

BELGRADE YESTERDAY, BERLIN TODAY

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IT is an accepted notion of Political Philosophy that there is a causal connection between any situation existing at a given time and the sequence of events preceding it. World conditions today present many aspects reminiscent of conditions that existed at the time of the outbreak of the First World War. To anyone who, like myself, has had the opportunity of following the course of historical developments from then to now, this fact must become particularly striking. It is for this reason that I venture to give the following truthful account of the tragic happenings of 1914, although I am well aware that, in so doing, I am reviving a period over which the judgement of history has long since been pronounced.

I.

In 1912, when the Balkan League against Turkey was being formed, I was transferred, as a young Austro-Hungarian Vice-Consul, to Belgrade. I had already seen service in the Balkans, having been attached to the Austro-Hungarian Civil Agent in Belgrade, who, with his Russian colleague, was charged with the thankless task of carrying out the programme of reforms in Macedonia.

Already the sovereignty of the Sultan over those areas, personified with much dignity, but little success by Hilmi Pasha, the Turkish High Commissioner, was purely nominal. The Christian nationalities, each eager for the greatest possible share of the expected spoils, had been engaged mutually in sanguinary warfare. Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek and Kutzo-Wallachian bands of "komitadjis," the latter claiming Romanian parentage, had been waging fierce battles for every square foot of Macedonian soil. Every village church, school or assembly hall in contested regions was assailed, as the case might be, by Serbian "Patriarchists" or "Bulgarian Exarchists," in a desperate bid to change the denominational, that is to say the national, *status quo* to their advantage. No quarter was given or asked by either side. The efforts of the Great Powers, backed by British, French and Italian Financial Advisers and an international gendarmerie, commanded successively by two Italian generals, were powerless to bring order out of the chaos. To cap the climax, cooperation between Austria-Hungary and Rus-

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sia, on which a faint hope of pacification had flimsily hung, was now jeopardized by a dispute between their Foreign Ministers, Aehrenthal and Isvolsky, over the interpretation of an understanding reached by them concerning the future status of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The year 1908 had been marked by two outstanding events: the outbreak of the Young Turkish revolution in Salonika in July, and the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in September. The former had been the cause of the latter. The underground organization called "Union and Progress," headed by a group of Turkish army officers (Mahmoud Shekret Pasha and Enver Bey in Salonika, Niazi Bey in Monastir), had acted with such secrecy and had come out into the open so suddenly that the Great Powers were taken unawares. The conspiracy was directed primarily against European reforms. It was thoroughly nationalistic in character, but this fact was carefully concealed by its leaders. What they emphasized was the immediate introduction of constitutional reforms into the Ottoman Empire, the substitution of political democracy for monarchical autocracy, equality for all nationalities whether Moslem or Christian. Such slogans could not fail to impress the masses. There was general rejoicing among non-Turkish national groups over the prospect that there would be no more European gendarmes to dog their steps, no more European commissions to curb their actions, above all no more tithes to pay for the upkeep of a hated foreign set-up. Henceforward they would settle their differences among themselves and, as to their Turkish compatriots, they would know how to deal with them, now they themselves had become "Osmanlis;" besides, they would have the support of their sponsors, the Balkan states. It looked as if the patriotic ardor of the Young Turks had imparted itself to all sections of the local population. What more unwonted spectacle could there be than to see the notorious "chetniks" whose very name had spread terror throughout the countryside now standing side by side, armed to the teeth but apparently on the best of terms, on the balcony of the Olympic Club at Salonika whence, against the background of European guests in evening attire, they harangued the cheering crowd densely packed in the square below; or to watch them parading the streets, arm in arm, proclaiming the advent of a new era in which the independence and prosperity of the Ottoman Empire would be based on the voluntary cooperation of all its citizens.

These enunciations were taken at their face value by many

Austro-Hungarian officials who were inclined to believe that a strong Turkey, reorganized on constitutional lines, would prove a barrier to Serbian expansionism.

Russia was more circumspect in her appraisal of the situation. She had no reason to welcome a possible convalescence of the "Sick Man." Her policy in the Balkans, intent on neutralizing Austro-Hungarian influence, was to be relentlessly pursued, either with the aid of the Ottoman Empire, reduced to the status of a Russian satellite, or against it. The new Russian envoys in Constantinople and Belgrade, Tsarikoff and Hartwig, were the able exponents of this policy.

In October Count Aehrenthal formally annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, the two Turkish provinces administered by Austria-Hungary since the Congress of Berlin (1878). This step was timed to forestall the elections to the Ottoman Parliament, designed by the Young Turks to comprise deputies from all countries still nominally under Turkish sovereignty. The real reasons for this decision lay deeper. The Russophil Radical Party in Serbia, all powerful since the overthrow of the Obrenovic dynasty and the accession of Peter I (Karadjordjevic) was known to be committed to a policy aiming at a political union of all Southern Slavs under Serbian leadership. This goal, it was openly averred, could be attained only through the destruction of the Dual Monarchy; the realization of this aim was also incompatible with Turkish sovereignty in the Balkans.

Within the Monarchy there had been a break between the Serbo-Croat Coalition, forming a majority in the Croatia Diet, and the Hungarian Government. This boded ill for the internal stability of the Dual Monarchy, since it foreshadowed the absorption of all her territories inhabited by Southern Slavs into a new political unit that would be independent alike of Vienna and Budapest. Especially Hungary was incensed, because she claimed that all these lands, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, had once owed allegiance, in one form or another, to the Crown of St. Stephen. The Hungarians suspected the Serbo-Croat Coalition of intriguing with the Radicals in Serbia, and if, as was shown at the notorious Fiume trials, no valid proof could as yet be adduced for this accusation, it nevertheless was true that Pan Slavism was already undermining the very existence of the Monarchy. A glance at the map will show why she could not relinquish her hold on Bosnia-Herzegovina if she wished to survive. She knew that the loss of these provinces would spell the end of her control over the entire Dal-

matian seaboard, from Cattaro to Trieste, including such vital outlets as the naval base at Pola and the great commercial port of Fiume. On the other hand, Austria-Hungary was anxious to strengthen her constitutional position in the two occupied provinces, by widening the scope of local self-government and establishing a Central Diet at Sarajevo in which all classes of the population would be equally represented.

With regard to the Ottoman Empire, Austro-Hungarian statesmen, still underrating the ultra-nationalistic aims of the Young Turkish revolution, were apt to hold that the common danger of Pan Slavism would militate in favour of a speedy settlement of differences arising from the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Count Aehrenthal, as a former Ambassador to St. Petersburg, had a working knowledge of Russian policy. He wanted to create a clear situation and thus to "localize" the scope of future conflicts by narrowing it down to the two principal contestants, Austria-Hungary and Serbia, whilst eliminating the third, Turkey.

The Sublime Porte had never pressed any claims to her two provinces under Austro-Hungarian occupation. Now, to compensate the Young Turks for their loss, the Dual Monarchy evacuated the Sandjak of Novibazar, a narrow strip of territory to the South East of Bosnia, separating Serbia from Montenegro. She renounced her right to advance, through the Sandjak, in the direction of Salonika, accorded her under a special clause of the Treaty of Berlin. She thus incurred the risk of having to face a united Serbo-Montenegrin front menacing her southern border from the Adriatic to the Danube. She also gave up her plan of constructing a railway southwards through the Sandjak. In addition, the Monarchy offered to pay a high indemnity for all public and religious property owned by Turkey in Bosnia-Herzegovina. That she would likewise discontinue her "reforms" in Macedonia was a foregone conclusion. All these attempts at appeasement, however, were regarded by the Young Turks as so many signs of weakness. Not only did they reject a compromise, but they organized a boycott of Austrian goods in the Levant, with the result that not a single cargo shipped from the Monarchy to Constantinople and other Turkish ports was unloaded. Austrian trade came to a complete standstill. Great as were these losses of the Dual Monarchy, from which her economic rival, Germany, was making a profit, they were far surpassed by the damage to her political prestige throughout the Near and Middle East.

Whilst in Vienna on official business during these troubles, I was told that Count Aehrenthal wished to see me. This was a surprise to me, for it was not usual for "the Minister of the Imperial and Royal House and of Foreign Affairs" to confer directly with junior officials. He received me in his office at the "Ballplatz", wan, haggard and stooping, apparently bowed down by care and already a prey to the fatal malady that was to carry him away a short time afterwards. I understood that he had summoned me on account of the good personal relations I happened to have with Turkish leaders of the day. "Tell them", he said, "that we have no further ambitions, either in the Balkans or anywhere else, and that we welcome the revival of a strong and independent Ottoman Empire. Tell them," he continued incisively, "that the Monarchy is now stabilized within her present boundaries (*saturated* was the term he used) and that her only aim is internal consolidation, not outward expansion." To all intents and purposes, this was the language of a man who, far from being imbued with a spirit of aggressiveness,¹ was animated solely by the desire of maintaining the political entity of his country against odds he already regarded as almost hopeless.

The situation had become more tense by the time of my arrival in Belgrade. The First Balkan War was drawing to a close. It had brought signal victories to Serbian arms. The whole valley of the Vardar, down to the gates of Salonika, and North East Albania were in the hands of the conquerors. In their triumphant march, they would have reached the Adriatic, in the neighbourhood of Durazzo, had it not been for the intervention of Austria-Hungary, who, backed by Germany, vetoed their further advance and, having staged a naval demonstration, forced their Montenegrin allies to raise the siege of Skutari in northern Albania. Anti-Austrian feeling was running high in Belgrade. It manifested itself in the press and in a hostile attitude of official and unofficial circles, despite an undertaking given by the Serbian Prime Minister Pashic, to discourage such public manifestations of ill will. It mounted to fever height after the Second Balkan War, when the victorious troops, decked with flowers and accompanied by the strains of martial music, streamed into the city to be greeted with frantic outbursts of popular enthusiasm for victories won and even greater ones to come. Had not Pashic himself avowed in private that to him the conquest of Macedonia was only the prelude to the forcible acquisition of Bosnia-Herzegovina?

1. The charge of "aggressiveness" levelled against Austria-Hungary by many Western-European writers, e.g. Prof. Seton Watson, has, in my view, scant justification.

Serbia's rival, Ferdinand of Saxe Coburg, by the grace of Austria-Hungary King of Bulgaria since 1908., had been utterly defeated by the other members of the Balkan League; Romanian and Turkish troops had taken part in the struggle, attacking the Bulgarian positions from the North and South. Under the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), the greater part of Macedonia had been given to Serbia which thereby became the most powerful state in the Balkans. A new Piedmont had arisen against the Dual Monarchy, more formidable than the old. Barred from the Adriatic by the newly erected puppet state of Albania, over which a German Prince had been called to rule, and cut off from the Aegean by the allotment to Greece of southern Macedonia, including Salonika, Pan-Serb expansionism now turned the full weight of its frontal attack northwards, and there could no longer be any doubt whatever that Austria-Hungary, representing the line of least resistance, had been singled out as the next victim of this relentless drive. The South Slav movement within the Monarchy was joining hands with Pan-Serbian aggressiveness and this, in turn, was backed by Russian Pan-Slavism. An international problem of the first magnitude was thus taking shape, and Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, hitherto chiefly concerned with maintaining the balance of power in the Balkans, now realized that the hour of destiny had struck. To attack the weakest link, in a chain of opponents has since become a fundamental principle of Soviet revolutionary strategy.

II

Belgrade, situated on the Save river where it flows into the Danube, was beginning to take on the aspect of a modern capital. Extending from East to West, from the ancient Turkish citadel of "Kalemegdan" to the small manor house in "Topchider" Park where Alexander Obrenovic and his unpopular wife, Draga Mashin, had been assassinated by a group of officers belonging to the "Union or Death" or "Black Hand" organization, the city now boasted an up-to-date business centre clustered around the towering Hotel Rosja (Russia), the symbol of her present allegiance. Across the river lay the sleepy little Croatian frontier town of Zemun, where harassed Austro-Hungarian diplomats used to spend their scanty hours of leisure, and further down stream there stretched out an extensive tract of wood and marshland, suitable for deer stalking and duck shooting, the property of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

The royal palace at Belgrade was a gaudy building constructed by Viennese architects in a semi-baroque style. Here, several times a year receptions were held for the diplomatic and consular corps and attended by King Peter and members of his family. Opposite, on the main street, was situated the Russian Legation, a long one-storey house contrasting favourably with the palace by the simple and graceful lines of its architecture. Here M. Hartwig, assisted by his Levantine wife and their daughter, kept open house, outshining their royal neighbours by the ostentatiousness of their hospitality. Crown Prince Alexander, his elder brother, the ill-fated Prince George, their jaunty cousin Prince Paul (later to become Regent) Prime Minister Pashic and members of his cabinet belonged to the innermost circle of guests. The host (stocky, short-necked, with greying hair, always scrutinizing, but himself inscrutable) had been one of the originators of the Balkan League; he had engineered the Serbian drive to the Adriatic during the First Balkan War, had sponsored a Union between Serbia and Montenegro after Austria-Hungary had withdrawn from the Sandjak, and it was he who insisted on the reopening of the headquarters of the "Black Hand," when it had been closed down by the Government.

Hartwig appeared to lead a double life. Day by day, seated at the bridge table or moving freely among his visitors, he gathered items of information till late after midnight. Then he would withdraw to his study and work until morning, only to snatch a few hours of rest before midday, when a new round of duties began. It was known that these periods of nocturnal seclusion were frequently interrupted by summonses to the Palace, for conferences with the King and his ministers. He was in fact the real power behind the scenes. Whatever happened between the Austro-Hungarian Legation and the Serbian Government was brought to his knowledge by secret channels, though his own movements were shrouded in mystery until revealed in the effects they invariably produced. The successive Austro-Hungarian envoys in Belgrade, Count Forgach, a haughty and reserved Hungarian, Baron Ugron, a bland and boisterous Transylvanian, and Baron Giesl, a stiff and stubborn Austrian general, were living virtually on a volcano, isolated from the outer world.

Meanwhile the ramifications of a secret organization for achieving Yugoslav unity under Serbia's leadership were spreading wider and wider, throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. Since, at the same time, the clamour for forcible union of these two pro-

vinces with Serbia was growing louder and louder, it was only natural to conclude there must be a close connection between the two movements. The "war of nerves" had reached a stage at which it was out of the question for Austria-Hungary to demobilize her troops concentrated in the threatened areas, much as she would have desired to re-establish normal conditions along her southern borders.

In February 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Consul at Nish, who had had a long experience of Balkan affairs, reported that the womenfolk in his district were busily engaged in knitting huge quantities of warm underclothing, ostensibly in anticipation of an approaching winter campaign. He was sure trouble was brewing, for the peasants could not be acting on their own initiative. Other sinister events pointed in the same direction. The border-lands of the Monarchy were aflame with terrorism. Attempts on the lives of governors, military commanders and high state officials were following one another in quick succession. An Austrian arch-duke narrowly escaped death. The residence of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Carlovic in Croatia-Slavonia was bombed. Fifth columnists were blowing up bridges, wrecking railways, destroying strategic objects and committing other acts of sabotage. The perpetrators had, in several instances, received instructions from revolutionary elements in Serbia, where the sharp edge of guerilla action was being shifted from the South to the North. One of these young fanatics, during a prolonged stay in Switzerland, had been in touch with Leon Trotzky, from whose Russian entourage he had learnt the art of bomb making. And all the while, military circles in Belgrade were openly agitating for aggressive war on the Monarchy. One of the most truculent among them, Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevic, chief of the Military Intelligence Service, organizer of komitadji bands and leader of the "Black Hand" is known to have taken an active part in the plotting of the Sarajevo murders. It is symptomatic that he, too, maintained close relations with the Russian Legation.

In May, 1914, I made the acquaintance of a young cipher clerk in the Belgrade Foreign Office. He was, by birth, a Croation, that is to say a Hungarian citizen. He had spent many years in Canada, where he had learnt to speak English fluently. This gave point to our intercourse, and we met pretty frequently. The news of the intended visit of the Austro-Hungarian Heir Apparent to the Bosnian capital to attend manoeuvres was beginning to spread. Threats of violent death were being uttered

against him quite openly, should he carry out his intention. The radical press in Belgrade had embarked on a veritable orgy of vituperation and incitement. The Archduke himself brushed all warnings aside, loth to exhibit any signs of weakness at this critical moment. It was amidst this atmosphere of extreme tension that I was approached by my Croation cipher clerk with an offer to disclose a secret that, he stated, was of most vital importance to us all in view of imminent danger. He wanted, however, to be assured that the Austro-Hungarian Legation would give him sanctuary and compensate him for the loss of his job in the event of detection. He asked me to act immediately for there was no time to lose. As a token of good faith, he confided to me that on a certain day, not far ahead, there would be an outbreak of popular hatred against the Austro-Hungarian Legation and colony in Belgrade. It was, he concluded, a matter of life and death.

I reported the matter that very day. Our envoy Giesl was incredulous. He declined to commit himself and only expressed his thanks for the warning. He notified the local authorities of the possibility of riots and asked them to take all necessary precautions. When I told my Croatian informant that this had been the only result of this message, he was visibly downcast and, having changed the topic of the conversation, took his leave rather hastily. I have not seen him since.

A few days later I was sent to Skoplje in Serbian-occupied Macedonia, on official business. It was there that I learnt the anti-Austrian outbreak in Belgrade had actually occurred on the very day predicted. The alarm caused in Austro-Hungarian circles was grossly exaggerated by the Serbian press for propaganda purposes. Insults and ridicule were hurled at the unfortunate Giesl. He was depicted in one of the cartoons, fully armed, but in scanty attire, peering, in a frenzy of fear, from behind closed shutters into the empty street below. The caption was. "A decrepit old general of a ramshackle monarchy." In far away Skoplje, where Serbian rule was asserting itself with an iron hand, hostility against the Monarchy was growing by leaps and bounds.²

Then came the fateful 28 June, "Vidow Dan" (Day of Widows), Serbia's national day of mourning, commemorative of her defeat at the hands of the Turks in 1389, on the plains of Kossovo. The day passed without incident, but towards

² There were similar occurrences at later dates. That they were organized from above appears obvious.

evening, a telegram in code from Belgrade informed me that Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his consort, Duchess Sophie of Hohenberg, who had insisted on accompanying him, had been assassinated at Sarejevo; I was to return to the capital immediately. The blow had fallen earlier than expected. That I had actually expected it and that my apprehensions had come true, seemed to me to point to some irreversible chain of causes and effects moving, with elemental force, towards an inevitable catastrophe.

Shortly afterwards I started on my return journey. There was wild excitement everywhere. It increased as the journey proceeded. Crowds had gathered at the larger stations. Groups of officers and reservists boarded the train. Horses, munitions and vehicles were being shipped northwards. There were leave-takings, embraces, gestures of defiance, shouts of defiance, shouts of exultation, bursts of martial songs, to the accompaniment of stringed instruments. In contrast with these rejoicing the capital appeared silent, deserted, numbed, as if weighed down by a guilty conscience. Friends and acquaintances I met hurried past with hardly so much as a glance of recognition.

The story of the Sarajevo tragedy is too well known to be repeated here. It must, however, be stressed that although sufficient proofs of the complicity of the Serbian government were lacking at the time, it could not reasonably be doubted, in the light of circumstantial evidence already available, that the Belgrade authorities had known of the conspiracy but had failed to give a timely warning. Both actual perpetrators of the crime, Princip and Cabrinovic, had been residing in Belgrade during a lengthy period preceding it. The Serbian police, who had been requested by the Austro-Hungarian Consulate to supervise the movements of suspects, had been, to say the least, non-cooperative. Both youths had received training in guerilla warfare from Major Voya Tankosic, a direct subordinate of Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevic, already referred to. Both had obtained their revolvers and bombs from the State arsenal at Kragujevac, with which Major Tankosic was closely associated. The Serbian War Office and General Staff must therefore have had some foreknowledge of the plan. Furthermore, the two youths, fully equipped for the commission of the crime, had been allowed, without questioning, to cross the border near Loznica, where Serbian frontier guards and customs officers usually exercised a strict control over travellers. Since these officials were under the supervision of the Serbian Ministry of Finance, it is hardly

possible that they could have acted as they did without express orders or, at least, the implied connivance of their superiors. Where many an honest man had been turned back, prospective murderers had not even regarded it as necessary to avoid the open road, they had not so much as attempted to reach their goal by devious tracks. In point of fact, Prime Minister Pashic avowed at a later date that he had been informed of the movements of the conspirators. Nothing was done, however by the Serbian authorities either to prevent the murders or to clear up the case *post factum*. I personally am inclined to believe that the Croation cipher clerk by the nature of his occupation, was pretty well acquainted with the inside story of the plot.

However this may be, it was clear to anybody with some insight into conditions prevailing at the time that Austria-Hungary must act at once, in order to extricate herself from an intolerable situation. The nature of the offensive launched against her by militant Pan Slavism would have made war inevitable within a near future, even had it been possible to avoid a showdown for the moment. To responsible Austro-Hungarian statesmen therefore a settlement of accounts with Serbia appeared to be imperative, as long as there was still a chance of "localizing" the conflict, i.e., reducing its scope to the two parties immediately concerned. The obvious disparity of forces would it was thought, induce Serbia to abandon her subversive policy—voluntarily if possible; under compulsion if necessary. The efficacy of this plan hinged on the attitude of Russia, but this, as viewed from Belgrade, did not appear to be indicative of a readiness to back Serbia by force of arms, at least not in the immediate future. On the other hand, Austria-Hungary was not deterred by the prospect of having to act against Serbia single-handed, that is to say, without the help of her German Ally, for the benefit of any success she might achieve would thus accrue to her alone; this would enable her to restore her badly shaken international credit.

Doubtless, at this juncture, Austro-Hungarian diplomacy was prone to underestimate the danger of a general conflagration, and to overestimate the chances of an isolated action against Serbia and the effects it would have on the latter. As a matter of fact, whatever action Austria-Hungary might take at that time was bound to have very serious international consequences, for the world was already divided into two hostile camps.

The tactics adopted by M. Hartwig to meet this contingency bear witness to his shrewd grasp of all elements conducive to the fruition of his plans. He knew how to strengthen the belief of the Serbian government that Russian help would not fail them in their hour of need. It was he who had arranged Pashic's flying visit to St. Petersburg, for the purpose of cementing Serbo-Russian friendship by a pledge of co-belligerency against the common enemy. It was mainly his merit that this pledge was given a few months later, so that Pashic, certain at last of Russian military backing, could exclaim with deep emotion: "The Tsar is great and merciful!"

By contrast, Hartwig did everything to impress his Austro-Hungarian colleague with the certainty of Russian unpreparedness. His unceasing endeavours to convince Baron Giesl of the expediency of delaying the projected action against Serbia could not but be interpreted by the Austro-Hungarian Government as indicative of Russia's desire to gain time. A few days before the delivery of the ultimatum Hartwig called on Giesl and, passionately, almost imploringly, urged him to prevail upon his Government to hold back the ultimatum for yet a couple of days. Giesl was obdurate. Overcome by emotion, Hartwig was seized with heart attack and died before the eyes of his host. It was significant that his widow and daughter shortly afterwards appeared at the Austro-Hungarian Legation and, suspecting foul play, removed, (for minute examination) the coffee cups and ash trays that had been used during the interview.

Events were now moving forward with lightning rapidity. On 23 July, 1914, at 6 p.m., Giesl handed the ultimatum in the final form given to it by the Austro-Hungarian Joint Council of Ministers, to the Serbian acting Prime Minister. Pashic himself was absent. He had left for Salonica, for a conference with the Greek Premier Venizelos. The time limit was 48 hours. Acceptance had to be unconditional. Failing such acceptance, the Austro-Hungarian Government had decided to order general mobilization. It was still hoped that a formal declaration of war might yet be avoided. "War," declared the Hungarian Premier Tisza in the Budapest Parliament, "is a very sad *ultima ratio*."

The language of the ultimatum was harsh and peremptory; yet it is only fair to state that the wording of the ten demands was susceptible of an interpretation that, under normal circumstances, should have been acceptable even to so uncompromising

a government as that of Serbia. Actually the Serbian Government rejected only three of these demands, in whole or in part whilst it accepted all the other demands without reservation. Now, there are good grounds for assuming that even the three demands in question had originally been accepted *unconditionally* and that the reservations made in regard to them were inserted in the Serbian reply to the ultimatum at the last moment, after some fact had become known of which the Serbian Government had had no certain knowledge up to that moment. This fact apparently was of a nature to stiffen Serbian resistance. Under the circumstances, nothing short of an official intimation from St. Petersburg that Russia had decided to mobilize in defence of Serbian interests could have produced such an effect.

It may be useful to recapitulate briefly the tenor of the three demands rejected by Serbia. In the order in which they appeared in the ultimatum, they are: Demand No. 2, calling for the suppression of certain publications conspicuous for their unscrupulous propaganda against the Monarchy; No 5, requiring the "collaboration in Serbia" of Austro-Hungarian officials in the liquidation of underground organizations engaged in a campaign of violence; and No. 6., concerning the "participation of Austro-Hungarian delegates in the judicial enquiry" to be instituted in Serbia against persons implicated in the Sarajevo murders.

The first of the above demands may have been hard to fulfil, in view of the stringent provisions of the Serbian Constitution guaranteeing the freedom of the Press. It cannot, however, be denied that these publications had abused their freedom by committing a number of offences punishable under criminal law. Nevertheless, I can state on the grounds of immediate evidence, for I was present at the Austro-Hungarian Legation when the Serbian reply was being collated with the text of the ultimatum, that Serbia's qualified rejection of this particular demand would not have led to a breach, had the other demands been accepted unconditionally.

As regards the second of the above demands it may be noted that it is by no means unusual for police officials of one country in which a crime originating in another country has been committed to take part in investigations conducted on the territory of that other country. Naturally, in such cases, they will act only in an auxiliary character. It was in no other capacity that Austro-Hungarian officials, by the terms of the ultimatum, were to take part in investigations on Serbian territory. A similar case arose in 1934, when, after the assassination of

King Alexander I. of Yugoslavia at Marseilles, French police were sent to work on the case both in Hungary and Yugoslavia.¹

The same principles apply also to the third of the above demands, but here it must be expressly stated that the term "judicial enquiry" as referred to in the Serbian reply to the ultimatum does not convey the exact meaning of the term "Voruntersuchung" (Preliminary Investigation), as used in the Austrian Code of Criminal Procedure and understood by the Austro-Hungarian Government at the time the document was drawn up. What was demanded was that Austro-Hungarian "delegates" take part, again in a strictly auxiliary character, e.g., as liaison organs, in the initial proceedings to be instituted by Serbian courts against persons formally charged with having committed criminal offences in connection with the Sarajevo slayings. It never was the intention of the Austro-Hungarian Government that the "delegates" to be sent to Serbia should exercise judicial functions there.

Serbia's reply was due to be delivered on 25 July, at 6 p.m. Till late in the afternoon that day it was still uncertain whether, or not, Russia would decide to back Serbia by force of arms. Public opinion was almost unanimous in assuming that if a binding Russian assurance to that effect would not have been received before the expiry of the time limit, Serbia would have no other choice but to accept the whole ultimatum as it stood. As the hours dragged on, the defeatist mood in Serbian circles seemed to be gaining ground. Then suddenly, about 5 p.m., the situation changed. Excited crowds were gathering in the streets, especially before the Palace and the Russian Legation. Movements suggestive of a general mobilization could be observed. Rumours purporting that a telegram of vital import had just been received from St. Petersburg spread like wildfire throughout the city. In an instant the temper of the people became more defiant and bellicose. All talk about a peaceful settlement ceased.

Gathered in Baron Giesl's study, around their chief, the senior members of the staff of the Austro-Hungarian Legation were awaiting zero hour. On the writing table lay two coded telegrams, addressed to the Foreign Minister Count Berchtold the one containing the message that the ultimatum had been accepted, the other that it had been rejected. Trunks and suitcases ready to be removed to the station at a moment's notice

¹ The principle that such cooperation does not infringe upon national sovereignty is now universally recognized.

were piled in the ante-room. Archives had been packed away in cases and in part dispatched to Vienna.

At the stroke of the clock, Prime Minister Pashic drove up to the Legation and was met in the Hall by Baron Giesl. He handed the latter the closed and sealed envelope containing the Serbian reply, saying a few words to the effect that if the reply should not be found satisfactory, the dispute might be settled by arbitration. Giesl immediately returned to his study, opened the envelope and laid out the text of the reply before him on the writing table. Each member of the Legation staff had been supplied with a copy of the ultimatum, so that he could discover any discrepancy between this and the tenor of the Serbian answer to each successive demand. Giesl then began to read out aloud the text of the Serbian reply. The answer to demand No. 2 caused a moment of hesitancy, but the Serbian reservation to this point was, apparently, regarded as valid, and the replies to the following two demands were satisfactory. It was not till after the replies to the fifth and sixth demands had been checked and found to be deficient that Giesl declared that the ultimatum must be regarded as rejected by Serbia. The telegram announcing this negative result was immediately dispatched. Nevertheless the text of the Serbian reply was read to the end. It was about 6.20 p.m. when Giesl and his staff left for the station. Without stopping to speak to the group of newspaper men waiting downstairs, he merely exclaimed in a loud voice: "You see, we are leaving Belgrade."

The train carrying the Austro-Hungarian diplomats had hardly passed the frontier station at Zemun, when the big railway bridge spanning the Danube at this point was blown up. A deep unbridgeable chasm had opened up between two hostile worlds.

The tragedy of Sarajevo released from a state of inertia blind forces that, to this day have not been brought to rest. The charge of responsibility for this catastrophe leveled at Austro-Hungarian statesmen of the day appears, on the face of it, unfair. Of the three attributes requisite to real statesmanship, namely knowledge, character and genius, they lacked only the last. But even if they had possessed this quality, it is doubtful whether they would have been able to change the course of history, which has indeed changed the face of the earth.