

IMCEERES Master's Thesis

# ‘COOPERATION, CONFLICT AND CO-OPTION: DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ROYAL DICTATORSHIPS OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FAR-RIGHT DURING THE INTERBELLUM’

International Master in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies:  
University of Glasgow

Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science (Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian  
Studies): University of Tartu

Master of Arts (MA) in Political Science (Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian  
Studies): Corvinus University Budapest, Hungary

Name: Owen Howells    Matriculation Number(s): 2376547H/I8Y5JT    Word Count:  
23,957

Supervisors: Dr Éva Ványi (CUB), Dr Vladimir Unkovski-Korica (University of Glasgow)

September 2020

University of Tartu Author's Declaration:

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

Signed: Owen Howells....(signature of author)

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Owen Howells (personal identification code:2376547H/ I8Y5JT)

1. herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making thesis public, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright, my thesis entitled:\_\_\_\_ 'COOPERATION, CONFLICT AND CO-OPTION: DEFINING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ROYAL DICTATORSHIPS OF SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FAR-RIGHT DURING THE INTERBELLUM'

Supervised by: Dr. Eva Vanyi, Dr. Vladimir Unkovski-Korica.

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the work specified in p. 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives, until the expiry of the term of copyright.

3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in pp. 1 and 2.

4. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

Done at Tartu/Tallinn/Narva/Pärnu/Viljandi on \_\_\_\_/09/2020\_\_\_\_ (date)

Signed : Owen Howells

## Contents

Abstract.....	3
Introduction .....	3
Literature Review .....	7
Methodology.....	14
Case Selection .....	14
Defining the Far-right.....	17
Conceptualising Royal Dictatorship and the Variables Affecting the Nature of the Regimes. ....	20
Methodological Approach .....	24
‘One, State, One People, One King’ - Yugoslavia under King Aleksandar and Prince-Regent Pavle.....	25
Background and the Road to Dictatorship.....	25
The Establishment of Royal Dictatorship.....	27
The Rising Influence of External Fascism and the Road to War.....	32
‘King of the Peasants’: Carol II of Romania .....	33
Background and the Road to Dictatorship.....	33
The Rising Influence of External Fascism and the Road to War.....	41
‘Boris, Bulgaria, God!’: Boris III of Bulgaria .....	42
Background and the Road to Dictatorship.....	42
The Establishment of Royal Dictatorship.....	45
The Rising Influence of External Fascism and the Road to War.....	46
Conclusion.....	48
Bibliography .....	53

# ‘Cooperation, Conflict and Co-option: Defining Relationships between the Royal Dictatorships of South Eastern Europe and the Far-right during the Interbellum’

## Abstract

This study will examine existing academic materials to explore the relationship the Royal Dictatorships of Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria had with the far-right movements in their respective countries. It will seek to define this relationship and produce a comparison between the three. It will seek to produce a detailed oversight of often competing historical narratives in academic literature to find an accurate picture to present. Were they truly ‘Monarcho-Fascist’ regimes as their left-wing opponents would argue; were they merely utilising far-right support and style to provide stability; or where they actively hostile to the far-right, fighting a losing battle in a charged political atmosphere. Understanding this relationship can help us explain the shift from constitutional monarchy to royal dictatorship and explore the nature of those regimes. By comparing the three countries, it endeavours produce a model for explaining the choices made by the respective monarchs; to Cooperate, Conflict or Co-Opt.

## Introduction

“The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.” — L.P. Hartley, ‘The Go-Between’.

The past is a foreign country, a sentiment most befitting the region and time this study will examine. South Eastern Europe; notably the Balkans; has been defined in common thought by post-war events; the advent of communism; Tito’s Yugoslavia; that country’s dramatic collapse into civil war and ethnic strife. Looking further into history the complex interweaving of Ottoman heritage and national awakening collides into the First World War with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June 1914. Between these more familiar periods of history, lies the interbellum; a lost world where newly independent, or freshly emboldened states struggled to survive in a period of economic and political turmoil; a brave new world still convulsing from the rapid changes brought by the post First World War peace treaties.

These countries, were, in the most-part, led by monarchs, who at the outset at least, oversaw democratic parliamentary system from a constitutional position, but who would later assume dictatorial powers as democracy fell throughout the region. Part of a pattern that swept across the continent, as country after country succumbed to authoritarian leadership. They faced the complex

task of balancing nation building; shoring-up their own fragile, relatively young thrones; economic chaos; all whilst interacting with an increasingly extreme and polarising political atmosphere. Key to understanding this transition from democratic constitutional monarchs to royal dictatorship is the relationship between the monarchy and the far-right within each country. Much historiography has placed blame for this shift as the growing threat from Communism, indeed this was often used as justification for anti-democratic coups, but as this study will explore, the relationship between the monarchy and the far-right had equally as great an impact on the road towards authoritarianism.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the royal dictatorships of the interbellum, along with their republican counterparts have often been dismissed under the banner of fascist-sympathisers and assumed the collective guilt of tolerance towards, or participation in, the rise of the Axis-powers. This served the purpose of justifying the post-war Communist coup d'états' and in a contemporary context the subversion of democracy alone is enough to draw parallels, inaccurately, with Hitler, Franco or Mussolini. The far-right; often imprecisely synonymised with fascism; has for much of the last eighty years been a pariah; an anathema to all that is good; an ultimate insult to be levelled at political opponents. This last point muddies the waters of academic discourse on this period, as Marxist scholars and post-war communist governments were keen to label all potential opponents as potential fascists or fascist sympathisers, not least the deposed monarchies. In addition, the desire to provide a legal and moral 'break' with anything potentially tarnished with the stain of wartime fascist atrocities has meant a distancing from ownership and thorough investigation of these relationships. This applies not only to the countries as a whole, but especially to the monarchical dynasties. It is without question that the monarchs in this study at times subverted the democratic process and assumed dictatorial powers. Some adopted cults of personality and styles more familiar with their fascist counterparts in Italy and Spain. All at times had to engage with the far-right in their own countries and were fatefully dominated by relations with Hitler's Germany. The Marxist post-war dismissal of these regimes as fascist or at least sympathetic to fascism belies a far more intricate relationship, so too does the monarchist-apologist portrayal as victims of circumstance in a time of unprecedented political pressure. The competing historical narratives must be unravelled to try and produce a clearer sense of the relationship the monarchies of this region had with the far-right, for better or for worse.

However, during the interbellum, fascist and far-right politics were not only accepted, they gained significant popular support, either as genuine adherents or out of a common desire to halt the spread of communism. Far-right movements often targeted democratic governments; criticising their governmental ineptitude in the face of economic crises; promising a strong and radically different alternative. In the midst of this political chaos sat the monarchy.

The most obvious threat to the monarchs of this era; one which would ultimately be their downfall after the Second World War; was the far-left and Communism. Communist forces had already participated in revolutions across Europe, to a varying degree of success and were inspired and sponsored by their patron in the newly established USSR. It is of no real surprise, given the hostility and incompatibility of communist ideology with Monarchy, that the two forces were fundamentally opposed. However, a second movement, more amorphous, but just as potent, was growing.

To the far-right, the Monarchy, may at first glance be an obvious ally. The monarch; glorious symbol of the nation; hostile to communism and often suspicious of democracy. Certainly, a surface overview of far-right movements reveals evidence to that effect; from the British Union of Fascists' declaration of 'absolute loyalty to the Crown' advocating the Monarchy's role leading Britain's imperial splendour (Lewis, 1990, p. 51); to Mussolini's alliance with King Victor Emmanuel and the Pseudo-Monarchical system under Franco in Spain. The reality on the ground in South Eastern Europe however was far from simple and the view of the far-right of monarchy and the latter's relationship with the former are thus complicated by a multitude of factors. The three countries at the centre of this study; Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia; were all relatively new creations, with Yugoslavia only being formed in 1918. They had similarly young monarchies, mostly foreign in origin, though that of Yugoslavia stemmed from the Karađorđević dynasty dating to the 1804 Serbian Insurrection (Žanić, 2003, p. 51), they nonetheless hadn't the deep history of monarchies in Britain, France, or Spain. However quite unlike the monarchies in the three Western-European countries mentioned, the Kings of Bulgaria, Romania and Yugoslavia would assume dictatorial powers, putting them at the forefront of political life and forcing their direct interaction with the far-right to a level far beyond that of their constitutional and deposed counterparts in the West.

It is also important to understand that just as the situation of the Monarch in these countries was complex, so too was it for the far-right. The far-right, as with much of politics is a diverse and often amorphous entity, with a multitude of parties and organisations potentially fitting under its broad umbrella. This study will, for the sake of academic lucidity and the constraints of time, focus only on those organisations mentioned below.

This study will focus on three countries: Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Romania.

In Bulgaria the Tsar Boris III, who had acceded to the throne in 1918 after the abdication of his father Ferdinand I, following a string of disastrous military defeats for Bulgaria and growing unpopularity due to his openly pro-German sentiments. His family was German in origin and their throne only thirty-

one years old, Boris's father being plucked from relative obscurity in the German nobility to be ruler of Bulgaria in 1887 (Constant, 1979). Boris faced leading a defeated and humiliated country, truncated by the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine, with prominent political forces; namely the Agrarian Union and Communist Party; advocating the abolition of the monarchy (Veremis, 2017, p. 49). Whilst initially a constitutional monarch, Boris would seize power in 1935 with the assistance of a cadre of right-wing military officers and politicians. The far-right in Bulgaria during this period centred around the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO); Bulgarian National Socialist Party led by former Prime Minister Alexander Tsankov; pro-Nazi Union of Bulgarian Legions under General Hristo Lukov; Ratnik (Warriors); and finally the Military League-Zveno (Circle) movement, though as will later be discussed the latter may be erroneously included in the far-right camp (Chary, 2007, p. 124). The IMRO also played an active role in Yugoslavia, though with considerably different motivations, as this study will investigate.

In Romania King Carol II; described by Quinlan as the 'Playboy King' (Quinlan, 1995); came to the throne controversially in 1930, displacing his infant son Mihai. Carol had been by-passed in the succession in 1925; deemed ineligible by his father Ferdinand for his hedonistic lifestyle and affair with his mistress Magda Lupescu which had resulted in his divorce from Crown Princess Helen (Sachar, 2003, p. 90). Like Boris he was German in heritage; part of an imported dynasty for a newly emerging Romania during the 1860's; but also had ties to the UK through his mother and was initially a Francophile. Offsetting his international background and hedonistic lifestyle with the increasingly critical political forces within Romania; from all sides of the political divide; was an uphill struggle. Carol made little attempt to remain within his constitutional remit, eventually taking full control in 1938. Romania's far-right was dominated by the Legion of the Archangel Michael/Iron Guard, led by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu; the League for Christian National Defence of A.C. Cuza and finally the Military-Fascist government of Ion Antonescu.

In Yugoslavia King Aleksandar I, born the second son of an exiled Serbian Prince, was by 1920 King of a newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later to become Yugoslavia after his 1928 declaration of a Royal dictatorship. Aleksandar Ujedinitelj or Aleksandar the unifier (Newman, 2007, p. 60) was at least a native of (part) of the land he now reigned over but faced an unenviable task of striking a balance between the constituent nations of the new kingdom and the desire to create a unified state. His 'Yugoslavist' agenda put him at odds with the far-right movements in Croatia and Macedonia, with the latter two ultimately conspiring in his assassination in 1934. His successor Prince-Regent Paul, faced similar issues, however joined by a newly formed Yugoslav fascist-inspired movement of Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović. The far-right movements in Yugoslavia, like all of Yugoslav politics, were divided between a pro-Yugoslavist movement and traditional competing

national lines. To provide a balanced picture, the study will explore the Croatian Ustaše; the IMRO, as previously mentioned in Bulgaria; the Yugoslav National Movement also known as the United Militant Labour Organization/ Zdužena borbena organizacija rada (Zbor) led by Dimitrije Ljotić and subsequently as previously mentioned the Yugoslav Radical Union/ Jugoslovenska radikalna zajednica (JRZ) of Milan Stojadinović.

This study will examine existing academic materials to explore the relationship these three monarchies had with the far-right movements in their respective countries. It will seek to define this relationship and produce a comparison between the three. It will seek to produce a detailed oversight of often competing historical narratives in academic literature to find an accurate picture to present. Were they truly fascist or far-right sympathisers as their left-wing opponents would argue, were they merely utilising far-right support and style to provide stability? Were they actively hostile to the far-right, fighting a losing battle in a charged political atmosphere? By comparing the three countries, it endeavours to explain the choices made by the respective monarchs; to Cooperate, Conflict or Co-Opt.

This thesis will argue that whilst the Royal Dictatorships in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria to a greater or lesser extent remain within the confines of the conservative-right-authoritarian albeit with moments of cooperation with, and certainly co-option of, the far-right. By comparison, the reign of King Carol in Romania, whilst containing some of the most violent conflict with the far-right, pushes the boundaries far beyond the confines of conservative authoritarianism. In fact, this thesis will argue that in contrast to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, Carol's Romania was heading in a far from conservative direction and furthermore, more than simply interacting with the far-right was becoming a leading force in that movement. Finally, it will raise the need to recover the term Monarcho-Fascism, free from the bias of Marxist historiography, to apply in cases such as Romania under Carol II.

## Literature Review

As outlined in the introduction, the historiography of this subject and period is broadly divided into three schools of approach. The first two provide an interesting insight into the competing narratives surrounding the Royal Dictatorships, they do 'muddy the waters' however in trying to establish an unbiased review of the relationship they had with the far-right. Presenting two extremes of the argument, from absolute assertion of Fascist ideology to highly sympathetic almost apologist declarations of absolute, heroic innocence. The third grouping, primarily found amongst Western European scholars and more extensively since the collapse of communism, presents variations of a



more balanced approach. One thing they do all have in common is their tendency to focus on the innocence or guilt of those under scrutiny, especially in the light of their relationship with Nazi Germany and the Second World War, rather than examining how they interacted with far-right movements in their own countries. In addition, whatever the historiographical leaning there is a bias towards a broader, biographical approach, rather than issue-based analysis and a chronological fixation on the Second World War, with the interbellum presented too often as a preamble. There are however a few notable exceptions which I will review shortly.

Two works in particular stand out as having been particularly inspirational for this study. Firstly, 'Balkan Strongman: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of South Eastern Europe', as edited by Bernd J. Fisher. Secondly, 'In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe', as edited by Rebecca Haynes and Martyn Rady. The former provides an excellent chapter by chapter overview of the three raw dictatorships. The latter presents in a similar format a review of the political positions of those leaders and politicians of the far-right with whom they would have interacted. However, neither specifically concentrate on the issue of the relationship between the far right and the raw dictatorships. The work edited by Haynes and Rady takes an analytical approach to the political positioning of each of the leaders studied. It debates their position within the political spectrum and attempts to conclude whether or not each could be considered fascist. It demonstrates the difficulty in placing even apparently clear-cut cases within the political spectrum of the far-right, especially given emphasis of individual personalities on influencing political direction. This is an issue also later touched upon by Roumen Daskhalov, emphasizing the importance of charismatic leadership in far-right movements, the need for a 'Führer' figure. A role fulfilled by the Royal-Dictatorships, if adhering to Communist historiography (Daskalov, 2011, p. 168). It is this approach that I felt should be applied to the Royal dictatorship's, as their precise inter-relationship with the Far-right is rarely directly addressed rather touched upon as part of the greater historical narrative. For example in Haynes and Rady's book; Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović is analysed by Dejan Djokić (Djokić, 2014, pp. 153-168) for his potential fascist leanings. This is a debate which occurs quite regularly in works focusing on this era. However fewer historical works looking at the personality and the rule of King Alexander or Regent Prince Paul subject them and their actions to similar scrutiny. Fewer still seek to compare and contrast the Royal Dictatorships or their relationship with the Far-right. However Djokić's analysis of the political leanings of Stojadinović, along with similar studies within the book; Dimitrije Ljotić by Jovan Byford, Ion Antonescu by Denis Delatant and Corneliu Codreanu by Rebecca Haynes; provide an excellent guide in discerning with elements of the Right can be considered far-right or indeed fascist in order to investigate their relationship with the Royal Dictatorships. A task not easy in the myriad of complex political movements that define the era in question. The most comprehensive

work in this regard would be Philip Rees's 1990 'Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right since 1890', in it Rees outlines the key figures of the Extreme-right, across the globe he has identified, although he freely admits the list is not exhaustive due to limited space and continuous debate on the definition of Extreme-right. Whilst somewhat light on detail as to the precise methodology he uses to compile his cases, he singles out Stanley Payne's 1995 pivotal work the 'History of Fascism' as providing the key definitions, a source that this study along with others has returned to as a source of definition for what is often a subject that defeats definition. Whilst each of the individual biographical entries are short, they are informative and provide an excellent springboard from which to conduct further study.

Haynes in her chapter on Corneliu Codreanu and a number of additional works such as her 2007 work 'Reluctant Allies? Iuliu Maniu and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu against King Carol II of Romania', as the title suggests, goes into a much more detailed account of the tumultuous relationship King Carol II had with Codreanu and the Legionary (Iron Guard) movement. Haynes demonstrates the complex nature of Carol's reign, being seduced by the pomp and populism the far-right could bring his rule yet finding the Legionary movement unwilling to cooperate and fundamentally opposed to his rule and lifestyle choices, most notably his choice in mistress in Magda Lupescu. However, the focus of Haynes work is on Codreanu himself and the cooperation with National Peasant Party Leader Iuliu Maniu, and their shared dislike for the Monarch, rather than on the rule of King Carol himself. It is however an invaluable resource to ascertain the way Carol was perceived by the Iron Guard.

The work edited by Fisher, is in a similar format to that edited by Haynes and Rady, with each subject of study presented in a discreet chapter by different historians. Whilst it presents a focused overview of the rule of Boris III, Aleksandar I, and Carol II, the method of presentation excludes direct comparison between the three. Equally whilst the issue of the far-right does appear, the level of focus is limited and differs between the three. Brigit Farley's Chapter on Aleksandar for example rarely mentions the issue of the far right beyond a few lines on the Ustaša whilst discussing the Croatian question- the issue which understandably dominates much historical debate of interwar Yugoslavia. She does however include a useful paragraph summarizing the different historiographical approaches to Aleksandar's rule ranging from a traitor to Serbs to the label of 'Monarcho-Fascist' a term which dominates communist historiography and will be discussed later (Farley, 2007, p. 83). By contrast Maria Bucur's chapter on Carol II not only includes significant detail about his relationship with the Legionary movement, but also how Carol's own worldview affected his sympathies. However, it fails to address the cult of personality Carol attempted to culture nor the political positioning of the party created by him as a state monopoly, the National Renaissance Front. What Bucur does address is the debate over the level of sovereignty Carol and by extension the other monarchs had over their own

destiny, or whether they were merely affecting minor influence over the overwhelming forces of politics at the time. Bucur further debates the nature of Carol's 'dictatorship' using Ronald Wintrobe's 1998 work on typology of Dictatorships, classifying Carol rather unflatteringly as a 'tinpot' dictator as opposed to a totalitarian, tyrant or timocrat (Wintrobe, 1998, p. 11) (Bucur, 2007, pp. 87-117).

Stanley Payne's 1995 work 'A History of Fascism 1914-45' is a critical work in the definition of what is meant by far-right in this paper, as will be discussed further in the methodology. Payne also contributes to the historical debate of the political positioning of the Royal Dictatorship and critically their relationship with the far-right. Payne argues that they adhere to a 'Balkan Model' which he describes as a 'rightest authoritarian system under the crown'. A system which, at least in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, sees proto-Fascist and Far-Right organisations suppressed by the regime alongside their communist opponents (Payne, 1995, pp. 326-327).

This is countered by Mlakar who quotes Juan Linz's definition in Payne's earlier 1980 work 'Fascism, Comparison and Definition', arguing that Linz's definition implies the term Monarcho-Fascist is entirely accurate when applied to Aleksandar's dictatorship. However, he goes on to highlight that some scholars even doubt the fascist credentials of the Ustaša. The debate, in his opinion, is still a 'dilemma' (Mlakar, 2009, pp. 12-13).

Payne is less clear on Carol's position in Romania, focusing more on the overtly fascist movements under Codreanu and Antonescu, however clearly defines the Carolists within Romanian political life as belonging in the same conservative authoritarian right-wing. Confusingly though Payne refers to the regime in Yugoslavia as semi-authoritarian, as opposed to the fully authoritarian epithet applied to Boris's rule. He doesn't define why this is the case, however as this in reference to the suppression of Zbor, an organisation which only came into being after Aleksandar's assassination, may possibly refer to the less autocratic approach of Prince-Regent Pavle, though this is unclear.

Despite Payne's assertions that the three Royal-Dictatorships were Conservative Authoritarian rather than far-right or Fascist, Communist historiography stuck to a much harder-line that labelled them as 'Monarcho-Fascist' regimes; an approach which dominated the historical debate in the region for most of the post-war period. This continued to hold sway amongst some in-country academics long after the blanket assumption of fascism or fascist affiliations of the Interbellum authorities had been debunked elsewhere (Daskalov, 2011, p. 172). Formulating not only assumptions about the regimes themselves, but their relationship with far-right movements.

Roumen Dashkalov in his 2011 work 'Debating the past modern Bulgarian history from Stambalov to Zhivkov, presents a detailed overview of the post-WW2 debate on the role of fascism in the Royal

Dictatorships and Bulgarian political life in general. He outlines that whilst the various factions and parties that made up interwar Bulgarian political life were gradually excused of their 'fascist' labels even during communist rule, the 'last bastion' in the communist conception of fascist rule in Bulgaria to fall was the royal dictatorship (Daskalov, 2011, p. 165). The epitaph 'Monarcho-Fascist' is once again applied here to Boris III's rule. Dashkalov describes how any evidence to the contrary was written off by Communist Bulgarian historians such as Ilcho Dimitrov for example the role Boris III played in preventing the deportation of Bulgarian Jews is attributed rather to 'mass anti-fascist action' (Daskalov, 2011, p. 167). Dashkalov argues that historians such as Dimitrov and Dimitur Sirkov sought to adapt the definition of fascism to fit the Royal Dictatorship, explaining away the absence of key attributes as a new brand of fascism, a Bulgarian 'variant', with Boris III fulfilling the role of the 'Bulgarian Führer' and the state itself fulfilling the role of a mass-movement (Daskalov, 2011, pp. 167-168) (Dimitrov, 1971, pp. 94-95). This is in stark contrast with Western historiographical approach in which Dashkalov summarises the approaches of Stanley Payne and Richard Crampton whom both place Boris's regime firmly in the camp of 'moderate right-wing authoritarian' and critically not fascist (Crampton, 1987, p. 128). Dashkalov's work whilst perhaps frustrating in its lack of conclusion with regards to the true nature of Boris III's regime or its relationship with the far-right, does provide and all important insight into the development of post-war historiography on the subject, especially under the communist yolk. It demonstrates the danger of taking works from this period at face-value, but also highlights the difficulty of obtaining a dispassionate literature base, given the large quantity of sources which stem from this time period and region.

Markus Wien also pursues this argument outlining that the communist authorities were keen to define Boris III's regime as 'Monarcho-Fascist' as part of a campaign to 'eliminate any positive memory of the monarchy', a dark past which had been 'overcome', the state-sponsored academic output would naturally echo this approach (Wien, 2006, p. 79). Ivo Banac also highlights a similar problem in Yugoslavia, with Tito personally setting the tone of historiographical debate on the Royal Dictatorship, adhering to the 'Monarcho-Fascist' label (Banac, 1992, p. 1085). Though the use of 'Monarcho-Fascist' as a label was used in contemporary descriptions too, not just post-war. As Bashakova highlights, communist inspired Macedonian students called for an end to the 'Monarcho-Fascist' dictatorship in 1936 (Boskovska, 2017, p. 86).

Payne is especially scathing of this approach, arguing that describing someone as fascist because they share an opposition to liberalism and Marxism, as being akin to 'likening Stalinism and Rooseveltian democracy because they were both opposed to Hitlerism'. The label served a powerful purpose for Communist authorities, but was also, Payne highlights, a trap contemporary commentators fell into

due to falsely associating Conservative Authoritarian leadership with the growing Fascist phenomena (Payne, 1995, p. 16).

Stephane Groueff's 1987 work 'Crown of Thorns: The Reign of King Boris III of Bulgaria 1918 to 1943' is arguably at the other end of the historiographical extreme to the communist historians debated by Dashkalov. Along with Pashanko Dimitroff's 1986 work 'Boris III of Bulgaria: Toiler, Citizen, King'; represents a sympathetic, revised approach to study of the Royal Dictatorship. Even the very titles are evocative of Boris being a heroic figure struggling with the heavy burden of ruling a country besieged by malign forces internal and external. Groueff's account is potentially useful as it presents a counterpoint to communist malignment, it is of added interest that Groueff's background growing up in the Bulgarian court provides a first-hand insight to events. Unfortunately, the highly romanticised style and unquestionable pro-Monarchist bias makes it difficult to assess the academic value of the content. Often the book takes on the tone of a home-sick memoir rather than an academic work. However that is not to say it is without value for this study, it is full of personal accounts, quotes etc which are too often absent in other works, which given the highly personal nature of the Royal-Dictatorship, has value in attempting to grasp Boris III's approach to the far-right, even if this evidence has to be taken with a certain degree of caution.

Dimitroff's work however, whilst still sympathetic to Boris on a personal level, takes a more academically rigorous approach, debating the effectiveness of his position vis-à-vis the increasing dominance of Germany in Bulgarian domestic and foreign policy most notably the 'saving' of Bulgarian Jewry. Whilst Dimitroff's argument on this issue is a far cry from the resurgent monarchist movement that would campaign successfully for a monument to Boris to be erected in Israel for his actions (subsequently dismantled) (Grosvald, 2007, p. 267), it does however excuse the King's often tepid actions against the overwhelming force of the Third Reich (Dimitroff, 1986, p. 184). Whilst Dimitroff's works style is more academic in its approach, there is a distinct lack of rigorous referencing; making cross referencing and fact checking extremely difficult; it does like Groueff's work, contain a large number of useful quotes outlining Boris's personal approach to his rule, other political figures such as Bogdan Filov, and of course external forces such as Hitler's Germany. Where these are referenced, they form a more detailed overview of Boris's life and rule, something often absent from other works.

On a similar vein, within the more biographical approach is Neil Balfour and Sally Mackay's 1980 biography of Prince-Regent Pavle of Yugoslavia, entitled 'Britain's Maligned Friend'. One of the very few works discussing the role of Prince-Regent Pavle is a valuable resource in understanding the man who ruled Yugoslavia through some of its most turbulent years. The authors support the argument that Paul was far less authoritarian in his approach than Aleksandar, leading to a rapprochement with

Slovene and Croatian leaders, most notably Vladko Maček (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, pp. 109-111). From the perspective of this study, Balfour and McKay's book is key in providing the background knowledge to form a clearer impression of Paul's approach to the far-right, both in terms of the Croatian Ustaša but also the para-Fascist and radical right Zbor movement and the premiership of Milan Stojadinović. In addition, it covers the period where Yugoslavia was under increasing pressure, and eventually kowtowed to German demands in signing the Tripartite pact. A more comprehensive and academically vigorous work than Dimitroff or Groueff, it nonetheless reveals a distinctly sympathetic tone, as the title would suggest. It is perhaps unsurprising that upon writing a biographical study that the authors might develop a personal affinity to the subject. Unlike Groueff's work I would argue this sympathetic approach does not overly contradict historical accuracy. Pavle's actions are still analysed in detail, and a clear picture of the man complete with faults is drawn. This is especially the case in exploring Pavle's relationship with Stojadinović which reveals not only the former's opinions and actions with regards to the latter, but also crucial for this study Pavle's mistrust for Stojadinović's fascist sympathies. A mistrust, the authors highlight separately, very much stemming from Pavle's attribution of blame for Aleksandar's assassination to the 'Great Fascist' the term the latter coined for Mussolini (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 98). However, the authors are also keen to balance the impression of Pavle, hinting at his admiration for what the Nazis had achieved for Germany, given his shared 'mania' of hatred for bolshevism. Contrary to the impression often given, by an almost total absence of mentions of Pavle in discussions regarding Stojadinović e.g. Djokić, the authors emphasise opinions at the time show Pavle was perhaps more dominant than expected and indeed was arguably the more impulsive of the two (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 129).

It is of interest that whilst Pavle, Boris and Aleksandar are all subject to works more sympathetic of their relationship with the far-right, there is a distinct absence of a similar revision with regards to Carol, suggesting his position is the subject of far less debate. Even Hayne's measured and analytical approach to Carol's relationship with Codreanu does little to dispel the impression of Carol as highly sympathetic to the far right, if only to further his personal ambitions. As there is a lack of direct comparative analysis of the three Royal Dictatorships, it is difficult to establish whether this is a fair assessment or whether Carol's disreputable character combined with the focus of monarchist support lying with his son Michael as a result of his decisive coup against far-right leader Ion Antonescu in 1944, has resulted in a lack of demand for a historical review or revisionist approach.

Pavle's cousin and predecessor King Aleksandar, often overlooked in the subject of the far-right beyond his assassination by IMRO and Ustaša operatives, is subject to an intriguing study in the form of John Paul Newman's 2017 article 'War Veterans, Fascism, and Para-Fascist Departures in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1918-1941'. Newman doesn't depart from the concept of Aleksandar as a

conservative authoritarian leader, agreeing with Antony Polonsky's argument that the 'reactive illiberalism' of the Royal Dictatorship was not the same as the extreme radicalism of fascist and far-right movements such as Zbor or the Ustaša (Polonsky, 1975) (Newman, 2007, p. 43). What he does do however is explore the involvement of para-fascist organisations in the support for Aleksandar in the build up to and the establishment of the Royal Dictatorship. These para-fascist organisations such as ORJUNA, often stemmed from war-veteran organisations and would later form the core of more truly fascist organisations in the 1930's such as Zbor. Aleksandar's war time actions, as the victorious 'unifier' of Yugoslavia, Newman argues, placed him in high prestige with such organisations who perceived him as the more 'obvious symbol of national unity and patriotism' than the floundering parliamentary democracy (Newman, 2007, p. 60). Newman goes on to argue that the shared frustration with the democratic system, caused Aleksandar to heed the calls of such organisations. Whilst Newman does point out that the most violent and extreme organisations such as ORJUNA were suppressed upon the establishment of the dictatorship, Aleksandar continued to recognise the importance of such organisations as a 'pillar' of his regime. This relationship can help explain and define the relationship the often-illusive Aleksandar had with far-right movements, at least within the Serbian/ Yugoslav camp.

Ivan Berend goes further, in his 1998 work, 'Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe before World War Two'. He argues that Aleksandar shared some anti-democratic sympathies with proto-fascist veterans organisations but actively supported paramilitary 'Great Yugoslavian' organisations such as the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists. Berend also goes on to argue Aleksandar took action to re-organise Yugoslavia along distinctly fascist lines, at least with regards to the economy and trade unions (Berend, 2001, pp. 327-328).

This leads conclusively to the need for a more comprehensive comparative study between the three Royal Dictatorships, to establish a sharper picture of the questionable relationship between the far-right and the monarchy.

## Methodology

### Case Selection

This study aims to use existing academic works, which do not necessarily focus on the precise topic of study, but whose arguments and evidence; in the form of primary, original-language sources and quotations can be repurposed to explore the relationship between the Royal Dictatorships and the

far-right. As discussed in the literature review much of the pertinent works are somewhat biographical in nature, or more focused on the characters of the far-right than on the Royal Dictatorships. The weighting of academic literature, communist historiography besides, now seems to adhere approximately to Payne's placement of all three within a Conservative-Authoritarian model. Despite this analysis, when the Royal Dictatorships are the focus, the debate tends (though not exclusively) to remain on the relative political positioning of the Royal Dictatorships i.e. if they themselves are fascist. This seems to imply there is room for further debate, which a comparative study may provide a useful contribution. If the Royal Dictatorships are not far-right themselves, then what was the relationship they had with those parties, individuals and organisations which fit within this category. Can categorisation as far-right be entirely ruled out by existing historiographical debate? This study will examine how the Royal Dictatorships conflicted, co-opted, and cooperated with the far-right; to assist in defining this relationship, how each contributed to the other's success or failure.

Whilst in an ideal world more primary sources would be utilised, the lack of easy access, and crucially the reliability of these sources is often called into question. First-hand accounts are often subject to political bias or post-war adaptations by communist authorities. The diaries of Bulgarian War Time Prime Minister Bogdan Filov have been subjected to an 'interpretation' by communist historians and suppression from the very top of the communist hierarchy (Daskalov, 2011, p. 166). Equally the memoirs of Ustaša leader Ante Pavelić were written long after the events he describes and must be viewed through the lens of someone wishing to defer guilt, a revised account in light of the outcome of the War. Whilst these sources, especially the latter, is informative and revealing, they should be taken with a degree of scepticism, thus secondary academic analysis will form the basis for this study, complemented where possible with primary sources.

In selecting countries for this study Romania and Bulgaria and Yugoslavia stood out, as the most obvious choices for a comparative study. Geographically neighbours and sharing a similar transition from constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy in the 1920s through to Royal Dictatorships. All three suffered the political instability of the 1920's, driven to a greater or lesser extent by financial crises, communist and far-right agitation. All three also experienced the growing influence, first from Fascist Italy but from the early 1930's onwards, increasing economic and political influence of Nazi Germany. In any study, finding three perfectly analogous countries is always going to be a challenge. Romania and Bulgaria are set apart somewhat from Yugoslavia in that their trajectory resulted in their participation in the Axis powers. Equally Yugoslavia's position is somewhat different to the others given its multi-ethnic composition and the complexities stemming from that. Romania too had significant minorities, which would contribute to it being drawn into the Second



World War, however this was not on the same level as Yugoslavia, as the Hungarian or German minorities were not comparable in numbers or influence to the Croats in Yugoslavia.

One could also argue that the German origins of the Romanian and Bulgarian monarchies compared to the indigenous Serbian origins of the Karađorđević dynasty, may also have an impact on relationships with the far-right especially given the ethno-nationalistic nature of that political sphere. However, this can be countered in the fact the Karađorđević dynasty whilst native to Serbian was an external imposition to Croats, Slovenes and Muslims. The regimes of these two countries under Boris III and Carol II have often being presented in the historiography as 'Monarcho-Fascist' regime's or at the least sympathetic to the far right they thus stood out as prime candidates to explore the relationship between the far right and the monarchy, by comparison Yugoslavia occupied by the Axis, thus perceived as a victim of Fascism rather than a perpetrator has been somewhat overlooked in this regard. This did not however prevent accusations of Monarcho-Fascism being levelled at the Royal Dictatorship both at the time and in the Communist period. In this instance the subtle differences between the three countries can provide an interesting backdrop on which to compare the relationship between the far-right in the monarchy, it is also important to not let the events of the Second World War over-shadow the subtleties of relationships in the early 30s. The Communist regimes in the post-war era regularly sought to discredit these regimes by strongly associating them with Nazi Germany and Fascism.

It was for this reason, and in order to provide a more balanced approach, that this study will also look at Yugoslavia. The monarchy in Yugoslavia especially under the Regency of Prince Pavle was the most unequivocally pro-Allied regime in the area, despite later being discredited in being forced to sign the Tripartite Pact (Balfour & MacKay, 1980). Yugoslavia's uneasy if not actively hostile relationship with both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy set it apart from both Romania and Bulgaria, and thus lacked a close relationship with a patron of the far right. Of course, this did not stop nationalist groups within Yugoslavia seeking Italian help. However, almost by definition, such assistance often sought to undermine rather than bolster the monarchy, or at least sought to exert German or Italian dominance. Equally, the dictatorship of King Alexander is lacking the same direct association with Fascism and the far-right due to its untimely end with Alexander's assassination in Marseille in 1934, before the growth of Nazi Germany into a dominant power and the influence that had on far-right across the continent.

The Royal-Dictatorship in Yugoslavia whilst also subject to accusations of 'Monarcho-Fascism' by the post-war Communist government, has not received the same level of historiographical condemnation or scrutiny in this regard as the governments of Boris III and Carol II. It will thus be interesting to explore and compare how the Royal dictatorships interacted with fascist and far right movements;

providing a refreshing perspective, whilst trying to avoid the avarice of hindsight of the Second World War and limiting the bias of post-war Communist historiography. One final point on Yugoslavia that must be addressed, is the extension of the study to include the Regency of Prince Pavle. To provide a fair and direct comparison, it seems important to continue the Yugoslav element of the study beyond 1934, as the late 1930's saw all three countries exposed to the increasing influence of Nazi Germany both in terms of foreign policy but also internal politics. It is thus arguably the most dynamic time period to examine the relationship between the Royal Dictatorships and the far-right; and the potential impact external influence had on this relationship. To study Bulgaria and Romania during this period, yet exclude a Yugoslav contemporary seemed a methodological error. Whilst Pavle's rule was sufficiently less autocratic, that contemporary sources would describe Yugoslavia as a dictatorship without a dictator (Seton Watson, 1937, p. 102), the fundamental structure of the Royal-Dictatorship remained intact and ultimate power remained with Pavle. Thus, there is little reason to exclude him as it provides direct contemporary comparison between the three. Naturally, there were other contenders for the study, namely Greece and Albania, both of whom possessed dictatorial regimes either controlled by or closely affiliated to the monarchy. I ruled out including Greece on the primary ground that the Metaxas regime more closely reflected the situation in Italy, with power lying with a dictatorial Prime Minister rather than in a Royal Dictatorship (Payne, 1995, p. 327). One could argue that this would also be the situation under the Regency of Prince Pavle and the Premiership of Milan Stojadinović in Yugoslavia, ultimate authority remained with the monarchy in that case. Albania was ruled out for two reasons; firstly, lack of accessible source material to provide an accurate comparison, and secondly the regime of Ahmed Zogu was quite unlike the monarchies in neighbouring states, in fact quite unique in Europe. His ascendancy from president to monarch whilst acquiring ever-more autocratic powers stands at odds with the trajectory from traditional constitutional monarchy to Royal Dictatorship seen in the three selected case studies (Fisher, 2007, pp. 19-50).

### Defining the Far-right

One of the more challenging aspects of this study is identifying parties and organisations which fit a clear definition within the far-right. Philip Rees quotes British Conservative Ian Gilmour in describing the right as 'like the elephant, easily recognised when it is seen' (Rees, 1990, p. XVII), and this is especially true for the myriad of complex figures and movements in Yugoslavia, Romania and especially Bulgaria which often seem to defy clear definition, yet 'feel' as though they belong in the

far-right camp. As with many studies on this subject I have turned to Stanley Payne's superb 'A History of Fascism' in assistance in providing clarity. However, even Payne's comprehensive guide to the movement is described by him as 'a working definition' (Payne, 1995, p. 3). Even far-right archetypes such as Mussolini's Italy and Nazi Germany differed significantly, at least in the beginning, in policies seen as inseparable from a modern understanding of European far-right movements, such as state sponsored anti-Semitism. The Croatian Ustaša, for example, had a significant number of Jewish members in the formative years of its existence, before it began to adopt policies to adhere to the Nazi world view (Yeomans, 2013, p. 6). It is for that reason that this work will take a broader approach using the term far-right as opposed to a narrow fascism terminology, though this in itself creates additional problems as discussed later. Payne helpfully produces a table separating out the three faces of authoritarian nationalism dividing Fascists from the Radical-right and the Conservative-right (Payne, 1995, p. 15). For the sake of this study the first two columns are of most interest. To focus purely on fascism is too constraining given the complex nature of the political situation in the three countries and study. Payne identifies organisations such as Zbor, ORJUNA in Yugoslavia and the National Christians of Romania as fitting within the 'radical right'; the Iron Guard (Legionaries) and the Ustaša fit within the definition of 'Fascist'. Helpfully Payne includes King Alexander and indeed Carolists in the Conservative-Right by comparison.

Fascism itself has been defined multiple times and yet remains somewhat illusive. For that reason, taking a cross section of definitions, identifying the key features and taking a more relaxed approach to incorporate the non-fascist radical/far right seems to be the best approach. Djokić provides a comprehensive breakdown on his understanding of fascism '...as an extreme nationalist, right wing ideology or movement with a totalitarian and hierarchical structure that is fundamentally opposed to liberalism democracy and communism. Fascists believe in the superiority of their nation and promote the cult of leader and state. Any opposition is suppressed by means of terror, while fascist societies are, in theory at least, corporatist in nature. The foreign policy of fascist regimes tends to be aggressive and expansionist.' (Djokić, 2014, p. 154). Roger Griffin provided a more succinct approach; '...a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism' (Griffin, 1991, p. 44).

Payne defines the Radical-right as differing from fascism not because it was a more 'moderate' form but simply because it was more 'tied to the existing elites and structures for support' this meant it was unwilling to accept the 'cross class mobilization' and revolutionary social economic and cultural change that was demanded by fascism (Payne, 1995, p. 19). Therefore, within this study, the more revolutionary aspects of fascism can be put aside as a key defining feature in identifying the far-right.

For the sake of parsimony in this study the far right will be understood as an individual or movement which is anti-democratic, anti-communist, openly nationalist but in a dynamic or at least 'palingenetic' form to borrow Griffin's terminology. They promote the concept of a more militarised society with popular mass-movements and an emphasis of a strong 'Führer/Duce' figure, a 'strength' which often corresponds to violent oppression of opposition or those seen as outside the nation. However, they may adhere to existing structures and elites rather than pursuing revolutionary change. The caveat that not all criteria will be met in all cases, should be added. This is not as satisfactory as one might wish, however given the fluid and changeable nature of politics at the time, plus the varied circumstances in the countries in question, applying an entirely rigid definition isn't prudent.

The specific focus of this study does allow a certain flexibility of approach with regards to defining the far-right. Whilst Djokić concludes in his assessment of Milan Stojadinović that the latter's fascist credentials are somewhat lacking (Djokić, 2014, p. 166), a sentiment echoed by Payne's assessment of interwar Yugoslavia (Payne, 1995, p. 325), Stojadinović's flirtation with fascism was enough for Prince-Regent Pavle to distrust, investigate and ultimately contributed to his decision to dismiss him from office (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 159). Thus, whilst Stojadinović's precise political leanings may remain the subject of debate he is still a worthy subject of study in investigating the relationship the Royal-Dictatorship, in particular the Prince Regent had with far-right movements.

Even with a clearer understanding of what the ideal far-right organisation should look like case selection is troubled by two key issues; the infancy of fascism and far-right organisations as a distinct movement in the early part of the period studied; and the political fluidity not only of individuals but of movements as a whole. This is perhaps most clearly yet confusingly demonstrated in Bulgaria with the Zveno movement, which not only appears to span monarchical-republican divides but whose different members would later go on to form both part of the pro-German fascist regime and the communist authorities in the post-war era. As mentioned, this is further complicated by both contemporary misnomers and post-war Marxist historiography, the 'fascist' label being widely applied by the far-left to movements and individuals as a discrediting force. Post-war communist propaganda also influenced non-Marxist historiography, with the 'fascist' label firmly associated with the interbellum monarchies. For example Tito set the tone of Yugoslav communist historiography on King Aleksandar's dictatorship at Fifth Party Congress in 1948, describing it firmly as 'Monarcho-Fascist' (Tito, 1948, p. 29) (Banac, 1992, p. 1085). In addition, the interbellum was a politically vibrant and unstable period, especially in the three countries studied, meaning parties and movements formed, merged and disappeared with alarming speed; it is thus important, for the sake of this study, to only consider those which had large enough influence to affect the Monarchical regimes.

So, taking the discussion back to case-selection, the advantage this study has is the length of period of study. It allows for a broader sense of the direction of movement that particular parties, individuals and organisations are taking, thus allowing a clearer idea of which to focus on based on their consolidation into the 1930s. This comes with the danger of hindsight, assuming a fatalistic trajectory, so must be treated with caution. Equally where organisations are politically complex or diverse such as the aforementioned Zveno or indeed the IMRO it is sensible to identify those elements within the organisation which fall under the scope of the far-right, e.g. the IMRO definitively from 1928 and partially from the early 20's (Chary, 2011, p. 70). However as previously mentioned, as this study is focusing on the relationship the royal dictatorships have with the far-right as a whole, it allows a degree of flexibility.

### Conceptualising Royal Dictatorship and the Variables Affecting the Nature of the Regimes.

It is important to define the precise nature of the regimes of Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria during this period; conceptualise a Royal Dictatorship; identify any differences; and establish at what stage these regimes ceased to be constitutional monarchy and transitioned to dictatorship. The differences in the formation of the dictatorships being important in understanding the similarities and differences in their approach to the far-right.

Juan Linz provides the definition of authoritarian or dictatorial regimes as '... political systems with limited, not responsible political pluralism, without intensive nor extensive political mobilization, and in which a leader or a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.' (Linz, 1975, p. 255). This is a comprehensive statement, though is perhaps challenged when dealing with more totalitarian systems, given their strong focus on mass political mobilisation behind the cause/leader or party.

Przeworski et al prefer a far more simplified version of this defining dictatorships by what they are not i.e. Democracies, those who exercise power are not '...selected by contested election'. This is problematic when dealing with monarchies as almost by definition they are not selected by contested election, however the presence of a monarch does not exclude definition of countries such as the Netherlands or the UK as democracies. The key concept being the role of the monarch, in the UK etc those who actually govern and exercise political power are democratically elected, the monarch remains as a figure-head (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011, p. 241). Ezrow and Frantz argue that when a monarch's role is largely ceremonial the regime itself cannot be defined as a monarchy (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011, p. 22). This is in contrast to the absolute monarchies where power to govern is held by

the monarch without redress. In this thesis it is thus important to establish clearly at what point the monarch gained complete power to govern. In Yugoslavia this would be when King Aleksandar prorogued the constitution in 1929, in Bulgaria the counter coup against Zveno in 1935, and in Romania when King Carol suspended the constitution and seized emergency powers in 1938. Whilst the degree to which the monarch held sway over politics, prior to this varies significantly, this is the stage at which governing power was removed from democratic choice (or alternative dictatorship) and placed solely in the hands of the monarch. There is a good argument to be made that Carol was far more powerful than his contemporaries during the democratic period, and the 1930's were a gradual transition from a true democratic state to the royal dictatorship via a period of managed democracy, or perhaps better described as undermined democracy.

The declaration of the dictatorships did not mean an end to elections however, both Boris and Pavle allowed elections to take place, however they were primarily non-partisan with communist and hostile candidates banned. The only exception to this being the 1939 election in Bulgaria, where there was a restoration of political parties, including the communists, in light of the recent Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, coercing concessions out of Boris's regime (Chary, 2007, p. 131). The presence of elections within a dictatorship may seem counterintuitive, and potentially undermine the validity of a dictatorial classification. Levitsky and Way seek to describe this phenomenon as a Competitive Authoritarian Regime, whereby elections may be held, with 'meaningful contestation for power' however the results of elections are violated regularly by the regime enough to undermine any would be democratic credentials maybe an 'impure' form of dictatorship, but a dictatorship nonetheless (Levitsky & Way, 2002, pp. 52-54).

Michael Herb discusses the role of elections in Royal Dictatorships specifically, discussing how elections are allowed and enabled by the monarchy as they better the chances of the regime surviving by providing a forum for the negotiation of power-sharing 'between palace and parliament' (Herb, 1999, p. 16). However, in all such situations, whilst power may be shared amongst a select group, in the case of the Royal Dictatorships often government approved parties or candidates, the monarch always maintains the role of 'chief arbitrator' (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011, p. 251). This is most clearly observed in the role of Prince-Regent Pavle and Boris during their post-dictatorship elections, but also what Carol was attempting to be even before the dictatorship was declared.

Natasha Ezrow and Erica Frantz discuss the concept of Dynastic and Non-Dynastic Monarchy as defined by Michael Herb (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011, pp. 242-243) (Herb, 1999). Contrary to how these terms may be initially interpreted Non-Dynastic monarchy is not removing the concept of inherited rule through a dynastic line, rather the role the Royal family play in the reign of the Monarch, how

much influence they maintain over royal decision making and lines of succession. This is an interesting concept in regards to this thesis as the rule of Carol II, as will be discussed in the main body of the text, can be seen as becoming increasingly Non-Dynastic as he progressively ostracised his family in favour of a more personal rule as he shifted both towards dictatorship and the far-right. By contrast no such overt shift can be observed in Yugoslavia or Bulgaria, both of which maintained a less 'revolutionary' approach. Lisa Anderson is also quoted as describing non-dynastic monarchs as 'presidential monarchies' or a dominant 'strongman' (Anderson, 1991, p. 11). This once again befits Carol, who, as will be discussed later, increasingly preferred the titles and trappings of a Führer like figure to traditional Royal epithets. A similar approach can potentially be observed in Aleksandar, with the ideology of Yugoslavism being so tightly bound to the person of Aleksandar himself, thus making him such a pivotal target to opponents of the regime and Yugoslav movement. However, his assassination thwarted any further progression along this line, with Prince Pavle taking a distinctly 'Dynastic' approach to the dictatorship. This crucial difference may, amongst other factors such as the strength of domestic far-right support and external pressure from Rome or Berlin, why Carol's regime in Romania was far more openly pro-far-right and fascist ideology. The monarchy in Romania had been eroded to a point, that there were no dynastic checks and balances to his own personal preferences.

A further issue that must be addressed is the issue between totalitarianism and authoritarianism. Hannah Arendt describes a totalitarian dictatorship as one which wants to seek control over every aspect of the lives of its citizens, evoking mass mobilisation to 'transform human nature' along their ideological lines (Arendt, 1951, p. 326). By contrast Linz defines authoritarian regimes as seeking the opposite, to demobilise and depoliticise the population as much as possible, whilst allowing a much greater degree of societal pluralism (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011, p. 4) (Linz, 1975). Whilst as already discussed previously the all three regimes can be described as falling within the Conservative Right, or Conservative Authoritarian (Payne, 1995, p. 15), it is worthy of contemplation whether totalitarianism or more revolutionary nature was creeping into otherwise authoritarian systems. Certainly, attempts by Carol to extend his influence and control into compulsory youth groups, fostering of a cult of personality, gradual suppression of pluralism and attempt to mobilise mass popular support suggest a more totalitarian visage than a traditional authoritarian system. Equally Aleksandar's vision for Yugoslavia was far from Conservative, in fact quite radical, seeking to recreate identity through suppression of regional organisations, even a redrawing of regional borders, although clearly nowhere near extreme enough to be defined as totalitarian it somewhat defies definition as Conservative Right. By contrast Boris, Pavle and elements of Carol's inner circle are far more befitting of the Conservative Right descriptor, refraining from radical change and preferring traditional social structures over cross-class mass mobilisation.

The association of interbellum right-wing dictatorships with the totalitarian fascist regimes of Italy and Germany, it is sometimes challenging to separate true totalitarianism from those guilty by association. This task is made more complex by the emulation and admiration of those totalitarian states. Bideleux and Jeffries argue that the Royal regimes in the Balkans overtly fostered 'fascist or quasi-fascist' movements, both in order to reinvigorate and inspire the populace in their support, but also subvert and crush more radical and violent political elements (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007). This is very clearly demonstrated by Carol's attempt to co-opt the support of the Iron Guard, through the creation of his own National Renaissance Party and Straja Țării youth movement, both openly emulating fascism. To a degree this can be seen in Yugoslavia too with Aleksander's early tolerance of ORJUNA and later the increasingly fascistic aesthetic of the premiership of Milan Stojadinović. Though in Yugoslavia and especially Bulgaria the royal regimes seemed far less enthusiastic, in fact quite often openly suspicious and hostile to quasi-fascist movements, even when (in the case of Bulgaria) increasingly allied to Germany. It must also be noted that existing domestic support for far-right movements should be considered of high importance, whilst Carol flirted with the Iron Guard its popular support was widespread and continued to grow in spite of his attempt to control it, and defeat it. It would be to underestimate the popular success of Codreanu to place credit for its success at the feet of the monarchy. By contrast far-right movements in Yugoslavia and especially Bulgaria, as will be later discussed, had minimal popular support, and most only gained any power or influence through connections to the palace and critically powerful external support.

Rothschild's argument that 'States of lesser power, especially new or restored states, generally take as their model the political institution and values of the seemingly strongest and most successful great power of the day' (Rothschild, 1974, p. 21) provides support for Bideleux and Jeffries' point, and certainly it is fair to say that all three of the Royal Dictatorships at various points adopted selective elements of the fascistic aesthetic to boost their popularity. It is also apparent that, in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, this formed part of a balancing act between a loyalty to the old western democracies and the *realpolitik* of German and Italian dominance in the region, rather than a blind admiration for the 'zeitgeist' that gradually befell Carol in Romania. Crucial in this balance was the capacity of the Royal Dictatorship to prove its value to Berlin or Rome vis-à-vis a far-right rival. Bulgaria's lack of popular far-right support, the stability of the Royal Dictatorship and their eventual willingness to join the axis meant little need for the Nazis to undermine the regime by supporting far-right groups and gave Boris far greater flexibility in opposing them. Carol by contrast, whilst initially viewed favourably gradually viewed more and more as less reliable, less popular and less stable than an Iron Guard dominated regime. Thus, it became more challenging for him to suppress them. Support, or opposition for fascist or far-right organisations must always be viewed through the context of growing German and Italian



dominance, realpolitik dictated a degree of deference to Rome and especially Berlin regardless of preference, thus cooperation may be exaggerated and conflict understated.

Four key variables thus come to light which help explain the similarities and differences between three Royal Dictatorships and their relationship with the far-right. Firstly, existing domestic sympathies for the far-right, did the regimes have to build a far-right movement or was it a matter of controlling an already existing popular force. Secondly, the nature of the regime itself, be it dynastic or non-dynastic. Thirdly, and being influenced by the second point, the personal political sympathies of the monarch in question. Carol was personally far more in awe of fascism, and inclined towards undermining the traditional power structures, than Aleksandar, Boris, and Pavle, most of whom viewed it with intense suspicion if not hostility and who preferred existing elites to revolutionary ideas. Finally, and especially prevalent as the 1930's progressed, the relationship with Rome and Berlin, if that relationship was positive or negative, and to what degree the three Royal Dictatorships were able to resist this external pressure.

### Methodological Approach

In terms of methodology this is primarily a historical work which will seek to compare the narratives of the three case studies. It will utilise primarily English language source material to build upon existing historiography and study from a different, detailed, comparative angle. Each chapter will outline the development of the relationship of the far-right and the Monarchy in the build-up to, establishment and rule of the Royal Dictatorship in each country. It will examine the four key variables previously identified that impact upon the Royal Dictatorship's approach to the far-right, going in to more detail how each impacted the course of the relationship, progressing chronologically from the pre-dictatorship through to the rise of Nazi influence on the region and the war. It will progress chronologically rather than thematically, as in order to establish a comparative study, it is also important to gain a firm overview of each case study in turn, how the relationship progresses over time.

The conclusion will then bring these three narratives together to compare and contrast. To aid the direction of the study and to help formulate a clear conclusion the three case studies will be examined and compared to see how they fit into three key categories. Firstly 'Conflict', this applies when the regime in question is in direct opposition to the far right and or fascist movements. Secondly 'Co-option', this is a little bit more complicated but essentially the study will examine to what degree these regimes utilised fascist or far right terminology, propaganda, structures, or indeed policies for their own objectives. Thirdly 'Cooperation', this applies when the regime openly works with the far right,

or indeed becomes such itself. I would expect that all three case studies would display characteristics of each categorisation and these characteristics may evolve overtime, depending on the variables influencing the regime at the time. Thus, the objective of the conclusion is not only to provide a clear categorisation where possible but also define the trajectory of that categorization. For example, a regime may begin as openly hostile to the far right but due to internal or external pressures reluctantly move towards cooperation. Naturally, solely using these three categories runs the risk of oversimplification of what is an extremely complicated and very fluid relationship, however it helps form a structure around which a more detailed understanding can form. Whilst Payne places all three regimes within the category of Conservative Right of authoritarian Nationalism, he does highlight that even Conservative authoritarian regimes 'adopted certain of the trappings of fascism' though adding '...they neither desired nor would have been able to reproduce all the characteristics of generic fascism', so one would expect all three countries, given the political atmosphere of the Interbellum, to demonstrate elements of all three categories (Payne, 1995, p. 17). As discussed in the literature review, non-Communist historiography tends to present the three countries in question on a form of sliding scale, ranging from Carol II's Romania more often presented as most sympathetic to the far right, with Yugoslavia the least and Boris III's Bulgaria a mixed review depending on the monarchist sympathies. By directly comparing the three countries this study intends to put these perceptions to the test. The extent to which the three countries adhere to those designations, how that changes over time and critically how that compares to the others that will form the crux of the concluding arguments.

## 'One, State, One People, One King' - Yugoslavia under King Aleksandar and Prince-Regent Pavle

### Background and the Road to Dictatorship

As in Germany and Italy the origins of far-right movements in Yugoslavia lay amongst veteran's groups from the First World War. As a victorious party from the conflict these groups were keen to build on that success but were deeply divided as to the approach the new country should take, and increasingly disenchanted with the ineffectual and bitterly disparate democratic system. In the early years of the new Kingdom, one figure stood out as an exceptionally popular figurehead- Aleksandar Karađorđević

Prince-Regent and soon to be King of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as Yugoslavia was then known. Aleksandar the Unifier as he was glorified had lead the victorious Serbian armies during the First World War and had presided over the 'liberation' and unification of the South Slavic peoples, actions which elevated him to a heroic status in many circles (Newman, 2007, p. 59). This status, led him to being seen as an exception, even to groups on the Croatian right, for whom the Yugoslav project was viewed through the lens of anti-Serbian suspicion and a feeling the post-war 'Vidovdan' constitution established a pro-Serbian bias, something which could only be countered by increased Croatian influence or autonomy (Benson, 2001, pp. 34-35).

Unlike Romania and Bulgaria whose far-right movements focused exclusively on the strength, preservation or expansion of the State, the far-right movements in Yugoslavia formed four distinct groups, each promoting competing aims to Greater Yugoslavia, Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia, with the IMRO seeking incorporation of Macedonia into Bulgaria (Iordachi, 2014, p. 383). The first two were generally supportive of the ethnically Serbian unifying monarchy, the latter two suspicious or openly hostile.

Ironically later becoming the ultimate symbol of everything they hated about Yugoslavia; a Serb who dominated Croatia and whom crushed any sentiment of Croatian autonomy or independence; Aleksandar was at this time one of the few components of Yugoslavia the Croatian far-right could tolerate (McCormick, 2017, p. 15). Aleksandar was even proposed as the heir to King Zvonimir's throne by Ante Pavelić, then leader of the Croatian Party of the Right and later the Ustaša, as part of negotiations to make the CPR the Zagreb branch of Nikola Pasić's Radical party (Yeomans, 2013, p. 6). Whilst Aleksandar's vision for a centralised Yugoslavia meant this toleration or even admiration was short lived within the Croatian far-right, other groups within the Kingdom were actively supportive or were founded with the specific purpose of defending Aleksandar's vision (Cohen, 1996, p. 12). These groups, perhaps unsurprisingly, tended to have a bias towards Aleksandar's native Serbia, however this was not exclusively the case.

This was a two-way relationship; Aleksandar relished participation in veterans events, and actively supported the Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists (ORJUNA), an organisation founded in Split in 1921 to defend Yugoslavism and fight the Bolshevik threat; whose violent tactics and often extreme ideology has seen them categorised as fascist (Berend, 2001, p. 327). ORJUNA's aim for a nationalist Yugoslav dictatorship under Royal auspices, to 'knock out of the heads of our masses the idea that they still have the right that this state should or should not exist' (Grigorijevic, 1963, p. 344) was almost prophetic of Aleksandar's eventual seizure of power. Aleksandar shared a greater Yugoslav vision, hatred of communism and a frustration with democratic politics with these groups, and seems to have

been emboldened in his 'constitutional role' by their support (Newman, 2007, p. 59). He offered political and financial support for ORJUNA and worked on fostering a sense of Greater Yugoslav Nationalism, feeding into an anti-Bulgarian nationalism (Berend, 2001, p. 327). Aleksandar's reign through the 1920's was increasingly reliant on organisations such as ORJUNA, whose paramilitary forces cooperated with the more traditional army and police presence in enforcing state authority (Nielsen, 2014, p. 33). The exclusively Serbian far-right which would gradually evolve from the extreme end of the Chetnik veteran organisations and certain vestiges of Narodna Odbrana were also broadly supportive of the new Serbian King, but viewed this through the prism of Yugoslavia being a proxy for a Greater Serbia, an opinion they were prepared to brutally enforce on other Yugoslav nationalities (Cohen, 1996, p. 9).

Despite Aleksandar's early popularity, no such unified feeling was felt for the Yugoslav project as the Croatian Nationalist led by the Croatian Peasant party (CPP) under Stjepan Radić, but including Ante Pavelić's Croatian Party of the Right, clamoured for a federal system, with autonomy for Croatia. They were justified in their fears of Yugoslavia being taken over by a Greater Serbian movement, Serbian authorities routinely harassed, attacked and murdered leading Croatian figures, either directly or through proxies such as ORJUNA (Denitch, 1976, pp. 105-107). Aleksandar's own opposition to federalism was also viewed through the prism of Serbian nationalist sentiment, as the piedmont of the Yugoslav movement, he felt they should have a dominant position in Yugoslavia and any move towards granting Croats home rule would be seen as 'stabbing the Serbs in the back' (Farley, 2007, p. 85). The continued demands for autonomy had Aleksandar exasperated and even contemplating a excision of Croatia from Yugoslavia to allow him to continue his project in peace (Pribičević, 1933, p. 81).

The conflict came to a head in June 1928 when a Serbian member of the Radical Party, and a leader within the extreme far-right of the Chetnik movement, shot dead the leader of the CPP Radić (Tomasevich, 1975, p. 9). The ensuing chaos and the renewed demands for full Croatian autonomy gave Aleksandar the impetus to finally seize power; end the anarchy of parliamentary rule, banned political parties and declare the time had come where '...there can, and should, be no intermediaries between nation and King' (Farley, 2007, p. 72) (Djokić, 2007, p. 69).

### The Establishment of Royal Dictatorship

Aleksandar's January 1929 Royal dictatorship had an immediate impact on the countries disparate far-right movements. Whilst in Croatia the declaration of the dictatorship was greeted moderately well by the CPP, it immediately ended any possibilities of rapprochement with the Croatian far-right, in fact

driving them further to an extreme (Djokić, 2007, p. 70) (Newman, 2007, p. 65). The Croatian Party of the Right, along with all political parties was declared illegal and Pavelić fled into exile with a group of likeminded extremists; founded the Ustaša within the friendly host of Mussolini's Italy; and plotted the King's downfall (Newman, 2007, pp. 65-66). The Serbian and Yugoslav far-right were, naturally, more inclined to welcome the dictatorship and many pledged their allegiance to the Crown. However this didn't automatically equate to acceptance by the new regime, the Chetniks were forcibly reorganised into one official organisation and ORJUNA found itself banned outright due to its extreme acts of violence (Newman, 2007, p. 64). Still more organisations, emboldened by the Dictatorship, were established in support of Aleksandar, these included, but were not limited to, Yugoslav Action and Zbor (Yugoslav National Movement Zbor) (Cohen, 1996, p. 12). Many of these movements were dominated by Serbian membership, but others such as the Union of Fighters had their origins in pro-Yugoslav Slovenian far-right movements. All initially received enthusiastic support from the Royal regime (Nielsen, 2014, p. 150), however they too were banned by Aleksandar by 1933 for having connections with now banned political parties (Parezanin, 1971, p. 47).

Despite sharing much in common with these movements; providing many of them with support prior to the establishment of the dictatorship; Aleksandar was increasingly reluctant to engage to heavily with them once in power. Equally in 1931 when encouraged by newly appointed Minister of Finance Dimitrije Ljotić, to create a new totalitarian constitution that would subjugate the country to the King's will and create a new fascist style corporatist society and anti-democratic mass movement, Aleksandar refused causing Ljotić's resignation or sacking depending on the account (Ljotić, 1952, p. 397) (Connelly, 2020, p. 425). On the other hand the constitution Aleksandar did implement in 1931 saw the establishment of a distinctly fascist inspired economic model and trade union, alongside a parliament, making concessions to both the far-right and more moderate voices (Berend, 2001, p. 328). Crucially however, it also removed the power of local authorities and political parties, even altering the borders of internal administrative divisions to further undermine national divisions.

The Ustaša for their part now identified Aleksandar as their ultimate target. Due to the intensely personal nature of his dictatorship, and the undermining of other institutions Aleksandar was identified as synonymous with the Yugoslav project, something Aleksandar did little to dissuade. The 1931 Constitution was seen as an existential threat to Croatian identity. To the Ustaša and other revisionist far-right groups, such as the IMRO in Macedonia, Aleksandar became a symbol of all they hated, and increasingly saw his destruction as key to the collapse of Yugoslavia, thus achieving their aims (McCormick, 2017, p. 15). Aleksandar's unified vision for Yugoslavia, whilst always tinged with a pro-Serbian bias would increasingly alienate even elements of the Serbian far-right, some of whom would gradually come to view him as a traitor to Serbdom for failing to implement a Greater Serbia

(Kazimirović, 1995, pp. 439-469). It is also important to note that this attempt at an all-encompassing transformation of society, according to the vision of Aleksandar, not only put him in the firing line, but also arguably made the Royal Dictatorship increasingly non-dynastic or personalistic and tinged with elements of totalitarianism, although the King's own political preferences by and large kept it within a traditional authoritarian framework. This radical, transformative nature was also highly appealing to far-right and quasi-Fascist movements, which in addition to the personal prestige of Aleksandar, may explain why Yugoslav far-right movements remained fiercely loyal to both Aleksandar and his successor, despite repeated attempts by the former to suppress or outlaw them.

Despite the distinct ideological differences and progressively hostile rhetoric, and growing terrorist attacks on Yugoslav soil coming from the Ustaša in exile, Aleksandar seemed blissfully unconcerned by the threat they posed to him. Aleksandar's inner circle of advisors warned him that such groups posed a growing threat to him '...because they see in you the personification of Yugoslavia they wish to destroy' (Meštrović, 1969, p. 235). This would change in 1933 when the Ustaša, emboldened by a need to prove their use to their host Mussolini, launched a failed assassination attempt on Aleksandar (McCormick, 2017, p. 15). Aleksandar's reaction was furious and placed the blame firmly on the 'Great Fascist' (Mussolini), swearing he would '...open the eyes of the world to... fascist methods' (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 98). Mussolini whose primary objective for supporting their cause was the destabilisation of Yugoslavia in the hope of gaining Adriatic territories coveted by Italy, had been funding not only the Ustaša but also the IMRO (Chary, 2011, p. 70).

The IMRO, based in Bulgaria, whose ambition was the incorporation of Macedonian territories into Bulgaria, had been launching attacks on Yugoslav soil since the early 1920's with little interference from successive Bulgarian governments (Crampton, 1987, pp. 109-111). This caused numerous diplomatic incidents, and caused the frontier between the two countries to be one of the most heavily fortified in Europe (Crampton, 1987, p. 120). The IMRO, whose political origins were very disparate, had, since 1928, taken a more far-right path under the leadership of Ivan Mihailov (Chary, 2011, p. 70). By the early 1930's this had evolved into receiving funding from Mussolini and launching a collaborative effort with the Ustaša in Croatia to bring down Yugoslavia (Farley, 2007, p. 80). The IMRO, who had greater experience in terrorist insurgency, now trained Ustaša operatives, in a joint conspiracy to assassinate Aleksandar (Law, 2016, pp. 138-155).

Aleksandar on the other hand had begun to realise his policies vis-à-vis Croatia were driving more people into the hands of the far-right opposition and threatening to undermine the country, gradually accepting that Croats could be brought on board but not in the current format, and prepared to compromise (Meštrović, 1969, p. 233). Unfortunately, this decision came too late for in October 1934,

the Ustaša and the IMRO finally achieved their ambition, assassinating Aleksandar in Marseilles. The assassin was a Bulgarian-IMRO agent called Vlado Chernozemski, but the brains behind the operation was attributed to Ustaša leader Ante Pavelić (Brown, 2003, p. 43) (Farley, 2007, p. 83). Interestingly in his autobiography Pavelić would attempt to disown responsibility, even mourning the loss of Aleksandar, maybe a hint to his earlier acceptance of the man, though more likely a post-war attempt to divert blame from himself for the King's death stating '(the)...Serbian people lost with that tragic death a true king who was a worthy descendant of the Karađorđević dynasty' (Pavelić, 1967, p. 44). This is despite the clear implications of his own involvement in the assassination and declaring earlier in the same chapter that, 'There isn't a single Croat who wouldn't in their thoughts kill this King at least ten times if they could and you can of course count me amongst them' (Pavelić, 1967, p. 33). It is also worthy of note the emphasis, placed on Aleksandar's Serbian origins, despite the King's strong advocacy for a Yugoslav identity. Emphasising the Serbian origins of the monarchy was key to the narrative of the Croatian far-right in undermining the legitimacy of their rule over Croats, and further fostering anti-Serbian resentment.

The king's dying words were allegedly 'Čuvajte mi Jugoslaviju!' or 'Preserve my Yugoslavia!', and the Yugoslav authorities whipped up a fervid nationalist rhetoric declaring to avenge the 'blood of the Vođa (leader)' (Nielsen, 2014, pp. 237,243). The use of the title Vođa (leader) rather than King has echoes of fascist titles, rather than traditional royal monikers, supporting the argument that in transforming the country and society according to his vision, Aleksandar had perhaps also transformed the role of monarch, rather ironically, to one that had more in common with Il Duce than his royal counterparts. The Yugoslav far-right responded to this call, signing an agreement a mere three days after Aleksandar's death, unifying many of the remaining movements, such as Yugoslav Action, Zbor and the Slovenian Fighters movement under the banner of Zbor and led by former Minister of Justice Dimitrije Ljotić (Cohen, 1996, p. 13) (Ljotić, 1952, pp. 125-126). Whilst initially illegal the new government under the regency of Prince Pavle; Aleksandar's cousin; were convinced of its use and loyalty, despite its overtly fascist agenda, to recognise it as an official party (Cohen, 1996, p. 15) (Connelly, 2020, p. 425). Despite this, the movements of Zbor would remain a minor player in Yugoslav politics, far more important would be the rule of Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović.

Prince Pavle, was far less dictatorial in his approach and had less inclination towards a pro-Serb bias so was considerably less threatening to the Ustaša etc; this was complimented by his willingness to reach compromise with the Croats which would ultimately end in the 'Sporozum' (compromise) agreement between CPP leader Maček and Yugoslav PM Dragiša Cvetković in 1939 (Djokić, 2014, pp. 158-59). Simultaneously the IMRO were radically reduced in their operational ability by first the Zveno government, and the Royal Dictatorship under King Boris established in 1935 in Bulgaria (Crampton,

1987, p. 112). At the same time a shift in Mussolini's foreign policy focus towards Abyssinia and away from destabilising Yugoslavia meant the Ustaša lost much of their foreign encouragement for further action (Ramet, 2006, p. 103). However, whilst on this front, the threat to far-right played to the Yugoslav state was reduced, Pavle was to face negotiating a relationship with the far-right, much closer to home.

Zbor's policies were growing in extremity, and were now actively emulating Nazi policies on anti-Semitism in addition to hostility to democracy, freemasonry and communism (Byford, 2014, p. 298). On at least this last point Pavle could find some common ground with the fascists, despite disliking their preference for violence and extreme action, Pavle actively admired what Hitler had done for Germany economically and had a hatred for communism which bordered on a 'mania' (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, pp. 113-114). That Zbor received funding and support from Berlin and from ethnic Germans in Vojvodina to actively promote German economic and foreign-policy interests in Yugoslavia (Stefanović, 1984, p. 19). This was of concern to Pavle whose sympathies lay with Yugoslavia allied to Britain and France.

However, Zbor's influence was minimal, never achieving more than 1% of the vote, despite its status as an official party, being viewed as a lackey for Germany or Italy both considered by Serbs as Yugoslavia's nemeses (Connelly, 2020, p. 426) (Byford, 2014, p. 299). Despite espousing a 'Yugoslavist' agenda, Zbor was overtly pro-Serbian and religiously Orthodox in nature, making it incompatible to Croats, most non-Serbian nationalities, and even secular Serbs (Blinkhorn, 2000, p. 50). Minimal popular support was also the case, even for the Ustaša, whose maximum membership only reached 40,000 out of 2.9 million Croats, their impact on Yugoslavia stemming from their foreign backers and violent action, a pattern that must be noted across the far-right movements of Yugoslavia, and something it has in common with Bulgaria (Blinkhorn, 2000, pp. 50-51). A far more problematic influence for Pavle would stem from the premiership of Milan Stojadinović. Stojadinović, who Pavle had appointed Prime Minister in 1935 to work on the rapprochement with the Croats (Djokić, 2014, p. 159), was initially seen as a moderate who even curtailed the more impulsive tendencies of the Prince Regent (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 129). Stojadinović formed a new government party; the Yugoslav Radical Union (JRU) from Serb, Slovene and Muslim traditional parties, and advocated policies supporting greater federalism, a major break from Aleksandar's dictatorship, which he had opposed (Djokić, 2014, p. 158).



## The Rising Influence of External Fascism and the Road to War

By 1937 Stojadinović had shifted towards a distinctly pro-German and pro-Italian stance, moreover transforming the JRU with an increasingly far-right agenda, absorbing many of the more high profile members of Zbor and other far-right organisations (Stefanović, 1984, pp. 54-6). JRU's aesthetic developed along these lines, adopting the Roman fascist salute, referring to Stojadinović as Vođa (Leader) and forming a paramilitary youth organisations dressed known as the 'Green Shirts' (Berend, 2001, p. 330). Whilst primarily of Serbian origin these organisations also found some popular support in Slovenia (Mlakar, 2009, p. 8). Whilst not yet openly fascist, Stojadinović was open in his praise for both Rome and Berlin, and ominously promised Italian foreign minister Ciano, that he planned to develop both the party and the country along Italian Fascist lines (Payne, 1995, p. 325). Hitler switched his support from Zbor to Stojadinović, instructing the German minority in Yugoslavia to vote for the JRU (Berend, 2001, p. 330). Despite Stojadinović's continued support for the monarchy – his 1937 election slogan 'One Country, One People, One King' both an emphatic declaration of monarchical tendency and an uncomfortable echo of Hitler's 'Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer' speech (Lampe, 2000, p. 178) (Djokić, 2014, p. 160) – rumours of Stojadinović's increasing fascistic leanings deeply concerned Pavle, who ordered an investigation into the truth of the matter, the results of which did little to convince Pavle of his innocence (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 159). The impact of Stojadinović's increasingly fascist sympathies were also causing the Royal Dictatorship to be judged by opponents in the same light, much like Boris in Bulgaria and perhaps more fairly Carol in Romania parts of the left-wing opposition started to refer to the monarchy as 'Monarcho-fascist' and calling for the dictatorship and hegemony to be dismantled (Boskovska, 2017, p. 89).

At the same time Pavle's government didn't waver in using the police and armed forces to dismantle far-right and fascist movements, Dimitrije Ljotić; despite his loyalty to the Crown; was detained and sectioned accused of a variety of charges from receiving Nazi funds to being a dangerous religious fanatic; eventually having him declared mentally unwell (Connelly, 2020, p. 426). Although this may have been motivated by Stojadinović wishing to remove a rival, who was vocally critical of his government.

Things came to a head as the JRU's agenda became increasingly tolerant of anti-Croatian rhetoric, quite the opposite of what Pavle had hoped from Stojadinović. Rather than reaching a compromise with Zagreb, he was now sowing the seeds of further conflict between Croats and the rest of Yugoslavia (Ramet, 2006, p. 105). As a result, Pavle removed Stojadinović in 1939 whose fascistic leanings, and increasing opposition to a compromise with the Croats he now saw as a threat to the integrity of the country, and the rule of the monarchy. Despite earlier agreeing with Stojadinović a

more pro-German/Italian foreign policy might be sensible, Pavle now reversed Stojadinović's position and refused to participate in the forthcoming invasion of Albania, and taking steps to move away from the Axis and from fascist influence (Watt, 1989, pp. 203-207). The new government under Cvetković managed to achieve a compromise with the Croats under Maček, the 'Sporazum', however as with Romania and Bulgaria the forces of war in Europe overtook Yugoslavia (Benson, 2001, p. 68). Stojadinović, had irrevocably shifted Yugoslavia's foreign policy in Germany's favour and Belgrade was now heavily economically integrated with the Reich, limiting their options, and granting those with support in Berlin undue influence in decision making (Ramet, 2006, p. 103). Despite this Pavle still moved to rid the country of fascist influence, banning Zbor in 1940, and arresting its leadership following a series of violent incidents (Byford, 2014, p. 301).

However the fall of Yugoslavia's traditional patron and ally France in 1940, and an increased sense of abandonment and isolation from Pavle's preferred ally Britain, forced his hand leaving him with the only option but to seek a rapprochement with Hitler, signing the Tripartite Pact in return for guarantees of Yugoslav territorial integrity (Weinberg, 2005, p. 78). Within hours of the pact being signed mass protests broke out across Yugoslavia, primarily in historically anti-German Serbia, with protesters burning down the German embassy declaring 'Bolje rat, nego pakt' ...rather war than (the) pact (Ramet & Lazić, 2011, p. 18). On the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1941, Pavle's Regency was overthrown by a group of Serbian nationalist Generals, in favour of his young nephew Petar (Tanner, 1997, p. 139). Within days Yugoslavia was invaded and defeated by the German and Italian armies, with Pavelić achieving the aim of establishing a fascist 'Independent State of Croatia' (Payne, 1995, p. 407). Serbia was reduced to a rump-state under German occupation, though governed through the Quisling government including Dimitrije Ljotić, who cashed in on long-held pro-German positioning (Byford, 2014, pp. 301-302). Despite Aleksandar's and Pavle's efforts, or perhaps because of them, Yugoslavia was consumed by the far-right, not for the last time in her history.

## 'King of the Peasants': Carol II of Romania

### Background and the Road to Dictatorship

Carol II of Romania shared a similar attitude to parliamentary democracy to Aleksandar, and like Aleksandar would seek to court far-right organisations to further his authoritarian tendencies, however this is where any similarities end on a personal front. Unlike Aleksandar, Carol didn't have

the luxury of coming to the throne a war-hero, he was quite the opposite in fact, a sexually promiscuous play-boy whose very public affairs with a number of undesirable women had marked him as an increasingly undesirable candidate for the throne (Bucur, 2007, pp. 34-35). Carol, also faced a country which, partly thanks to his machinations, was home to the strongest fascist parties outside Italy and Germany (Berend, 2001, p. 337). This was in contrast to Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, where the far-right was influential but did not possess the same strength or popular support as seen in Romania (Payne, 1995, pp. 326-327)

Carol maintained a close inner circle, the Camarilla, who stoked his ambitions and stroked his ego, led by his controversial mistress Elena Lupescu; Romania's answer to Lady Macbeth (Berend, 2001, p. 334). A divorcee and Catholic with Jewish origins; Lupescu's relationship with Carol had cost Carol his marriage to Princess Helen and temporarily his throne (Porter, 1989). His father Ferdinand, backed by popular discontent at Carol's behaviour had forced the latter to relinquish his right to the throne in favour of his son Michael, when Carol repeatedly refused to give up Lupescu (Glenny, 2000, p. 454).

This not only earned him the animosity of his father, his wife and the Romanian people, but also the Romanian Far-right which unlike in Yugoslavia was dominated by the deeply religious and Orthodox Legionary Movement of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (Iron Guard). For the deeply devout and anti-Semitic Romanian populace Lupescu would become seen as 'the symbol of absolute evil', who had not only destroyed the King's orthodox marriage but was now extending Jewish influence over the running of the kingdom (Nagy-Talavera, 1970, p. 277)

Carol's return to Romania in 1930, came about as a result of a failing regency overseeing the desperate economic situation of the late 1920's. Carol was increasingly seen as a potential source of stability and his return was negotiated with Prime Minister Iuliu Maniu, with a number of key caveats referring to his political and personal behaviour, namely a respect for the constitution; leaving Elena Lupescu and returning to Princess Helen (Quinlan, 1995, pp. 107-134) (Bucur, 2007, p. 98).

Unfortunately, Carol had a severe dislike for many traditional parties. His perception of them as corrupt and rotten, was not aided by the fact some such as Liberal leader Ion I. C. Brătianu; Carol believed had been party to the cuckolding of his father by his mother Queen Marie (Quinlan, 1995, p. 14). By contrast Carol viewed himself rather fancifully as the 'King of the Peasants' (Bucur, 2016, p. 114), who needed a direct contact with his people, echoing the 1929 proclamation by Aleksandar for a 'end to intermediaries between king and people' (Farley 2007, p. 72). Carol possessed a far more clear preference for far-right politics than either of his neighbouring monarchs, it being argued that upon coming to the throne his only clear political idea was an admiration for Aleksandar and Mussolini (Polonsky, 1975, p. 86) (Haynes, 2007, p. 108). Carol's early relationship with Codreanu's Iron Guard

was complex, on the one hand he shared a common dislike of Romanian democracy, believing it is 'rotten to the core'; yet he was jealous of Codreanu's popularity compared to his own (Glenny, 2000, p. 450). The Iron Guard's relationship with the King was similarly complex; openly monarchist, the group's leader Corneliu Codreanu declaring 'At the head of peoples, above the elite, one finds the monarchy. I reject the republic' in his political manifesto (Codreanu, 1936, p. 170). The Guard were even one of the first political movements to show public support for Carol's return in 1930 (Quinlan, 1995, p. 72).

However, Carol rapidly reneged on all his promises and within a few months Lupescu had returned to Bucharest and Carol began to 'assume powers beyond his constitutional restraints' (Bucur, 2007, p. 98). This was despite the pleading of his own mother, who could see the damage Lupescu was doing to the reputation of the monarchy (Easterman, 1942, pp. 86-87). Carol's relationship with his family, already fraught declined rapidly, isolating his mother and removing his brother, Prince Nicolae from the line of succession, rather hypocritically for marrying a divorced commoner (Haynes, 2007, p. 113). Despite Carol's attempts to woo or coerce the Iron Guard, this was a one-way affair, as long as Lupescu remained. Codreanu and the Iron Guard viewed Carol as the lowest form of humanity, for throwing over his popular Orthodox wife Princess Helen, with 'the Jewess' of all people. Worse still with Lupescu's control over the Camarilla, Carol's promotion of Jewish industrialist interests was contributing to the forced enslavement of the good and Christian Romanian peasants. In other words, everything the Iron Guard preached against (Glenny, 2000, p. 455).

Carol's government were far less admiring of the growing Iron Guard movement; starting from 1932, leading figures such as Foreign Minister Nicolae Titulescu did all they could to convince Carol they were a threat to be crushed. Whilst Carol conceded to the arrest of thousands of Guard members and a ban on the Iron Guard by 'cabinet decree', he withheld Royal decree in the vain hope that this might inspire gratitude and loyalty from Codreanu in future (Glenny, 2000, p. 455). Despite this strong difference of opinions, the Guard remained moderately tame in their attacks in the first few years of Carol's reign, giving him a sense of security that the Guard could be won over to his cause, and continued to support and collaborate with them to undermine the traditional power structures. This cooperation came to a head in 1933, when recently appointed Prime Minister Ion Duca, was assassinated by Iron Guard members on Codreanu's orders, after Duca had ordered the arrest and imprisonment of 18,000 Guard members (Berend, 2001, p. 335). It has been alleged that Carol was a co-conspirator in the assassination, and certainly the palace was not displeased at the result (Haynes, 2007, p. 110). However whilst the assassins escaped punishment, the ensuing clamp-down was seen as a betrayal by the Guard with elements of the movement declaring they were now no longer monarchists (Haynes, 2007, p. 111). The first attempt to judicially eliminate Codreanu in 1934 proved

a failure due to testimony from high ranking Military figures who sympathised with the Iron Guard cause, most notably Ion Antonescu (Bucur, 2007, p. 112). As a result of the Duca affair Carol's popularity plummeted not only amongst the Guard, but the population as a whole. Carol now fearful of assassination, sent his mother in his stead to Independence Day celebrations (Elsberry, 1972, p. 253). Her ensuing popularity made Carol fearful for his own position, and thereafter sought to keep her from public view, trying but failing to force her into exile (Gelardi, 2005, p. 352).

Codreanu, for his part, made veiled reference, and perhaps threat to Carol arguing. 'One has met some monarchs that were good, some very good, others weak or bad. Some enjoyed honours and the love of their people to their end of their lives, others were beheaded. Therefore, not all of the monarchs were good, monarchy itself however has always been good. One must not confuse the man with the institution and draw false conclusions'. (Codreanu, 1936, p. 170).

Though both Codreanu and the Iron Guard had been vocal in their support for the Monarchy as an institution there was clearly no love-lost with Carol. Whilst initially not challenging Carol's position directly they launched increasingly vicious attacks against Lupescu, with regular threats to assassinate the women they perceived as the ultimate symbol of the Jewish threat to Romanian life and values. Codreanu built upon the widespread anti-Semitism existing in the Romanian population and used Lupescu's unpopularity to channel more to his cause (Brunstein & King, 2004). Despite these increasingly brazen attacks, Carol was initially somewhat notable in his lack of response, it has been argued this was due to Carol's continued assumption that the Iron Guard could be won round, due to their similar political and national outlook (Bucur, 2007, p. 100) .

Whilst he was failing in his attempts to win over the far-right, Carol made increasing efforts to utilise the same fusion of modern nationalism and traditional Orthodoxy to co-opt the popularity of the Iron Guard movement, sharing an ideological mentor with Codreanu in Nae Ionescu (Bucur, 2007, p. 101). Desperate to emulate the fascistic popularism that was increasingly fashionable in Europe and ever image conscious, Carol was intrigued by the trappings of fascism, if not the deep politics (Glenny, 2000, p. 454). He sought to play in to the hands of Iron Guard supporters by trying to cultivate a cult of personality, ever more intense as his reign continued, that promoted him as a devout Orthodox prince, sent from heaven to create a 'New Romania' (Boia, 2001, pp. 204-205). This was an ever more ridiculous image to present given his international reputation as a playboy and his continued relationship with Lupescu. As time went on this cult of personality became more and more overtly fascistic in its imagery, especially after the establishment of the Royal Dictatorship in 1938. In an attempt to counter the populism of the Iron Guard amongst Romanian youth which had so impressed him (Yavetz, 1991, p. 604), and taking inspiration from the Hitler Youth, Carol established the Straja

Țării (Sentinels of the Motherland); a compulsory youth organization which would swear its allegiance to him alone, with fascist-style Roman salutes, uniforms and referring to him as 'Supreme Leader' (Bucur, 2016, p. 114) (Berend, 2001, p. 338).

Despite all of Carol's efforts to coopt Iron Guard support or to gain their cooperation, it became apparent by 1937 that their popularity was now dangerously out of Carol's control. Carol's Camrilla had been pushing Carol towards a more dictatorial rule primarily to further their own economic interests. As the camarilla contained a number of prominent Jewish industrialists, in addition to Lupescu's own high profile role, this had fed readily into the fears and prejudices of the Romanian people and into the arms of Codreanu's Iron Guard (Glenny, 2000, p. 454). Carol made one final attempt to get Codreanu on his side, summoning the Iron Guard leader to the palace in February 1937, demanding control of the Iron Guard in return for appointing Codreanu to his government, a demand immediately refused by Codreanu (Haynes, 2007, p. 113). Compounding the threat to Carol's position and popularity, his estranged brother Prince Nicolae was forging links with the Guard and Maniu. Carol responded swiftly by removing him from the line of sucession and forcing him into exile; an act seized upon by the Guard to launch further attacks on Carol's questionable actions and hypocritical position vis-à-vis (Haynes, 2007, p. 113).

For most of the late 1930's the King had been governing through the ruling Prime Minister Gheorghe Tătărescu's Liberal party, and he expected a Liberal victory in the 1937. However to his unpleasant surprise the results delivered a loss of majority for the Liberals and saw the Iron Guard come second with 16% of the vote (Lungu, 1988, pp. 323-324). An attempt to re-run the elections in March 1938 was aborted after the Ministry of the Interior announced the strong likelihood of a Iron Guard victory (Haynes, 2014, p. 178). The Iron Guard had been bolstered in April, with the decision of National Peasant Party leader Iuliu Maniu to enter an electoral pact with Codreanu. This leant the latter a degree of respectability which could extend the Iron Guard's popularity to a much larger electoral base. Maniu, whilst not a natural political ally of Codreanu was driven by a personal enmity of Carol and a desire to end his Camarilla's reign of corruption and threat of electoral fraud (Haynes, 2014, p. 179). In addition, a similar pact was concluded with a faction of the Liberal party which had broken away in opposition to Carol's authoritarianism headed by Gheorghe I. Brătianu (Haynes, 2007, pp. 114-115) (Deletant, 2006, p. 33).

Carol's answer to the Iron Guard threat was, given the make-up of his inner circle, a rather questionable. Rather than crush the Iron Guard, he attempted to outflank them. He asked the rapidly anti-Semitic Ion Cuza and Octavian Goga to form a government, although they only gained 9% of the vote. (Glenny, 2000, p. 456). In implementing a minority government under the extremely far-right

and anti-semitic National Christian League (NCL) of Gogu and Cuza, Carol thought he could 'steal the thunder of the Iron Guard' (Polonsky, 1975, p. 89). The NCL, formed in 1935, was in many ways as extreme in its beliefs as the Iron Guard. Openly pro-Nazi, sporting a swastika as an emblem and having support from Hitler himself (Berend, 2001, p. 337) (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1938, p. 12).

Carol felt that in giving the Romanian people the sort of extreme right-wing government that at least 25% of them had voted for; this would to some extent, neuter the Iron Guard position and the threat they posed to him. By comparison Goga and Cuza were elderly and more easily controlled 'two-racist geriatrics', who Carol could use to ride the wave of anti-Semitic national sentiments taking hold of the country (Lungu, 1988, p. 324) (Glenny, 2000, p. 456). That said those 'geriatrics' commanded a group of paramilitary units, the 'Lancieri' who committed more anti-Semitic violence and terrorist attacks in the period up till 1937 than the Iron Guard (Berend, 2001, p. 337). In asking them to form a government, Carol was hardly choosing a more moderate option. However Goga and Cuza were staunchly monarchist, less revolutionary and were prepared to overlook Carol's personality flaws in order to obtain control of Romania's destiny (Lungu, 1988, p. 324). Why Carol chose this path over supporting the largest party the Liberals, who whilst had sunk in the polls, still commanded more than the Iron Guard and Goga-Cuza combined, may be part of his attempt to neutralise all opponents to his own personal power or quite possibly an opportunity to implement the ultra-nationalist policy, with which he had been flirting throughout his reign (Bucur, 2007, p. 104).

Whatever Carol's personal motivations behind this decision to invite Goga and Cuza to form a government, it was seen as a royal assent to anti-Semitic violence across the country, descending Romania into chaos and causing international outrage (Berend, 2001, p. 337). Certainly that is how it was portrayed by Goga, who announced victoriously that 'Thanks to King Carol Romania is now beginning to belong to the Romanians' (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1938, p. 13). Carol tried to convince his foreign allies in France and the UK that his decision was purely a ploy designed to counteract the greater threat of the Iron Guard, by satisfying Romanian national opinion (Lungu, 1988, p. 325). However Carol's New Year's address of 1937 emphasised how pleased he was that the new government had 'decided to act along lines on keeping with the spirit of the present time', which could be seen as actively condoning and encouraging the actions of the new fascist government. (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1938, p. 14).

The Goga-Cuza government was violent and short-lived and was subject to international outrage, much of which found itself at Carol's feet. Carol's decision was successful in one regard, as the Lancieri of Goga and Cuza and the Iron Guard, turned on each other and the country descended into total

anarchy. Carol stepped forward and presented himself as the only solution to the crisis, which faced with a Iron Guard alternative was broadly accepted by the Romanian political elite (Glenny, 2000, p. 456). A sympathy echoed by Romania's international allies in France and Britain who concluded that the King was 'on the whole the best element in a very unstable situation', despite their earlier condemnation of Carol's tolerance of the violent reign of Goga and Cuza (Lungu, 1988, p. 340).

### The Establishment of Royal Dictatorship

Carol moved to establish a dictatorship on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1938, dismissing Goga and Cuza. In an open concession to fascist corporatist ideas, universal suffrage was abandoned in favour of individuals voting by their profession or class. (Polonsky, 1975, p. 89).

When Carol finally moved against the Iron Guard, he took no prisoners. In contrast he extended more leniency towards other opponents such as the Iron-Guard's electoral ally Iuliu Maniu. This, despite Maniu's very real threat to Carol's power suggests that the desire to crush the Iron Guard was more focused than a general crack-down on opponents (Bucur, 2007, p. 89). Carol felt the guard threatened his own personal position and conflicted his more Francophile sympathies in foreign policy with a pro-Axis stance (Polonsky, 1975, p. 89), a belief strongly supported by the Iron Guard's electoral promise of an alliance with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy within 'forty-eight hours' of an Iron Guard victory (Haynes, 2014, p. 179). Carol immediately moved to disenfranchise men under the age of thirty and those who had not held Romanian ethnicity for less than three generations. This both continued the popular nationalist and anti-Semitic policies of the Goga-Cuza government, but conveniently prohibited much of the Iron Guard from participating in politics due to their young demographic base (Bucur, 2007, p. 105). It even targeted Codreanu himself whose father had been born Ion Zelinski, allegedly a 'Ukrainian' in Austrian Bukovina, and whose mother was part-German (Seton Watson, 1961, p. 206).

Codreanu was unphased by the establishment of the Royal Dictatorship, assuming the unpopularity of the King would soon unseat him, however he wouldn't live long enough to see that day (Haynes, 2014, p. 179). Carol first outlawed the Iron Guard, then moved to round up the Iron Guard leadership accusing them of sedition and being Nazi stooges (Glenny, 2000, p. 456). Codreanu's immense popularity had grown to such a point that his imprisonment and murder were considered vital for the survival of Carol's throne and the Romanian political establishment, a threat which had been



foreseen by politicians such as Titulescu back in 1932, but Carol himself had only recently begun to realise. (Haynes, 2014, p. 170).

Carol, however, only felt emboldened to take the final step to eliminate the Guard leadership after visiting Hitler in Berlin in November 1938. The rapprochement gave Carol the mistaken confidence the Nazi leader's support for the Guard was limited and combined with a series of terrorist attacks committed by the Iron Guard, sealed Codreanu's fate (Ornea, 1995, p. 314). Much of the Guard leadership including Codreanu himself, already imprisoned, were transported to Jilava prison, where they were garroted and then 'shot trying to escape' (Polonsky, 1975, p. 89). A move which earned

Carol mortal enmity amongst the remaining Iron Guard, their supporters and indeed displeasure in Berlin, all of which he would come to regret (Glenny, 2000, p. 456). Contrary to Carol's belief following his meeting in Berlin, Hitler was extremely angered by news of Codreanu's death (Hayes, 2000, p. 62)

In December 1938, Carol created the Front of National Rebirth or the National Renaissance Party (FRN) as a government monopoly, simultaneously outlawing all other parties (Payne, 1995, p. 392). Once again, despite launching a violent repression of the Iron Guard, Carol did little to interfere with the activities of other opponents such as Brătianu or Maniu, despite their parties now being technically illegal. In the sense of coopting the violent oppression of opponents from the far right, ironically it seemed Carol was only willing to use this power against the Iron Guard (Bucur, 2007, p. 106).

The FRN was fully fledged with the façade of a Fascist party, complete with roman salute, paramilitary uniformed parades and symbolism. To forcibly coopt Iron Guard supporters, membership was obligatory for all Romanians over twenty-one (Haynes, 2019, p. 307). At the same time Carol's drive for a personality cult grew ever more outlandish with Ministers and commoners alike increasingly encouraged to call him 'Conducător' or Leader, rather than traditional Royal titles (Bucur, 2016, p. 114) (Cioroianu, 2005).

The purge of the Iron Guard continued in 1939 after Guard members assassinated Carol's Prime Minister Armand Călinescu, in revenge for Codreanu's murder. An estimated 3000 guard members were killed before the end of the Royal Dictatorship, with the bodies often left where they fell as a warning to others. (Haynes, 2014, p. 179)

Despite Carol's crackdown on the Iron Guard and his launch of the FRN, the Guard remained a powerful political force that the FRN was simply unable to challenge in terms of popular support. 1939 brought a shift in global perspectives, with Nazi Germany's dominance growing; Carol faltered in his continued oppression of the Iron Guard. Codreanu's successor Horia Sima had fled to exile in Berlin,

and Carol now perceived the Guard had the full backing of Hitler, though in reality Hitler, despite his reaction to Codreanu's death, was not entirely convinced by the Iron Guard (Haynes, 2019, p. 308).

### The Rising Influence of External Fascism and the Road to War

This forced a rapid change in 1940 when the European situation overtook Carol's position and the King was forced to U-turn, establishing an openly pro-German foreign policy which included, amongst other things establishing a new Party of the Nation, incorporating the Iron Guard. (Polonsky, 1975, p. 90). The PN was a significant shift into the far right, moving towards a totalitarian regime, which exalted Carol as 'Supreme Leader' as well as King in a direct effort to mirror the party set-up under Hitler (Heinen, 1986, p. 421) (Payne, 1995, p. 392). Carol's rapprochement towards the Iron Guard in an attempt to win favour with Berlin and stabilise his position, was temporarily successful, securing Simia's support and participation in the new government. Simia was prepared to conclude the King had been portrayed in an inaccurate light by Codreanu and there was even discussion of making Carol 'king of the Legionaries' (Haynes, 2019, pp. 315-316).

However, it was not to last, despite Carol's best efforts to win back the favour of Berlin, Hitler forced Carol to accept the humiliating terms of the Second Vienna Awards, in return for guarantees of no further revisions of Romanian territory and a place in the new German order (Weinberg, 2005, pp. 184-185). The loss of such a huge swathe of Romanian territory to Romania's traditional enemies of Hungary and Bulgaria was too much for the Romanian population and mass protests broke-out across the country demanding Carol's abdication. Whilst at least Simia and the Iron Guard initially kept faith with the King, they rapidly saw their opportunity to seize power from a man they increasingly saw as a 'marginal ally' who had refused to hand over any meaningful power and threw their considerable support behind the protests (Haynes, 1999, p. 710). Increasingly running out of options the King turned to General Ion Antonescu, to rescue his throne. Antonescu, who had been held under house arrest for insulting the King, was known to be highly sympathetic to the Iron Guard cause, yet still a member of the establishment (Haynes, 1999, p. 713). Carol hoped that cooperating with Antonescu might calm the protesters now whipped up by the Iron Guard. However once again Carol miscalculated those he chose to cooperate with; when Carol ordered Antonescu to fire upon the protesting crowd he refused, and upon learning that members of the King's Camarilla planned to have him murdered; Antonescu took the decision to move his support to the protesters and demand the King's abdication (Deletant, 2006, p. 49). Having alienated everyone in the country through his machinations and flirtations with the far-right; on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 1940, Carol was forced to abdicate and flee, his

train being shot at by Iron Guard members as it sped through Timisoara station to the border (Bossy, 2003). Antonescu was granted unlimited dictatorial powers by Carol's successor King Michael, and rapidly formed the National Legionary State backed by the Iron Guard (Deletant, 2006, p. 53). Carol who had long played a game with the far-right, to further his own ambitions, had finally run out of options.

### 'Boris, Bulgaria, God!': Boris III of Bulgaria

#### Background and the Road to Dictatorship

Whilst Carol's infatuation with the far-right is unsurpassed by his fellow Balkan monarchs, he is not alone in having been accused of cooperating with far-right movements to remove a political opponent. In October 1918, following Bulgaria's disastrous defeat and subsequent humiliation at the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine, Tsar Ferdinand I of Bulgaria fell on his metaphorical sword and passed the crown to his son in the hope of preserving the throne (Berend, 2001, p. 130). From that point the young Boris III thus began his reign in uncertain circumstances; in the unenviable position of a young monarch, dominated by openly republican Agrarian Prime Minister Aleksandar Stamboliyski (Chary, 2007, p. 121). Stamboliyski was the dominant political force until 1923, but his increasingly authoritarian tone, attempts to crack-down on the IMRO, the all-powerful Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation, and a failure to cater for the needs of war veterans had created a dangerous, albeit politically disparate opposition in the Military League (Dimitroff, 1986, p. 112). The league whose members included members of the King's inner circle, including General Hristo Lukov; orchestrated a coup in cooperation with the IMRO; which resulted in the overthrowal of the agrarian government and the murder and mutilation of Stamboliyski (Crampton, 1987, p. 98). Whilst Boris had admiration for the Agrarian leader, whom despite their differences had seen as a great man, it is still alleged he gave a 'nod of approval' to the coup (Cornell, et al., 2020, p. 184). Although it must be argued that Boris was genuinely shocked at the violent murder of Stamboliyski, so the extent of his knowledge of the plans is questionable (Crampton, 1987, p. 98).

The IMRO and Military League were both politically disparate organisations, containing members with extreme left and right, monarchist and republican tendencies. Unlike Yugoslavia where the military,

and veteran organisations were firmly behind the victorious Aleksandar, Boris faced a significant contingent of republican sentiment in the armed forces. However the right wing of the Military League did contain a large number of members who were close to Boris, keeping him well informed of the movements of the League (Dimitroff, 1986, p. 112). Those members such as Hristo Lukov who would go on to form the basis for the developing far-right in Bulgaria, founding the Union of Bulgarian Legionaries in 1932 (Rees, 1990, p. 241). The IMRO, whose principle ambitions were for a unified Macedonian lands within a Greater Bulgaria, became the undisputed dominant force in Bulgaria at the time, although operating outwith the law, had formed a 'state within a state' (Crampton, 1987, p. 102). Successive governments proved unable to reign in the IMRO's campaign of terror, often fratricidal in nature, which not only destabilised Bulgaria but whose actions undermined her diplomatic relations with neighbouring Greece and Yugoslavia (Glenny, 2000, p. 438). Whilst Boris was not in a position during this period to oppose the IMRO, he did little to discourage the irredentist IMRO (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 98) and his inner circle contained a number of members who were distinctly sympathetic to the IMRO cause, though active royal cooperation with the IMRO remains uncertain (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 98) (Crampton, 1987, pp. 98-99, 104).

In 1932, the first significant steps in establishing a more permanent far-right presence in Bulgaria were made, with the establishment of both the Union of Bulgarian Legionaries (UBL) under General Hristo Lukov and the National Social Movement under former Prime Minister Aleksandar Tsankov (Rees, 1990, p. 393). This was considerably later than say the Iron Guard in Romania which by this point was an established political force, having been growing in popularity since 1927, or its predecessor the National Christian Defence League of Ion Cuza, which had been in existence since 1924 (Levy, 2005, p. 410). There had been earlier attempts to establish far-right movements, inspired by Mussolini in Italy, as early as 1923; these movements attracted as much 'ridicule as support' and their members quickly dissolved into the arms of the IMRO (Crampton, 1987, p. 110). Whilst support for the UBL, along with the Ratniks, formed a few years later in 1936, gained some ground, most far-right movements like their earlier predecessors and those in Yugoslavia failed to gain much in way of popular support, yet they remained surprisingly prominent given their support amongst the elite both at home and abroad (Chary, 2011, p. 81) (Blinkhorn, 2000, p. 50). The relative youth of the movement and the lack of popular support may have later contributed to the lack of engagement Boris would demonstrate, compared to Carol with the Iron Guard, as he neither overly respected them as a capable ally, nor a meaningful opponent. From the far-right perspective; Tsankov's movement, was at best neutral on the monarchy, with its limited membership stemming from Social Democratic convert to National Socialism (Rees, 1990, pp. 393-394). Lukov's movement, by contrast, was avowedly pro

monarchist (Poppetrov, 2009). Like ORJUNA in Yugoslavia, the UBL was charged with the desire to protect the Monarchy from threats and was personally loyal to Boris (Rees, 1990, p. 242).

The IMRO continued to cause Bulgaria problems, and as discussed in the chapter on Yugoslavia, increasingly reached out to other far-right movements, such as the Croatian Ustaša and Mussolini's Italy (Glenny, 2000, p. 437) (Chary, 2011, p. 70). The two movements conspired in their assassination of King Aleksandar in Marseilles in 1934, the assassin being a Bulgarian by the name of Vlado Chernozemski (Nielsen, 2014, p. 237).

Only months earlier as part of a warming of relations with King Aleksandar, Boris had promised all he could to encourage his government to end the IMRO's activities (Balfour & MacKay, 1980, p. 99). However, the government, as with previous Bulgarian governments had failed miserably to act against the IMRO (Berend, 2001, p. 332). It is perhaps testament to Yugoslavia's belief in Boris's sincerity in opposing the IMRO that efforts to improve relations between the two countries continued (Crampton, 1987, p. 120). This détente was in part encouraged and arranged through the influence of Boris's wife Queen Giovanna, who was a cousin of King Aleksandar and whom used her familial links to broker meetings between the two monarchs and an improvement in diplomatic relations (Glenny, 2000, p. 436). Unlike Carol in Romania, and to a much greater extent than Aleksandar, Boris decision making was advised, informed and to an extent controlled by his family, especially Giovanna and his sister Princess Eudoxia (Chary, 2007, p. 134). A far more traditional dynastic approach, which would continue after the establishment of the dictatorship. This had a direct impact on the Royal Dictatorship's relationship with the far-right as it not only provided motivation to suppress the IMRO, but would additionally keep the Tsar with a foothold in the traditional democrat elites despite the efforts of the far-right to gain his support (Chary, 2011, p. 80).

With the IMRO's actions out of control, democracy was once again overthrown in 1934 when a movement called Zveno (Link) staged a coup. Zveno, following the rather unusual tradition of Bulgarian mass movements, was a very politically disparate grouping, whose members spanned the political spectrum. Although a majority of the movement's rank and file could be classified as falling within the political right, much of the leadership some would go on to form the ranks of the first communist regimes after the Second World War (Chary, 2007, p. 124). They did however share a desire to end the failing democratic system and replace it with an authoritarian system that would be capable of providing stability and controlling the IMRO (Glenny, 2000, p. 438). Whilst this movement has often been given the misnomer 'fascist' by the press at the time and later historians, it is far too politically diverse to attribute such a label or even describe it with any certainty as far-right (Connelly, 2020, p. 429). In fact Zveno may have acted to prevent a truly fascist coup in the form of Tsankov's

National Social Movement, which had support within royal circles, though possibly not from Boris himself (Dimitroff, 1986, pp. 113-114). Boris's compliance in the Zveno coup also seems unlikely given the leadership was dominated by some staunchly left-wing republican members such as Georgiev, Velchev and Kazasov who not only subjugated Boris to a puppet status, but placed him under a form of house arrest (Oren, 1971, pp. 232,253). With Zveno succeeding in finally reining in the IMRO (Chary, 2007, p. 124), and their authoritarian and corporatist positioning, they may have found an ally in Boris, whose political beliefs were not so different albeit with a greater respect for some form of democracy (Glenny, 2000, p. 438). However, the strong republican tendencies and their detainment of Boris in all but name had him fearful for not only his throne, but also his life (Dimitroff, 1986, pp. 114-115).

### The Establishment of Royal Dictatorship

In-fighting within Zveno gave Boris the opportunity to rally his supporters in the Military League, including Hristo Lukov to stage a coup against the movement in April 1935 (Rothschild, 1974, p. 350). Zveno had already abolished political parties and clamped down on the IMRO, so Boris needed to do little to establish his authority as the one remaining source of stability and power in the country (Glenny, 2000, p. 440). Despite being a natural advocate of democracy Boris didn't move to re-establish political parties or the pre-1934 constitution, although he did allow some form of semi-pluralist democracy (Payne, 1995, p. 327). In fact he went further: suppressing all mass-movements including those far-right organisations which professed to support him (Berend, 2001, p. 332). Velchev was arrested, tried and sentenced to death for treason for conspiring against the King, but was spared due to Boris's lifelong opposition to the death penalty (Glenny, 2000, p. 439) (Crampton, 1987, p. 115). Even the Military League wasn't spared, being dissolved with some members such as General Lukov incorporated into Boris's new government as Minister of War, under Prime Minister Georgi Kioseivanov, expropriating much of their (far-right) ground support to the new monarchist regime (Frusetta & Glont, 2009, p. 558). It is also worthy to note that at no point in the Royal Dictatorship did Boris possess the more unbridled power possessed by Carol or Aleksandar, he always had to govern in cooperation with his Prime Minister, however he had the power to choose his Prime Minister (Frison-Roche, 1999, p. 230).

The National Socialists (NS) under Tsankov were far less compliant with the new Royal Dictatorship and continued to agitate throughout 1936, becoming ever bolder and more overtly fascist in their rhetoric. Lukov advocated the formation of a pro-Monarchist mass movement to coordinate with and coopt Tsankov's support, presumably centred around his own increasingly fascistic organisation the

UBL, which by this stage was openly emulating the Nazis in Germany in appearance, politics and slogans (Poppetrov, 2009) (Rees, 1990, p. 242). Boris was highly suspicious of the fascists and fascism and refused to cooperate with them (Chary, 2007, p. 126). He may have been emboldened by the limited popular support for such movements, or indeed any mass movements due to the lack of a large urban, literate class in Bulgaria, a luxury not afforded to Carol in Romania (Connelly, 2020, p. 430). However perhaps as a nod to the zeitgeist and an attempt to co-opt some of the more practical elements of fascism, creating a corporatist style economy and 'patriotic union' (Connelly, 2020, p. 430). In return the far-right in Bulgaria was keen to play-down its more revolutionary intentions in an attempt to gain royal approval, and on the whole content to accept Boris as the personification of the nationalist cause (Frusetta & Glont, 2009, p. 558). This again contrasts with Carol, Aleksandar and Pavle who all faced significant opposition from the far-right, be it on a national or regional level.

### The Rising Influence of External Fascism and the Road to War

However, as with Romania and Yugoslavia, the tides of Europe were turning in the favour of Nazi Germany, with the whole region becoming increasingly dependent on Germany economically (Macartney & Palmer, 1962, pp. 339-40). Despite Boris's personal efforts to engage Britain and France, by the end of the 1930's Germany dominated Bulgaria's economy to an extent unsurpassed by its neighbours (Glenny, 2000, p. 441) (Berend, 2001, p. 333). This in turn had an impact on Bulgaria's foreign policy and the strength of the far-right, with fascist organisations such as the Ratniks, founded in 1936, increasingly receiving support from Berlin and agitated for a closer alliance with the Reich, an argument few in Bulgaria could resist given its level of economic dependence (Fuentes, 2019, p. 188).

In 1939, in one last effort to avert political extremists from both left and right, Boris moved to abolish all political mass movements, including the Ratniks, NS and the UBL, although in reality they remained at large (Payne, 1995, pp. 325, 429). However as with Carol in Romania and Pavle in Yugoslavia it was too late to stop the tide of fascism. In September 1939 the Ratniks and other far-right sympathisers launched an attempted pogrom in Sofia modelled on the earlier Kristalnacht in Germany, with little to no opposition from the authorities (Bar Zohar, 1998, p. 8). Despite this, or perhaps because of it, Boris remained resolute in his reluctance to get into bed with fascists either at home or abroad, and with the outbreak of war declared Bulgarian neutrality (Crampton, 1987, p. 121).

By 1940 the European die had been cast; the conservative-authoritarian, and pro-Western government of Koseivanov was forced to resign and Boris invited academic Boris Filov to form a

government (Crampton, 1987, p. 122). Filov's pro-German government immediately shifted Bulgaria's position in favour of Berlin, and invited Ratnik founder Petur Gabrovski to be Interior Minister (Chary, 1972, pp. 17-18). Filov initiated the formation of the Brannik's, which like the Straja Țării in Romania were pro-fascist, modeled on the Hitler Youth and swore allegiance to Boris with the motto 'Boris, Bulgaria, God!', designed to defend the monarchy not only from left-wing, but also the increasingly extreme and uncontrollable UBL (Poppetrov, 2009) (Raïkin, 2001, pp. 146-147). In contrast to Romania, the level of interest or influence Boris had over these organisations is questionable, compared to the active enthusiasm displayed by Carol.

By October 1940, the Ratnik dominated government of Filov proposed a Law for the Protection of the Nation, modeled on Germany's 1935 Nuremberg Laws, which sought to deny the Jewish population of Bulgaria of their rights to citizenship, property, intermarriage and economic activity (Ragaru, 2017). Boris and members of the Bulgarian elite acted to limit the effects of these laws, advocating for a number of clauses to counter actions that were against their fundamental beliefs (Crampton, 1987, p. 127). Boris refused to allow far-right volunteer battalions to fight against the Soviet Union, despite his long-held fear of communism, as he felt such a battalion could further undermine his position and Bulgaria's security (Crampton, 1987, p. 126). The growing threat Boris felt from the far-right, may have been justified. Tsankov's National Socialists waited in hope the German's would overthrow Boris's government due to its lack of cooperation (Rees, 1990, p. 394). The UBL and Lukov, despite being self-professed extreme monarchists had by 1942 grown tired of Boris's lack of enthusiasm for the fascist project and made unsuccessful overtures to Hitler to gain his support for a coup against Boris and the installation of a UBL dominated government (Kolev, 1976) (Chary, 2007, p. 129). The same year Germany, felt it necessary to insist to Boris that they had no secret contact or support for Lukov and the UBL (Rees, 1990, p. 242). This is perhaps testament to the value that Berlin placed in Boris's regime versus their trust in Bulgaria's far-right, giving Boris far greater capacity to countermand the far-right, without fear of consequences than had been enjoyed earlier in Romania and Bulgaria. This would be reinforced later in 1943 when the German high command overwhelmingly supported the succession of Boris's son Simeon and the regency under Prince Kirill, over a potential UBL putsch, reiterating their support for the Royal Dictatorship as an institution, not just Boris personally (Chary, 2007, p. 138). This contrasts with German support for Antonescu and the Iron Guard's coup against King Carol and the subversion of his son King Mihai to the will of the Conducător and the National Legionary State (Deletant, 2006, pp. 52-55).

By 1942 the Jewry of Bulgaria had been declared to be outside the protection of the law and preparations were being made for the deportation of the Jews to Nazi concentration camps (Chary, 1972). Boris was increasingly detached from the government of Filov, but made significant efforts to



save Bulgaria's Jewish population, though not those from the newly acquired territories in Macedonia and Thrace, from the camps. This is not to say that Boris wasn't anti-Semitic, even going as far as publicly placing the blame on Jewish 'profiteering spirit' for their current situation (Todorov, 2001, pp. 104-105), however his decisions were tempered by his own dislike for violence and a determined opposition from Bulgarian high-society, including the ever influential Princess Eudoxia (Connelly, 2020, p. 484) The precise impact Boris had on these decisions, is a subject of much historical debate but it seems likely that the lack of the King's support for such measures delayed the deportations and certainly by 1943 Boris actively advocated to prevent the Bulgarian Jews from leaving the country (Chary, 2007, p. 135) (Crampton, 1987, p. 127). Unlike Carol in Romania, Boris made little attempt to show even false support for the more distasteful elements of Fascist and Far-right policies.

Hristo Lukov, who had increasingly been forced into political retirement was assassinated in February 1943, officially by communist partisans but possibly by agents of Boris in an attempt to remove the threat posed by the UBL, did Boris finally overcome his misgivings over killing and like Carol seek to murder his far-right opponent? (Rees, 1990, p. 242). Boris himself died suddenly in August 1943, shortly after returning to Bulgaria from visiting Hitler in Berlin. It was postulated at the time, that Boris had been poisoned by the German's for his refusal to participate in the war with the USSR or allow the deportation of the Jews, however this has been discredited by most modern historiography (Chary, 2007, p. 138). Boris's often flawed battle to maintain the centre-ground against a fascist onslaught was finally over, and with him ended the last of the Royal-Dictatorships.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, to summarise, none of the three countries studied do periods of conflict with the far right preclude simultaneous co-option or later cooperation. Equally flirtations with the far-right and attempts to emulate them do not necessarily equate to a wholehearted embracing of their ideals nor prevent later suppression. This was an ever-evolving relationship dependent on the realpolitik of the European situation, popular support for the far right, and the personal viewpoint of the monarch and the dynastic/non dynastic nature of the monarchy.

The Monarchy was to a large extent encouraged towards a Royal-Dictatorships by the far-right both in terms of direct support; such as the support for Boris's coup, or in indirect measures such as the nationalist violence in Yugoslavia undermining the democratic system, or in Romania where the

relative threat of the far-right was used by Carol to propose his dictatorship as the more palatable option; just as the far-right grew in influence as a result of the Royal Dictatorships, so did they contribute to the formation of those dictatorships willingly or otherwise.

The cases in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria both demonstrate similar tendencies of timid cooperation and co-option with the Far-right in order to achieve short term ambitions, namely securing the throne, the establishment of dictatorship and, in the case of Yugoslavia, an attempt to impose Yugoslav identity. This was then followed by periods of minor conflict, with attempts to suppress far-right movements increasing as the threat from external influence became more widely understood. The irony being the far-right was both a useful intermediary with Berlin and Rome, yet that very connection posed a threat to the traditional alliances and geopolitical orientation of Yugoslavia, Romania and to an extent Bulgaria. On the most part the far-right movements were, if not actively fanatical monarchists, at least initially supportive of the monarchy. Only Yugoslavia's Royal Dictatorship experienced intense and continuous hostility in the form of the IMRO and Ustaša due to the intrinsic threat each posed to the other's aims, and as mentioned even Pavelić had been willing to compromise on the monarchy prior to the establishment of the dictatorship. On this latter point Aleksandar's actions can be seen as directly contributing to the radicalisation of the Croatian right, and in opposition the Serbian and Yugoslav movements- the dictatorship being the catalyst. In Bulgaria conflict only occurred once the far-right felt power was within their grasp within the confines of an alliance with Nazi Germany and felt frustrated and hindered by Boris's lack of enthusiasm for the fascist project. Whereas Carol actively embraced the trappings of fascism, including establishing the Hitler-Youth inspired Straja Țării before the entry into the Axis, Boris seems to have shied away from such pomposity and only after the rabidly pro-German government of Filov was installed after the start of WW2, were similar methods adopted such as the Brannik. Equally on the grounds of Nazism's most distasteful policies such as staunch anti-Semitism Carol actively promoted viciously anti-Semitic right-wing minority governments over the traditional elite, offering his vocal support for such policies. This was despite his personal relationships with prominent Jewish industrialists and indeed his mistress Elena Lupescu. Regardless of his personal views on the Jewish community he was prepared to pursue this agenda which he viewed as 'keeping with the spirit of the present time' (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1938). By contrast Boris sought to distance himself as much as possible and when he did intervene, it was to frustrate or countermand such policies. It must be noted that Romania's popular support for the far-right and indeed antisemitic policies was much higher than in Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, which may go some way to explain Carol's greater enthusiasm for such movements and conversely why Boris, Aleksandar and Pavle may have felt emboldened to suppress such movements. Although, similar to the catalyst Aleksandar's dictatorship provided, Carol's continuous machinations

against traditional parties, personal support for the far-right, plus his own blindness to how his unpopular maintenance of Lupescu and the Camarilla were feeding into support for the Iron Guard's rhetoric, fostered greater support for the far-right than would otherwise have been possible.

In comparison, whilst Aleksandar's support for organisations such as ORJUNA may be questionable, his subsequent rapid out-lawing of the organisation, once the dictatorship was established suggests that whilst he was content to use the far-right, he was not keen to maintain its power. Equally Pavle's initial tacit acceptance of Zbor or Stojadinović, or Boris's eventual invitation to Filov's Ratnik dominated government, can arguably be seen as a means of gaining influence and support from Germany and Italy, an influence that could be ever more imposed by the Axis due to their economic dominance in the area. As time went on this also evolved into a fear of repercussions from these foreign 'patrons', should there be any too overt moves to suppress the far-right. What is apparent is the Royal Dictatorships, whatever their motivations acted to give the far-right far greater influence than they might otherwise have achieved. This is especially in the case of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, where, as discussed in the article, far-right popular support was at best a very small minority, albeit a very vocal one. Cooperation and co-optation with the Royal Dictatorships gave them a voice, and space to develop far beyond what could have been achieved through democratic or even violent means alone, even if that remained (in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia) minimal for much of the 1930's.

In all three countries the role of external influence and support from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, how strongly they favoured the Royal Dictatorship over the far-right movements in the country, progressively dictated the level to which the monarchs could move against such movements. Boris was in a much stronger position, allied to Germany, with a weak and unpopular far-right to have a free hand in domestic agenda, than Carol was by the time of his final calamitous attempts to control the Iron Guard. For movements hostile to the Royal Dictatorship; Berlin and Rome also provided the funding, inspiration and even safe harbour, giving them power and impact beyond anything most could attain domestically and allowing them to openly defy and threaten the Royal Dictatorships with an impunity unachievable otherwise. Only when the regime became allied to, or at least friendly to the axis did the threat abate, most clearly observed in the sudden withdrawal of support for the Ustaša and IMRO following the rise of Stojadinović's more pro-fascist government.

With the zeitgeist moving in the favour of Berlin, Rome and fascism, it also became increasingly challenging for any regime in Europe not to be seduced by the appeal of order and success, even on a merely aesthetic level. Carol was clearly much more engaged and enthusiastic on a personal level for the new fascist era than Boris or Pavle, both of whom made timid steps towards a more fascist inspired model with a degree of reluctance and a continued regard for the old order and the western powers.

Even in more overtly pro-fascist Romania, the final shift towards an extreme right-wing regime under Carol, came as a result of an attempt to gain the support and good will of Nazi Germany, however this came after a much longer period of Royal flirtation with the far-right during a period that Carol felt free to pursue a pro-Anglo-French foreign policy and murder Codreanu despite the latter's support in Berlin. It could be argued that Carol also simply wished to coopt far-right support for his own gain, however his strong early fascination with Mussolini and the Fascist aesthetic suggests this was more than a useful tool and hints at a political preference. Carol's fierce conflict with Codreanu and the Iron Guard are far more related to Codreanu's opposition to Carol's personal life due to his (Codreanu's) religious fanaticism and anti-Semitism than any wide divide in political outlook. This divide was worsened by Carol's megalomaniacal personality which saw him seek to remove any challenges to his popularity or power, even from his own family (Gelardi, 2005, p. 352).

Carol's jealous guarding of his personal power and popularity, not only sought to undermine the traditional democratic system, utilising the far-right, but also weakened the monarchy as a dynastic institution. By revoking his father's wishes, overthrowing his infant son, alienating and exiling his mother and brother, he turned the monarchy into a personal regime or an essentially non-dynastic monarchy as defined by Ezrow and Frantz (Ezrow & Frantz, 2011, pp. 242-243). This paved the way, combined with his political leanings towards transforming the monarchy into a personal dictatorship more akin to Fascist Italy than neighbouring Bulgaria or Yugoslavia, with few checks on his behaviour or willingness to accept advice. Arguably Carol's decision to violently suppress the Iron Guard could be viewed more as a removal of a political rival within the same political sphere, more akin Hitler's 'Night of the Long Knives' than the bans (albeit half-hearted) on far-right movements implemented by Boris and Pavle. Carol sought to implement fascist-inspired personal rule and actively encouraged the far-right in their joint goal of undermining the traditional elite. His adoption of increasingly more fascistic and less monarchical titles when addressing his supporters, suggest at least an aesthetic transformation of the traditional monarch into a Mussolini like 'Leader'. By comparison Boris and Pavle remained far more dedicated to their more traditional role, with much of the growing far-right agenda stemming from increasingly powerful Prime Ministers, rather than from the Monarchy directly; echoing the role of Vittorio Emanuele III in Italy more than 'Il Duce'. This said, unlike in Italy, ultimate power still remained with the monarchy so this analysis should not be taken as a deferral of responsibility, rather a demonstration of more passive versus active interaction.

Cooperation was highest once the influence of Rome and Berlin grew in the region, the Royal-Dictatorships calculating that far-right movements could be a useful, albeit unstable intermediary, in improving their position with the Third Reich. This happened regardless of popular support for the far-right, though with the exception of Carol in Romania, was hesitant and often reversed when either

the influence of the far-right or Berlin was deemed to have grown too great, often too late to prevent being drawn into their sphere. The Royal Dictatorships were also willing to cooperate with loyal far-right groups in the establishment and enforcement of their regimes- notably Aleksandar and Carol, but were unwilling to share much power or concede to right-wing demands until the influence of Berlin was felt.

All three royal dictatorships co-opted far-right support and populism, at least on an aesthetic level, adhering to the purveying zeitgeist set by Mussolini and Hitler. None more so than Carol, but even the more traditional, conservative Boris was aware of its use. Either due to its personal appeal or a means of weakening far-right opposition by focusing that support on the monarchy. All three to a greater or lesser extent were willing to co-opt fascist and far-right policy, both economic (Aleksandar and Boris) and socio-political (Carol and later Boris). Though only Carol actively co-opted the more extreme policies of the far-right, prior to the outbreak of war.

Conflict tended to occur at the establishment of the dictatorship, with the Monarchy keen to rid itself of an unstable and potentially threatening force. This was more due to perceived direct competition in Carol's Romania, whereas in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria the threat was more personal (i.e. assassination) or the far-right were viewed unfavourably due to their class and revolutionary ideas being incompatible with the more traditional-conservative outlook of the monarchy.

In light of this, there may be room to re-evaluate the term 'Monarcho-Fascism' devoid of its Marxist historiographical prejudice, in order to better describe the phenomena seen in cases such as Carol. Fascism is by its very nature revolutionary, and would seem at odds with the conservative nature of monarchy, but when faced with a narcissistic personality with such fascination with the movement, it is possible to fuse the two, the 'revolution' taking place under the auspices of a radical monarch. A similar phenomenon, but for the opposite end of the political spectrum, can be observed in the strange attempts to fuse communism and the monarchy in Cambodia and Laos, combining the traditional elite with revolutionary ideology (Osborne, 1994, pp. 228-233). The same argument cannot be applied in the cases of Boris, Pavle, or even Aleksandar who whilst cooperated with far-right movements, and co-opted their support and imagery on occasions, did so either to pursue their own (primarily Conservative Authoritarian) ambitions, preserve their position, or under duress from the Axis powers. Whereas Boris, Aleksandar and Pavle's relationship can be summarised as tacit co-option followed by underwhelming conflict and (at times) reluctant cooperation, Carol's relationship with the far-right goes beyond the aesthetic, beyond cooperation and mere co-option. Even in conflict he was emulating his idol Mussolini, by his ruthlessness. It is fair to argue that only his royal lineage, and the

fact his tenure as dictator was so short lived have saved him from being condemned and classified in the same boat as Hitler and Mussolini, albeit a tin-pot variety.

On a final note a similar figure with a similar personality, and similar sympathy with the far-right, even a similar ambitious and vilified mistress, can be observed in the United Kingdom in the form of Edward VIII (Duke of Windsor). As such Carol provides an interesting, and deeply concerning model for which a British Monarchy may have developed under Edward's reign had he not abdicated.

## Bibliography

Anderson, L., 1991. Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East. *Political Science Quarterly*, 106(1), pp. 1-15.

Arendt, H., 1951. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, NY: Harvest Press.

Balfour, N. & MacKay, S., 1980. *Paul of Yugoslavia: Britain's Maligned Friend*. London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd.

Banac, I., 1992. Yugoslavia. *The American Historical Review*, 97(4), pp. 1084-1104.

Bar Zohar, M., 1998. *Beyond Hitler's Grasp: The Heroic Rescue of Bulgaria's Jews*. 1 ed. Holbrook, MA: Adams Media Corporation.

Benson, L., 2001. *Yugoslavia: A Concise History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Berend, I. T., 2001. *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe before World War II*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Besier, G. & Stokłosa, K., 2013. *European Dictatorships: A Comparative History of the Twentieth Century*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Bideleux, R. & Jeffries, I., 2007. *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*. 2nd ed. Abingdon: Routledge.

Bigelow, B., 1974. Centralization Versus Decentralization in Interwar Yugoslavia. *Southeastern Europe*, 1(1), pp. 157-172.

Biondich, M., 2008. The Historical Legacy . In: L. J. Cohen & J. Dragović-Soso, eds. *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration* . West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, pp. 43-74.

Blasen, P. H., 2018. De la nomination du cabinet Goga au coup d'État du roi Carol II (28 décembre 1937 - 10 février 1938)\*. *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai - Historia*, 62(3), pp. 111-157.

Blinkhorn, M., 2000. *Fascism and the Right in Europe 1919-1945*. London: Pearson Education Ltd.

Boia, L., 2001. *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*. Budapest: Central European University Press.

- Boskovska, N., 2017. *Yugoslavia and Macedonia Before Tito: Between Repression and Integration*. London: I B Tauris.
- Bossy, R. V., 2003. *Recollections of a Romanian Diplomat, 1918-1969: Diaries and Memoirs of Raoul V Bossy Volume II*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press.
- Brown, K., 2003. *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Brunstein, W. & King, R., 2004. Anti-Semitism as a Response to Percieved Jewish Power: The Cases of Bulgaria and Romania Before the Holocaust. *Social Forces*, 83(2), pp. 691-708.
- Bucur, B., 2016. Socialogical School of Bucharest's Publications and the Romanian Political Propaganda in the Interwar Period. In: A. Fox, ed. *Global Perspectives on Media Events in Contemporary Society*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global, pp. 106-121.
- Bucur, M., 2007. Carol II of Romania. In: B. J. Fischer, ed. *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, pp. 87-118.
- Byford, J., 2014. Willing Bystanders: Dimitrije Ljotic, 'Shield Collaboration' and the Destruction of Serbia's Jews. In: R. Haynes & M. Rady, eds. *In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: I.B.Tauris, pp. 295-312.
- Carlisle, R. P., 2005. *The Encyclopedia of Politics: The Left and the Right, Volume II : The Right*. London: Thousand Oaks.
- Chary, F., 1972. *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution, 1940-1944*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Chary, F., 2007. Boris III, Tsar of the Bulgarians. In: B. J. Fisher, ed. *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, pp. 119-140.
- Chary, F., 2011. *A History of Bulgaria*. Oxford: Greenwood.
- Chary, F. B., 1976. The Diary of Bogdan Filov (Translated). *Southeastern Europe*, 2(1), pp. 161-163.
- Cioroianu, A., 2005. *Pe umerii lui Marx. O introducecere în istoria comunismului românesc*. Bucharest: Editura Curtea Veche.
- Codreanu, C. Z., 1936. *For My Legionaries*. 2015 English Language Translation ed. London: Black House Publishing.
- Cohen, P. J., 1996. *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History (Eastern European Studies)*. 1st ed. College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press.
- Connelly, J., 2020. *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Constant, S., 1979. *Foxy Ferdinand, 1861–1948, Tsar of Bulgaria..* 1st ed. London: Sidgwick and Jackson.
- Cornell, A., Møller, J. & Skaaning, S.-E., 2020. *Democratic Stability in an Age of Crisis: Reassessing the Interwar Period*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Cox, J. K., 2007. Ante Pavelić and the Ustasa State in Croatia. In: B. J. Fischer, ed. *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, pp. 199-238.
- Crampton, R., 1997. *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century-And After*,. London: Routledge.
- Crampton, R. J., 1983. *Bulgaria 1878-1918: A History*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs.
- Crampton, R. J., 1987. *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Daskalov, R., 2011. *Debating the Past: Modern Bulgarian Historiography—From Stambolov to Zhivkov*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Davies, P. & Jackson, P., 2008. *The Far Right in Europe: an Encyclopedia*.. Oxford: Greenwood.
- Deletant, D., 2006. *Hitler's Forgotten Ally: Ion Antonescu and His Regime, Romania, 1940-44*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Deletant, D., 2014. Ion Antonescu: The Paradoxes of His Regime, 1940-44. In: R. Haynes & M. Rady, eds. *In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: I.B.Tauris, pp. 278-294.
- Deletant, D., 2016. *British Clandestine Activities in Romania during the Second World War*. 1st ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Denitch, B., 1976. *The Legitimation of a Revolution: The Yugoslav Case*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Dimitroff, P., 1986. *Boris III of Bulgaria: Toiler, Citizen, King 1894-1943*. Lewes: Book Guild.
- Dimitrov, I., 1971. Tsaryat-fyurer (shtrikhi kum portrela mu) The Tsar-Fuhrer: Lines to His Portrait. In: V. D. Voznesenski, ed. *Tsar Boris, Hitler i Legionerite*. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na OF, pp. 85-91.
- Dimitrov, M., 2018. *Bulgaria Remembers Victims of Communist Purge*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/02/01/bulgaria-commemorates-half-heartedly-victims-of-communism-02-01-2018/>  
[Accessed 19 January 2020].
- Djokić, D., 2007. *Elusive Compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Djokić, D., 2014. 'Leader' or 'Devil'? Milan Stojadinović, Prime Minister of Yugoslavia (1935-39), and His Ideology.. In: R. Haynes & M. Rady, eds. *In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: I.B.Tauris, pp. 153-168.
- Easterman, A. L., 1942. *King Carol, Hitler and Lupescu*. 1st ed. London: Victor Gollancz LTD.
- Easterman, A. L., 1942. *King Carol, Hitler and Lupescu*. London: V. Gollancz Ltd..
- Elsberry, T., 1972. *Marie of Romania*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Eudes, D., 1973. *The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943–1949*. London: Monthly Review Press.



- Ezrow, N. M. & Frantz, E., 2011. *Dictators and Dictatorships: Understanding Authoritarian Regimes and Their Leaders*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Farley, B., 2007. Aleksandar Karadjordjevic and the Royal Dictatorship in Yugoslavia. In: B. J. Fischer, ed. *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, pp. 51-86.
- Fisher, B. J., 2007. King Zog, Albania's Interwar Dictator. In: B. J. Fisher, ed. *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of South Eastern Europe*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, pp. 19-50.
- François-Poncet, A., 1932. Ambassadorial Report (Berlin) December 15th 1932. *Documents diplomatiques français*, 2(1), pp. 262-63.
- Frison-Roche, F., 1999. Managing the Past in Bulgaria. In: H. Rousso & R. J. Golsan, eds. *Stalinism and Nazism: History and Memory Compared*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 218-241.
- Frusetta, J. & Glont, A., 2009. Interwar fascism and the post-1989 radical right: Ideology, opportunism and historical legacy in Bulgaria and Romania. *Communist and Post Communist Studies*, 42(4), pp. 551-571.
- Fuentes, J. F., 2019. *Totalitarianisms: The Closed Society and Its Friends. A History of Crossed Languages*. Santander: University of Cantabria Press.
- Gelardi, J., 2005. *Born to Rule: Five Reigning Consorts, Granddaughters of Queen Victoria*. New York, NY: Saint Martin's Griffin.
- Glenny, M., 2000. *The Balkans, 1804–2012: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers*. New Edt ed. London: Granta Books.
- Gligorijevic, B., 1997. King Aleksandar I Karadjordjevic. In: A. Pavkovic & P. Redan, eds. *The Serbs and their Leaders in the Twentieth Century*. London: Routledge, pp. 140-157.
- Griffin, R., 1991. *The Nature of Fascism*. London: Pinter Publishing.
- Grigorijevic, B., 1963. Organizacija jugoslovenskih nacionalista (ORJUNA). *Istoria XX Veka: zbornik radova*, Volume 5, pp. 315-393.
- Grosvald, S., 2007. *Antisemitism: An Annotated Bibliography*. Munich: K.G.Saur Verlag.
- Groueff, S., 1987. *Crown of Thorns*. Lanham, MD: Madison Books.
- Hartley, L., 1953. *The Go-Between*. 2012 ed. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Hayes, R., 2000. *Romanian Policy Towards Germany, 1936-1940*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Haynes, R., 1999. Germany and the Establishment of the Romanian National Legionary State, September 1940. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 77(4), pp. 700-725.
- Haynes, R., 2007. Reluctant Allies? Iuliu Maniu and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu against King Carol II of Romania. *Slavonic and East European Review*, 85(1), pp. 105-134.
- Haynes, R., 2014. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu: The Romanian 'New Man'. In: R. Haynes & M. Rady, eds. *In the Shadow of Hitler: Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: I.B.Tauris, pp. 169-187.

- Haynes, R., 2019. Without the Captain': Iuliu Maniu and the Romanian Legionary Movement after the Death of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 97(2), pp. 288-341.
- Heinen, A., 1986. *Die Legion 'Erzengel Michael' in Rumanien. Soziale Bewegung und politische Organisation*. Regensburg: Sudosteuropäische Arbeiten.
- Herb, M., 1999. *All in the Family: Absolutism, Revolution and Democracy in the Middle Eastern Monarchies*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Hillgruber, A., 1954. *Hitler, König Carol und Marschall Antonescu: die deutsch-rumänischen Beziehungen, 1938-1944*. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner.
- Hitchins, K., 1994. *Rumania 1866-1947*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hoxha, E., 1985. *Two friendly peoples: excerpts from the political diary and other documents on Albanian-Greek relations, 1941-1984*. Toronto: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin Institute.
- Ion, C., n.d. *Cultul personalității în vremea lui Carol al II-lea - Ziua Restaurației: Historia*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/cultul-personalitatii-in-vremea-lui-carol-al-ii-lea-ziua-restauratiei> [Accessed 22 January 2020].
- Iordachi, C., 2014. Fascism in Southeastern Europe: A Comparison Between Romania's Legion of the Archangel Michael and Croatia's Ustasa. In: R. Daskalov & D. Mishkova, eds. *Entangled Histories of the Balkans - Volume Two: Transfers of Political Ideologies and Institutions*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, pp. 355-468.
- Kazazov, D., 1949. *Burni godini 1918-1944*. Sofia: Knigaizdatelstvo 'Naroden pechat'.
- Kazimirović, V., 1995. *Srbija i Jugoslavija, 1914-1945: Srbija i Jugoslavija između dva svetska rata (II)*. Krugujevac: Prizma.
- Kolev, Z., 1976. *Suyuz na Bulgarskaite nationalni legioni (Union of Bulgarian National Legions)*. Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo.
- Lampe, J. R., 2000. *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Law, R., 2016. *Terrorism: A History*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Levitsky, S. & Way, L. A., 2002. The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2), pp. 51-66.
- Levy, R. S., 2005. *Antisemitism: A Historical Encyclopedia of Prejudice and Persecution, Volume 1*. Oxford: ABC Clío.
- Lewis, D. S., 1990. *Illusions of Grandeur: Mosley, Fascism, and British Society, 1931-81*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Linz, J., 1975. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. 2000 ed. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Lipcsey, I., Gherman, S. & Severin, A., 2006. *Romania and Transylvania in the 20th Century*. Buffalo, NY: Corvinus Publishers.

- Livezeanu, I., 1990. Fascists and Conservatives in Romania: Two Generations of Nationalists. In: M. Blinkhorn, ed. *Fascists and Conservatives: The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth Century Europe*. London: Unwin Hyman, pp. 200-238.
- Ljotić, D., 1952. *Iz mogu zivota*. Munich: Iskara.
- Loiseau, C., 1931. La Dictature yougoslave: Plaidorie. *Le Monde Slav*, 8(3), p. 336.
- Lungu, D. B., 1988. The French and British Attitudes towards the Goga-Cuza Government in Romania, December 1937-February 1938. *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 30(3), pp. 323-341.
- Macartney, C. A. & Palmer, A. W., 1962. *Independent Eastern Europe: A History*. London: Macmillan.
- Majuru, A., 2007. King Carol II and the Myth of "Eternal Romania" in Identity and Destiny: Ideas and Ideology in Interwar Romania. *PLURAL Culture and civilization*, p. 250.
- McCormick, R. B., 2017. *Croatia Under Ante Pavelic: America, the Ustaše and Croatian Genocide in World War II*. London: I.B.Tauris.
- Meštrović, I., 1969. *Uspomene na političke ljude i događaje*. Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska.
- Minkenberg, M., 2014. *Historical Legacies and the Radical Right in Post-Cold War Central and Eastern Europe (Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society 100): Volume 100*. Stuttgart: ibidem Press.
- Mlakar, B., 2009. Radical Nationalism and Fascist Elements in Political Movements In Slovenia Between the Two World Wars. *Slovene Studies*, 31(1), pp. 3-19.
- Mudde, C., 2000. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Nagy-Talavera, N. M., 1970. *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Romania*. Stanford, CA : Stanford University Press.
- Newman, J. P., 2007. War Veterans, Fascism, and Para-Fascist Departures in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1918–1941. *Fascism: Journal Of Comparative Fascist Studies*, 6(1), pp. 42-74.
- Nielsen, C. A., 2014. *Making Yugoslavs: Identity in King Aleksandar's Yugoslavia*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Oren, N., 1970. Popular Front in the Balkans: 2. Bulgaria. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5(3), pp. 69-82.
- Oren, N., 1971. *Bulgarian Communism: The Road to Power 1934-44*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Ornea, Z., 1995. *Anii treizeci. Extrema dreaptă românească*. Bucharest: Editura Fundației Culturale Române.
- Osborne, M. E., 1994. *Sihanouk Prince of Light, Prince of Darkness*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Parezanin, R., 1971. *Drugi svetski rat i Dimitrije V. Ljotic*. Munich: Iskara.
- Pavelić, A., 1967. *Doživljaji*. 2015 ed. Zagreb: Hrvatska Povijest.
- Payne, S. G., 1980. *Fascism: Comparison and Definition*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Payne, S. G., 1995. *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*. London: UCL Press.

- Polonsky, A., 1975. *The Little Dictators: The History of Eastern Europe since 1918*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Poppetrov, N., 2009. *Социално наляво, национализмът - напред. Програмни и организационни документи на български авторитаристки националистически формации*. Sofia: Gutenberg .
- Porter, A., 2010. *The Ghosts of Europe: Journeys through Central Europe's Troubled Past and Uncertain Future*. Toronto: D&M Publishers INC..
- Porter, I., 1989. *Operation Autonomous*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Porter, I., 2005. *Michael of Romania: The King and the Country*. 1st ed. Stroud: Sutton Publishing.
- Pribičević, S., 1933. *La dictature du roi Alexandre; contribution à l'étude de la démocratie (Les problèmes yougoslave et balkanique)*. Paris: P. Bossuet.
- Quinlan, P. D., 1995. *The Playboy King: Carol II of Romania. (Contributions to the Study of World History, number 52)*. 1st ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Ragaru, N., 2017. *SciencesPo: Contrasting Destinies : The Plight of Bulgarian Jews and the Jews in Bulgarian-occupied Greek and Yugoslav Territories during World War Two*. [Online]  
Available at: <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/contrasting-destinies-plight-bulgarian-jews-and-jews-bulgarian-occupied-greek-and-yugoslav-.html#title2>  
[Accessed 21 March 2020].
- Raïkin, S., 2001. *Rebel with a Just Cause: A Political Journey Against the Winds of the 20th Century Volumn II*. Sofia: Pensoft.
- Ramet, S. P., 2006. *The Three Yugoslavias: State-building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*. Washington D.C: Woodrow Wilson Centre Press.
- Ramet, S. P. & Lazić, S., 2011. The Collaborationist Regime of Milan Nedić. In: S. P. Ramet & O. Listhaug, eds. *Serbia and the Serbs in World War Two*. . London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 17-43.
- Rees, P., 1990. *Biographical Dictionary of the Extreme Right since 1890*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Roszkowski, W. & Kofman, J., 2008. *Biographical Dictionary of Central and Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*. Armonk, NY: M.E Sharp.
- Rothschild, J., 1974. *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars*. 8th ed. London: University of Washington Press.
- Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1938. The New Government in Rumania. *Bulletin of International News*, 15(1), pp. 12-14.
- Sachar, H. M., 2003. *Dreamland: Europeans and Jews in the Aftermath of the Great War*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Savu, A. G., 1970. *Dictatura Regală*. Bucharest: Editura Politica.
- Seton Watson, H., 1961. *The East European Revolution*. New York, NY: Frederick A. Prager.
- Seton Watson, R., 1937. Yugoslavia and the Croat Problem. *Slavonic and East European Review*, 16(46), pp. 102-112.

- Stefanović, M., 1984. *Zbor Dimitrija Ljotica, 1934-45*. Belgrade: Narodna knjiga.
- Tanner, M., 1997. *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War..* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- The Slavonic Review, 1927. The Foreign Policy of the Little Entente. *The Slavonic Review*, 5(15), pp. 523-536.
- Tito, J. B., 1948. "Politicki izvjestaj," *Peti kongres Komunističke partije Jugoslavije: Izvestaji i referati*. Belgrade: s.n.
- Todorov, T., 2001. *The Fragility of Goodness: Why Bulgaria's Jews Survived the Holocaust*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tomasevich, J., 1975. *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: The Chetniks*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Trifkovic, S., 1997. Prince Pavle Karadjordjevic. In: A. Pavkovic & P. Redan, eds. *The Serbs and their Leaders in the Twentieth Century*. London: Routledge, pp. 158-202.
- Turnock, D., 2007. *Aspects of Independent Romania's Economic History with Particular Reference*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Vassilev, R., 2003. Will Bulgaria Become Monarchy Again?. *Southeast European Politics*, 4(2/3), pp. 157-174.
- Veiga, F., 1989. *La mística del ultranacionalismo: historia de la Guardia de Hierro, Rumania, 1919-1941*. Barcelona: Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- Veremis, T., 2017. *A Modern History of the Balkans: Nationalism and Identity in Southeast Europe*. London: I.B.Tauris.
- Von Beyme, K., 1985. *Political Parties in Western Democracies*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.
- Watt, D. C., 1989. *How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939*. 1st ed. London: Heinemann.
- Weinberg, G., 2005. *A World In Arms: A Global History of World War II*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wien, M., 2006. The Bulgarian monarchy: a politically motivated revision of a historical image in a post-socialist transitional society. In: H. Altrichter, ed. *GegenErinnerung. Geschichte als politisches Argument Im Transformationsprozes Ost-, Ostmittel- Und Sudosteuropas (Schriften Des Historischen Kollegs)*. Munich: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 219-236.
- Wintrobe, P., 1998. *Political Economy of Dictatorship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wintrobe, R., 1998. *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yavetz, Z., 1991. An Eyewitness Note: Reflections on the Romanian Iron Guard. *Journals of Contemporary History*, 26(3/4), pp. 597-610.
- Yeomans, R., 2013. *Visions of Annihilation. The Ustasha Regime and the Cultural Politics of Fascism 1941-1945*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Žanić, I., 2003. South Slav Traditional Culture as a Means to Political Legitimation . In: S. Resic & B. Tornquist-Plewa, eds. *The Balkans in Focus: Cultural Boundaries in Europe* . Lund: Nordic Academic Press, pp. 45-59.