

In Specter's telling, the period that followed was shaped especially by the ideas of the highly influential German Carl Schmitt. He and others undercut the conception of Anglo-American exceptionalism. But Specter cautions against attempts by the Left to co-opt Schmitt: progressives, he advises, should consider whether Schmitt's theory "enables critical and emancipatory views of international relations, or whether it contains any resources for resisting empire" (90). The following chapters focus on German legal scholar-diplomat Willem Grewe; the rebirth of Atlantic realism during World War II; and Hans Morgenthau, the hugely important German émigré who is considered by so many to be the intellectual father of postwar realism. With Morgenthau, as with Schmitt, Specter cautions that "nowhere did he question the prerogative of the United States to order the entire world's affairs in its interests; in short, its imperial prerogative" (166). Specter finishes with the story of the unlikely restoration of realist thought in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Particularly fascinating is Specter's treatment of the Nazi period. All of the crosspollination became extremely problematic in the 1930s and 1940s, when *Geopolitik* seemed to be an intellectual handmaiden for Nazi expansionist policies: the search for *Lebensraum*. The result was what Specter calls "anxieties of influence" (127): fear that American "political geography" owed a little too much to ideas that were then being portrayed by Americans as uniquely German. The appellation "realism" thus emerged in no small part as a "semantic refuge for fugitives from the discredited discourse of Nazi geopolitics" (135).

One might note that the chapter on Wilhelm Grewe seems out of place. Specter is able to demonstrate Grewe's "assiduous contributions to the [Nazi] regime's foreign policy goals" (108). But even if Grewe's realism was a lone "residuum" (117) of the appalling ideology and policies of the Third Reich, this does not advance Specter's argument about realism itself. Additionally, Specter engages in some strong rhetoric, never more so than when he writes that a study such as this "can help to emancipate ourselves from realism's tyranny over the political imagination" (17). But is this an overstatement? Does realism actually possess such a stranglehold on the minds of both academic theorists and policymakers? The flourishing of constructivism (mentioned on page 137) as a challenge to academic realism suggests that it does not. It would thus have been useful if Specter had addressed himself, however briefly, to the influence of such scholars as Alexander Wendt (who appears only in the endnotes), Martha Finnemore, and others. It is also worth asking if the policy elite, while proclaiming themselves hard-nosed realists, in fact often act as constructivists in practice. If so, then Specter is more successful at scholarship than at advocacy. But his scholarship is superb – a model for how international intellectual history can be done.

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Misfire: The Sarajevo Assassination and the Winding Road to World War I

By Paul Miller-Melamed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 296. Hardcover \$29.95. ISBN: 978-0195331042.

T.G. Otte

University of East Anglia

"It is nothing," the archduke Franz Ferdinand is reported to have assured his adjutant as he and his wife lay bleeding in their car, struck down by the bullets fired by the assassin Gavrilo

Princip. It was a brave statement perhaps, certainly deluded, and also plainly wrong. The archducal couple was dead within a few minutes, and the Sarajevo murders triggered a chain of events that ended ultimately in the First World War.

It was not, of course, the killing of the heir to the Habsburg throne that brought about the cataclysm, as Paul Miller-Melamed points out, but the decisions made by the rulers and governments of Europe in the days and weeks after Sarajevo. He contends that the real causes of the war are to be found in the capitals of the Great Powers, in “civilized” Europe, rather than in the Balkan backwater of Austrian-administered Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the same time, he also argues that the origins of the 1914–1918 conflict need to be studied from the perspective of the Balkans, and that the events on that fateful day must be embedded in the broader sweep of Southeast European history. Keeping both the international and the regional sphere in focus is a laudable ambition, and if done well, it can yield significant insights. Alas, in the case of *Misfire* ambition and achievement are uneasily matched.

There are some clever twists to the book, which is based on extensive reading of the secondary literature. The juxtaposition of assassin and victim, of Gavrilo Princip and Franz Ferdinand, makes for lively reading. Even so, there is little that is particularly new in Miller-Melamed’s treatment of either man. That Princip was a troubled young man, radicalized or self-radicalized and ready to seek martyrdom in pursuit of his chosen ideological cause, few will deny. Whether it is helpful to speculate about a Freudian inferiority complex on account of his diminutive stature is altogether more doubtful, not least because here – as too often elsewhere – Miller-Melamed confines himself to an *en passant* remark, suggestive but not conclusive and, above all, not substantiated. Likewise, it is an odd omission on his part not to have considered the Habsburg archduke’s profound clericalism. No doubt, as recent studies of Franz Ferdinand have shown, his political views were not of one piece, and nor was he the constitutional reformer *manqué* presented in the older literature. Even so, his pronounced clerical leanings shaped his outlook on politics in general and on international affairs too.

Miller-Melamed is on surer ground when dealing with the internal dynamics of Bosnia-Herzegovina, administered by Austria-Hungary since 1878 and annexed by Vienna in October 1908. But here, too, he tends to be allusive rather than incisive. This also extends to the author’s treatment of Princip and his associates. He stresses particularly the fact that they did not espouse the idea of a Greater Serbia but were instead inspired by visions of a future Southern Slav or Yugoslav state. What precise shape their Yugoslavism took remains unclear. Similarly, the extent to which the latter might have been a cover for the regional ambitions of key players in Belgrade is not explored. But this is one of the many intricate knots that constitute the challenge of 1914. Miller-Melamed confidently asserts that Princip and his comrades “duped” Dragutin “Apis” Dimitrijević, the head of Serb military intelligence, into supporting them. Perhaps they did, but Miller-Melamed provides no evidence. Indeed, he rather skirts over the fact that the ultranationalist and regicide Apis pursued his own political agenda in his power struggle with the government of Nikola Pašić, in which an “incident” in Bosnia might well have been useful.

More disappointing still is the treatment of relations between the European Great Powers at the close of the long nineteenth century. This is complex terrain, of course, and anyone entering it will tread warily. It clearly is not Miller-Melamed’s area of expertise, and in consequence the reader is treated to reheated notions that have been discarded by recent scholarship, such as the idea that Kaiser Wilhelm II’s injudicious congratulatory telegram to President Kruger of Transvaal of 1896 was the opening act of the European war of 1914 or that the *ententes* were some form of alliances. Often, the version of events presented is somewhat hackneyed. The Bosnian uprising of 1875, for instance, led straight to the Berlin Congress three years later, without the reader hearing of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and Russia’s punitive preliminary peace treaty of San Stefano. The idea that they gave Italy free rein to attack Tripoli in October 1911 would, this reviewer suspects, come as a surprise to senior British diplomats. Baron Aehrenthal would similarly have raised a

quizzical eyebrow at finding himself described several times as “the Russian ambassador” – he was, in fact, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador at St. Petersburg and later Habsburg foreign minister. And the reader is not spared the hoary old chestnut of Europe’s leaders not responding to Franz Ferdinand’s murder. If only!

The events at Sarajevo on that fateful June 28, 1914 are treated at some length, though without adding much to our knowledge and at the price of repetition (there is indeed considerable “padding out” here and throughout the book). But this raises a wider question. If, as Miller-Melamed argues, Franz Ferdinand’s chauffeur’s “wrong turn” on Sarajevo’s Appel Kai was irrelevant, in sharp contrast to the many “wrong turns” by Europe’s leaders after June 28, then one is left wondering why he treats those same events at such length but compresses what happened after Sarajevo into barely a dozen pages.

At the root of the book’s flaws seems to lie a confusion about its aims and conceptualization, which its author’s liberal spraying of other scholars with criticism cannot quite hide (for the sake of transparency, the reviewer catches a few droplets too). In consequence, it is neither an explication of the centrality of the Balkans to European power politics nor does it elucidate why Europe’s statesmen were unable to prevent the Sarajevo crisis from spiralling out of control. Instead of laying to rest the mythology that has arisen around Princip’s gunshots, Paul Miller-Melamed has resurrected older ones about linear developments that led to the outbreak of war in 1914, and that is far worse than “nothing.”

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Trauma, Religion and Spirituality in Germany during the First World War

By Jason Crouthamel. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Pp. xiv + 258. Hardcover \$115.00. ISBN: 978-1350083707.

Benjamin Ziemann

University of Sheffield

In his new book, Jason Crouthamel charts how German soldiers used religious language to articulate and process their frontline experiences during the First World War. Religion allowed for expressing the hardship and trauma of war in a large variety of ways, from a simple coping mechanism to elaborate expressions of sacrifice, redemption, and spirituality in the widest sense. Religion itself was, as Crouthamel rightly states, “not static,” but “in a state of constant flux,” turning the war into a “laboratory for religion” in which new, often syncretistic forms of faith were explored (3). The focus of this book is on religious practice and its place in the everyday life at the front, and on faith as an expression of meaning in communication with relatives at home. The intensive theological attempts to reinterpret the Christian message in nationalist terms only provide the backdrop for this study. To put his investigation on a firm primary-source basis, Crouthamel has conducted extensive research in all major German archives with extensive collections of war diaries and war letters.

The book is organised into seven chapters and an epilogue that analyses the reverberations of defeat through the prism of religious language. Chapter 1 charts the top-down militarization of faith and its instrumentalization for the German war effort. The second chapter traces the broad range of religious emotions and expressions that the beginning of the war triggered among