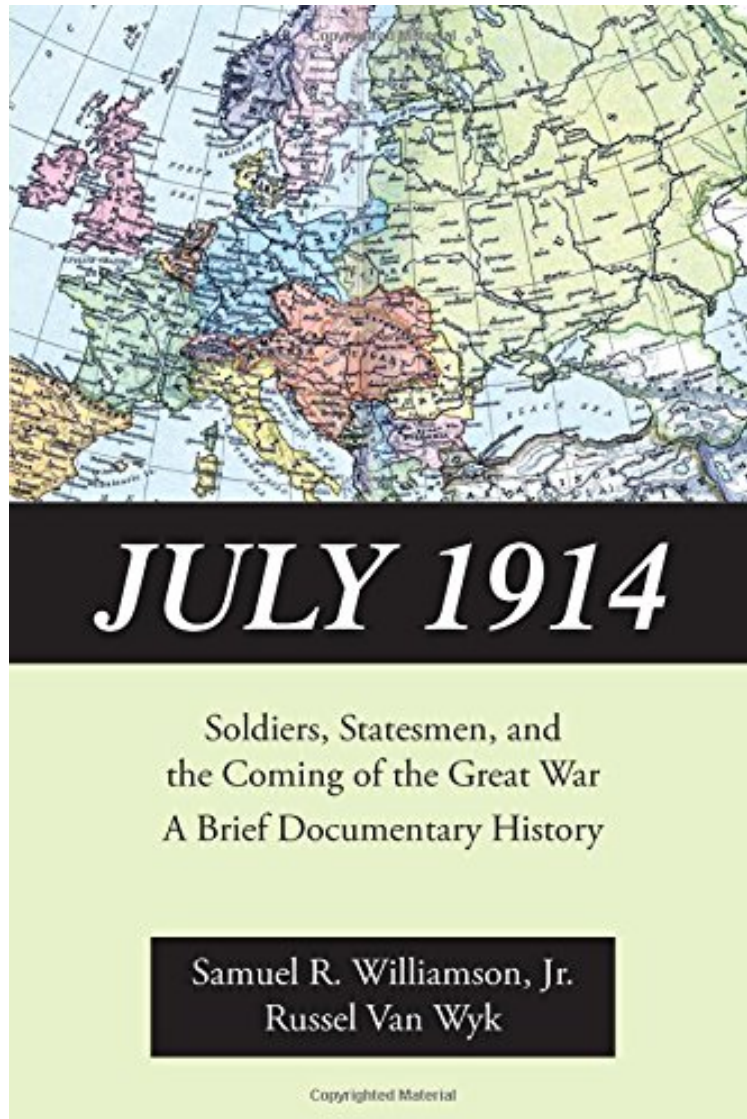


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July 1914: Soldiers, Statesmen, and the Coming of the Great War-A Documentary History

Samuel R. Williamson Jr., Russel Van Wyk
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Samuel R. Williamson Jr., Russel Van Wyk : July 1914: Soldiers, Statesmen, and the Coming of the Great War-A Documentary History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised July 1914: Soldiers, Statesmen, and the Coming of the Great War-A Documentary History:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Spotlight on Old World Power Politics and Diplomacy - Blowing

up the World of 1914:By John Silence is GoldenThe best way to describe this book's format is that it is a condensed, streamlined, edited and updated version {in its format} of Luigi Albertini's monumental 1600 page three {3} volume masterpiece "The Origins of the War of 1914" {see my April and May 2010 reviews} published between 1952 and 1957. By using Professor Albertini's template, the various contributors and authors have culled a wide variety of official government documents, letters, diary entries, contemporary newspaper articles and memoirs written by the monarchs, politicians, generals, decision makers on interested onlookers for all of the Great Powers AND for the "Rogue State" whose criminal actions precipitated the catastrophe - The Kingdom of Serbia.All these numerous contemporary documents/sources illuminate these "powerbrokers" mindset, prejudices, insight, opinions and their world view as the 1914 crisis unwound. The book is divided into chapters by country - Serbia, Austria - Hungary, Germany, Russia, Italy, France and Great Britain with the authors supplementing these original documents with a preface, detailed information {for each individual country's chapter} that provides an overview for each nation's internal/external problems issues and reactions and an epilogue that ties all of these astonishing documents and information together in the context of 21st century hindsight.These documents assess each country's civilian and military leadership in relation to their reaction to the what their prospective adversaries were doing / saying AND what they actually thought what their true motives were - what they were actually really scheming / planning to perpetrate! Trust of one's neighbors {and your friends!!} was not prevalent in the world of 1914 "Old World Diplomacy"!The individual chapters on Serbia, Russia and Italy are particularly interesting in how the official documents provide some insight to their decision - making. The case that is made in the chapter for Britain's eventual declaration of war and Sir Edward Grey's management of Britain's Foreign policy decisions is {in my opinion} less than edifying and the weakest chapter in this book. Certainly Grey's "tweaking and cheeseparing" of the truth in what the British Foreign Office, P.M Asquith and Grey's motivations were in pushing Britain towards war are quite revealing in the official documents that are cited in this chapter.I purchased this book on the basis of a previous one written by Samuel R. Williamson - "The Politics of Grand Strategy; Britain and France Prepare for War - 1904 -1914" which I've read and own and despite its age {the original publication date is 1969} and it is still a relevant and excellent book.In 2014, the 100th year anniversary of the start of World War 1, there has been an astonishing number of books recently published on its the historical causes/reasons for who bears the most responsibility. "Soldiers, Statesmen and July 1914" would be a worthy addition to anyone's library because the contemporary documents are so well chosen meshing with the various contributing authors insights.The used copy that I recently purchased on the Web Site was reasonably priced and of excellent quality. I was impressed with the author's overall / outstanding organization of it information and the high quality and {surprising} depth of it's narrative for a relatively brief book and I give it rating of between 4 and 4 ½ stars - Recommended.12 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Country-by-Country Summary of the July CrisisBy Gregory J. MillerI found July 1914, edited by Samuel Williamson and Russel Van Wyk to be an interesting supplement as to James Joll's The Origins of the First World War. July 1914 analyzed the reaction of each of the great powers of Europe, along with Serbia, to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary. This book was a combination of primary sources, including letters, state documents, telegrams, and newspaper editorials, along with background information provided by the authors. The book's overall purpose was to analyze what went wrong: why did a seemingly trivial incident escalate into the second worst war in history? While none of the powers claimed to have wanted a war, they all (with the possible exception of Italy) really did. They just did not want war declared in July 1914. Upon reading the primary sources, it is clear that most of the European leaders wanted the war postponed for a few months or years. Austria-Hungary, Russia, and France were not ready for a war then because most of their soldiers were on leave harvesting their crops. Russia would have preferred to delay the outbreak of the war for two or three years to complete their industrialization and military preparations, but they could not back down to the Central Powers a third time or they feared that they would lose all credibility in the Balkans. France, nervous that she had a population just two-thirds that of Germany, wanted to wait until her eastern ally was ready. Serbia's army was exhausted after fighting the two Balkan Wars. England was dealing with internal issues and faced the threat of rebellion in Ireland. Germany was the only power that sensed that this was the opportune time to fight; they viewed the outbreak of war in July-August 1914 as a pre-emptive strike before Russia was fully prepared. Williamson and Van Wyk confirmed Joll's thesis that Germany and Austria-Hungary started the war because they knew that things would be much worse on the Eastern Front in a couple of years. Austria-Hungary (at least the duo of Leopold Berchtold and Conrad von Hotzendorff also wanted war, hoping that a decisive victory over Serbia would pacify their Slavic subjects. It is important to note that none of the Allied powers seemed to be willing to back off, either. The authors believed that the lack of civilian control of the military (except in the case of France) was a major cause of the war. Although Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić opposed the assassination, he was unable to prevent Dragutin "Apis" Dimitrijević from being able to carry it out, let alone fully cooperate with Austria-Hungary because he feared the quasi-governmental Black Hand organization (this is similar to how people question whether Mahmoud Abbas could control Hamas or other Palestinian terrorist organizations even if he wanted to). German Chief of Staff Helmuth von Moltke did not have to answer to the Reichstag. The Russian system discouraged cooperation between the army and civilian authority. After Italy entered the war, the leaders of the army were able to do whatever they

wanted to (including squander untold numbers of soldiers before the Caporetto Campaign). This lack of civilian control proved to be a dangerous situation. The citizens of Europe had little or no say as to whether their country would go to war; while there were briefly some strikes in France after war was declared, most people chose to follow their country's flag. That might not have been the case if the people were consulted earlier in July...they might not have cared if Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated in a town that they probably couldn't spell. Military leaders tend to favor their wars because that is their job. Both Hotzendorf and Moltke favored a quick victorious war to make their people happy...What if the war is neither quick nor victorious? General Vladimir Sukhomlinov of Russia either lied to Foreign Minister Sazanov about the level of preparedness of the army or he himself did not know its exact strength. Henry Wilson wanted a British Expeditionary Force (BEF) on the Continent asap. The other problem with this lack of civilian control was that once the army started to mobilize, it would be difficult to impossible to stop. Due to the poor communication and transportation systems of the time, it was difficult for any government to control mobilization. This could be seen in Russia's dilemma as to whether it should partially or completely mobilize and whether its frontier with then-neutral Germany should be included. Austria-Hungary faced a similar quandary in regards to Serbia and Russia (made worse by the fact that there was only one railroad line going to Serbia). It would be difficult for any negotiator or leader to control that process. Reading between the lines, I believe that the July Crisis might have been diffused by an effective international forum. There were too many problems with communication at this time. French President Raymond Poincare missed some key telegrams when he was traveling by boat from Russia. The famous Nicky-Willy telegrams between Czar and Kaiser were frequently delayed and were ineffective in preventing a war). Unfortunately, the Concert of Europe system was obsolete and the Hague was only temporary. Europe needed something more permanent and effective. I am not saying that the world learned its lesson, as both the League of Nations (1919-1939) and the United Nations (1945-present) have proven to be worse than worthless preventing aggression. Europe was on the brink of war in July 1914. The political animosities from one end of the continent to the other were too great to prevent World War I from occurring. Through better statesmanship and communication, the war could have been prevented for a few months or possibly a few years. If that was the case, then Williamson and Van Wyk would have written a book describing the reactions of a different crisis. The outcome might have been the same or hopefully Europe would have chosen different leaders who might have been able to prevent the horrors were created resulting from World War I and its aftermath.⁵ of 13 people found the following review helpful.

APIS -- no bull
By John P. Maher
July 1914: Soldiers, Statesmen, and the Coming of the Great War: A Brief Documentary History. Edited by Samuel R. Williamson and Russel Van Wyk. 2003. Bedford / St Martin's Press. A commonplace in recent books on the Balkans is to draw parallels between 1990s Serbia and the Third Reich. Williamson and Van Wyk confirm the consensus view that that Germany and Austria-Hungary started the Great War, but fail to pursue another parallel. They say nothing about activities of Germany and Austria in the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. But policy and press in those countries are re-runs of the war hysteria of 1914. Germany and Austria, despite their atrocities in WW I and WW II have deployed troops in "enemy territory" - the Serb lands, after arming, training and diplomatically recognizing secessionists in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo-Metohia. The parallel is identical to the 1914 war to destroy Serbia and annex (1914) or economically dominate (1991-present) this strategic territory. Williamson and Van Wyk, though they blame the Central Powers for 1914, nevertheless revert to the PR of those powers regarding Serbia 1914 and 1991ff. I quote: "...murderous colleagues..... the same Serbian military pretensions that drove Apis would ... lead to the virtual Serbian takeover of the Yugoslav government in the 1990s. These moves in turn set in motion the forces that would ultimately see post-World War II Yugoslavia split apart in the 1990s. This dissolution would come in part from the relentless political struggles between another volatile Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, and his Serb military associates. Pasic and Apis would have felt right at home in Belgrade of the 1990s." They adduce not one document in their "documentary history" which would permit the reader to confirm their characterization of "Serbian military pretensions" or the "volatility" of Slobodan Milosevic. If they are going to interject Milosevic here, it would be consistent to include the man who sent the Yugoslavian federal army to take over the border posts between Italy and Austria and Slovenia (a Yugoslavian federal unit). Slovenian irregulars, in Austrian kit, murdered federal unarmed army recruits, holding hands-up (screened on Austrian TV). The Prime Minister who sent in the army as commander in chief was the Croat Ante Markovic. The President of the federal presidency who published a book "How I destroyed Yugoslavia" was not Slobodan Milosevic, but the Croat opportunist Stjepan Mesic. - His family operated under the name "Tovarish" (Russian for `comrade') in communist days. Williamson and Van Wyk would also have to mention Alija (Ali) Izetbegovic, the USA's "son of a bitch" (remember LBJ on Somoza?). His "Islamic Declaration" was re-issued in 1990 in Sarajevo. If Williamson and Van Wyk can't, I can provide the documentary evidence of his 1984 sentence for trying to re-establish political Islam in the Balkans. including details of his travels to Vienna, Istanbul and Teheran. - Oh yes, Osama Bin Laden received his Bosnian passport in Vienna. During Bill Clinton's tenure Osama was often in Bosnia. Williamson and Van Wyk could have saved themselves from this morass of incompetence by sticking to things they know. That would, however, take more homework, too." Apis" - no bull. Getting back to July 1914, Williamson and Van Wyk are in over their linguistic heads. On page 19 is a purported explanation of the nickname of the head of Serbian military intelligence,

Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevic. "nicknamed for his bull-like appearance". If Williamson and Van Wyk could read Serbian and the Latin required in secondary schools of a century ago, they would have known that the constantly working APIS got his moniker not from Egypt's BULL, but from Rome's busy BEE: *Apis mellifica*. There's more. In a footnote (page 41) "Documents on the Foreign Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia", Williamson and Van Wyk leave out a crucial jot or a tittle that changes everything. Not many nouveaux balcanistes seem to know Balkan languages. Williamson and Van Wyk's text has "Dokumenti o spolnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije". There should be a letter "j" between the "l" and the "n" of "spolnih", i.e. it should be "spoljnih"; then it would mean what they say, but what they have printed reads "Sexual Policy of the Kingdom of Serbia".

Williamson and Van Wyk's carefully chosen primary documents memoirs, diaries, government documents, newspaper editorials, and other contemporary accounts introduce readers to the civilian and military leaders whose decisions contributed to events that led to World War I. The documents, along with the authors' scholarly, engaging analysis and insights, reveal personal and national conceptions of war and peace, militaristic impulses, and influential contextual factors, including alliance structures, arms races, and mobilization arrangements of the time. Coverage includes all the major powers of the war Austria Hungary, Germany, Russia, Italy, France, England, and Serbia. The authors' conclusion that individuals, not monolithic governments and impersonal forces, made the decisions in the summer of 1914 that led to the First World War, is worthy of consideration in the current era of global tension and terrorism. Title of related interest also available from Waveland Press: Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I*, Second Edition (ISBN 9780881339543).

"The Williamson and Van Wyk work is still the best single book to use in the classroom. It reprints the most essential documents and its narrative and analysis is exceptional. Here is an innovative analysis of the outbreak of the war that is far better than other standard texts. I use it, however, because it has something to say to scholars and it is a major interpretation in its own right. The book also has a useful chronology, list of key decision makers, and a bibliographical guide to writing papers." --John A. Vasquez, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (International Studies)"This is an amazing book for teaching crisis diplomacy. Students love the primary documents and analysis that accompanies them. I'm very grateful you got this book back into print." --Andrew P. Owsiak, University of Georgia"An excellent and valuable text for my course on WWI indispensable and an excellent selection of primary source readings along with the superb introductions to each." --Robert Pontbriand, University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

About the Author SAMUEL R. WILLIAMSON, JR. is Professor of History and Vice-Chancellor and President Emeritus of the University of the South. His most recent books include *Austria-Hungary and the Origins of the First World War* (1991) and with Steven L. Rearden, *The Origins of U.S. Nuclear Policy, 1945-1953* (1993). He writes frequently about the causes of the First World War, while offering courses on intelligence and foreign policy in the 20th century. He is currently working on a two-volume study of Austria-Hungary before the Great War.

Williamson has held administrative and teaching positions at Harvard University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as well as the University of the South. RUSSEL VAN WYK teaches at Cary Academy, a college preparatory school, and is an adjunct faculty member in the Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He served as the U.S. editor for the War and Society Newsletter published by the Military History Research Office in Germany and has written on German-American relations during and after World War I as well as intelligence operations during the Great War. He is currently editing Russian and German documents related to Kurt Jahnke, a German intelligence agent active in the United States and Western Europe.