in Poland than previously thought; secondly, that the foreign ministry remained in overall control of the process of war aims formulation in opposition to the army's policies and contrary to the German example; and thirdly, that the war was prolonged due to Austria-Hungary's at times almost delusional insistence on its principal war aims. At the start of the war, according to Fried, Vienna simply wanted to defeat Serbia militarily and make her a tributary or dependent state. Yet as the war continued and as it became clear that it would not be a short one, more extensive war aims developed. Serbia, Vienna initially agreed, due to the influence of Tisza, the Hungarian premier, was neither to be annexed nor destroyed. Instead, she was to cede territory to Bulgaria, Albania and Greece but pay reparations to Austria-Hungary which would also receive some territory as "strategically important border corrections". Specifically, these included the north-western corner of Serbia called the Macva, the north-east of Serbia around Negotin, and Belgrade itself. It was also important that neither Bulgaria nor Germany should dominate the Western Balkans, which should be Austria-Hungary's exclusive sphere of influence. Tisza saw this as the most important war aim for the Monarchy. So, too, did the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister and Chair of the Joint Ministerial Council the Hungarian premier, who was willing to lose Galicia but not control of Serbia. The Austro-Hungarian Chief of the General Staff Conrad, on the other hand, saw victory on the Eastern Front and the defeat of Russia as the key to any general peace, although he did realise the economic importance of the Balkans to the Monarchy. His plan, after Serbia's defeat, would become one of annexing the rump of Serbia, once Bulgaria had been paid off with Macedonia, annexing Montenegro and dismembering Albania. Yet continued military defeats always deprived him of any real influence. In any case, the ultimate commander in chief of the armed forces - Kaiser Franz Joseph - tended only to discuss foreign policy with his foreign minister. Besides, Tisza had no intention of absorbing more Slavs into the Monarchy, an issue that Conrad simply dismissed or overlooked. The problem of what to do with Poland would also become a difficult one to resolve. Certainly, it had to be detached from Russia but what then? Tisza rejected any trialist solution meaning that if the Germans indeed allowed Poland to go to Austria-Hungary, it would have to be part of Cisleithania in some sort of sub-dualist structure. Clearly, there were huge potential gains from acquiring a territory as large as Poland, but these were never apparent to Hungarians. One of these, Burian, on becoming Hungarian Foreign Minister in 1915, displayed astonishing obduracy in face of military and civilian panic. He simply kept refusing any concessions to Italy, Romania or Bulgaria, despite the threat of Italian and Romanian intervention on the allied side. Once Serbia was defeated at the end of 1915 with German and Bulgarian help and the Russians had been defeated at Gorlice-Tarnow in the summer of 1915, however, Burian's position became close to Tisza's - rump Serbia would be dominated by Hungary which would populate it with Hungarian and German immigrant farmers but leave it nominally independent. The foreign ministry also wanted Albania to remain theoretically independent and neutral despite military occupation and Conrad's desire to annex or dismember the country. Burian, however, agreed that Montenegro should lose its coast, the Lovcen plateau, which threatened the Austro-Hungarian naval base at Cattaro, plus some northern territory to Austria-Hungary; she should also lose territory to Albania. With the need for German support against the Brusilov Offensive in 1916 and against Romania which now entered the war, Austria-Hungary's diplomatic room for manoeuvre became limited. She gained little from Romania's defeat while Bulgaria pressured her for concessions in occupied Serbia and the Germans set their sights on the Albanian port of Valona. Meanwhile, Congress Poland was given constitutional independence at the end of 1916 but with no agreement over who would control it. Burian kept pressing for Austrian parity with Germany in Poland; indeed, control of Poland, if possible, remained an Austrian war aim. Despite hunger becoming the most pressing issue for the Monarchy by 1917, and despite the accession of a new Emperor - Karl I - who soon sacked Conrad, Burian and even Tisza, it proved impossible to change Habsburg foreign policy in any way. In March 1917, a minimum programme was agreed with Germany according to which the armies of the Central Powers would only retreat from Russia and the Balkans if the statu quo before 1914 was restored in east and west. A maximum programme gave Romania to Austria-Hungary and expanded territory for Germany in the East, territory whose extent would be defined according to later circumstances. Although the new foreign minister and emperor became identified with a desire for peace for various reasons, they never abandoned the established new order in the Balkans, assuming that 'minor' territorial adjustments in Serbia and Montenegro would be overlooked or allowed by the Allies at any peace conference. The Germans, on the other hand, not merely went on to plan huge annexations in the East, but came up with schemes for the wholesale economic reorganisation of Central Europe that would have subordinated the whole Habsburg Monarchy to Germany - in short, the plans for Mitteleuropa. By now, however, the question of food supplies to a starving Monarchy and the prospect of peace were the two issues most exercising the populations of Austria-Hungary. This meant that when Russia collapsed in revolution - which, it was feared would spread to the Monarchy - Czernin at Brest-Litovsk offered the whole of Poland - including Austrian Galicia - to Germany on condition that grain supplies from the Ukraine and Romania would reach starving Austria. (In fact, he had already offered the whole of Poland to Germany in discussions at the German army headquarters at Homburg on 3 April 1917, in order to encourage the Germans to make concessions over Alsace-Lorraine.) Austria-Hungary, however, was to keep her Balkan possessions. As it turned out, no grain came from the Ukraine, but Austria's cession of Cholm to that country so infuriated her Poles that there could no longer be any thought of an Austro-Polish solution, if indeed any prospect of one still existed. On the other hand, by 1918 the

Monarchy's war aims had been fulfilled: Serbia and Russia had been crushed, Romania had ceded some strategic territory (the Iron Gates) to Austria-Hungary and agreed to border rectifications, and Austria-Hungary still had a say in the future of Poland. Italy had been humiliated by the autumn of 1917 at Caporetto. Austria-Hungary had even fought off serious threats from Germany and Bulgaria to interfere in her occupation zones in Serbia, Montenegro and Albania. All enemy troops had been expelled from the lands of the Monarchy. All her own troops were fighting abroad. Hence the new army chief of staff, General Arz von Straussenburg, began making all sorts of plans for annexations in the Balkans, which the foreign ministry still opposed. In any case, the main problem was now hunger, the moral and physical collapse of the civilian and military populations, and strategic defeat. Karl attempted secret peace negotiations with the Entente through his brother-in-law Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma, during which, without informing them, he had suggested that the Germans might surrender Alsace-Lorraine. After the collapse of the Sixtus mission, Karl's subsequent humiliation and apparent diplomatic surrender to the Germans at Spa, and Czernin's resignation and replacement by the apparently imperturbable Burian, defeat was not far off. Burian, predictably, kept trying to get the Germans to guarantee the Monarchy's Balkan gains almost to the end of the war and still made Vienna's agreement to Mitteleuropa conditional on a Polish settlement. However, by the autumn of 1918, with everything everywhere collapsing, the allies no longer cared to guarantee the Monarchy's own survival and far less that of its military conquests in the Balkans when the war eventually ended. Fried thus makes an excellent case for the primacy of Balkan war aims in the wartime diplomacy of Austria-Hungary. It may be true that Conrad saw the eastern front and the struggle against Russia as being more important for military survival, something which objectively was true - a Russian army pouring through the Carpathians on to the Hungarian Great Plain represented a lethal threat to the Monarchy in a way that Serbian military strategy certainly never did nor could; it may be true, also, that Austria-Hungary saw the campaign against Italy as one against a traditional enemy and one, therefore, which united all populations of the Monarchy in enthusiasm for war; but diplomatically, it may be the case that the Balkans had been the cause of the war and thereafter remained at the heart of it for Austria-Hungary's leaders and policy-makers. The issue of Poland, however, should not be easily dismissed in the context of the war-aims of the Monarchy. Its control by, or even close association with, the Habsburgs would have added immeasurably to their prestige in a way that control of the Western Balkans could not have equalled.

Kurzbeschreibung The conquest of Serbia was only one of the goals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the First World War; beyond this lay the desire to control much of South-East Europe. Employing previously unseen sources, Marvin Fried provides the first complete analysis of the Monarchy's war aims in the Balkans and tells the story of its imperialist ambitions. *Pressestimmen* 'Although the war aims of almost all the other 1914-1918 belligerents have now been studied, those of Austria-Hungary have long been neglected. Marvin Fried's new study, based on groundbreaking archival research in both Vienna and Budapest, provides the first full-length analysis of the Habsburg Monarchy's objectives, offering not only much new information but also insights of relevance not only for the Balkan theatre but also for the history of the First World War as a whole.' - David Stevenson, London School of Economics, UK. Author of '1914-1918: The History of the First World War'. 'Marvin Fried has written the first detailed and archive based study on Austro Hungarian War aims and offers a new picture on what the government in Vienna wanted to achieve during the First World War.' - Holger Afflerbach, University of Leeds, UK. Author of *Falkenhayn and The Triple Alliance* "Marvin Fried's excellent analysis of Habsburg foreign policy during the First World War is based on a meticulous knowledge of the German and Hungarian military and diplomatic sources and constitutes one of the most important books now available on the end of the Monarchy and the war itself." - Alan Sked, London School of Economics, UK. Author of 'Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire'. " [...] this is a necessary book and any scholar serious about Austro-Hungary during the First World War needs to read it. The book will also be a great asset to generalists working on wartime foreign policy and decision-making process." - s in *History* **Kurzbeschreibung** The conquest of Serbia was only one of the goals of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the First World War; beyond this lay the desire to control much of South-East Europe. Employing previously unseen sources, Marvin Fried provides the first complete analysis of the Monarchy's war aims in the Balkans and tells the story of its imperialist ambitions.