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# Of Other Balkan Wars: Affective Worlds of Modern and Traditional (The Bulgarian Example)<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*Nobody is so poor as not to leave any legacy behind when he dies, said Pascal. But what inheritance of war (also involving the problem of its heir) is left behind by the soldier who keeps writing his notes and sending letters from the front line when he faces something unimaginable – dying by cholera? What else invisibly stands behind such a soldier's urgent need: is it to bear witness, and is it to become an opportunity to accumulate other affective (of the soldier's anger, rage, hatred, anguish, pain, fear and bitterness) archives of the Balkan Wars? Is this witnessing a condition in itself for penetrating the other, the invisible reality of the fighting man's world, so as to problematise the other heritage of this war (the sensitive man who has let himself be affected) and its stakes (the questionable values of the modern and traditional)? This article searches answers to these questions.*

## Key Words

War, trauma, cholera, modern, traditional, soldiers' letters and notebooks, witness.

## Facing Something Worse Than War – Cholera

'Our regiment was in a fierce battle at Bunar Hisar, but we came out of it safe and sound. From there we went to the village of Tarfa, the foremost battle station where we *endured something worse than the war – cholera*. In war and under attack, death comes suddenly and without one seeing it, so it is not so terrible, but cholera is something that you over there cannot imagine. There's a man feeling healthy and joyful to have survived the battle and all of a sudden, 2-3 hours later, he drops to the ground and passes away. Moments ago you have been talking to someone and then you overhear that he is in agony or is already dead. And the worst thing is to watch your comrades near you die and shiver, and the fear that you might be next. [...] Thousands left their bones not because of a bullet but because of cholera. No need to say that *in such a time* everybody has to take care of himself, with no question of paramedical or doctor's help. People are dying like cattle. Even now I remember the dying cry: 'I'm dying, give me some water!' But who would dare to go and help when such help means certain death? All the newspapers write about is the Bulgarian victories, with not a word of truth said about the horrors that accompany war. All of that we experienced, and hoped would not happen again, but now that

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hope begins to fade away; the 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> regiments are returning to their positions; tomorrow maybe we'll leave too, and it is likely that the war will resume and, needless to say, that fortune will not always be with us. If not a bullet, the cholera will do the job. And bearing in mind that we sleep in holes, pens, starve and have lice, then one begins to lose all hope.<sup>2</sup>

This is part of a lengthy letter written by Gancho Ivanov, a teacher from Daskot village near Veliko Tarnovo, on 19 January 1913, the day before the resumption of military hostilities after the armistice in November 1912 that did not end in the 'long-awaited peace on the front' (the anticipation clearly expressed in soldiers' letters and diaries). But 'the conference in London', 'the stubbornness of Turkey', 'young Turks revolution' and 'conditions of peace' are the political news most commonly discussed by ordinary soldiers (reaching them via military bulletins, rumours and conversations with their 'better educated comrades'),<sup>3</sup> news overshadowed only by the knowledge that 'our allies are taking over Macedonia' and the 'deceitful neighbours, Silistra'.<sup>4</sup> This excitement amongst soldiers indicates that political consciousness was beginning to form and develop in the *rural* lower middle classes (teachers, artisans, financial clerks, farmers, lower military ranks, sergeant majors), those who were identified as (if inseparable from) the 'gray mass of

soldiers' (socially apathetic and politically indifferent) by the upper bourgeois class (metropolitan intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, pharmacists and senior professional military). This process became apparent with the emergence of a new political genre – the *Army Songbook* for the Balkan Wars as an indistinct form (strongly influenced by folk melodies), but with distinct content (articulated by an affected sense of justice), satisfied an urgent need of 'its author' – to communicate a problem, such as unfair treatment of soldiers, misery on the front, soldiers' pains and sufferings – often caused by disease, but also to tell of 'our people's grief' (loss of 'the lands for which we were dying').<sup>5</sup>

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It is in the formal non-emancipation from the traditional (the lamenting folk culture) in the soldier's songbook through which the ordinary soldier seeks to give public expression of something *new* – his *affectedness* from that which struck him as

everyday injustice (diseases, history and politics), the interconnectedness of the two worlds stand out (the traditional and the modern), disclosing the condition that made it possible for them to merge – affect (pain and suffering from, but also anger, rage, hatred *against*).<sup>6</sup> From this other, affective, reality of the experience appearing in the soldiers' daily struggle for survival at the front, the other legacy of these wars emerges – the 'sensitive man', obviously the man who wrote this letter, the rural teacher G. Ivanov. The 'sensitive man' – the other one 'in the hardened warrior' – who actually let himself be affected, is the locus revealing another military experience (painful and tragic, the feeling of 'just and unjust'), and thereby *he* becomes an internal condition for affective mapping of the Balkan Wars – the research subject of this text.

Even in the very embitteredness and its residual effect (resentment) – witnessed in the village teacher's letter – in fact in the very process in which, *as if momentarily* the difference in social and cultural position of the soldiers on the front (poor and rich, educated and barely literate) are invisibly overcome, reveals the nature of their worlds (social and cultural, but also an ontology; the nature of 'just and unjust'). For *what* (in)visibly and (un)consciously embitters the soldiers, bringing them close but also

distancing them in the ways they display this affectedness outlines the points which merge – only in an instant – both political poles ('left and right'),<sup>7</sup> namely in *another*, truthful, attitude towards war. The relation to that other truth – 'the horrors that accompany war', is the point of political reconciliation between soldiers (from both 'lower and upper classes') in which lightning (as if in-and-only-for-an-instant) flashing their common historical shared past ('all this we experienced and we hoped...'), writes G. Ivanov in its authenticity – *suffered*, on the front in the name *of*. A truth on which the village teacher insisted, trying through his attitude towards it (the truth about what had been suffered) to unite the front and rear in a common experience, which the act of writing such letters from battle station (to his older brother) actually is, an act through which the person affected by history becomes visible; and thereby *another community*: a new historical subject, the 'suffering humanity', is to emerge.

The fact that soldiers' diaries and letters were preserved and passed on to the official archive as *historical* family heirlooms proves, among other things, that the soldier on the front encounters history as a direct experience. History hurts the soldier in particular, taking away what was valuable to him, turning him into a witness of his time, and by

this very fact endowing him with a historical past – *another* capital, *his* historical legacy: ‘we fought for our brothers’ freedom’, ‘for human rights’, the soldiers sang; the *new* place where the descendants connect with the present and future, as is evident from the historical timing of the act of donation, by which family heirlooms reached the official records, thus seemingly making it possible to restore the *authenticity* of historical time itself – the experienced.<sup>8</sup> A process by which the other unconscious *desire* of the soldier is practically satisfied – to find listeners to the *other* (not official) truth of war: the soldier’s pain, something ‘Bulgarian newspapers do not write about’, according to G. Ivanov, so as to bequeath something else—that in the name of which he suffered, for the sake of which he endured (carrying in this commitment other social messages about the future of the survivors).

One *other* war phenomenon also insistently indicates of the war’s other reality: a soldier is diagnosed with ‘nervous limb tremor’ because of a slight injury suffered under intense artillery assault at positions in Karaagach. The hospital record of soldier Demeter Yanev (25-year-old, single, a native of the town of Eski Djumaya, treated with psychotherapy, discharged from the military hospital in Montana uncured, and sent home on two months’ sick

leave<sup>9</sup>), reveals the *other* truth about soldiers’ lives at the front (the truth asserted by the village teacher) – the horrors of war.<sup>10</sup> That *other medical diagnosis* of the symptoms of the soldier’s neurosis, refusing to see in the ‘shaking soldier’ the obvious, in fact acknowledges that *other* truth – the soldier’s pain and suffering – and by this very fact bears witness to *another* reality from which a different soldier’s image emerges: the sensitive man who has allowed himself to be affected, to be sensitive (the other nature not only of the warrior, but also of the doctor). Spiridon Kazandzhiev, the first Bulgarian military psychologist, in a letter sent from the Thracian front, reports on this particular impact of war: ‘In this war the soldier has been given the opportunity to stand at a distance from life, to *estrangle from it* so as to better appreciate it; the war has revealed the value of life, the soldier would return home a different person, more self-aware and more sensitive to the surrounding world’.<sup>11</sup>

The village teacher G. Ivanov, who had completed the third grade at Gabrovo (High) School, the founder of the socialist workers’ organisation in the village Daskot, the 37-year-old father of three sons and two daughters, one of them adopted, went to war with a clear awareness about the others – *the poor and miserable*, and with a pre-existing anxiety

about the meaning of human life and about justice and injustice. This was his perspective on the world, by which he connected with his environment and on the basis of which he built a relationship with his older daughter, the daughter of whose rearing and education he had taken great care (as indicated by his pre-war and war correspondences – part of it in French – between father and daughter).<sup>12</sup> On 30 September 1911, one year before the outbreak of war, he sent to Elisaveta Gancheva, a sixth grade pupil at the Veliko Tarnovo High School, a postcard with Franz Stuck's well-known war impressions from 1894 – *Der Krieg*, inscribed on the back: 'Strive constantly to think deeply into the rottenness and shabbiness of the modern system, strive to know if there is such a thing as a *fair war or fair poverty?* Strive towards knowledge, knowledge and knowledge. What are we? [...] What is nature? What is all this that surrounds us? How could that not bother a healthy person?'<sup>13</sup>

It was precisely this attitude towards the world that helped shape his relation to 'everything that surrounds him' during the war (as evidenced in his letters from the front), carrying unconscious testimony of a new feeling that strongly traumatised him, that place he could neither leave behind, nor stay in – his *premonitions* of death (judging by his diary, the locus at which he seeks

to connect to himself).<sup>14</sup> His diary entries, unlike his letters, are jumbled – torn lapidary messages, separate words, the Greek alphabet, his name scribbled on a separate page, clumsily scrawled images of what had obviously befallen him and which he could not put into words; notes behind which unprocessed affects emerge that seem to be repressed through another rationale – his material concern for the future of his children. As the rhythm of thought and speech 'normalised', the handwriting became legible when he set out to describe where the 'valuable documents' were (title deeds, loans given by him, adoption documents of his younger daughter, his life insurance policy, etc.) and when he wrote *a testament* to his heirs with personally addressed advice for their future, advice about their education and how they should help and trust each other, but all connected to a particular paternal wish: 'do not get married before 25 years of age and do not have more than two children', the fulfilment of which he purposely bequeathed to their mother.<sup>15</sup> The woman to whom he was committed at the will of their fathers with an early marriage and expectation for many children, a social horizon in which the individual drama of the (financially) unequal and unhappy marriage emerged (evidenced in the pre-war and war correspondences between father and

daughter, and daughter and mother). The woman with whom he seemed to have reconciled, making her a 'desired social comrade' when away from her at the front, he grew closer to not only in his concerns about the other 'eventuality' (the future of his family without a father), but also in another desired closeness and intimacy (of intellectual communion about 'knowledge of the world and of oneself'), entrusting her solely with his dearest, 'last things about himself': 'My *burning desire* to have on my grave an evergreen tree and fresh air will come true if I do not return to Daskot. If I die here, you must know that above and around me will forever grow a bush – a maple to which I will say "thank you"'.<sup>16</sup> This is the last written page of the village teacher's pocket notebook; he apparently stopped writing in it months before his death, but never parted with it until the end.

The crisis, whose traces are left in the soldier's notebook – as if written by *someone else* (not by the author of the letters, which reveal high epistolary skill), and in the parts where the village teacher was trying to deal with it (by leaving a testimony of what was most precious to him), is a sign of his other battle. That invisible and unconscious battle that he actually fought against the *other* fear, of the *other* death – from cholera, the fear of dying as cattle, a

death unlike a human one, which he could not rationalise and comprehend; it held no reward in return (he who had marched bravely to fight was defeated by the unimaginable – by cholera) and comrades in arms drew away, refusing to answer the calls for help. This refusal to answer makes cholera 'something uglier than a bullet' (as another village teacher writes in his diary),<sup>17</sup> it shows the *Other power* of the disease: the image of a soldier sick with cholera, the locus where the soldier is left at the limit of his existence – the possibility of imagining oneself sick. This impossibility reveals the other power that cholera holds: to bring a crisis upon the relations of an ethical ('good') and esthetical ('beautiful') order within human identity; when confronted with the disease, what was once seemingly an ontology – 'the just and the unjust' *by nature* – seems to lose power. The mute death, in turning cholera into something unimaginable, jeopardises the village teacher's humanity and masculinity, as it not only leaves the dead in the 'field of dishonour', but also transforms them into it – the contagious disease in the dead bodies, humiliated and often unburied, whose very sight seemingly could kill, also producing another *dishonour*, that of the survivor: the refusal (actually the fear) to face another 'obvious death' by lending a hand to those dying of cholera; a refusal difficult to explain by

the *absence* of disciplinary punishment for it (it is not a disciplinary offense subject to drumhead court-martial) nor by the contrasting willingness to head off to ‘apparent death from a bullet’. It can hardly be analysed solely in the disciplinary context of fear of military law. The refusal by the village teacher to risk another ‘obvious death’ by helping men dying of cholera, leaving him with the acoustic image (‘please, give me some water’) interwoven with memories of the irrepressible cries he heard, indicates not a lack of empathy (the fact of revealing the suffering of others is an empathic gesture) but something else, that *other* thing, persistent, unsettling and restless – *his affectedness*. The sight of those suffering from cholera annuls the everyday morality that has defined what is normal for humankind – ‘to give a little water’, in practice affects another symbolic locus of positive identity – ‘to stretch a helping hand’ to the sufferer (his *significant other*); a refusal which jeopardises the positive efficiency of the relationship, whereby the village teacher connects with the surrounding (the pre-war world) to invalidate the power of positive self - images; a crisis whose symptom is the very positive affirmation of another human nature (‘it goes without saying that in such a time everybody has to look after himself...’)<sup>18</sup> to normalise the unnatural (‘it is out of

the question to hope for help from a paramedic or a doctor’),<sup>19</sup> so it becomes something other than the professional and moral order.<sup>20</sup>

The power of cholera, which G. Ivanov bears witness to in his cry for ‘something you over there cannot imagine’, is the *place* where the village teacher apparently became alienated from *himself* and his surroundings, *as if* ‘estranged from life’ (in the words of the Bulgarian military psychologist); this alienation is itself a symptom of the crisis of public identifications, as evidenced from his notebook and letters from the front.<sup>21</sup> The soldier dying from cholera saturates the visual space with intense ‘inhuman sights’<sup>22</sup> that leave soldiers at the limits of the humane as an ethical and aesthetic possibility, and thus obstructs every channel, symbolic or physical, for connecting to the sufferer through active compassion; obstruction perhaps forced the village teacher to encounter other unfound answers to questions that troubled him before (‘what are we?’; ‘what is nature?’), and certainly confronted him with another battle for survival, probably against the fear of that other death, the process of his alienation from the world, if we were to trust the diary (in itself an indication that, whereof one cannot speak, thereof one cannot be silent either). In many war diaries, post-war memoirs, war novels

and plays, we can ‘hear’ the moans of abandoned soldiers dying from cholera, reflected in a different order of attitude towards the dying, and thereby we can trace the figure of the witness – he who has *let himself be affected*, i.e., who answered when ‘his humaneness was called to’.

## War as a Mood and Milieu

Perhaps this other *invisible* battle (hidden behind the visible battles against the enemy), embittered by other treatment of the soldier – condemning him to physical suffering (hunger, lice, cold, disease, etc.), daily undermining his expectations of a different attitude to those ‘sacrificing their lives’, expectations formed in the intertwined concepts of modern military order and patriarchal political morality – was mirrored in the village teacher’s perception of another trench war, a claustrophobic one; it impels him in his writing: ‘for four months now we have been put in the desert like in a prison’, and not that deprivation he pointed out, ‘not a word from the outside world’, and on which he insists in his lyrical outburst: ‘any letter from where you are is like a candle in the dark night.’<sup>23</sup> Since even this letter of his (written in response to the ‘generous gift’: letters, ‘your newspaper’ and the parcel with ‘all those things’)

shows that there was no particular shortage of information from the outside world (including receiving and sending uncensored letters and parcels). On the contrary, this very letter (highly critical of politicians and the military, claiming them responsible for ‘thousands of orphans and widows’, and then what future is ‘left to our fatherland’),<sup>24</sup> along with other soldiers’ testimonies<sup>25</sup> and documents of the military censorship department reveals a flow of ‘more knowledge’ about the outside world than was permitted by the official military institutions<sup>26</sup>. *Excess* knowledge indicates there were established and working communication channels between the front and rear, other connecting roads to fighting positions and home (beyond that permissible in a state of war),<sup>27</sup> despite the well-organised military mail service (evident not only from the soldiers’ testimonies, but also from the work of censorship and official regimental reports). This reality testifies to something *new*: the quest to satisfy a seemingly ‘insatiable need’ for ‘news from outside’ – in itself a sign of other soldiers’ desires (for communication, in order to connect with himself and the environment), whose insatiability reveals once again the crisis of the soldier’s relationship with the outside world, as well as the power of affect, whence the image of the undisciplined soldier

emerges. G. Ivanov was obviously such a soldier, violating the rules of censorship twice by his letter – containing all that it was prohibited to communicate: the positioning of troops, death and disease – which reached the village not by the military postal service, but through a ‘fellow soldier’. Apparently the invisible battles the soldiers fought (to deal with emerging unconscious critical relationship with themselves and others) brought about the critical front-line situation, shaping the soldiers’ moods of disobedience – the open opposition to censorship was a common reason for soldiers’ unrest and anti-war protests; resistance that was subject to military punishment, but remained practically unsanctioned by any severe punishment (imposed by martial law), hence recognising another soldier’s right: another connection outside the law with the rear; a recognition behind which another practice of connections and relationships within the military emerges – seemingly foreign to the modern disciplinary order and evidently closer to patriarchal values, thereby revealing the other legacy of this war: the contradictory stakes of paternalism, behind which are at play the shadows of the challenged stakes of the *modern and the traditional*.<sup>28</sup>

Measures against anti-war protests grew as the protests themselves grew, in the

form of the soldiers’ moods, but also as concrete acts of resistance against military orders, starting from the spring of 1913; these measures consisted of isolated practices (similar to the measures against cholera) – e.g., prohibiting purchase of newspapers and communication with soldiers from other units, increased censorship of letters and packages; yet they remained ineffective. Unlike these, the measures against cholera, observing a new order of hygiene and strict military health rules (disciplining the physical needs of the body), became increasingly efficient<sup>29</sup> and, therefore, the threat of cholera was used as a pretext to successfully introduce previously unsuccessful preventive measures against anti-war unrest, thus revealing the power of another infection, another ‘invisible virus’ – the *soldiers’ affect* (anger, rage, hatred and resentment); and through the ability of this affect to spread, apparently by mutual affect of soldiers (as evident from the nature of the prohibitions and restrictions), the other essence of war became apparent – *war as a mood*. Persistently present behind this other essence of war is that *other* which came invisibly and unconsciously, building critical relationships between the soldier and his surroundings (as evidenced by the case of G. Ivanov). Thus, in the soldiers’ moods (and their testimonies – letters, diaries, postcards and photos)

were left (by the affect) traces of the other, impenetrable reality of the war experience – the painful and dramatic reality – namely: ‘what the war is taking away from *me*, the soldier.’

‘29.11.1912. In the mud. [...] The day was pleasant. The Jewish volunteer arrived – Malamet, the orderly who has gone to see his mates in the regiment, as he will be returning to Bulgaria shortly. I greatly envied him that happiness. He is very nice and speaks in a pleasant manner. I took this opportunity and gave him *a letter to smuggle home for me*. We spent another merry evening, singing songs. Soon we forgot about *the mud*.<sup>30</sup> This is what the 32-year-old soldier Peter Kurdomanov wrote in his diary, thereby leaving a trace of something (excitement and pleasure) that on this day allowed this soldier to invisibly reconcile himself to his surroundings – the mud and the mess sergeant of the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 31<sup>st</sup> Silistra Regiment of the Third Bulgarian Army, where the regiment of the village teacher Gancho Ivanov was stationed.

Serving in the same third company of the Silistra Regiment was 30-year-old reserve second lieutenant Spiridon Bakardziev, single. Born and raised in a middle-class family of craftsmen in a small town (Sevlievo), he was to become the first Bulgarian military psychologist,

known as Spiridon Kazandziev. He had graduated in philosophy and before the war had studied in Germany under Wilhelm Wundt, and had become a scholar with a doctorate from Zurich; after the war<sup>31</sup> he would continue to teach at Sofia Men’s High School.

In a cheerful letter addressed to his ‘Dear parents’, dated 10.01.1913 (from Tarfa), he wrote that he had discovered himself to be a ‘man of iron’ and assured them that ‘no matter how bad it all is for the soldiers, it still is not too bad [...] for me; mud is the worst burden.’<sup>32</sup> However, in his diary entry for 10.01.1913, he wrote different thing, and left traces of another time, that of the philosopher and psychologist, of those *other* (invisible) events of his day, related to experiences of another order, those of the transcendental ego: ‘[...] I always feel unhappy when *reality* has me chained to it for long’, ‘and I am increasingly tormented by the thought that something fatal might happen to me.’<sup>33</sup>

From here, from the front line, he departed with the conviction that ‘I am 2-3 days away from my death’, with only two images in his mind (his mother and his friend), with the desire ‘to be in Munich and enjoy this nice weather’, rejecting the thought that, ‘I will soon be going into battle’, noting as they

approach the border, ‘anxiety overwhelms our camp’ and ‘the tighter we march, the less we think’<sup>34</sup>; he would return from the war a different person. He fought in battles, got to know life in the trenches – the other reality, mud, physical suffering, but also the greyness and boredom – but not the disease; he grew closer to others – to ordinary soldiers, in their joy<sup>35</sup> and suffering;<sup>36</sup> enjoying meeting Turkish officers on the war frontier (‘with whom we often chat in German and drink coffee’);<sup>37</sup> he corresponded with his family and relatives, his friends and his future wife. He wrote to those dearest to him, ‘we became very different people and, providing we return alive, everyday life will seem like a joke’.<sup>38</sup> He became another person, living intensively in another dimension of everyday life at the front – the reflective, philosophical, transcendent dimension, which fills over four hundred pages of his soldier’s notebook (containing ‘philosophical reflections and psychological observations’)<sup>39</sup> with things that seem unsharable by this fragile and sensitive man (in communicating with his other self) who remained an idealist philosopher, a scholar with a professorship from Sofia University.

P. Kurdomanov – a violin teacher and certified elementary school teacher, born and employed in the village of Kalipetrovo, Silistra, who came from a

wealthy farming family, married quite late in life, and became a father while at the front – did not have a philosophical mind like that of Wundt’s student, did not share the socialist ideas of G. Ivanov, and had gone to war with other attitudes, as evidenced by another active relation to the war expressed in his diary. He kept it daily, writing from another position – that of the mess sergeant – which kept him at a seemingly safe distance from the firing line, but in unsafe constant contact with the latter’s effects (the consequences of the battle); this position spared him the concerns over his physical survival (food, sleep and clothing),<sup>40</sup> providing objective conditions for psychological comfort (leisure and ‘first hand’ information from home) during the war. Apparently this service, judging by the daily notes of another mess sergeant – a certified teacher, 33-year-old Kovalenko Petkov from the 13<sup>th</sup> Company of the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the First Bulgarian Army, born in the village Golintsi, Lom<sup>41</sup> – was a privileged military service that soldiers fought to obtain through other network rules: ‘connections, friendship and intrigue’; this fact reveals another predisposition – different from that of the teacher from Daskot, i.e., the other *locus* from which they went to war, namely that of capital (rural bourgeois heritage and a better education),<sup>42</sup> different one’s own value

webs, and starting from this *locus*, they find themselves at different places at the front – as if beyond the daily threat of *my death*, even though witnessing the pictures of everyday suffering of others (but not like *mine*). And it is here – from that other locus, that, writing daily in their notebooks, they bear different witness about the *other nature of war* (as a milieu), namely: that other thing (*affect*), which persistently appears behind this urgency (to report a problem) and breaks through the apparent obviousness of the communication.

It is P. Kurdomanov, the other village teacher, who followed in the footsteps of G. Ivanov, reaching Tarfa and staying there until the resumption of hostilities in January 1913. Tarfa was where Ivanov was stationed at a ‘forward position’, and where the soldiers were attacked by the worst of all, the invisible enemy, the cholera bacillus, as he wrote in his letter. In his diary Kurdomanov wrote: ‘03.12.1912. ON THE WAY TO TARFA. [...] Tarfa is a purely Bulgarian village with 270 houses, a church with a priest, a school with one male teacher and two female teachers. Cobbled streets and water in great abundance, but polluted, so not drinkable.’<sup>43</sup> In fact, it is here that he invisibly filled in the gaps in the soldier’s letter of the other village teacher – writing the unsaid (why exactly we have come to *this*), behind which flutter

shadows of another hidden reality of the war experience – the unprocessed affects (anger, pain, anguish and bitterness), a shadowy reality in which Tarfa became a symbol, engulfing the place in another dimension (physical, historical and political). Reality from which interrelated images emerge – an undisciplined soldier (who had apparently disobeyed the prohibition on drinking water), another direct military commander (who had not built a good relationship with the soldiers in the required order of obedience and trust), other military health procurement (‘cookware that has not been polished perhaps since its purchase and the use of puddle water’, the mess sergeant wrote), another political and military order (‘the causes of illness in the regiment were attributed to poor food, water, and soldiers’ clothing being constantly wet from the rain and sweat, hence colds being easy to catch and very common’).<sup>44</sup> The shadows of that *other past of the war* are at play here – usually identified as ‘a deficit of modernisation’ – a past which is revealed in the perspective of a high political order: the report in 1909 by the Chief Military Physician Dr. Kiranov to the Minister of War, outlining the conditions that cause relatively high morbidity and mortality among the soldiers;<sup>45</sup> such a shadowed past emerges within the medical practice itself: reports by the Board of Directors of the

Bulgarian Red Cross (revealing lagging policies regarding sanitary services for soldiers and field hospital equipment)<sup>46</sup> and records by nurses (often punished for failing to meet antiseptic standards in hospitals).<sup>47</sup> Flickering through these deficits are shortages of another moral order, as well as what compensated for them (among other things, an ontology concerning the nature of what is ‘fair and unfair’), thus outlining the values at stake in a contradictory *war legacy* – paternalism.

The unpublished notebooks of the Bulgarian general Zhostov, written on the front line at the Thracian battlefields, bear witness to the critical experience of the Bulgarian positional trench warfare – weakness of military hospitals’ logistics, soldiers unprepared for a positional war, lack of substantial supplies for the fighting army, and the intrigues and political games within the military establishment, all the things that jeopardised the war effort.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, as evidenced from the archival documents, the notes and impressions left by an ordinary soldier or a priest do not differ from this register of perceptions, assessments and dispositions regarding the war. (Both the priest Ivan Dochev<sup>49</sup> and the general Zhostov never failed to make an entry for each day of the war, as did a rural sergeant major<sup>50</sup> and an urban medical orderly;<sup>51</sup> this particular note

starts with a description of the weather).

## The Stakes of Another Heritage – Domesticated War

Behind this urgency to *communicate* (producing, beyond the conventional artistic and literary genres, ‘authors’ of other genres: soldiers’ diaries, notebooks, naive sketches<sup>52</sup> and soldier plays and novels),<sup>53</sup> emerge relentless traumatic images of *physical suffering* on the front, images related as much to military destruction (evacuated villages, refugees, soldiers ‘punished with beatings on naked flesh’, outbursts of cruelty and violence on the part of ‘our people and the foreign ones’ towards ‘people and animals’) as to the devastation of disease (typhoid, cholera, frost bite, etc.); but yet another drama of the soldier’s life emerges: the encounter with the human condition, the slow but certain comprehension of the tragedy of human life, of the dark side of human nature. Perhaps this *drama* – another invisible war on the front line that shaped the processes which were recorded in the letter of the Bulgarian military psychologist and of the soldier who had begun to appreciate life, but what life? – was another *legacy of this war*. It became increasingly visible in the other economy of relating to the world – the work of ‘bitter war

memory', which, by articulating soldiers' songbooks (and soldiers' literature), revealed *what* affected the soldier as injustice, and thus made possible the revelation of what pretends to be fair, and the self-disclosure, in that other event (war-experience), of the stakes of another battle (between the modern and the traditional).<sup>54</sup>

Through this other active attitude to surroundings – reaching for a pencil and paper, which is in fact a mark of another affect (from the *encounter with the injustice of history*) – the soldier at the front bears witness to another invisibility (of a war whose battlefields are places inhabited by people who 'remind me of my own folk'),<sup>55</sup> another unconscious battle of the individual to understand himself as a subject. The acknowledged abandonment there of the village teacher, thrown there – as if 'unprepared, laid bare and alone against', his actual subjective experience of objective reality (the shortage of efficient modern power in key institutions – the army, hospital, communication means and roads – power against which he seemed to instinctively rebel, always using intermediate structures that alienated him from 'himself')<sup>56</sup> was the place in which the dramatic *conflict* took place between the stakes of the modern and the traditional, the conflict that

gave value to the positive and negative economy of paternalism.

The pre-war capital (education and inheritance) of the village teacher was engendered through manly enterprise, shaped through cultural mediation between two worlds (the traditional and the modern) – for instance, he ordered a cinema projector from France for the village school; his communication with his children was based on understanding and respect for their uniqueness (as evidenced by his will); power hierarchy is based on 'knowledge and knowing' (the other order of the Patriarch): the library in his rural home was filled with classics of European and ancient literature; he felt alienated from his wife, who failed to recognise the modern horizon of a man's expectations (for intellectual communion in 'knowledge about the world and ourselves'); his activeness, which challenged the traditional rural patriarchal order, sought to transform the world of the village (of the apathetic uneducated man, subservient *to* and alienated from). The professions the father chose for his children in the name of 'a better life than his own, than his teacher's life' – a *good* prospect apparently perceived in liberal professions, such as those of a doctor, pharmacist, lawyer, in the arts, in craftsmanship, not excluding farming or emigration to America (for the son who

did not want to study, if he did not make it as a clerk)<sup>57</sup> – reveal the father's ideal for the new (*deep knowledge and social freedom*). But upon bequeathing to his children the responsibility of pursuing a different future (from his own), he turned to his two brothers, asking them to take his place – supplying the power of the Patriarch, in order to ensure a higher moral order and law (linked with the name of the father, and with the power of the family) in the process of their socialisation (through higher education).<sup>58</sup> Conversely, the financial provision of the *desired* other future for his heirs is linked to life insurance, and 'all the work related to this' is left to a close friend, wise in the new ways (financial transactions), i.e., communication of another order (banking institutions), is entrusted to a friend from the city, which shows what the village person is alien to. He gave and took interest-free loans only to and from friends and comrades, loans free of that other guarantee – life, revealing the relationship of *trust and faith* of another order – patriarchal morality, in which one's given word has the force of law. Soldiers' notebooks were often filled with noted loans to villagers (relatives, friends and acquaintances), and examples of other military commanders who lent soldiers money at interest, is ridiculed in soldiers' jokes (another sign of domestication of wartime relations

in the blurring of boundaries, which is the condition for invalidating the symbolic efficacy of military power). The village teacher himself values that positive economy of *law and order* that ensures the soldier will be 'preserved in battle and healthy at the front', hence he values the modern disciplinary practice of the army, aimed at forming soldiers 'trained and well equipped' to face those two enemies – the military enemy and contagious diseases – a goal clearly argued in the report of the chief military physician, Dr Kiranov. The fact that he did not become a victim of cholera also reveals a positive economy of trust in the 'knowledgeable' and of obedience to the 'fair military commander', as well as to the other power (knowledge of modern sanitary prophylaxis), while his non-participation in the soldiers' unrest about certain military orders and his distancing from the acts of cruelty committed by soldiers and officers on both sides of the front prove that he could control his aggressiveness against the *other* and had rationalised the parasitic feelings of envy and malice;<sup>59</sup> and thus had formed another relationship with the environment, referring to *another order* embodied in modern disciplinary practices (including hygiene, which was at stake in the battle against cholera). But what the soldier G. Ivanov did not obey was the rules of military censorship:

he based his pre-war relationship with his children (when they were far from home) on posted letters but 'now', not trusting the military mail, he 'smuggled' letters through friends; he was late from home leave, but not punished under military law (another domesticated war locus); had he been sent to prison (the due penalty for his offence), perhaps he would have lived to see the end of the war.

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Since soldiers from village and city alike turned to letter-writing in order to deal with their overwhelming *mood* at the front line (in a very varied affective register at that) – it is evident that in their letters they connected with themselves through their relation to others (relatives), in order to return (get close to) where they had alienated themselves from (home or the front).

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Actually, amidst what is *slowly happening* – the imposition of another practical order (higher medical knowledge: virology, military hygiene that requires discipline, administration, and rules),<sup>60</sup> which could help overcome the human in the doctor (fear and

hatred)<sup>61</sup> so as to enable him to deal with the unimaginable (with the power of the 'virus, the bacillus', and then with what is invisible 'to the naked eye'), and help overcome the human in the soldiers (the fear, shame and hatred),<sup>62</sup> and overcome the unbearable (foreign and hostile: disciplinary practices and bureaucratic attitudes)<sup>63</sup> – amidst all this the other aspect of war transpires (a war claimed to be modern) – namely, what is in fact a patriarchal domesticated military order, involving value relationships characteristic of the pre-modern traditional society. And the things in which this other aspect is evident – the soldier's resistance to military orders, discipline, rules, his disobedience of officers' orders (for example, orders 'not to drink water from ponds and rivers', not to 'rummage through dead soldiers' and 'to use toilets'), medical neglect of patients, but also the obviously 'self-inflicted wounds', disorder in sanitary logistics, a limited number of death penalties imposed by court-martials for what obviously must have been very severe disciplinary violations, and the treatment of soldiers as 'my people'<sup>64</sup> – reveal the internal causes of the rule of cholera (the shortage of embodied modern practices). But this very fact (the lack of accelerated modernisation) actually reveals something else as well: the *magic*, the conditions, along with

his patriotism, that make possible the Bulgarian victories (which are not denied by the village teacher), despite the seemingly isolated soldier (in his other war: against ‘lice, disease, cold, hunger and poor clothing’); this other magic (in addition to the *soldier’s patriotism*, which was not lacking in the first months of war) is related to the connection of the ordinary soldier with the surrounding world in ways typical of the traditional patriarchal society; ways that bring worth to the soldier’s values when his relations to the surroundings are in crisis (be they relations to the ‘higher order’ of policy, or to the ‘lower order’ of everyday life).

Since soldiers from village and city alike turned to letter-writing in order to deal with their overwhelming *mood* at the front line (in a very varied affective register at that) – it is evident that in their letters they connected with themselves through their relation to others (relatives), in order to return (get close to) where they had alienated themselves from (home or the front).<sup>65</sup> The letters are often addressed to the soldiers’ mothers and older family members (but in some cases to the whole family) and were made available to the whole street (as in the case of S. Bakardzhiev); they are also often private – to a friend, a relative, a spouse,<sup>66</sup> but always seeking for the most ‘needed things’ related to those other needs – understanding,

acceptance, warmth, which are in fact the *other* attitude to the soldier (other than the modern disciplinary power and its practices); that is why even the most ordinary letter would be entrusted to someone ‘close’, and not because letters often contained money for, or from, the relatives, nor because they violated the rules of censorship (professional officers would send letters in the same way). The letter by G. Ivanov is in response to the ‘generous gift’ – a parcel with ‘newspapers, letters and things’, ‘things’ that were clearly important in addition to the news from family and relatives, had become an urgent need for the soldiers daily lives. These included things like ‘home food’, warm clothes, soap, writing paper, books and tobacco, as evidenced by what soldiers on the Thracian front requested in letters to their families or what they noted as events in their diaries – the arrival of these coveted items from ‘home’ or from the Red Cross, or their obtainment through purchase or ‘forceful acquisition’. In other words the actual fulfilment of the desire (which often grew into a dream to fulfil it, apparently associated with unconscious nostalgia) became *the event* marking the everyday life of the soldier, an event that adjusted relations with the surrounding world, as evidenced in the case of the village teacher G. Ivanov. ‘With parents like you, with friends like Boyan and the Gabe family

– how could one remain dissatisfied with the world?’ This was written by S. Bakardzhiev in a letter of gratitude for the ‘generous packages’ from home. Persistently evident throughout the cheer engendered by the ‘generous gift’ is that *other thing*, which raised the spirit of the soldier on the front, namely a sense of closeness (to my world – mine alone – of reciprocity and understanding) that, when mirrored in what is *other* than it (estranged *from*), reveals deficits which in themselves outline worlds (intertwined with values of the order of the modern and the traditional); evident too is the fact that they are compensated for in the search for another concern (coming from home) in order to satisfy the urgent need for care (obtaining recognition of what they were practically deprived of there). Hence from this disposition towards the world emerges the image of what was *endured*, suffered on the front: the horrors of war; in this way the other legacy of war reveals itself: ‘suffering humanity’, *the other historical subject*.

*P.S.* G. Ivanov died on the battlefield, *killed by* the ‘unfrightful death – a bullet’; his notebook was handed over to his family by his comrades in arms,

and he became a hero at the village school in Daskot – contrary to what he had predicted would be the political future of his military legacy – ‘orphans who will be made fun of because their fathers were fools to die for their native land’. As for the preparations related to this political act – composing a biographical text, finding photographs suitable for an ‘enlarged portrait of the hero’ – in a letter of condolence to the family of the perished teacher, the school principal assigned these tasks to Elisaveta

Gancheva, his well-educated daughter.<sup>67</sup>

And by this very act of ‘assigning and accepting the honour’, they became *heirs* of the other past – the official historical political past, and

hence of the other war – that of generals and politicians, those who will be ‘called Great, Liberators, and other glorious mighty names’,<sup>68</sup> the war from which the village teacher had become alienated at the front, but which seems to be the only perspective in which *his* death acquired meaning – a small photo from the family album was enlarged into the portrait of a hero and filled the space of the classroom with other messages, related to images of a patriotic war and heroic death. But it is

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**The war as actually experienced by people was bound to produce conflicting standpoints within the nation, standpoints that were silenced by political regimes and ideologies of the times.**

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hard to know to what extent these other messages (*other* with respect to the legacy referring to what had been endured in the name of, suffered for), this symbolic capital, had annulled and repressed that *other* truth about the front – the horrors of war, a truth through which G. Ivanov had sought to bind up the war front with the rear by sending uncensored letters to his family and turning to his diary. When and how did this other truth about his war, this other legacy of the killed father, visit the world of the living heirs, and did this truth have a part in the daily struggle for carrying out the father's bequest regarding the education of his children, provided for by the village teacher's life insurance policy? – answers to these questions would add more nuances to the context in which

the historical drama of Bulgarian society in the interwar period developed; one of the acts of this history was the trial of the government officials responsible for two national catastrophes, a trial in which the indictments included responsibility for the badly organised sanitary supply during the Balkan Wars. The war as actually experienced by people was bound to produce conflicting standpoints within the nation, standpoints that were silenced by political regimes and ideologies of the times. But the common aspect of experienced war – the suffering and the economy of empathy – was to pose yet another question: about the impact of the Balkan Wars on the process, structures and social agents of the Balkan modernisation.

## Endnotes

- 1 This article owes much to the research of Michel Foucault, Carlo Ginzburg, Giovanni Levi, John Beverley, Giorgio Agamben, and John Flatley – as evidenced by the title.
- 2 State Archive, Veliko Tarnovo (SA-V.Tarnovo), F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 16. [My italics, S. D.].
- 3 Ibid., F. 1040к, оп.1, a.e. 6, 25; Ibid., F. 1032к, inv. 1, a.u. 29, 30; SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.u. 66; Ibid., Occasional Proceeds (OP)-38; Ibid OP-37; Ibid., F. 1370к, inv. 2, a.u. 601; Ibid., F. 592к, inv. 1, a.u. 1; Kitanov, Sotir P. (1914) *Spomeni ot Balkanskata vojna 1912-1913. Dnevnik*. [Reminiscence of the Balkan War – Diary], Plovdiv: Centralna pechatnitsa.
- 4 SA-Silistra, F. 127к, inv. 1, a.u. 2, 1.45; Archive of Science, Bulgarian Academy of Science (AS, BAS), F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444; Central State Archive (CSA), F. 1965к, inv. 1, a.u. 14; SA-Silistra, F. 127к, inv. 1, a.u. 2.
- 5 I will quote only two (out of seven) examples: G. Stoynov, (1914) *Krav i salzi. Napevi ot Balkanskata vojna i zhivota* [Blood and Tears: Refrains from the Balkan War and Life], Plovdiv: Trud; (1913) *Nova pesnopoljka za Balkanskia Sajuz: Spomen ot vojnata. Naredil Zapryan M. Terziev, vojniki ot 30-ti Sheinovski polk, 5-ta rota* [Remembrance of War: New Army Songbook of Balkan Alliance; Completed by the soldier Zapryan M. Terziev of 30<sup>th</sup> Sheinovo Regiment, 5<sup>th</sup> company], second edition, Chirpan: Village Sransko.
- 6 ‘*Why don’t you weep for us – we’ll never return! Tell the wives never to marry again!*’ This verse from a soldier’s song is copied in the war notebook of second lieutenant Spiridon Bakardzhiev, who was to become the first Bulgarian military psychologist; he commented: ‘Very prosaic and, under normal circumstance, banal, a cabman’s song, *but which is now endowed with special meaning and expressiveness*’ [My italics, S. D.]; AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 16, p. 16.
- 7 Let me simply quote: Vasil Kolarov, the second lieutenant from the 13<sup>th</sup> Rila Regiment of 7<sup>th</sup> Rila Division, author of a war diary, who in 1946 was the Bulgarian representative at the Paris Peace Conference in his capacity as the Chairman of the National Assembly. In his presentation regarding the return of Western Thrace to Bulgaria (within the borders defined by the 1913 Treaty of Bucharest), Kolarov insists on ‘correcting a historical injustice’: ‘*All know that in the War of Liberation against the Ottoman Empire in 1912, of all allies, Bulgaria suffered the heaviest casualties: Bulgarians had 84,000 killed and wounded [...] Owing above all to the blood of the Bulgarian people, a large part of the present-day territory of Greece was liberated from the yoke of the Sultan*’; (1946) *Balgaria pred Konferentsiata za mir. Iskaneto na Balgaria za Zapadna Trakia*, Sofia: Voен. izd. fond. [Bulgaria at the Peace Conference: Bulgaria’s Demand for Western Thrace], Sofia: Military Editing Funds, p. 8. Cf. The letter sent from the front by second lieutenant S. Bakardzhiev (an idealist philosopher who did not sympathise with socialism): ‘Only one thing worries the people from our regiment, that Silistra, as it seems, will be given to Rumania. Bulgaria will badly repay the men who fought

- so bravely for this land, to free their brothers, and themselves will remain under foreign yoke'; AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444, s. 26. [My italics, S. D.]
- 8 As evidenced by the timing and the way in which the diaries (daily notebooks and letters from the front) were donated to the Montana Archives by the heirs of these soldiers, and from the personal archives in which they were kept (a topic for a separate study). Just one quote: 'As I see it, I believe that history is necessary for the family as much as it is for the state...', wrote Mladen Kadzhelianski of Lilen village, when bequeathing his diaries to his sons. His sons, in turn, donated them to the archive, where they are specially classified as 'occasional proceeds'; SA-Montana, OP-38. The soldiers' archive collections in Veliko Tarnovo came from families with leftist convictions or connected to the agrarian movement. Cf. SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 1023к, inv. 1, a.u. 12; Ibid., F. 1040к, inv. 1, a.u. 6; Ibid. F. 1032к, inv. 1, a.u. 29, 30.
- 9 SA-Montana, F. 36к, inv. 1, a.e. 18, p. 173-4.
- 10 Cf. How another soldier bears witness to this other war reality, in his daily notes: '28.11. [...] Every single day, literary every single day is raining with chilly wind. Trenches are filled with water. Such pain soldiers endured in their positions, worse than the infer. I learnt about one or two suicides in the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment.'; Ibid., F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.u. 66, p. 46.
- 11 AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444. [My italics, S. D.]
- 12 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 12.
- 13 Ibid., a.u. 29.
- 14 Ibid., a.u. 21.
- 15 Ibid., p. 16.
- 16 Ibid., p. 17. [My italics, S. D.]
- 17 *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov za Balkanskata vojna*. Predg., sastav. Stanka Georgieva. [*Soldier's Diary of Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov from the Balkan War*], Silistra, 'RITT', 2001, p. 62; it is kept in the SA-Silistra.
- 18 SA, V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 16.
- 19 Ibid. Cf. The daily note written by R. Kurdomanov: '*I couldn't sleep because of the scratching and moaning of a man sick with cholera, who had gone to relieve himself. Despite all his pleas, not one person in the whole regiment would come to his aid. Everyone looks to save himself. Only at sunrise did they go to lift him up. Artillery fire could be heard from the direction of Silivria.*' [My italics, S. D.]. *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p. 64, 76.
- 20 As statistics testify, this 'sad story' must have affected more than 600 mobilised doctors. In order to respond to the need for military sanitarian services, of war units ambulances and hospitals, the state required 2,000 doctors as a medical military staff. At that time Bulgaria had '640 doctors – 118 military, 85 municipal, 10 working within permanent medical

- commissions and 186 occupied either in private practice or retired'; St Kutinchev, (1914) *Sanitarnata Sluzhba. Cherveniat Krast i Balkanskata vojna. Belezhki i vpechatlenia* [Sanitarian Services. Red Cross and Balkan War. Notes and Impressions], Sofia, p. 15.
- 21 The mark of this crisis is another outburst of his rage against the war: 'orphans, who will be made fun of because their fathers were fools to die for their native land', as he writes in the same letter cited here, with rage he negates all political future for killed soldiers; this negation, however, reveals his alienation from his surroundings. Three days earlier from the same spot, Sp. Bakardzhiev addressed his letter to his 'dearest parents' in which he reports the same war drama, but from another reflective perspective: '16.01.1913. [...] But we bore it all patiently. Of course – for the sake of the Fatherland! Since so many people were killed, so many were left widows and orphans in Bulgaria, there is so much hunger and need there – why shouldn't we, who are still alive, put up with these hardships? For instance, just now, this evening, is the first time in 15 days that we are back in the village, where it's warm and well-lit, so I am able to write to you.' – Ibid., pp. 15-16.
- 22 Evident solely from soldiers' testimonies, but also from the high morbidity and death rates from cholera at the front. Vasil Uzunov, *Nie. Istoricheski roman* [We. The Balkan War. A Historical Novel, Sofia, 1933, p. 193; Kitanov, P. *Spomeni ot Balkanskata vojna 1912-1913. Dnevnik*, p. 40; Ludmil Stoyanov, *Holera: vojnishki dnevnik*. [Cholera. A Soldier's Diary], Sofia, 1935: *Zemia i hora; Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov; Dnevnik na Petko Chorbadzhiev za tragediata na vojnata. 17 oktombri 1912* [Diary of Petko Chorbadzhiev (Rosen) about the Tragedy of the War. October 17, 1912], Po IDA, 47, [Cited from State Archive Bulletin, 47], 1984.
- 23 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 16.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 I quote: '11.12.1912. [...] Tarfa. I picked a whole bunch of snowdrops. We read newspapers all day long and made all sorts of conjectures about the future. The mail arrives regularly and brings newspapers, which we read and reread regularly.' – AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444. 'We spent the whole time at Chataldzha, life was satisfactory, our correspondence came and went regularly. Here I received a parcel from home, containing: garlic, 20 packs of cigarettes, small peppers...' Diary of K. Petkov, SA, Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.u. 66, p. 66. '15.12.1912. TARFA. Today I received three letters. The postal service was set up here and all the letters come regularly'. *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov za Balkanskata vojna*, p. 87. '28.03.1913. Kabachkyoy. [...] Things got very merry here. Four commissariats in one place. We get news and newspapers regularly. Kolyo got to like it and is willing to remain on duty without being relieved'. SA, V. Tarnovo. F. 1023к, a.u. 30, p. 5 ; Cf. also Ibid., a.u. 29.
- 26 Lefterov, Christo. *Balkanskata vojna: Spomeni i dok.: Po dnevnika na Cenzurnata komisija pri shtaba na dejstvashtata armia*, Voен. izd. fond. [Balkan War: Remembrance and Documents

according to the *Journal of Censorships' Department within General Quarter of Operating Army*], Sofia, Military Editing Funds, 1938.

- 27 Cf.: '30.03.1913. The newspapers dating from the 28<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month *put us in an ugly mood* about the conclusion of peace and the cession of Silistra by 3 km. Terrible despair and terrible curses. [...] 04.04.1913. BIVOUC KABAČHA [...] *I got letters from Anka, Vasila and Rusi, my only consolation now. Everybody discussed this matter late into the night and aimed terrible curses at those responsible*'; *Vojniški dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov...*, p. 147; '27.11.1912. I hear that the prices of all goods have gone up and many are going hungry since war was declared. This depresses me terribly, especially knowing that you are alone.' NA, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444; Cf. The reports on the mood of discontent among soldiers sent to the commanding officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Balkan Division; CSA, F. 1965к, inv. 1, a.u. 4. Cf. Maj. Gen. Nikola Ribarov, *Voennite dejstva na 2-a brigade na 3-a peh. Balkanska divizion na Trakijskia voenen teatar: Chast I. [Military operations of 2<sup>d</sup> brigade of 3<sup>rd</sup> Balkan infantry division on the Thracian military theatre. Part I]*, Pleven, Sp. Ignatov i Tz. Angelov, 1915.
- 28 Cfs. *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika Ivan Dochev [Saga of Balkan War: Diary of priest Ivan Dochev]*, Sofia, Iztok – Zapad, 2012.
- 29 It is noted in all the soldiers' diaries, that observance of hygienic and sanitation regulations, together with the efforts of the Red Cross, led to a decrease in infections, so that the fight against cholera was eventually successful: the statistics confirm the soldiers' remarks.
- 30 *Vojniški dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p. 78. Cf. Also the letter written by Sp. Bakardzhiev from Tarfa: '16.01.1913. [...] And in the *village we visit each other often* and you might say we spend all the time talking, in merry conversations, singing, playing music, never despairing – *but what's coming will come*. We make false guesses fifteen times a day, sometimes about peace coming, sometimes about war, and we keep on waiting. *My only joy is when I receive a letter from you or from Boyan, even though your folks are not very courageous*'; AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444, p. 13. [My italics, S. D.]
- 31 He learns about his 'appointment as regular teacher at the Gabrovo High School' at the front, from the newspaper *Mir*, and shares the good news with his parents, seeing in this a promise for a better social future; S, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444, p. 12.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 33 S, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444, a.u. 16, pp. 12-3.
- 34 *Ibid.*, a.u. 444, pp. 2 – 15.
- 35 '03.03.1913. Kabachka. It's quite pleasant at the front line. The soldiers hold wrestling matches. From all corners of the Bivouac comes the sound of bagpipes and rebecs playing, and in the evening there are big horo dances. [...] These are such really fine men's horo

- dances, and soldiers' horo at that... that you feel like dancing too.'; *Ibid.*, s. 26. '16.01.1913. Tarfa. [...] The soldiers who go out to clean the roads or do some other work come back with big bunches of crocuses or snowdrops.' There is a dried crocus flower and a four-leaf clover still preserved in these letters; *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 36 *Ibid.*, a.u. 444, a.u. 16, 17.
- 37 *Ibid.*, a.u. 444, p. 13.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 39 *Ibid.*, a.u. 16, 17.
- 40 It is evident from these diaries that all parcels to the front line – including coffee, dry milk, biscuits, raki, underwear – which, according to the protocols of the Bulgarian Red Cross were ordered and sent to the front, arrived regularly; CSA, F. 156к, a.u. 14.
- 41 SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66.
- 42 'If you're sharp, wealthy, and have a recommendation from some officer, you can get whatever job you like in the army'; *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 43 *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p. 82-83. Cf. S. Bakardzhiev's first long letter he wrote to his parents: '11.12.1912. Village of Tarfa. Dear parents, This evening I received two postcards from Mama, dated November 26 and 27 [...] I am now lodged at the home of a Bulgarian (this is a Bulgarian village), who has been the village mayor for many years and is a relative of my company commander, married to a girl from here. The room I'm put up at is very nicely furnished. It predisposes me to write to you.' – NA, BAS, F. 40к, a.u. 444, pp. 6-7.
- 44 *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*, p.63-4.Cf SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66, pp. 50-51.
- 45 State Military Historical Archive (SMHA), V. Turnovo, F. 11к, inv. 5, a.u. 81, s. 1-77. Besides infectious diseases, scarlet fever and abdominal typhus, also frequently appearing on soldiers' hospital charts at the hospital in Montana were pleurisy, rheumatism, tuberculosis – SA, Montana. F. 36к, inv. 1, a.u.18. The same hospital's charts of women admitted with syphilis show that they became infected after their husbands returned from the front line (*Ibid*, F. 36к, inv. 1, a.u. 18); in fact this was the infection against which the least effort was made to fight, unlike during World War I.
- 46 CSA, F. 156к, inv. 1, a.u. 14. Cf. also the notes of St Chilingirov, a writer, on the sanitarian work during the Balkan Wars; CSA, F. 108к, inv. 2, a.u. 1145.
- 47 *Ibid.*, F. 156к, inv. 1, a.u. 65. Cf. also: The sanitary staff of the Bulgarian Red Cross numbered 228 males and 418 females – schoolteachers, schoolgirls, housewives, one midwife (from Bitola) and hat makers. Out of '660 sanitary staff members, only 379 have undergone

training – have taken a course, and these include old sanitary staff workers with experience dating from before 1912; CSA, F. 156к, a.u. 104. Cf. also Dr Stefan Vatev, *Ubilejna kniga: Kratak pregled varhu istoriata, zadachite I dejnosta na balg. d-vo na Chervenija Krast*, balg. d-vo na Chervenija Krast. [*Jubilee Book: Short Review of History, Goals, and Activities of the Alliance of Bulgarian Red Cross*], Sofia, Bulgarian Alliance of Red Cross, 1936. Cf. In 1914 St Kutinchev – secretary of the Inspector General of the Bulgarian Sanitarian Services, bears witness, in his notes on sanitarian work, to the banal everydayness of the sanitarian services (critical deficit of responsibility, flexibility and initiative during war). His urgent need to communicate a problem – bureaucratic indifferences to the pain of others, rude machismo of recruited doctors and the way they treat the nurses and the Samaritan's institutions, is bound with another moral question; question about the ideological context of the Bulgarian Patriarchal Modernity, and thus he poses yet another troubling question about the nature of 'just and unjust' by telling the other – hidden – story of the sanitarian work in a way to avoid 'the moral ambiguity in today's term of good and evil'; St Kutinchev, *Sanitarnata Sluzhba*, 1914, p. 12.

- 48 Regional Historical Museum Blagoevgrad (RHM), inv.3.08.L.F.Zhostov / 12. Cf. Dimov, Dimo. *Dnevnik na kapitan Marin Kutzarov* (za uchastieto mu v Balkanskata I mezhdusauznicheskata vojna 1912-1913) [*Diary of Captain Marin Kutzarov* (about his participation in the Balkan Wars 1912-1913)], Sofia, Voенно izdatelstvo, 2004; Lefterov, Christo. *Balkanskata vojna: Spomeni i dok.*; Dodov, Nikola. *Dnevnik po Balkanskata vojna* [*Diary on the Balkan War*], Sofia, Voенно izdatelstvo; Vasil Kolarov. *Pobedi i porazhenia: Dnevnik* [Victories and Defeats: Diary], Sofia, IK 'Christo Botev', 2001; SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66.
- 49 *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika.*
- 50 SA-Montana, F. 1370к, inv. 2, a.u. 601, pp. 1-60.
- 51 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 1023к, inv. 1, a.u. 12, pp. 1-23.
- 52 Cf. For example drawings of Sp. Bakardziev – AS, BAS, F. 40к, inv. 1, a.u. 29, and those done by G. Ivanov – SA, V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, op. 1, a.u. 21.
- 53 I quote only some plays that bear witness to the *other* common traumatic places of war – 'poor soldier, weak body', in a search to seek justice for those who experienced the war, its sufferings, and became victims of poor medical supply and bureaucratic attitudes to human life; their scene is the military hospital and its plot develops around the mutilation of the human body; their titles are highly suggestive: 'Walking corpse', 'Wretched', 'I do not believe'. They are signed by the author's pseudonym Arising Mine-layer, all published in 1914, and are bound to reveal the far-left's vision and its ideological context, as well as a new expressionism in the theatre arts.

- 54 This register which they share reveals the war as a social world, as a process of surviving the unbearable – cholera, the mud, the cold, thirst, hunger, the lack of news from the rear, the depressing life in the trenches; i.e. as an everydayness in which the scenes of patriotism, of dignity, of joy, of solidarity, of compassion, were quickly replaced by acts of cruelty, indiscipline, egoism, rebellion against the military hierarchy, the military's lack of respect for the soldiers, intrigues and envy..., and thereby the nature of their worlds is revealed.
- 55 Cf. The surge of compassion towards the Bulgarian wounded and sick soldiers, the Greek refugees, the poor Kurds, the Turkish prisoners of war – all these merge in a single image: of suffering people; this shows how affect can blur the established representation of the ethnic or cultural *other* and, instead, picture the political *other* – the inhumane and hypocritical Europe that was blamed for the continuation of the war (in soldiers' outburst of anger at the sight of inhuman scenes: human beings humiliated by disease and by history). In times of affect (the outburst of anger and compassion), conditions are created for something new – for that other sensitivity to the world, with which the soldier will return home from the front. It is commonplace in rural teachers' war notebooks and diaries.
- 56 Although the official reports say that half of the required 81 field hospitals went to war without being prepared for it; logistics were very bad. 'The Bulgarian army fought in the forest and in arid regions; after every battle the military units advanced while the ambulances were left behind; sanitarian services did not take the initiative to be near to fighting corpses; this lagging behind made more and more difficult the medical service in the battlefield'. St Kutinchev, *Sanitarnata Sluzhba*, 1914, p.12.
- 57 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 16, a.u. 21, p. 12-16.
- 58 Ibid., a.u. 12, p. 3.
- 59 About such affective realities of the negative economy of hatred, see, for example: the diary of the Mess Sergeant, K. Petrov – SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66; *Vojnishki dnevnik na Petar Zhechev Kurdomanov*.
- 60 Bulgarian virologists had acquired experience (not only scientific and theoretical knowledge) in fighting infectious diseases; for instance they were able to contain the cholera infection in 1910-1911, and then dealt successfully with it again in the summer of 1913, when the disease spread in the rear after the Rumanian army entered the country; in both cases there were few casualties. What happened at the front – the fact that most casualties there were due to diseases, not to combat, showed the practical shortcomings of the modern order – a shortage of medical staff, insufficiently trained sanitary staff (doctors, paramedics and nurses) – and hence the ineffective medical prophylactics carried out among the population at large (urban and rural). Cf. The newssheet distributed by the Bulgarian Red Cross on 'How to distil water for drinking', kept in the archive of General Zhostov – Regional Historical Museum Blagoevgrad (RHM), inv.3.08.L.F.Zhostov/12. Cf. Dimov, Dimo. *Dnevnik na kapitan Marin Kutzarov*; CSA, F. 108к, inv. 2, a.u. 1145. Cf. Dr Stefan Vatev, *Merki, vzeti*

*v tzarstvo Bgaria protiv chumata I holerata prez 1908-1910 ot Direktsiata za obshtestvenoto zdrave* [Taken Measures in Bulgarian Kingdom against Cholera and Plague during 1908-1910 by the Department of Social Health], Sofia, Committee of Public Health, 1911; Dr Stefan Vatev, (1908) *About Typhus*, Sofia: Contemporary Hygiene; Dr Stefan Vatev, *Holera: zaraziavane, predpazvane, dezinfektzia*. Sofia: sp. K-t za borba s holerata [*Cholera: Contagious, Prophylaxis, and Disinfection*], Sofia: Committee of fight against cholera, 1913; Dr Stefan Vatev, *Upatvane za davane na parva pomosht i otglezhdane raneni I bolni*. Sofia: balg. d-vo Cherven krast [Guidenes for Securing and Caring the Wounded and Sick. Sofia, Bulgarian Alliance of Red Cross, 1912].

61 Cf. *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika*.

62 SA-Montana, F. 1157к, inv. 2, a.e. 66, p. 50.

63 *Saga za Balkanskata vojna. Dnevnik na sveshtenika*, p. 49.

64 Dimov, Dimo. *Dnevnik na kapitan Marin Kutzarov*.

65 'That was when I was best off, so I couldn't think of anything to write you about', writes Sp. Bakardzhiev in response to his relatives' worrying for him since he did not send a word from the front line; nevertheless his diaries from that time are filled with his reflections and observations; AS, BAS, F.40к, inv. 1, a.u. 444, s. 11. Cf. Also Ibid., a.u. 311, 339, 175, 176. Cf. Dodov, Nikola. *Dnevnik po Balkanskata*.

66 Gencho Stainov, *Pisma ot Odrin* [Letters from Odrin], Sofia, DVI, 1964.

67 SA-V. Tarnovo, F. 844к, inv. 1, a.u. 18.

68 Ibid., a.u. 12.