

A Traditionalist History of the Great War, Book III

A Traditionalist History of the Great War, Book III:

Into The Abyss

By

Alexander Wolfheze

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



A Traditionalist History of the Great War, Book III: Into The Abyss

By Alexander Wolfheze

This book first published 2025

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2025 by Alexander Wolfheze

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-1-0364-4504-1

ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-0364-4505-8

In memory of Hellas and her protectress

*O buono Appollo, a l'ultimo lavoro
fammi del tuo valor si fatto vaso
come dimandi a dar l'amato alloro*

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	ix
List of Tables	x
Introduction	xii
Aim	
Analysis	
Narrative	
Inventory	
Organization	
List of Abbreviations	xxii
Chapter One.....	1
Preliminaries (1815–1911)	
1.1. The Congress System	
1.2. The Alliance System	
1.3. The First Moroccan (Tangiers) Crisis	
1.4. The Bosnian Crisis	
1.5. The Second Moroccan (Agadir) Crisis	
Chapter Two	83
Prelude (September 1911–March 1914)	
2.1. The Anglo-German Naval Arms Race	
2.2. The Turco-Italian War	
2.3. The First Balkan War–Phase One	
2.4. The First Balkan War–Phase Two	
2.5. The Second Balkan War	
Chapter Three	281
The July Crisis (28 June–4 August 1914)	
3.1. Sarajevo	
3.2. Opening Moves	
3.3. Raising the Stakes	
3.4. Va banque	

3.5. Into the Abyss	
Chapter Four	411
Armies and Navies	
4.1. Britain	
4.2. France	
4.3. Russia	
4.4. Germany	
4.5. Austria-Hungary	
Chapter Five	481
Plans and Dispositions	
5.1. The German Schlieffen Plan	
5.2. The French offensive à l'outrance	
5.3. The Russian Steamroller	
5.4. The Battle Orders	
5.5. The Naval Chessboard	
Post-Mortem	522
Postscript	536
Appendix A	541
World War Outlines	
A.1. Belligerent State Monarchs	
A.2. Belligerent State Republican Heads of State	
A.3. Belligerent Minor States	
Appendix B.....	554
Total War Outlines	
B.1. Regressions	
B.2. Descents	
B.3. Daemons	
B.4. Eudaemonics	
Appendix C.....	574
Sacred Geography Revisited	
Bibliography	582
Notes.....	583

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

() Copyright: All illustrations listed here are in the Public Domain.*

Image 0-1 Michael Casts Out Rebel Angels.....	xi
Image 1-1 Dropping the Pilot	24
Image 1-2 Concord	44
Image 1-3 The Modern Civilization of Europe	60
Image 2-1 No Limit.....	87
Image 2-2 “Dreadnought” and “Victory” at Portsmouth.....	100
Image 2-3 Italian Encampment in Tripoli.....	125
Image 2-4 Treaty of Lausanne.....	142
Image 2-5 The Balkan League and Hagia Sophia	156
Image 2-6 Cruiser “Averoff”.....	207
Image 2-7 Kleptroumania.....	254
Image 2-8 The Boiling Point	280
Image 3-1 Archduke Franz Ferdinand	289
Image 3-2 The Sarajevo Assassination.....	296
Image 3-3 German Soldiers on the Way to the Front	410
Image 4-1 John French	417
Image 4-2 Joseph Joffre.....	438
Image 4-3 Grand Duke Nicholas	455
Image 4-4 Helmuth von Moltke	469
Image 4-5 Conrad von Hötzendorf.....	479
Image 5-1 Bravo Belgium!	486
Image PM-1 John Bull Feeding His Dear Little Friends	531
Image PM-2 The Wolves.....	535
Image A1-1 The Monarchs.....	545
Image B4-1 The Peace Palace	573
Image C-1 Mother of the World	581

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The Anglo-German Naval Arms Race	109
Table 2. Balkan War Initial Deployment–Balkan League Forces	169
Table 3. Balkan War Initial Deployment–Turkish Forces.....	172
Table 4. The Russian Navy’s Three-Sea Deployment.....	457
Table 5. The German Battle Order–Western Front	505
Table 6. The Allied Battle Order–Western Front	507
Table 7. The Russian Battle Order–Eastern Front	511
Table 8. The Central Powers Battle Order–Eastern Front	515
Table 9. The Sea Power Balance	518
Table 10. The Minor Belligerents of the Great War.....	551



0-1 Into the Abyss:
Michael Casts Out Rebel Angels, illustration for John Milton, *Paradise Lost* VI
(1866) by Gustave Doré

INTRODUCTION

Aims

The ten volumes that are to make up the author's *A Traditionalist History of the Great War* series may be divided into three parts. The first group consists of three volumes, roughly covering the time before the formal outbreak of the Great War in the summer of 1914: these comprise the “introduction” part of this series, investigating the war’s cultural-historical, geopolitical and political-military background. These are to be followed by a second group of five volumes, each covering one of the war years: these are to make up the “main text” part, narrating the war’s events and focussing on military history. Finally, the last group is to consist of two more volumes, covering the direct aftermath and settlement of the Great War in the West (the Eurasian Rimland) and in the East (the Eurasian Heartland): these are to make up the series’ “epilogue” part, analyzing the Great War’s geopolitical fallout. *Into the Abyss*, the work presently before the reader as Volume III of the author’s *A Traditionalist History of the Great War* series, concludes its first, “introduction” part. It deals with the direct historical and political event chain leading up to the outbreak of the First World War and with the political and military starting position of the Great Power belligerents when hostilities started.

It should be noted that even if it can be read separately as a monograph, *Into the Abyss* is also directly linked to the two earlier volumes of the “introduction” part that it now completes. First, it follows up on the macro-geopolitical and macro-historical trajectories analyzed in the first volume, *Sunset* (Chapters 9 and 10 thereof), showing the continuity and reflection of these trajectories in the micro-geopolitical and micro-historical realities of the years directly preceding the First World War. Second, it continues the diachronic narrative woven into the largely synchronic analysis of the second volume, *The Former Earth* (the narratives of Russian, Chinese and Turkish Revolutions and the Spanish-American, Second Boer and Russo-Japanese Wars therein), showing how the pre-1911 event-chain shaped and determined the crises and wars of 1911-14, which led directly to the outbreak of the Great War itself. These two links explain the first two of the three aims of *Into the Abyss*.

The *first* aim is to give an *analysis* of the causes of the “Shorter Great War”, i.e. the Great War taken in its *narrower* (conventional) sense, by explaining the circumstances, actors and intentions that shaped the July Crisis of 1914 and led to the subsequent outbreak of worldwide hostilities. The *second* aim is to give a *narrative* of the great events of 1911-13, by viewing them as part of the first phase of the “Longer Great War”, which is the Great War in its *wider* sense as defined by the author, viz. as a single, continuous twelve-year conflict, lasting from autumn 1911 to summer 1923.¹ The *third* and final aim of *Into the Abyss* is to give an *inventory* of the military means and plans of the five Great Powers that went to war in the summer of 1914.

Analysis (The Long Fuse of the Shorter Great War)

As stated above, *Into the Abyss*’ first aim is to analyze why the Great War, conventionally defined by its 1914-18 dates, broke out when it did, where it did and how it did. Over the last century, much historical research has been done and many weighty tomes have been written on this topic. In the author’s view, many of these are useful at some level: they serve specific purposes appropriate to either the writers’ agendas, which may be to unearth unknown facts, to disprove false assumptions and to validate national interests, or their changing audiences, which may demand a different approach, a greater perspective and a better presentation. Above all, however, all new historical research and each new work of history is a function of the *passage of time*: each new generation and each new epoquee shapes humanity’s collective memory, as manifested in the *art form* (i.e. imaginal culture expression) that is History.²

At the outset of his *A Traditionalist History of the Great War* writing project, the author stated that the *scientific phase* of Great War historiography was ending and that its *synthetic phase* was starting. The author defined the scientific phase as having started in 1969 and being inextricably linked to the dominance, throughout the Western world, of the baby boomer generation, which is, at the time of writing, still going through its slow and reluctant removal from the scene. Over the last few years, however, another thing has become clear: even if nothing has yet replaced it, the scientific approach to Great War historiography, which lasted about half a century, has now finally ended: it ended during the early 2020s “Great Reset”. It may be argued that, as the Western value system of the current Post-Modern Era is winding down to its logical (“relativist”) “zero point”, so is Western historiography: when a value system disappears or is

discarded, so its now-irrelevant history disappears—even the very definition of what constitutes “history” is changed. One of the most commonly acknowledged outcomes of the early 2020s “Great Reset” is the shift of Western civilization into a post-Western and a (thus-defined) *post-civilizational* modality: the very epistemological foundations of Western civilization, including its once-mighty scientific method and its once-all-conquering philosophical grounding, have become redundant and are now actively fought by powerful “progressive” forces promoting a new dispensation. That new dispensation, already largely in place, is *post-Western* and *anti-Western* because it is defined in exclusively *negative* terms, viz. in opposition to everything that the West once stood for. In fact, to those “progressive” forces, “progress” is *regress*, as long as it serves the purpose of eliminating Western civilization: digging out the very roots of that civilization, i.e. the elimination of Western history, is a precondition for their new dispensation to succeed. To these forces, Western values are ridiculously anachronistic at best and radically subversive at worst: only the elimination of Western values and Western history can guarantee a *post-Western* future. This is the very essence of the “Great Reset”, which has only just started: it seeks to realize a post-Western and post-civilizational future by *inverting* the concepts of civilization, science and history and by replacing them with *anti-civilization*, *anti-science* and *anti-history*. That being so, the question arises whether *any* form of historiography of the Great War, scientific, synthetic or otherwise, is viable after the “Great Reset”.

The author suggests that to answer that question, it may be useful to revisit the Traditionalist thesis of the progressive *acceleration* of time, as reflected in human historical calculus, during the Cycle of the Ages (the Cycle of the Great Boar³): as the cycle winds down, and as the civilizational matrix generated by the cycle breaks down, events and phenomena speed up, with ever shorter intervals separating boundaries and transformations. In ordinary human experience, this process means that all structures in all spheres—institutional, economic, social, religious, natural—are dissolved, reverting to a state of “primordial chaos”. As the civilization matrix becomes unstable and as the cultural habitat, including language—Heidegger’s *Haus des Seins*—itself, starts to come apart, the very foundations of history are shaken and dissolved and, at some point, history itself enters a transition state before transforming into something else altogether. In the author’s estimate, with the early 2020’s “Great Reset” auguring in the Fall of the West, Western history has entered precisely such a transition state and is about to undergo a radical metamorphosis, changing into *mythology*. Such transitions have happened before in recorded human

history, e.g. when cuneiform- and hieroglyph-written Mesopotamian and Egyptian *history* faded away and were transformed into Aramaic- and Arabic-written *mythology*, leaving only the faintest residue in Abrahamic Holy Scripture. It stands to reason that other such transitions happened before and outside recorded human history, with non-written memories or lost-writing records being transformed in the course of multiple “pre-historic” epistemological shifts. This thesis leaves open the possibility, however, that, during the ongoing transition process, which is wiping out Western civilization and destroying its Western cultural matrix, there may yet occur a short time span in which the historiography of the Great War, a war that undoubtedly constitutes a crucial inflexion point in Western history, can enter its synthetic phase. No matter how brief that moment may be, this is of great significance because it would still momentarily permit a full, synthetic grasp of Western history *as a whole*, i.e. the formulation of a meta-narrative that contains a full and authentic understanding of the *meaning* of the entirety of Western history.

As an individual man may occasionally be granted, for a brief moment, a full and authentic understanding of his own personal life, overviewing its arch and destiny, also Western mankind as a whole may now, briefly, be granted the full and authentic grasp of its *collective* life. It may come to grasp all of Western history’s countless conundrums and gain a supreme understanding of its overarching trajectory. Given the breathtaking acceleration in the Fall of the West since the start of the “Great Reset”, it is likely that the time during which this vista may be glimpsed will be very short—perhaps this vista will last no longer than a flash. Given the supreme stakes, however, the author considers it incumbent upon those few authentic historians still standing among the crumbling ruins of the West to work towards this synthesis moment, which reveals the meaning of Western history. Given the fact that Modernity, understood as an abstract idea (“progress”) as well as a concrete force (*Techné*), originates in the West and given the fact that Modernity is now affecting all of humanity, such a revelation would constitute the *ne plus ultra* of all historiography. *Into the Abyss* is meant to strive for this revelation. Hence the importance of uncovering the *why* of the outbreak of the Great War, which is the first aim of *Into the Abyss*: it is a subject of uncommon significance. Inevitably, the *why* question also touches upon the intractable subjects of *responsibility* and *guilt*. These subjects will therefore be summarily addressed as well: in a separate “Post-Mortem”, the author will give his judgment.

Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht
—Schiller

Narrative

(The First Phase of the Longer Great War)

Into the Abyss' second aim is to narrate the first phase of what was earlier termed the "Longer Great War" and defined as the greater sequence of interlocking conflicts that started in the autumn of 1911 and ended in the summer of 1923. The first phase of that Longer Great War consists of a near-unbroken series of intrinsically linked international crises and regional wars that finally gave rise to the Shorter Great War. More precisely, that first phase is here defined as beginning with the outbreak of the Turco-Italian War on 29 September 1911, marking the point at which, after more than three decades, direct armed conflict broke out between two European Great Powers (at that point, Turkey could still be counted as such because it still held large Balkan territories). That first phase is here defined as ending with Britain's declaration of war on Germany on 4 August 1914, marking the point at which Europe's two mightiest powers, both heading a great coalition (respectively, the Allies and the Central Powers) and both championing a larger cause (respectively, Modernity and Tradition), became irrevocably locked in a life-and-death struggle. With these start and end dates, the first phase of Longer Great War covers three crucial years: this was the time between the final breakdown of the long-standing political equilibrium of the "Concert of Europe" and the outbreak of all-out military confrontation between the European Great Powers.

It is important to note that the political map and the military equilibrium of Europe, and the Great Powers' dispositions and plans for the subsequent Shorter Great War with them, were fundamentally affected and altered by the first phase of the Longer Great War, most obviously so in the case of the Great Powers and minor states directly involved in the military conflicts of that first phase (Italy, Turkey and the Balkan states). The political considerations and military plans that dictated the events of 1914 were decisively shaped by the three wars fought between 1911 and 1913 (the Turco-Italian and the two Balkan Wars). Combined, these three wars had the effect of changing state boundaries, diplomatic relations, political commitments and military balances to the extent that they effectively predetermined not only the course and outcome of the July Crisis but also the military moves and clashes that followed it. The political and military events of 1914-18, i.e. the Shorter Great War, can only be fully understood in the context of the military conflicts that directly preceded it, i.e. the first phase of the Longer Great War. In terms of psychological conditioning, at the level of state diplomacy aspect, no less than at the level of public mood,

the events of 1911-13 had created a sense of permanent diplomatic crisis and continuous military conflict, with war creeping ever closer to the heart of Europe. By the summer of 1914, a mood of approaching doom hung over Europe. For the south eastern part of Europe it may be said that, by the summer of 1914, the Great War had already been going on for nearly three years. By the summer of 1914, for the Great Powers bordering the 1911-13 war zone and for the decision-makers in Rome, Constantinople, Vienna and St. Petersburg, war was not just “in the air”: it was already a reality on the ground. *What most destabilised Europe were probably the repeated diplomatic crises, especially from Agadir onwards. ...Once the process of deterioration began... it took on a cumulative momentum. ...From [1910-11] on,... each crisis added further elements to the combination of circumstances that caused disaster in 1914. It is the worsening of the international situation, rather than domestic developments, that explains why the Sarajevo crisis was more serious than its predecessors and why war came when it did.*⁴

Inventory

(The Arsenal and Plans of the Five Great Powers)

Into the Abyss’ third and final aim is to provide an inventory of the military capacities of Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, as well as a brief sketch of their war plans based upon these capacities. This inventory will serve as background reading for *Into the Abyss*’ analysis and narrative, elucidating the means-and-methods-based calculus behind the specific political and military decisions made during the July Crisis of 1914. It will also serve as a useful reference tool for readers of the next instalment of the author’s *A Traditionalist History of the Great War* series: that instalment, Volume IV entitled *Gambit*, will cover the military campaigns of the first year of the war and these can only be fully understood against the background of the preparations and plans made before the war.

It should be noted that similar inventories, covering the military capacities and plans of the other states that went to war in the summer of 1914, i.e. Japan and the minor European states of Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the states that joined the war later, including the Great Powers Turkey, Italy, America and China, will be given at appropriate times in later volumes. The reason for the exclusion of these other states from *Into the Abyss* pre-war inventory is that their military commitments dispositions were, in essence, *secondary*: they were shaped and determined by the initial military dispositions and plans of the five Great Powers that went to war in

the summer of 1914. In other words, the *initial* military dispositions and plans of these five Great Powers, Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, essentially predetermined the *later* military dispositions of all the other belligerents.

Organization

The content organization of *Into the Abyss* is logically determined by its aims as discussed above: chapters 1-3 combined provide the *analysis* of the long fuse of the “Shorter Great War”, chapters 2-3 combined provide the *narrative* of the first phase of the “Longer Great War” and chapters 4-5 combined provide the *inventory* of the military capacities and war plans of the five Great Powers at the outset of the Great War. Unlike the earlier two volumes of the author’s *A Traditionalist History of the Great War* series, *Into the Abyss* is *diachronically* oriented, providing a chronologically ordered analysis and narrative. The resulting historical narrative of political, military and diplomatic events builds up to the point at which Europe fell into the abyss of all-out war, i.e. the point at which military calculus prevailed over political calculus. At that inflexion point, which was the point at which the political leadership decided that war is the necessary continuation of politics and at which the military leadership took it upon itself to solve political conflicts, there arises, inevitably, the question of responsibility: the question as to what—and who—was responsible for the outbreak of the Great War and for the *Untergang des Abendlandes* that followed from it. In its widest sense, this question has already been answered in *Sunset*, Volume I of the author’s *A Traditionalist History of the Great War* series. *Sunset* shows that, in the final analysis, the Great War was *inevitable*—as was its outcome. From a Traditionalist perspective, the Great War represents the showdown between the larger-than-life forces of rising Modernity and declining Tradition and the total defeat of the latter was a foregone conclusion. In its narrower sense, however, the question of responsibility is also a “who” question that has never been satisfactorily answered in any of the innumerable works of research and analysis dedicated to it. To the author, approaching the Great War from a meta-historical and “large picture” perspective, the “who” question does not seem particularly important but he will make some attempt to answer it. It is, after all, the historian’s task to cover not only the “big picture” but also (some of) the “small picture”—the author has therefore briefly addressed the “who” question in a “Post-Mortem” section.

The first three chapters of *Into the Abyss* count down to the outbreak of the war, covering progressively shorter episodes. *Chapter 1* analyzes the origins of the geopolitical trap, or “encirclement”, that the Germanic Empires found themselves caught in during the July Crisis. Facing an existential threat, they basically decided on an all-out gamble, followed by a desperate stand against overwhelming odds, resulting in what was once called the Great War and is now called the First World War. As stated earlier, that trap had already been sprung by 1911:⁵ this is why the crisis- and war-riven years 1911-13 are here described as the first phase of the Longer Great War. *Chapter 2* narrates that first phase, starting the military overview with an in-depth investigation of the all-decisive Anglo-German Naval Arms Race and ending with a detailed sketch of the repercussions of the Balkan Wars. *Chapter 3* covers the July Crisis of 1914, starting with its trigger event, i.e. the Sarajevo Assassination, and ending with its culmination point, i.e. the rash of declarations of war and Europe’s apocalyptic plunge into the abyss.

The final two chapters of *Into the Abyss* give a historically grounded overview of the military equations prevailing during the July Crisis. *Chapter 4* serves to acquaint the reader with the military capacities of the five Great Powers that went to war in Europe in the summer of 1914, covering their armies and navies separately and systematically, allowing easy comparison. In this chapter, the Great Powers are discussed in the following order: Britain, France, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, i.e. in the reversed order in which they went to war, which also happens to reflect the decreasing degree of aggressive intent underpinning the various Great Powers’ preparations for war. Finally, *Chapter 5* serves to acquaint the reader with the war plans of the Great Powers as well as the dispositions that resulted from them. Chapter 5’s first three paragraphs cover the land war plans of Germany, France and Russia, which were the three strongest continental powers, in order of *decreasing* mobilization speed, i.e. the speed with which their plans could be executed. The land war plans of Britain and Austria-Hungary are briefly discussed alongside those of France and Germany, of which they essentially were adjuncts. Chapter 5’s fourth paragraph gives a tabular overview of the battle orders as they eventually materialized on the Western, Eastern and Balkan Fronts. Chapter 5’s fifth and final paragraph analyzes the Great Powers’ naval dispositions, which is a matter of some complexity but great importance: it can be safely said that, although the Great War was largely fought on land, it was decided at sea.

Its regular content aside, *Into the Abyss* also contains three *excursuses* and three *appendices*. The three *excursuses*, giving “extra material”, are inserted

into the main text at relevant places (two in paragraph 2.5. and one in paragraph 4.2.1.) and the three appendices, giving “background material” for the geopolitical, macro-historical and sacred-geographical context of the Great War, are added behind the main text. *Appendix A*, entitled “World War Outlines”, provides the reader with “snapshot” overviews of the geopolitical “state of the world” at the start of the Great War, in the form of three lists. These lists (A.1.-A.3.) show how the world was divided into Modernist and Traditionalist camps, a division relevant to the much older, longer and greater conflict between Modernity and Tradition of which the Great War was merely one—albeit crucially important—episode. The first two (A.1.-A.2.) give all the heads of state of all of the world’s sovereign states during the Great War, categorizing them as either monarchies or republics. From a Traditionalist perspective, only the former category is legitimate, although there were two exceptions: Switzerland (the Helvetic Confederacy) and San Marino (the Most Serene Republic of San Marino), which are both *ab origine* republics. For all other states, lacking Traditional legitimacy, the point at which legitimate monarchic rule ended is indicated by listing their last legitimate ruler. The third (A.3.) lists all of the minor (non-Great Power) states that formally participated in the Great War, giving the dates at which they entered and exited the conflict: this list serves to remind readers of the fact that the Great War was truly a *world* war, affecting nations all around the globe. *Appendix B*, entitled “Total War Outlines”, serves to remind the reader of the fact that the Great War was the world’s first truly “total war”, pointing to its various “totalizing” and “totalitarian” origins, dynamics and effects. Finally, *Appendix C*, entitled “Sacred Geography Revisited”, is added as a Traditionalist coda: after *Into the Abyss*’ long exposé on how the material (earthly) powers of Modernity and Tradition came to oppose each other in the Great War, the three geosophical theses of this appendix serve to remind the reader of the immaterial (heavenly) powers of Tradition.

On a final, “numerological” note, it should be said that the total number of text sections of *Into the Abyss* (the Introduction and the five chapters with five text sections each, the Post-Mortem, the Postscript, plus three appendices with eight text sections in total) is *forty*. In many Traditional symbol systems, that number has the connotation of time (either years, months, weeks or days) spent “in limbo” within settings of essence transformation, e.g. deluge duration, prophetic preparation, fasting penitence. Here, the number forty will serve to remind readers of the greater historical “limbo” (the 33 months between the outbreak of the Turco-Italian War and the outbreak of the Great War) and the smaller historical “limbo”

(the 33 days between the Sarajevo Assassination and the Austrian declaration of war) that preceded the Great War—and the *Untergang des Abendlandes*.

(*) *Chronology note: All dates are given according to New Style (Gregorian calendar) rather than Old Style (Julian calendar) calculation. Till 1918, Russia and most of the Orthodox East retained Old Style calculation, which meant that, as of March 1900, Russian and Orthodox calendar dates were 13 days behind the calendar dates of the West (thus, the Russian February and October Revolutions took place during the Western months of March and November 1917).*

(**) *Vocabulary note: To reflect the identity-modifying effects of the Ausgleich of 1867 and the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, after these dates, the Hapsburg Empire (Austria) will be referred to as “Austria-Hungary” and the Ottoman Empire will be referred to as “Turkey”.*

(***) *Citation note: Bible citations are taken from the King James Version translation and Quran citations from the Pickthall translation.*

(****) *Digital resource note: The author’s podcast lectures on the Turco-Italian War and the Balkan Wars may be freely accessed through his Substack page: alexanderwolfheze.substack.com. A full overview of the author’s book, essay and podcast publications may be freely accessed through his website: wherewolf.eu.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AC	- Armoured Cruiser;
BA	- Pre-Dreadnought Battleship;
Bav	- Bavarian;
BB	- Dreadnought Battleship;
BB+	- Super Dreadnought Battleship;
BC	- Battle Cruiser;
Br	- Brigade;
C	- Cavalry;
CA	- Large Armoured Cruiser;
CAC	- French: <i>Corps d'armée colonial</i> , "Colonial Army Corps";
CD	- Coastal Defence ship;
DD	- Destroyer;
GDR	- French: <i>Groupe de divisions de réserve</i> , "Group of Reserve Divisions";
CIC	- Commander-in-Chief;
Col	- Colonial;
Cos	- Cossack;
D	- Division;
Ers	- German: <i>Ersatz</i> "Replacement" (German special army reserve);
F	- Fortress;
G	- Guard;
H	- Home Guard (Turkey: <i>Mustahfiz</i>);
Hon	- Hungarian: <i>Honvéd</i> , "Home Guard" (Hungarian territorial army);
I	- Infantry (Turkey: <i>Nizam</i>);
KIA	- Killed in action
LC	- Light Cruiser;
Lds	- German: <i>Landsturm</i> , "Land Storm" (Austrian and Hungarian army reserve);
Ldw	- German: <i>Landwehr</i> , "Land Guard" (German and Austrian territorial army);
Mar	- Marine;
Mou	- Mountain;

MG	- Machinegun;
PC	- Protected Cruiser;
POW	- Prisoner of War;
PM	- Prime Minister;
R	- Reserve (Turkey: <i>Redif</i>);
SS	- Submarine;
T	- Territorial.

Notes

¹ Alexander Wolfheze, *The Sunset of Tradition and the Origin of the Great War* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2018) 385-6.

² For the author's application of Dutch historian Presser's scheme to the historiography of the Great War, cf. *Sunset*, xiii ff.

³ *Sunset*, 351-5.

⁴ David Stevenson, *The Outbreak of the First World War: 1914 in Perspective* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997) 51.

⁵ *Sunset*, 341-4.

CHAPTER ONE

PRELIMINARIES (1815–1911)

1.1. The Congress System

() Note: this first paragraph merely gives a brief geopolitical and diplomatic background for the Great Power Alliance System. The Alliance System gradually came to include all the European Great Powers and it ultimately took the shape of two opposing blocs during the Great War—its development is the topic of the second paragraph. For a comprehensive “deep background” analysis of the origin of the Great War, as shaped by the macro-historical conflict between Modernity and Tradition, and an overview of the effects of the modernist phenomena of nationalism and imperialism on European and global geopolitics, the reader is referred to Volume I of the author’s A Traditionalist History of the Great War series.¹*

Preliminaries: the Holy Alliance

The American and French Revolutions, rippling out in multiple smaller but simultaneous revolutions from Haiti and Spanish America to the Netherlands and Poland, plus their follow-up wars—events covering the half-century from the Battle of Lexington (1775) to the Battle of Ayacucho (1824) in the New World and less than half that time from the Battle of Valmy (1792) to the Battle of Waterloo (1815) in the Old World—marked the open intrusion of the forces of unadulterated (i.e. openly secular and unabashedly anti-Traditional) Modernity onto the political and geopolitical stage. Superficially, this initial intrusion ended in a clear end score, succeeding in the New World, which was almost entirely engulfed by Modernist rule (only a few offshore Spanish possessions and a few remote Russian possessions remained under Traditionalist rule), and failing in the Old World, where the forces of Modernity were effectively “quarantined” (only the British Isles remained outside of the grasp of Traditionalist reaction). After the forces of Modernity had first exhausted their momentum and then reached their nadir in the political and geopolitical arenas and after the traditional monarchic and religious order had been restored in the Old

World (formally by the 1815 Congress of Vienna), the forces of Tradition attempted the reconquest of the New World but the Spanish expeditionary forces sent to reconquer Spanish America between 1814 and 1819 only achieved partial success. At this point, the paper-thin façade of the Traditionalist restoration in the Atlantic Rim states of the Old World, which had been deeply affected, even existentially altered, by the events of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era, broke down: in 1820, the near-simultaneous revolutions in Spain and Portugal (the *Trieno Liberal* in the former, the *Revolução liberal* in the latter) doomed any further effort at restoring Traditionalist rule in the New World. By 1821, Brazil had gained independence as a moderately liberal constitutional empire, and by 1825, continental Spanish America had been irretrievably lost to the revolutionary independence movement, mostly inclining to radical-liberal republicanism. The weakness of the Traditionalist restoration on the Iberian Peninsula was symptomatic of the weakness of its equivalents elsewhere on the Atlantic Rim of Europe: the damage done to the domestic as well as the international order by the revolutionary experience was too profound to be undone—the poison of secularism, constitutionalism, liberalism and egalitarianism had sunk too deep into the fabric of society, spreading outward from the rising bourgeoisie and the nihilist intelligentsia, to be removed by more external intervention. The military defeat inflicted upon the revolutionary forces of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France and the political restoration forced upon revolutionary hotbeds, such as Italy, Belgium and Poland, would turn out to be nothing more than temporary dams against an irresistibly rising tide. In the final analysis, the balance of forces between "conservative" Tradition and "progressive" Modernity was too unequal for the order restored by the Congress of Vienna to last: republican, constitutional and liberal ideas and perceptions had permeated society to such an extent that the borders drawn and the order imposed by Vienna may be characterized as artificial—and unsustainable. Along the Atlantic Rim, the domestic balance of power had shifted too far in favour of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia to be substantially susceptible to counter-revolutionary intervention, except in the most superficial manner. The on-the-ground manner of the Vienna restoration reflected this reality: it did not *restore* the old order—rather—it merely *repressed* the new. There was no restoration of the ex-Roman Imperium which had conferred legitimacy on the defunct First German Empire (i.e. the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation), which had been abolished in 1806: its replacement, i.e. the German Confederacy as established by the Vienna Congress, merely created a political control mechanism to thwart foreign interference in small-state Central Europe and to deflect domestic German nationalist sentiment by

projecting the appearance of unitary identity. The Vienna arrangement lacked any sense of a comprehensive, higher vision, reflecting the lack of capable and committed statesmen, with the towering exception of Austrian Chancellor Metternich. It lacked an explicit transcendent aim for the restored order, as well as an authentic religious sanction and a comprehensive disavowal of the revolutionary bourgeois ideology (rationalism, scientism, illuminism).

Europe had a chance, if not to stop, at least contain the... process [of Modernist revolutionary subversion of its Traditional empires] in a rather wide geopolitical area after the fall of Napoleon who, though he revived the imperial symbol and yearned for a Roman consecration, still remained “the son of the Great Revolution”, the virus of which he helped to spread into the remaining states of Traditional and aristocratic Europe as a result of the upheavals brought about by his victorious campaigns. Through the Holy Alliance it would have been possible to create a dam against the fate of the last times. Metternich may rightly be considered the last great European. Nobody was able to see like him with the same far-sighted lucidity and the same overall view of the interplay of subversive forces as well as the only way immediately to neutralize them. Metternich saw all the most essential points: that revolutions are not spontaneous outbursts or mass phenomena but rather artificial phenomena that are provoked by forces that have the same function in the healthy body of people and states that bacteria have in the generation of diseases in the human body; that Nationalism, as it emerged in his own day and age, was only the mask of revolution; that revolution was essentially an international event and that the individual revolutionary phenomena are only localized and partial manifestations of the same subversive current of global proportions. Metternich also saw very clearly the concatenation of the various degrees of revolution; liberalism and constitutionalism unavoidably pave the way for Democracy, which in turn paves the way for socialism, which in turn paves the way for radicalism and finally for communism—the entire liberal revolution of the Third Estate only being instrumental in preparing the way for the revolution of the Fourth Estate, which is destined to inexorably remove the representatives of the former and their world as soon as they have completed their assignment as the avant-garde in charge of opening a breach. This is why Metternich saw folly in coming to terms with subversion: if you give it a hand it will soon take the arm and the rest of the body as well. Having understood the revolutionary phenomenon in its unity and essence, Metternich indicated the only possible antidote: a similar supernational front of all Traditional states and the establishment of a defensive and offensive league of all the monarchs of divine right. This is what his Holy Alliance was

*meant to be. Unfortunately, the material and spiritual requirements for the full implementation of this grandiose idea were lacking.*²

Even so, there existed, on the part of some of the monarchs leading the anti-revolutionary coalition that had defeated Napoleon, a sincere—albeit symbolic and ineffective—commitment to defend the Vienna restoration project. This commitment took shape in the so-called *Holy Alliance*, signed on 16 September 1815, three months after the final session of the Congress of Vienna. In this Holy Alliance, Tsar Alexander of Russia, Emperor Francis of Austria and King Frederick William III of Prussia committed themselves to the defence of the restoration project for the common good of the whole of Christian Europe. Signing this undertaking, the signatories represented the three great branches of European Christianity: Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism, respectively. In terms of Modernist “international law”, the Holy Alliance represented an informal commitment between *sovereigns* rather than a formal undertaking between *states*. In terms of Traditionalist *Nomos*, however, it was precisely the seal of sovereign intent that rendered the Holy Alliance authentic. In political terms, it aimed at maintaining the new international borders drawn at Vienna and the partial restoration of the old domestic order across continental Europe, the latter of which included a watered-down reinstatement of the political power of the monarchy (in many instances through a hybrid arrangement of combining the theoretical “divine rights of kings” with constitutional limitations), as well as an attempt at restoring the old socio-political balance between nobility, clergy and commons. In meta-political terms, it intended to restrain the rising force of Modernity, i.e. the driving force behind the ideological phantoms of secularism, constitutionalism, liberalism and egalitarianism. By signing the Holy Alliance, the three mightiest worldly rulers of continental Europe effectively cast themselves in the collective role of what in Traditionalist terms may be termed the *Katechon*.³ From the very outset, however, the Holy Alliance’s formidable, self-appointed task to restore the Traditionalist order was hopeless because it based itself on a compromise arrangement that left untouched the core power of Modernity: it failed to smash the supranational power of the international banking system and it left intact its geopolitical “offshore” safe havens, most importantly Britain. The geopolitical carriers of sea power-based Modernity on both sides of the Atlantic, Britain and America, were left untouched: neither Britain’s “constitutional” order nor America’s “republican” experiment were affected by the Traditionalist restoration in continental Europe. The Holy Alliance bought its suppression of the French Revolution and its victory over the Napoleonic Empire at the cost of an unnatural alliance with Britain, which

had financially funded and diplomatically engineered the defeat of its commercial and naval challenger, Napoleonic France. For the Holy Alliance's signatories, the maintenance of their Quadruple Alliance with Britain meant an acceptance, in principle, of a compromise and, in practice, with Modernity itself. Given the enormous influence of the international banks over Europe's trade and finance, including their close ties with many of Europe's royal and princely families, and given the enhanced status of Britain's Napoleonic-era client states (Hannover, Holland, Portugal, Sardinia, Sicily) in the post-Napoleonic settlement, this compromise meant that the structural damage done to Europe's Traditionalist order during the preceding revolutionary decades had become irreversible. Another weakness of the Holy Alliance was that it failed to get the support of two of Europe's Great Powers: the Catholic Church, which was restored to worldly sovereignty in the Papal States, and the Muslim Caliphate, based on the great Ottoman Empire, which refused to adhere to it because the Holy Alliance did not sufficiently conform to any authentic form of Tradition.

That said, the Holy Alliance did create a temporary dam, holding back the tide of Modernity across continental Europe for a season, and it did provide a counter-revolutionary mechanism, focussing the Traditionalist-leaning Great Powers on revolutionary emergencies. In historical terms, the Holy Alliance, conventionally taken to have expired with the death of Tsar Alexander in 1825, may have been a short-lived phenomenon but it would continue to shape European international relations through a diplomatic mechanism established under its signatories' auspices, viz. the *Congress System*. To maintain the restoration project of the Vienna Congress of 1815, the Holy Alliance's three signatories had agreed to hold regular follow-up congress meetings: these were meant to address and evaluate outstanding commitments, solve possible conflicts and deal with revolutionary threats, with special attention for known "weak spots" in the restored order, such as France, Spain, Italy and Poland. Even after the Holy Alliance's formal demise, this Congress System would continue to function, albeit in attenuated form and with multiple interruptions for decades. As a manner of political form, diplomatic etiquette and psycho-historical habituation, the Congress System may be argued to have lasted up to the outbreak of the Great War, which marks the beginning of the end for the last vestiges of Europe's world of Tradition. Through this Congress System, the relations between the Great Powers of Europe between 1814 and 1814 were orchestrated in what is often termed the "Concert of Europe". Following this line of wording, it may be said that this concert depended on each participant playing his assigned role, that it started faltering as participant

groups started drifting off to play their own arrangements and that it ended when the script and the director were finally ignored altogether.⁴

The Congress System: phase one (1815-25)

Under the initial auspices of the Holy Alliance's signatories, the Congress System attempted to implement the Vienna restoration project by periodically updating its political arrangements and prescribing military interventions where necessary. The *Aix-la-Chapelle Congress* (1818) primarily concerned itself with the Quadruple Alliance's final settlement with France (the treatment of exiled Napoleon Bonaparte on St. Helena, the evacuation of allied troops, the partial write-off of the French indemnity) and the readmission of France into the Concert of Europe: France joined the Quadruple Alliance, expanding it into a Quintuple Alliance. Although the Vienna restoration project superficially appeared strengthened by this successful settlement with France, the Aix-de-la-Chapelle Congress also brought to light the fundamental divergence in interests and ideas between the continental powers and Britain. Britain jealously guarded its interests by blocking the principle of a universal union of guarantee (which would allow counter-revolutionary military intervention by the defenders of the restoration everywhere but also create a legal precedent for possible intervention in Britain itself), by denying the right to search vessels on the high seas (which would serve the ongoing international campaign against slavery and piracy but also affect Britain's maritime hegemony) and by refusing to support Spain's campaign against the revolutionary movements in its New World colonies (which would restore legitimate monarchical rule across Central and South America but also weaken Britain's commercial negotiating position there). The next two congresses, held at *Troppau* (1820) and *Laibach* (1821), had to deal with clear and eminent threats to the Vienna restoration project, in the form of liberal-constitutional uprisings in Spain (the *Trieno Liberal*) and Naples (the Carbonari Revolution) but accentuated the fundamental and widening split within the Quintuple Alliance's ranks: the autocratically inclined Holy Alliance partners, Russia, Austria and Prussia, were in favour of joint military intervention, whereas liberally inclined Britain and France refused their formal approval. The last congress under the auspices of the Holy Alliance, held at *Verona* (1822), had to deal with multiple threats to the established order: the liberal challenge in Italy, the Greek national uprising against Ottoman rule, which had started in 1821, and the liberal takeover of Spain. About these issues, the participants were fundamentally divided on the principle of non-intervention, which Britain applied (reluctantly) to Italy and (enthusiastically) to Spain but not to Greece, whereas the continental