



The Gardeners of Salonika: The Macedonian Campaign 1915-1918

Alan Palmer

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The Gardeners of Salonika' as Clemenceau contemptuously labelled them, could well be called the forgotten army of the First World War. Yet the Macedonian Campaign was, in Lord Hankey's words, 'the most controversial of all the so-called sideshows.' The book tells the story of this extraordinary polyglot army - it included, at various times, contingents from seven countries - from the first landing at Salonika (Thessaloniki) in 1915 to the peace in 1918; at the same time it deals with the political and strategic background: the ceaseless argument in London and Paris over the future of the Salonika army, the maze of Greek politics in which the army and its commanders became involved and in particular the personalities of two remarkable French officers who commanded the the army, General Sarrail and Marshal Franchet d'Esperey. It concludes with an account of the offensive in September 1918 when, as Churchill later wrote, 'The controversies were silenced by the remarkable fact that it was upon this much abused front that the final collapse of the Central Empires first began!' In his definitive The First World War (1999) Sir John Keegan rated this book 'the best study of the Macedonian Front in English.' It was well received on first publication, too: 'Mr Palmer is a very competent writer. He has taken an apparently unpromising story and made a book of high interest about it.' A. J. P. Taylor, The Observer 'A masterly and colourful account of this, the most controversial and neglected sideshow of them all.' The Guardian 'Mr Palmer knows how to tell a good story . . . Salonika is a story from which no one emerges with credit, except the troops who were its victims.' New Statesman 'Not only a valuable contribution to history, but also an enthralling book.; Barrie Pitt, Sunday Times

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