

were not solely of their making' (147). This perhaps also explains the continuity of the mentality of the German industrialists, which hardly changed until halfway the 1950s, only accelerating in the 1960s (53). Grünbacher has written a very accessible and concise study on a fascinating topic, which does much to explain the status of West German businessmen. It is highly recommended to anyone interested in early post-war German economic and societal history, and those who want to gain a clearer insight into the Federal Republic's *Wirtschaftswunder*.

Filip Hameršak, *Tamna strana Marsa. Hrvatska autobiografija i Prvi svjetski rat*, Naklada Ljevak: Zagreb, 2013; 724 pp.; 9789533036335, 299kn (hbk)

Marco Mondini, *Il Capo. La Grande Guerra del generale Luigi Cadorna*, Il Mulino: Bologna, 2017; 388 pp.; 9788815272843, €26.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Mark Thompson, *University of East Anglia, UK*

Luigi Cadorna may be the last Allied national commander in the First World War who lacks a full-scale scholarly biography. Historical life writing has an ambiguous status in Italy, yet this omission has another explanation; Armando Diaz and Pietro Badoglio have their monuments, after all. Cadorna, however, remains highly problematic in Italy's reckoning with the Great War, indeed uniquely controversial. The mayor of Udine (the site of Cadorna's wartime headquarters) removed his name from a city square in 2011. Fierce encomia continue to appear, most recently by M. Brignoli (2012) and P. R. di Colloredo (2015).

Cadorna does not have this status because his orders incurred hundreds of thousands of deaths, or because he led the army to its worst defeat on the Italian mainland. It is – above all – because he promptly and publicly blamed his men's cowardice for that disaster. Ever since, a bad smell has tainted his name.

Cadorna so dominated Italy's war that his shadow falls in all directions, yet he comes into view as a caricature, an authoritarian brute demanding total control and utter obedience, idolized by toadying staff officers and journalists, setting unattainable objectives and urging decimations. A complete and balanced account of the man who led Italy's armed forces from 1914 until late 1917 is long overdue, and Mondini is qualified to provide it. Judged by output, he is the most industrious younger historian of Italy's Great War. His focus is quite traditional, concentrating on military and political events and dynamics, though he draws on diverse sources; comfortable with the archives in Rome, he keeps abreast of secondary literature in four languages.

Across seven chapters, Mondini considers Cadorna's origins in Piedmont, assesses his writings on tactics, training and morale, and examines his practice regarding command, management, strategy and tactics, military justice, the government in Rome, and communication. Mondini concludes with the rout at Caporetto in October 1917, which led to Cadorna's dismissal and subsequent arraignment before a commission of inquiry. Along the way, national and international context is judiciously supplied.

We learn that Cadorna's family never belonged at the heart of Piedmont's military elite (38); he himself realized that the Franco-Prussian and the Boer wars had ended the 'Garibaldian' epoch of mass infantry attacks on defensive lines (58); he had no illusions about the likely length of the war (152); and he sympathized, privately, with the massacred infantry (165). While these corrections humanize Cadorna somewhat, his decisions and actions remain what we have known them to be. Moreover, Mondini's language acknowledges that the caricature is essentially truthful: 'solipsism' (105), 'schizophrenic' (193, 225), 'ill-concealed misanthropy' (258, 260), 'obsession' (63, 248, 257), 'an almost pathological incapacity' (118), 'maniacally suspicious of any kind of discussion' (247), 'doctrinaire and blind vision [*sic*] of combat' (119), 'pathological contempt for his own army' (305), and so forth.

Mondini is meticulously fair, for example distinguishing Cadorna's errors from those forced on him by Italy's incompetent governments (142). Yet the charge-sheet remains long and overwhelming. He turned his headquarters into a fawning court (226), where the operations and situation offices were 'marginal' (247, 290) and intelligence was 'tragically undervalued' (248). By sacking hundreds of senior officers, including some 200 generals, he created insecurity and mechanical optimism (202). His failure to anticipate the Austrian attack in spring 1916 rehearsed the catastrophe at Caporetto, exposing shortcomings of judgement, imagination and character, mitigated by some eleventh-hour efficiency (216, 219). He distributed his scanty forces along the front rather than concentrate them for attacks (149, 190). He never ensured the coordination of artillery with infantry (166). His treatment of uncowed colleagues could be vicious (221, 222). His 'super-punitive conception' of discipline damaged morale in ways that he could not begin to see (231, 232).

Mondini's expertise in aggregating material is manifest, and his prose is never less than proficient. His book is a compendium rather than a biography. The hammering repetitiousness of Cadorna as man and actor is a burden by itself, and challenges historians to catch their subject anew. More might have been said about his psychology; did he really possess a 'granitic certainty of being in the right' (214) or was he 'only apparently imperturbable'? Mondini won't speculate. He draws skilfully on the archives of the official inquiry into Caporetto, but Luca Falsini has unearthed new material. When the journalist Gianni Rocca prepared his vivid, unscholarly biography, he drew on Cadorna's archive. Mondini – who calls Rocca 'brilliant' but 'decidedly unusable' (12) – makes no mention of this source. Yet he uses Cadorna's letters to his family that his son published in 1967. Indeed these provide many of the clinching quotations, cited seamlessly alongside official statements.

Soldiers from the Habsburg crown lands of Croatia-Slavonia and Dalmatia died in tens if not scores of thousands fighting against Russia, Serbia and Italy between 1914 and 1918. A general from Croatia, Svetozar Boroević von Bojna, 'Lion of the Isonzo', commanded on the Italian front. Another, Stjepan Sarkotić, served as governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina and led the occupation of Montenegro in

1916. So it is striking that few of the nations or peoples directly involved in the Great War can have produced less historical writing about it.

The reasons for this neglect lie in the political metamorphoses between 1918 and 1991, comprising four revolutions. Scholar Ivan Hrstić recently remarked that historiographical trends in Yugoslavia, as in other communist countries, reflected 'dominant political narratives'. The nature of Yugoslav narratives meant that, according to Ivan Hrstić, the 'ideological legitimisation' of research into 'pro-Habsburg actions of Croats in the Great War' was 'not clear', so 'the topic was avoided' (In a recent essay 'Croatian Historiography of World War I', Ivan Hrstić remarked that historiographical trends in Yugoslavia, as in other communist countries, reflected 'dominant political narratives'. The nature of Yugoslav narratives meant that the 'ideological legitimisation' of research into 'pro-Habsburg actions of Croats in the Great War' was 'not clear', so 'the topic was avoided' [múltunk, *Journal of Political History*, 2016, p. 60]). Borojević, Sarkotić and their armies had fought for His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty, not a Yugoslav state, let alone Croatian independence.

Discussing plans for the centenary, Croatia's prime minister told parliament in 2013 that the First World War was 'one of those old wars that we don't know whether we won or lost, and we still won't know after this'. His wry resignation hints at inextricable complexity and irresolvable antitheses. After all, Croats fought – some willingly – for the Central Powers, which lost the Great War, on behalf of an empire, which disintegrated; were drafted – some willingly – into a new state that was meant to ensure self-determination but did not; were then drafted – some willingly – into a monstrous Axis satellite entity, which they themselves helped overthrow in 1945; and were then drafted – some willingly – into a second Yugoslavia, which they themselves helped destroy in the 1990s.

Historians since independence have not made up for lost time, because the war of 1991–1995 cast an ideological shadow of its own. As Filip Hameršak notes in his bold and remarkable book, history in the 1990s was written in a 'national paradigm' (155) which, ironically, perpetuated several blind-spots of the Yugoslav era. Simply, there is still no scholarly or general account of the First World War as Croats lived it.

Hameršak has done as much as one scholar can to remedy this situation. By 'investigating the personal experience of war' (255) via the analysis of some 40 autobiographical texts, he skirts the trap of ideological prepossession and links with wider scholarly trends. His authors were junior officers, NCOs and one soldier. They were 'probably' Croats by nationality, born and resident for some time in the territory of today's Croatia (227). A few would become famous (Josip Broz Tito, Miroslav Krleža, Vladko Maček); most remained obscure; some are wholly unknown.

After a robust theoretical overture (the book gets going on page 177), Hameršak embarks on his task, quoting, summarizing, paraphrasing, glossing and comparing with patient scruple. He brings a great deal of fascinating material into circulation, and the contextual information is excellent. He does not strive to align the accounts, but listens for similarities and echoes as well as distinctions as he

probes inter-ethnic feelings, attitudes to the enemy, worldviews, notions of honour and much else, besides political views.

Croatian experience of the war emerges as a tangle of unstable quantities, such as: loyalty, genuine or automatic, to the Habsburg dynasty; aspirations to reform the empire, or destroy it; pan-Slavic inklings or yearnings, with degrees of sympathy for Serbia; and dreams of Croatian freedom, entailing anti-Serbism.

Only one of the authors blamed Serbian expansionism for the outbreak of war in 1914 (236). This was Mile Budak, whose view on Italians is also quoted:

Before the war, I neither liked nor disliked Italians more than any other people with which I had no particular connection. After they went to war against us [in 1915], in order to seize our purest lands, I conceived a sincere hatred for them. (327)

The phrase 'our purest lands' sounds a premonitory bell. And indeed, Budak would join the Ustasha and serve the NDH in high office. It disconcerts, by the way, to find this ardent *génocidaire* described neutrally as a 'distinguished writer and politician' (231). Such is the new normal in Croatia.

A short review can only hint at the riches here. The most engaging lesser-known author is Pero Blašković (1883–1945). After serving far and wide in the empire, Blašković spent the war with the 3rd Infantry Regiment of Bosnia and Herzegovina, rising to colonel. He opposed Habsburg depredations in Serbia and treated all nationalities alike. Foreseeing defeat, he fought steadfastly until the last battle in Italy, surrendering to spare his men's lives. Unlike many Habsburg officers, his career flourished in Yugoslavia, indeed in Belgrade, but he grew critical of Serbian domination. After publishing his memoir of the Great War – a splendid account of 42 months on three fronts – Blašković returned to Croatia in 1940. The following year, in unclear circumstances, he joined the armed forces of the NDH. Posted to Bosnia, he found the cruelty of his new masters unendurable. Arrested for conspiring against the Ustasha regime, he contracted typhus in prison and died a week before the regime's collapse. Blašković is merely one of many who merit separate study (in English too).

Hameršak's encyclopedic footnotes are beyond praise, and the plates are fascinating.

Arne Hassing, *Church Resistance to Nazism in Norway, 1940–1945*, University of Washington Press: Seattle, WA, 2014; 424 pp., 13 illus., 1 map; 9780295993089, \$90.00 (hbk); 9780295994543, \$30.00 (pbk)

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In an era gripped by the rise of militant political religion, twenty-first century scholars are increasingly redressing the neglect of twentieth century scholars towards the religious dimension of that century, bringing to it fresh insights and new perspectives. Arne Hassing's welcome study is the first critical book-length