



*Homogenizing Southeastern Europe — Balkan Wars, Ethnic Cleansing and Postwar Ethnic Engineering since 1912.* Philipp Ther, Institute for East European History, University of Vienna; Alexander Korb, Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, University of Leicester, 08.11.2012-10.11.2012.

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## Homogenizing Southeastern Europe - Balkan Wars, Ethnic Cleansing and Postwar Ethnic Engineering since 1912

In November 2012, the Institute for East European History (University of Vienna) and the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (University of Leicester) jointly organized the conference *Homogenizing Southeastern Europe – Balkan Wars, Ethnic Cleansing and Postwar Ethnic Engineering since 1912* with the support of the Robert Bosch Foundation. The conference was held at the Institute for East European History in Vienna from 8th to 10th November 2012 and was organized by Philipp Ther of the Institute for East European History at the University of Vienna and by Alexander Korb, Lecturer in Modern European History and Deputy Director of the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of Leicester.

The conference was divided into three panels. Each panel was chaired and commented on by distinguished scholars. An additional fourth panel, the Young Scholars Forum, was dedicated to project presentations by early-career researchers. The conference was opened by Philipp Ther and Alexander Korb. They provided a short introduction to the conference topic, the conference proceedings and the envisaged outcomes. In opening remarks, it was stated that nowadays historians tend to move away from the usual perspective of the Balkans as the Europe's powder keg and are becoming more engaged into the analysis of escalating violence, thereby focusing on the perpetrators groups, as well as on establishing the link between the violence on the Balkans and policies in the Western world. It was also stated that this

conference tends not only to examine the links between war and ethnic cleansing, but also to investigate how different issues, such as nation-building, social engineering and others, impacted on national process of ethnic homogenisation in a European context. One of the key questions raised was that of an extent to which the arrival of "settlers" went hand in hand with the attempts to redefine the nation in an environment, where social engineering and nation-building became intertwined processes, which were grounded in a widespread perception of the nation as an organic body.

Panel I, *Ethnicized Warfare*, was chaired by Cathie Carmichael (University of East Anglia) with Philip Ther (University of Vienna) serving as commentator. The first paper, entitled 'Why can the Conflicts in the Balkans (1912–1918) be called an Ethnicized Warfare?' was given by TAMARA SCHEER (Vienna). In her presentation, she focused on the changing perception of friend and foe among the Habsburg civil and military leadership with regards to its South Slav population and foreign political engagement. She investigated these relations through four crucial moments: the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878), the invasion of the Sanjak (1879), the First Balkan War and the First World War. She demonstrated, how the shift in perception towards the South Slav population took place, from them being actively engaged after 1878 and 1879, towards them being seen as an internal threat after the First Balkan War, accompanied with the emergence of violence, especially

towards the Serbs within the monarchy during the First World War. Her main argument was that the attitude towards 'their' South Slav population shifted and changed from being regarded as recipients of outside propaganda, mostly coming from Serbia during the post-1878 and 1879 period, to them becoming actively engaged in an ethnizing process.

The second presenter was JOHN PAUL NEWMAN (Ireland) with his paper on 'Nationalizing Wars and Paramilitarism in the Balkans 1914–1939'. His presentation dealt with the members of the South Slav state who, during the First World War, fought in either the Serbian or Austro-Hungarian army and their political, social, and cultural engagement during the interwar period. His main argument was that they did not manage to fully 'demobilize' from war in the sense of what he termed to be 'cultural demobilization'. Through the examination of policies of the 'victorious' veterans of the Serbian and Montenegro armies in the newly acquired territories of Kosovo and Macedonia, he argued that after 1918 there was an acceleration of forced homogenization which was often carried out by ex-soldiers. He also examined the case of former Austro-Hungarian officers, especially Croats, who mostly joined the Ustasha movement of the 1930s and were also active within the regime's armed forces.

The third paper, 'Peculiarities of the Southeastern European Warzone During WWII and Beyond (1941–1948)', was given by ALEXANDER KORB (Leicester). In his presentation, Korb contextualized the idea of the German New European Order, which envisioned the creation of small homogenous nation-states through ethnic re-allocation. In addition to some of the better-known cases of this policy, such as those taking place after the destruction of Czechoslovakia and Poland, he presented a less well-known case of the Treaty of Zagreb (1941), which was signed by the German and Croatian governments. Through this agreement more than half a million people were to be relocated across the borders of Germany, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. Though on the ground this ended in chaos, it was nevertheless one of the biggest attempts at population transfer during the Second World War. He also discussed groups such as the UPA in Ukraine, the EDES in Greece, or the Četnici or Muslims in former Yugoslavia, who were also interested in creating their own ethnically 'cleansed' regions. Focusing on violence, he further discussed ethnicised civil wars and the intertwined dimension of violence and counter-violence, ethnic cleansings and civil warfare. He concluded his paper by asking whether the

expulsions that took place at the end of the war can be regarded as aftershocks of the wartime violence or as part of a newly-developed Communist paradigm of homogeneity.

The last presenter in this panel was TOMISLAV DULIĆ (Uppsala). His paper, entitled 'The patterns of violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Securitization of Space and Civilian Deaths during the War of the 1990s', aimed at examining the difficult question of how to explain the uneven spatial distribution of violence against civilian populations. He discussed a range of scholarly developments, which were made possible due to the technological advances of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software. Two lines of research are of particular interest: firstly, research that focuses on the relationship between the spatial distribution of violence and the topographic, economic or environmental character of land itself, and, secondly, research using geo-statistics to account for the military's strategic logic behind the mass killings. Further on, he emphasized theories that focus on ideology and on micro-level studies. Dulić argued that the focus on ideology fails to address the distribution of violence across space, while a focus on the micro-level often cannot distinguish between civilian and non-civilian victims. According to Dulić, these shortcomings can be avoided by using disaggregated data in more sophisticated analyses, which would consider all historical, cultural, political and geographical contexts within which violence takes place. His case study used a dataset disaggregated into Bosniak, Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat ethnic communities in order to show the spatial distribution of civilian victims during the war of the 1990s. Dulić argued that in order to understand the geospatial distribution of violence, one must take into account the belligerents' understanding of their own needs. His prediction was that while ethnic diversity will not necessarily result in high levels of violence, highly homogenous municipalities will display a lower magnitude of violence than the average. He links this to his argument that a higher level of ethnic dominance produces strong legitimacy in territorial claims and a belligerent might therefore find it pointless to attack a region upon which he cannot place a reasonably legitimate territorial demand. However, Dulić also argues that if such a zone was to be perceived as a 'securitized' one that is of strategic importance, then it might become attacked due to its strategic importance. Finally, through the analysis of his data Dulić concludes that increased levels of violence are strongly associated with those municipalities which were considered by the Serbian elite as highly important from

a security perspective across victim groups, while Croat and Bosnian victims were primarily affected in their own securitized municipalities. His conclusion was that violence is to be less common in areas where an incumbent enjoys higher control and therefore has no strategic need to commit mass killings.

The key note lecture was given by THEODORA DRAGOSTINOVA (Ohio) on the topic of 'Politics of Limits of Nationalization: A View From Below'. In her lecture Dragostinova looked at population policies of the late 19th century to the outbreak of the First World War in Bulgaria and Greece, with her focus on the transfer of populations in between the two states.

Her main argument was that such policies, underwritten by nationalizing and centralizing states, rarely worked, mainly due to the extreme diversity in the ethnic identification of the subjects involved. On the one hand, these people were often caught in a web of policies that called for exclusive identification, either Bulgarian or Greek, lured by powerful narratives of the "nation". On the other hand, local identities were much more complex and fluid than the official categories ever allowed.

Panel II, Unmixing Peoples: National Policies and International Context and Panel III, Postwar Ethnic Engineering, which was divided into two sections, took place on 9 November 2012. Panel II was chaired by Ulf Brunnbauer (University of Regensburg) with Constantin Iordachi (Central European University, Budapest) as commentator.

HAKEM RUSTOW (Michigan) gave a presentation named 'Balkan Wars, Anatolian Echoes, and the Predicament of the Armenian Population'. Rustow emphasised the importance of the Balkan context in understanding the events, which occurred in Anatolia during the First World War. He addressed the Balkan roots of the Armenian genocide and the relevance of this question during the Greco-Turkish Lausanne Treaty of 1922–23. He also discussed the reasons of why the Armenian case had been excluded from these negotiations and what this meant for the Armenians who became citizens of Turkey.

Panel II's second paper, 'International Aspects of Romanian Population Policies, 1940–1944', was given by VIOREL ACHIM (Bucharest). The presentation dealt with the period of Antonescu's rule and his policies of trying to restore the Romanian borders as they existed prior to 1940. Achim discussed Antonescu's attempt to transform Romania into an ethnically homogenous country. This was to be achieved through population exchanges with

neighbouring countries, repatriations, population transfers and colonization. The paper dealt with the influence of such policies on the Balkan Peninsula, since the countries involved were Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, as well as the Aromanian (Vlach) groups, which were scattered throughout the Balkan Peninsula.

CATHIE CARMICHAEL (Norwich) was the final presenter on this panel with her paper on 'The International Community, Local Actors and Ethnic Homogenization in the Western Balkans in the 1990s'. She examined the process, which led to Bosnian and Croatian independence in the early 1990s, especially focusing on the period between the 1940s and 1980s and the evolution of 'national questions'. Carmichael also focused on the aspect of radicalization among the Serbian population of these two countries during the same period. She argued that it was the undeveloped and fluid nature of the national question in Bosnia, especially with regards to Bosnian Muslims, which in particular had a crucial impact on the war and the international response.

Panel III was chaired by Carolin Leutloff Grandits (Berlin) and was opened by THOMAS SCHAD (Berlin) on the topic of 'Demographic Engineering in Interwar Yugoslavia and Turkey'. Schad provided a comparative methodological approach with regards to the Turkish-Yugoslav "Convention regulating the emigration of the Turkish population of the region of Southern Serbia in Yugoslavia" from 1938, which aimed at deporting around 200 000 people of the mostly Albanian-speaking Muslim population. He showed that both regimes used various policies and means in order to achieve this, including indirect violence. Though never implemented, he argued that the Convention is an important document of the two states' attempt to shape their population in accordance with their national narratives. The second part of his paper dealt with demographic engineers and their attempt to clarify who was to be considered either a Turk or a Serb. He analyzed the hegemonic discourses of demographic engineers in both countries, which he considers to be the foundation myth behind national institutions such as the Turkish settlement law and the Yugoslav Interministerial Conference. Further on, he argued that the paradigm of demographic engineering, due to its descriptive character, is insufficient in understanding the motivation of both states to shape their populations according to national plans and that therefore the official "true view of history" presents material for the examination of the nation's *self* and *other*. This he had done through comparison of the Turkish official view as stated in Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his five day speech *Nutuk*, and the

Serbian myth of Kosovo as justification of the “reconquista of Southern Serbia.”

ULF BRUNNBAUER (Regensburg) presented a paper entitled ‘Excluding “Alien Elements”, including “our Emigrants”: Migration Policies and National Homogenization in Interwar Yugoslavia’. The paper examined the connection between emigration policies and nationalism in interwar Yugoslavia (1918–1941). Brunnbauer’s main argument was that the Yugoslav policy makers in that period embarked on using emigration groups as a means of nation-building, trying to create a ‘Yugoslav diaspora’. He spoke of legal and institutional frameworks created, and argued that while these policies’ effects were not as successful as expected by policy-makers, the emigration policy of that time nevertheless provides an original perspective on nation-building in interwar Yugoslavia.

Panel III’s third paper, ‘The Policies of Ethnic Homogenization and Settlement of Greek Orthodox Refugees in Northern Greece, 1912–1940’, was presented by ELISABETH KONTOGIORGI (Athens). She examined the processes of national homogeneity, which took place during the period when Greek society was still in the process of formation. Her focus was especially on the Northern provinces of Greece, which since the beginning of the twentieth century had seen wave after wave of refugees. Her focus was placed on how the Greeks perceived the consolidation, transformation and modernization of Northern provinces which had already been multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic. She analyzed the hegemonic discourse, the views and behaviour of the Greek government officials and policy-makers, and the local agents and civilians. In her concluding remarks, Kontogiorgi showed the three phases of this process. From 1912–1914, atrocities against, and uprooting of, minorities took place. In the interwar period, the Liberals sought to achieve national homogenization through refugee resettlement policies, sweeping and radical land reform, infrastructure development and modernization. Finally, during the period of authoritarian regime of Ioannis Metaxas (1936–1941) coercive methods of rigorous assimilation and national homogenization were instigated.

The final paper of the first part of this panel was given by NADA BOŠKOVSKA (Zürich). In her presentation on ‘Ethnic Homogenization of Yugoslav Macedonia in the 1920s’, she examined both the process through which Macedonia was to become homogenized and attached to Serbia, and the reactions, which such an undertaking caused. Boškowska analyzed this by looking

into three different areas: agrarian colonization, the education system and organizations. Agrarian colonization started in 1920 through a decree on “Regulation on the settlement of the new southern regions” (Macedonia and Kosovo) which allowed colonists and so called optants from abroad to settle in these regions. She argued that the main goal of colonization was not economic, but rather one of ethnic homogenization, a project which ultimately failed. With education, which was introduced into regions where illiteracy was as high as 80 per cent, also came a clash between those who thought it was good to have educated children and those who considered it to be a disadvantage if children learned that they were Macedonians. Boškowska also demonstrated how the Yugoslav state accelerated this process by moving local to Serbia. In her paper, she also emphasized the role of the Serb Orthodox Church, which took an active role in this process. Like teachers, priests were required to learn the Serbian language and history. She also mentioned the establishments of various local clubs and societies, which were supported by the Ministry of Interior. In her conclusion, Boškowska argued that this project failed partly due to a lack of investments, and due to the fact that the Slavs in Macedonia did not consider themselves to be Serbs and because they had started to develop their own national consciousness.

The second part of this panel began with a paper given by VLADAN JOVANOVIĆ (Belgrade) entitled ‘Comparative Perspective on Muslim Emigration from Monarchist and Socialist Yugoslavia (1938/1953)’. He focused on the state policies aimed at Muslim migration from monarchist/socialist Yugoslavia. By analyzing these two processes, he concluded that while they were not identical, one can find similarities between the two.

The second presentation was given by MICHAEL PORTMANN (Vienna). His paper on ‘Flight, Internment, and Colonization: Migrations and Migration Policy in the Yugoslav Vojvodina 1944–1950’, analyzed forced and voluntary migrations and migration policy as applied in Yugoslavia after the Second World War. Portmann focused on two population movements, the flight of the Yugoslav Germans and Hungarians, and the settlement of the Yugoslav (mostly Serbian) supporters of the National Liberation Army headed by Tito. He argued that ‘decolonisation’ of the Yugoslav Germans and the colonization of Serbs and Montenegrins were heavily intertwined processes. To conclude, Portmann reflected on the 1990s when another massive wave of migration swept over the region of Vojvodina.

The third panel's final paper, 'Post-Dayton Ethnic Engineering', was presented by CAROLIN LEUTLOFF-GRANDITS (Berlin). She analyzed and discussed the main ideas and processes of ethnic minorities' return, as stated within the "Dayton Agreement", into the areas which had been 'ethnically cleansed' during the 1990s' war. She looked at the link between the restitution of houses and the return itself. Her main argument was that the return to these territories failed and was obstructed by missing social and economic prospects. She argued that one of the prerequisites to obtain national and a social right was to belong to the 'right' national group and that this constituted the main obstacle for the return of minorities. Leutloff-Grandits concluded that a liberal concept which sees the restitution of property as a sufficient step in creating a livelihood failed completely and that many refugees opted for "sustainable relocation".

After a short break, the conference continued with the Young Scholars Forum. The Forum was established to provide early-career researchers, mostly PhD candidates, with the opportunity to present their on-going projects and ideas to their colleagues, established professors, scholars and a wider audience. A rare practice at similarly prestigious conferences, the attempt to connect researchers in the early stages of their careers with present and future colleagues should be credited and acknowledged.

In the first session, chaired by Alexander Korb and Uğur Ümit Üngör, the presenters and their projects were EVA FRANTZ (Vienna) on 'Muslims and Christians in late Ottoman Kosovo. Life-worlds and Social Communication in the beginnings of an Ethnopolitical Conflict, 1870–1913', and SELIM BEZERAJ (Prishtina) presenting his project 'Political, Social and Cultural History of the Austro-Hungarian presence in Albanian Territories, 1912–1914'.

The second session, which was chaired by Alexander Korb and John Paul Newman, included presentations by DENIVER VUKELIĆ (Zagreb) on 'Censorship in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1952', JELENA LILIĆ (Stockholm) on 'Post-War Transitional Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1944-47/1995' (MA), GORAN MILJAN (Budapest) on 'A Resurrected State: Poglavnik, Ustashas and the New Croat Nation', and DRAGAN CVETKOVIĆ (Belgrade) presenting his project on 'War Victims in Yugoslavia 1941–1945, Genocide and Holocaust, Ethnic Cleansing and Forced Migration – an Attempt of Quantification by Personal Identification'.

In the third session, chaired by Alexander Korb and

Ulf Brunnbauer, the presenters were IDRIT IDRIZI (Vienna) on 'The Totalitarian Project of Homogenizing the Society and "agency" in late-Socialist Albania', HANS LEMPERT (Vienna) on 'The Balkan Wars as a Pivot Point of Albanian Nationalism', and ODETA BARBULLUSHI (Tirana) on 'Of Celebrations and National Forgetting; '1912' in Albanian Political Discourse'.

The final session, chaired by Alexander Korb and Carolin Leutloff-Grandits, included presentations by IVA LUČIĆ (Uppsala) on 'From Religion to Nation. Ambiguous Nation-building Process of Muslims in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1960–1981', MARINA ILIĆ (Lille) on 'Theoretical Synthesis between Realism and Constructivism in International Relations, with Particular Emphasis on the Origins of War in Croatia, 1991–1995', and DARIO BRENTIN (London) talking about his project on 'Sport and Narratives of National Identity in Post-Socialist Croatia'.

The conference ended on Saturday, 10 November 2012 with concluding remarks given by Alexander Korb and Philip Ther. The main points and questions raised were that of terminology. This was especially connected with the terms such as occupation, liberation or minority. For example, one issue raised was that of who defines minority and how do we define it? There was also an issue of economic concerns, its importance and role when talking about homogenization, settlement, or social engineering. At the end, the question of the year 1912 as the starting point of this conference was put to question, with an issue of whether one could consider these processes as taking place even earlier, during the nineteenth century.

The conference, Homogenizing Southeastern Europe – Balkan Wars, Ethnic Cleansing and Postwar Ethnic Engineering since 1912 proved to be a successful one on several levels. First of all, it brought together distinguished scholars who examined this topic through their diverse methodological and scientific points of research and interpretations. Secondly, the conference dealt with the topic which can be seen as somewhat marginal and has therefore provided an interesting insight into this highly complex and understudied topic. Thirdly, with its Young Scholars Forum, it provided the opportunity for young researchers to present and discuss their projects with distinguished scholars and experts in this field, an opportunity not that often provided to them. It is my opinion that this conference was excellently organized and the papers presented and the following discussions were of high academic standards.

**Conference Overview:**

Philipp Ther (Vienna) / Alexander Korb (Leicester): Homogenization Politics and its Limits

*Panel I: Ethnicised Warfare*

Tamara Scheer (Vienna): Why can the Conflicts in the Balkans (1912–1918) be called an Ethnicized Warfare?

John Paul Newman (Maynooth): Nationalizing Wars and Paramilitarism in the Balkans 1914–1939

Alexander Korb (Leicester): Peculiarities of the Southeastern European Warzone During WWII and Beyond (1941–1948)

Tomislav Dulic (University of Uppsala): Ethnicized Warfare in the Hercegovina, 1991–1995

Theodora Dragostinova (Columbus, Ohio): Politics and Limits of Nationalization: A View From Below

*Panel II: Unmixing Peoples: National Policies and International Context*

Hakem Rustom (Ann Arbor): Balkan Wars, Anatolian Echoes: The Lausanne Treaty and the Armenian Population

Viorel Achim (Bucharest): International Aspects of Romanian Population Policies, 1940–1944

Cathie Carmichael (Norwich): The International Community, Local Actors and Ethnic Homogenization in the Western Balkans in the 1990s

*Panel III/1: Postwar Ethnic Engineering*

Thomas Schad (Berlin): Demographic Engineering in Interwar Yugoslavia and Turkey

Ulf Brunnbauer (Regensburg): Excluding 'Alien Elements', including 'our Emigrants': Migration Policies and National Homogenization in Interwar Yugoslavia/Macedonia, 1912–1940

Elisabeth Kontogiorgi (Athen): The Policies of Ethnic Homogenization and Settlement of Greek Orthodox Refugees in Northern Greece, 1912–1940

Nada Boskovska (Zurich): Ethnic Homogenization of Macedonia in the 1920s

*Panel III/2: Postwar Ethnic Engineering*

Vladan Jovanovic (Belgrade): Comparative Perspectives on Muslim Emigration from Monarchist and Socialist Yugoslavia (1938/1953)

Michael Portmann (Vienna): Flight, Internment, and Colonization: Migrations and Migration Policy in the Yugoslav Vojvodina 1944–1950

Carolin Leutloff Grandits (Berlin): Post-Dayton Ethnic Engineering

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