Captive States, Divided Societies: Political Institutions of Southeastern Europe in Historical Comparative Perspective

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Some relevant publications:

Military and Politics in south-eastern Europe from the Eve of World War One to the early Cold War Period

The main idea behind this approach is to establish a framework which will enable me to treat the armed forces as an institution, while at the same time to discuss change, continuity and interaction with other institutions.

I intend to pursue comparison in two ways. In the first place by comparing the development of the armed forces in the single south-eastern European countries against the background of their transformation from armies relying on armed bands and some professionals into modern regular armies of a more “European” type; Secondly to compare the ways in which the armed forces responded to the series of substantial changes that the European and regional balance of power underwent, and how this conditioned their political role and their relations to society.

I will focus on the following four cases 1) the First World War 2) the World Crisis and the rise of German and Italian revisionism in Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean, 3) the impact of Germany’s conquest of Central Europe in 1938, 4) coercion and adaptation, resistance and collaboration and during the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath.

In this I shall depart from the following plan:

The Creation of National Armies
1) The professionalization of national armies: the development of the various services, reliance on foreign models (French, British or German), discipline and education and ways of equipping the armed forces, in particular, regarding the role of local production and supply from abroad; in the latter case, in particular, the political and professional issues concerning the questions on which foreign suppliers to base the procurement of war materials.

The Inter-war Period
1) The Impact of the First World War and the Versailles-treaty system on the development of the armed forces in south-eastern Europe and their political role.
   a) In the status quo states: Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia
   b) In the revisionist states: Bulgaria
2) The impact of the Word Crisis and German and Italian revisionism on the Versailles-treaty balance of power in south-eastern Europe:
   a) Before Germany’s Conquest of Central Europe in 1938
   b) Between Anschluss and Munich and Axis occupation of Greece and Yugoslavia

The Second World War and the early Post-War Period
1) Resistance and Civil War in Greece and Yugoslavia, its impact on the development of the armed forces and their role in politics
2) Bulgaria and Rumania from allied of the Axis to Soviet satellites

The Creation of National Armies is intended to discuss and describe the main lines of transformation of military doctrines from the 19th century until the Balkan War and the First World War. It will focus, in particular, on the shift of emphasis from the use of guerrilla-like armies and tactics to the employment of regular soldiers and modern army doctrines. For much of the 19th century the armed wing of the national independence movements as well as the national armies relied on recruitment and methods of traditional armed bands and “irregulars” in the stile of klephts, armatolis, hayduks and uskoks and in the shape of chetniks and komitadjis. It will discuss the motives behind these new politics in relation to national, regional and international settings. It will also discuss the impact of these reforms on state and society.

Regarding the Inter-war Period, it is of particular interest to discuss and outline the impact of war experience, in particular, the fulfilment, or non-fulfilment, of the national and territorial aims which motivated the various south-eastern European countries for allying with the great powers in ways which they did.

Furthermore, it is important to discuss the impact of the Versailles-treaty system on the development on the armed forces in south-eastern Europe, in particular, the role played by their countries’ positions in the new European balance of power as status quo states (the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente) and revisionist states; and hence how this conditioned the role of the armed forces in the wake of the percussions of state and society unleashed by the World Crisis and, by rising German and Italian revisionism. In this context the impact of Germany’s conquest of Central Europe is particular important: it made it necessary to prepare for a future in which the establishment of a “new German European order” was most probable perspective; This made the issue of rearmament and the direction of armaments procurement a highly crucial - and in some countries also a most contested one; it made imperative too, a reconsideration of alignments and relations with the European great powers. All, this, in turn, affected relations between the armed forces and the political world and society.

The development of the armed forces, in particular, their relations to the political world and society in the wake of the Second World War and the early Post-War Period was to a wide extend conditioned by war experiences and by the issue of with whom the particular country allied. In the case of Greece and Yugoslavia the development was to a very high degree conditioned by the resistance against the Axis occupation and by the civil wars which raged in these countries. In the case of Bulgaria and Rumania it was the siding with Berlin and Rome and, in particular, the Soviet Union’s occupation and the establishment of Communist regimes that conditioned post-war relations between the armed forces, government and society.