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The Origins of the First World War

1. Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier, speaking in the Canadian House of Commons in January 1910, said that: "When Britain is at war, Canada is at war. There is no distinction."[1] This was the view taken in 1914 as well, and Canada, which had had no part in the diplomatic exchanges leading up to the conflagration, went to war automatically on 4 August, 1914. Canadian fatalities numbered 59,544 in the four years of conflict; another 172,950 Canadians were wounded.

2. Apart from the fall of the Roman Empire, probably no historical problem has been more exhaustively analysed than that of the origins of the First World War. This was a natural result of the magnitude of the conflict, its cost in lives, wealth and values, and its emotional grip on contemporaries. When the guns at last fell silent in November 1918, Western Civilization looked back aghast at a continent ravaged and at uncounted millions of dead. It looked back, when it dared look back at all, with an almost unbearable sense of loss, and with the aching certitude that the loss was permanent.

3. After 1918 feelings of patriotism, guilt, outrage, or awe attracted many scholars to the subject of what had caused the war. Much of the work done was partisan and some was unscrupulous; but much also was honest, diligent and perceptive. And the passion of the controversy at least ensured that no view, however plausible, would pass unchallenged or untested.

4. The means of forming a sound historical judgement were unsurpassed, for a great mass of documentary evidence was available. The distortions, falsifications or omissions of which most of the Great Powers were guilty when they presented their separate cases in the Diplomatic Books of 1914 and early 1915[2] were minutely scrutinized, cross-checked, and exposed. This process was much facilitated by the revolutions that swept away the governments of three of the original five major belligerents, for the new regimes had little interest in concealing the sins of their predecessors. The search for truth was helped also by the fact that revolution struck impartially at both the Allies and the Central Powers.

5. Thus we know, in the greatest detail, what went on in the chancellories of Europe immediately prior to the outbreak of war -- what ambassadors reported to their Governments, what foreign secretaries said to their allies, what General

Staffs told their political superiors. We have access to the texts of the secret treaties and to the mobilization plans of the War Ministries; we possess the decoded telegrams of the embassies, often with the hurriedly pencilled annotations of august readers still ledgible upon them.

6. We know more than this, for we have the great advantage of hind-sight, of knowing how it all turned out. We know now, and can easily trace, the deep historical roots of the conflict - the hatreds left by old wars, the stains left by old lies, the ancient greeds unsatisfied, the ancient prides unrepented. We know the individual characters of the persons most concerned, the weaknesses, ambitions, prejudices and loves of Tsar and Kaiser, Prime Minister and President. We know -- in broader terms but on even more overwhelming evidence -- how the peoples of Europe felt in that fateful summer of 1914, how they viewed themselves and their neighbors, what they considered moral or base, where they thought their world was going. We can catch the very accents of the time, and we certainly know much more about the origins of the war than did any of those whose actions contributed to the event.

7. Yet no universally acceptable answer has been found to the problem of what caused the First World War. Obvious reasons for this are national prejudice, the complexity of the causes, and the necessarily qualitative nature of much of the analysis. A somewhat less obvious reason may be that the immediate causes of the First World War were not by themselves determinant. There is no apparent inevitability in the sequence of events that led to war or in the purposes of those who must bear the most immediate share of responsibility. The guarantees of Russia, Germany and France, and murder of the Archduke Ferdinand, the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, the uncertainty in Britain, and the rigid mobilization plans of all the continental powers do not, either individually or in sum, fully account for the fact of war.

8. To view the crisis which preceded the war as something which began with the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo on the 28th of June is inadequate. The principle reason why the immediate origins of the war have been given so much emphasis in Allied countries is that the best possible Allied case can be made if only the 33 days between the 28th of June and the 1st of August are considered in detail. That case is very considerably weakened if full account is taken of such matters as Serbian South-Slavism, the history of the Black Hand organization, Russian diplomacy between 1908 and 1914, and the Balkan War of 1912-13.

9. Nevertheless, if the events which immediately preceded the conflict do not constitute a complete cause, still less can ultimate responsibility be placed upon individuals. The agitation to fix the guilt upon the Kaiser, of course, is merely an illustration of how little removed is the twentieth century from the tribe, the desert and the sacrificial scapegoat. But later attempts to blame Dimitrievich, Berchtold, Hötzendorf, Moltke, Isvolsky, Sazonov or Poincaré, are not much better. Certainly, some of these men worked actively for war and none of them were much averse to it, but none of them wanted the war they got and none of them had sufficient influence on the course of

events to be awarded a degree of responsibility at all equivalent to, say, Napoleon's responsibility for the attack on Portugal in 1807 or Stalin's responsibility for the attack on Finland in 1939.

10. The immediate causes of the war are only significant--or indeed intelligible -- when they are considered together with remoter causes. The historian, however, cannot regard causation as infinite. There is a point, and one which is soon reached, when it is no longer profitable to pursue the origins of an event into "the dark backward and abysm of Time." The force exerted by the past upon the present weakens in direct proportion to its remoteness; other considerations intervene; cross-currents of influence arise; and the significance of the past to any individual occurrence is soon in doubt.

11. Thus it is probably unprofitable to attempt to trace the remoter origins of the First World War much past 1870. For instance, among the remote, historical reasons advanced to explain the conflict is to be found a once-popular theory that Prussia, a country whose national industry was war, had been, at least since the time of Frederick the Great, a militaristic state and a menace to the peace of Europe. This theory does not bear close examination: Frederick generally fought as a member of an alliance; after his time Prussia engaged in fewer wars than either Britain or France; and for at least the first half of the 19th century Prussia was less militaristic than Austria, Russia, or the Napoleonic Empire. Therefore, while admitting that Prussia possessed many unamiable characteristics, chief among which was a brash self-confidence very dangerous to world peace, we should probably dismiss the theory of the evil Prussian state as being propaganda, useful no doubt for patriotic purposes but beneath the recognition of the historian. Attractive as it may be to build up a case against Prussia, similarly damaging cases could with equal facility be made out against many other nations -- and in fact have been, for the English-speaking world possesses no monopoly on patriotism.

12. One extremely remote reason for the catastrophe of 1914, however, should be noticed in passing, and that is the European tradition of settling national differences by force of arms. By 1914 all the principal nation states of Europe were predicated upon violence. This had not always been so, or at least the practice of states had been modified by theories which did not admit the ultima ratio of violence, but the metaphysics of Europe had changed. By the beginning of the 20th century European statesmen worked within the concept of violence as within an essential dimension -- any individual war might be sought or avoided as expediency suggested, but war itself seemed a natural, and probably an ineluctable, concomitant of international affairs.

13. The final grouping of the Powers was reasonably clear by 1905 when Campbell Bannerman's Liberal Government in Britain authorized informal staff talks with France. The division of Europe into two antagonistic groups was, of course, a fundamental historical cause of the war. The particular division which occurred came about largely by accident. After 1871 Bismarck had wanted security and peace, goals which he

felt could be achieved only if France were kept without allies, for France was filled with the spirit of revanche and yearned for the restoration of the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. Shortly after Sedan, Bismarck wrote: "Our task is to see that France leaves us in peace, and to make sure that in case France refuses to keep the peace, she shall have no allies."

14. However, the failure of Bismarck's policy was inherent in the national ambitions of the states of Europe: Russia and Austria had conflicting aims in the Balkans; France remained implacable; Italy and Austria were traditional enemies; Britain, already aware that her industrial superiority was being overtaken, was determined to maintain her pre-eminent trading position; and expansionist forces in Germany herself proved stronger and less wise than the Chancellor.

15. For a time it appeared as though Bismarck could in fact consolidate his gains. In 1873 he managed to create the Three Emperors' League of Germany, Russia and Austria, and European war was impossible. Britain remained in splendid isolation, and France was effectively quarantined. Only two years after the formation of the League, however, relations were strained when Tsar Alexander II warned Bismarck against fighting a preventive war against France, and in the Near Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 Russia and Austria almost went to war over the redrawing of national boundaries in the Balkans. The Treaty of Berlin resolved this crisis, but despite Bismarck's claims that he was acting only as "the honest broker of Europe", the Tsar blamed him for Russia's diplomatic defeat. Moreover, Russia now knew that Germany feared above all else a Franco-Russian alliance, and in the context of the time it would have been too much to expect that an ally would not take advantage of such knowledge.

16. In 1879 Bismarck definitely chose Austria as an ally instead of Russia. The Prussian Chancellor's only concept of an alliance was that it was analogous to the relationship between a rider and his horse, and Bismarck felt that Austria would be more likely to play horse than Russia. The result of this calculation was the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria. In 1882 Italy's adherence changed the Dual Alliance into the Triple Alliance. Nevertheless, Bismarck was far from wishing to estrange Russia and in 1881 the Three Emperors' League became an alliance. Among other provisions, this alliance in effect recognized Austria's right to annex the provinces of Bosnia and Hercegovina at pleasure and appeared to heal the developing breach between Germany and Russia.

17. As long as Russia and Germany were allies, a major war was extremely unlikely, but in 1885 Russia left the Three Emperors' Alliance after a further quarrel with Austria over the Balkans. In 1887 Bismarck was able to arrange a Reinsurance Pact with Russia, but three years later, when the new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, replaced the old Chancellor, Germany did not renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia on the grounds that to do so would be disloyal to Austria. Britain, meanwhile, had rejected three German offers of alliance that Bismarck had made in 1879, 1887, and 1889.

18. Italy remained in uneasy partnership with Germany and Austria, but in 1892 the Tsar signed a Mutual Assistance Treaty with France, ending the Third Republic's isolation in Europe. Two years later this military convention was replaced by a secret formal alliance, the Dual Entente, which provided for mutual assistance in case of a German attack. This treaty was to remain in effect so long as the Triple Alliance endured.

19. The Dual Entente marked the failure of Bismarck's European policy. With it, the lines were drawn; henceforth France and Russia stood opposed by the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy. By now, moreover, Britain was no longer so comfortable in her splendid isolation. She quarrelled with France in the Sudan when Major Marchand and Kitchener dramatically confronted each other at Fashoda; she quarrelled with Germany in the Far East; and she feared Russian designs in Afghanistan and India. Three times, in 1898, 1899 and 1901, Joseph Chamberlain proposed an alliance with Germany, but on each occasion his overtures were rejected. In January 1901, King Edward VII came to the throne, and although his influence has been much exaggerated, it undoubtedly helped create at least the cordiality necessary for the entente cordial. The mutual dislike which he and his nephew, the Kaiser, entertained for each other did nothing to improve Anglo-German relations.

20. Even before this, Germany and Britain had been revealed as potential enemies when in 1896 the failure of the Jameson Raid in South Africa elicited a congratulatory telegram from the Kaiser to the Boer President Kruger. Germany found herself unable to intervene in the Transvaal because of her lack of naval strength and forthwith began a naval building programme which Britain came increasingly to regard as a direct challenge. The German naval programme led Britain first to an alliance with Japan in 1901 and then to a policy of settling differences with both France and Russia.

21. On 8 April 1904, Britain and France, having first resolved their colonial differences in North Africa, signed the Entente Cordial. But if Britain and France had resolved not to clash over North Africa the same could not be said of Germany. On 31 March, 1905, in Tangiers, the Kaiser made a war-like speech which challenged French claims in Morocco. At this time France could expect no help from her ally Russia, who was fighting an unsuccessful war with Japan. The French Government was therefore forced to accept a European Conference on the future of Morocco. Delcassé, the French Foreign Minister, resigned over this incident, but when the conference was held at Algericas in 1906, Germany was disappointed for "the special interest of France in Morocco" was recognized by the Powers.

22. Britain, although not formally committed, was now ranged, at least in sympathy, with Russia and France. The conversations between the French and British general staffs, which were begun at the time of the Algericas Crisis formed a moral bond and were an additional influence on the side of Britain's intervention when war came. These conversations were secret, and Grey had not even informed all his Cabinet colleagues that they were taking place. In 1907 Britain and

Russia reached a detente on their outstanding differences in Persia and the Persian Gulf. The following year, when the German Consulate at Casablanca was discovered assisting deserters from the French Foreign Legion, the quarrel was submitted to arbitration and the verdict went against Germany whose Consul was declared guilty of "a serious and manifest fault."

23. As Europe divided, the nations increased their armaments and in each nation soldiers moved closer to the heart of affairs. This latter trend was more pronounced in the autocracies of Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, where the sovereigns exercised many of the powers of commanders-in-chief, than in the democracies of Britain and France, where the politicians were often suspicious of, or hostile to, the army.

24. None of the General Staffs of the European Powers, however, seemed in any way averse to war -- all were confident that, if it came to fighting, their side would soon be brilliantly victorious. These sentiments in each case were based upon a sober estimate of national superiority and upon a profound ignorance of the new nature of war. The increased power of the defensive and the confining effect of Western European topography on mass armies were not so much as guessed at. The staffs thought instead in terms of a single great campaign across the summer countryside, of cavalry screens and wide-wheeling masses of manoeuvre, of fortresses invested and capitals entered before the snowflakes flew, of Berlin taken before Christmas and Paris captured between harvest-time and frost.

25. In 1908 the revolution of the Young Turks against the Sultan enabled Bulgaria to break away from Turkish sovereignty and served as a pretext for the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Hercegovina, which had been Austrian protectorates since 1879. The Russian foreign minister, Isvolsky, had agreed to the Austrian annexation, which was no more than the formal recognition of an already accomplished fact, in exchange for an Austrian promise not to oppose the opening of the Dardenelles. Isvolsky had understood that he would receive prior notification of the annexation, but Austria announced it without further consultation. Moreover, Isvolsky found that Serbian resistance to the annexation made it impossible for Russia to ratify the act, which was a blow against Serbian ambitions of forming a South-Slavic Balkan state. On 23 March 1909 Germany demanded that Russia recognize the annexation and threatened that, if this were not done, Germany would be compelled to allow Austria to attack Serbia; in that case Germany would take military measures to safeguard Austria's northern boundaries. Russia complied and advised Serbia to do likewise, but the methods used by Austria and Germany were much resented. Isvolsky, in particular, who resigned as Foreign Minister and took up the post of Russian ambassador in France, was filled with an implacable hatred of the Central Powers. Russia was henceforth determined to alter the balance of power in the Balkans in her favour, and within three years was to find the opportunity for effecting this.

26. Meanwhile, at the other end of Europe, the Franco-German quarrel again flared up dangerously. In June 1911 the German Foreign Minister, Kiderlen-Wächter, despatched a gun-boat to Agadir in an obvious move to intimidate France in Morocco. French public opinion was enraged, and although Russian and British pressure resolved the crisis by having France give Germany concessions in the Congo in return for a free hand in Morocco, the treaty which was signed on 4 November, 1911, satisfied neither Germany nor France.

27. All of this was sinister enough, but far worse than any colonial quarrel was the tension which was building up in south-eastern Europe. Serbian ambitions had long been a source of friction in the Balkans. For more than a generation influential Serbs had dreamed of the day when Belgrade would be the capital of a new South-Slav state which would include all the Serbs and their ethnic brethren -- Bosnians, Croats, Hercegovinians, Montenigrins and even Bulgars. This new state, they thought, would be created just as the Kingdom of Italy had been formed around the nucleus of Piedmont or as the German Empire had been formed around Prussia.

28. On the 10th of June 1903 the Serbian King, Alexander Obrenovitch and Draga, his queen, both of whom had looked to Vienna rather than to St. Petersburg for support, had been brutually murdered by a group of army officers. The mutilated bodies of the king and queen, hacked almost beyond recognition by the sabres of their officers, had been tossed out a second-storey window of the Konak, the Serbian royal palace; Belgrade's churches had been forced to ring their bells for joy at the murder; a Te Deum service was held in St. Sava's, the Orthodox cathedral; and Peter Karageorgevitch, the rival claimant to the throne, was brought back in triumph from Switzerland by special train. The new King, Peter Karageorevitch, naturally felt under some obligation to the regicides and Serbian policy henceforth became pro-Russian and anti-Austrian. The murderers of Alexander and Draga also found in Crown Prince George Karageorgevitch a bellicose spokesman for their aims. In 1908 this group of extremists, led by Colonel Dragutin Dimitrievich, later the head of the Serbian Army Intelligence Service, had formed a para-military organization known as Narodna Odbrana, or National Defence, and had begun to train terrorists for employment in the newly-annexed Austrian provinces of Bosnia and Hercegovina and in Macedonia. At the time of the Bosnian Crisis of 1909 Crown Prince George was forced to retire both from the succession and from public life when he murdered his valet in a fit of rage, but the eclipse of the Crown Prince merely strengthened the personal influence of Dimitrievich. In 1911 Dimitrievich, and nine others, most of them regicides, founded in Belgrade a secret Committee of Ten which became the executive of a new and much more powerful revolutionary society, the Ujedinjenje ili Smrt, Union or Death, whose aim was the union of Serbia with its irredentist territories. The principal means employed by the Union or Death, or Black Hand as it was commonly called, was assassination, but at this time the society still exercised some restraint in its choice of victims, killing only over-scrupulous customs officials, journalists, and such small fry. Nevertheless, the Black Hand

virtually dictated policy to the Serbian Government, and King Peter, who was never allowed to forget the night of the 10th of June, was in no position to withstand its demands. The Black Hand ran its own newspaper, Piedmont, and largely controlled the Army, the frontier guards, and the police. The Black Hand was also one of the prime movers in the next serious crisis which was to break out in the Balkans.

29. Between February and September 1912 a series of treaties were signed, binding Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenigro to defensive military action against Turkey. In addition, these Treaties contained a secret appendix, providing that, if Turkey found herself involved in internal difficulties, the Balkan states would attack her. This appendix would only become effective if Russia raised no objection to it. Russia knew of and approved these pacts but did not mention the existence of the secret appendix to her ally, France. Indeed, as late as August, 1912, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sazanov, was assuring Poincaré that the Balkan Conventions had been drawn up solely with a view to preserving the status quo. Poincaré was skeptical of this, but France needed an ally so badly that she did not at the time press Russia on the matter. Two additional conventions to the Balkan Pact treaties provided for joint Bulgar-Serb defensive action against Rumania and Austria-Hungary. Russia had the power of veto over the implementation of these treaties, and Sazonov promised the French Government that this veto would be exercised to prevent a Balkan war.

30. In the last two weeks of September, 1912, however, the Balkan allies mobilized against Turkey, and Russia did nothing to prevent it. Fighting broke out on 8 October when Montenigrin troops attacked the Turks. On 15 October the French Government for the first time informed Britain of what it knew of the diplomatic background of the First Balkan War. The war resulted in the rapid defeat of Turkey by Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. A general war almost occurred when the Serbs claimed Northern Albania, for both Austria and Russia ordered partial mobilization; and only the combined efforts of Germany, France and Britain saved the peace. Albania became an independent state, and Serbia, now left without her share of the spoils, went to war with Bulgaria over the division of Macedonia. Serbia was joined by Greece and Roumania; and Bulgaria was defeated.

31. At Bucharest in August 1913 peace was signed. Serbia had almost doubled her population and territory; the South-Slav extremists appeared justified in their methods and their aims; and the Black Hand looked forward confidently to the liberation of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Austria, on the other hand, was seriously alarmed, recognizing that Serbian propaganda and terrorism was a menace to the very existence of the polyglot Empire. Germany supported Austria and took steps to increase the German control already being exercised over the Turkish Army. Russia, still with an eye on the Dardenelles, deeply resented this.

32. At a few minutes before noon on the 28th of June, 1914, in Sarajevo, the heir to the Austrian throne, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophia, who were paying a state visit to the Bosnian capital, were shot to

death by Gabriel Princip, a Bosnian Serb who for the past two years had been a student in Belgrade. Princip was arrested immediately after the murder, as were several other Serbs involved in the plot. It was soon established that the assassins had been armed, trained and paid by a group of Serbian army officers; that the weapons used had come from the Serbian military arsenal at Karagujevac and had been presented to the assassins in Belgrade; and that the murderers had been smuggled into Austria by the connivance of Serbian customs officials.

33. More fortunate than some other states in more recent times, Austria manged to retain a live assassin for questioning. Princip and his fellow conspirators had been given poison to take, but the poison was old and although it made them ill, did not kill them. As a result, the Austrian Government was able to trace the murder plot as far as the Narodna Odbrana, or National Defence Society, but another ten years were to elapse before it was conclusively proved that the instigator and organizer of the assassination had been Colonel Dimitrievich, the President of the Black Hand's Committee of Ten and the head of Serbian Army Intelligence. The Austrian confusion of Narodna Odbrana and the Black Hand Society was perhaps excusable; both organizations had the same permanent secretary, Milan Vasitch, and the Black Hand controlled the policy and activities of Narodna Odbrana. The same mistake had been made by the Carnegie International Commission which had inquired into the origins of the Balkan Wars and whose report had been published earlier in 1914. In a book published in 1923,[3] Stanoje Stanojevitch, Professor of History at Belgrade University, claimed that Dimitrievich decided on the murder as the result of a message he had received from the Russian General Staff on or about the 15th of June 1914. The source claimed by Stanojevitch for this startling intelligence is Dimitrievich himself, but there is no supporting documentation. However, at the trial of the apprehended murderers, Princip and Chabrinovitch separately testified that at least three of the conspirators had belonged to the Grand Orient Lodge of the Freemasons and that the murder had been postponed until a leading Serbian Freemason had returned from a trip to Budapest, Russia and France. This tentative international link, however, is again unsubstantiated by other evidence. The evidence that the Black Hand was directly responsible is, on the contrary, overwhelming.

34. Austria was not sorry to find an excuse for dealing harshly with Serbia. We need not, however, take seriously the far-fetched and entirely unsubstantiated suggestion made during the war that certain Austrian factions hostile to the Archduke were accessories to the plot. The Archduke Ferdinand had undoubtedly been unpopular with some of the reactionary elements in the Empire. He had, after all, made no secret of his belief that Austria's future depended on establishing a federal system which would give the Empire's minorities a greater measure of autonomy. But if this doctrine was unpopular with Austrian and Hungarian reactionaries, it was anathema to the Serbs, for it might have resulted in a pacification of the Empire and in Bosnia and Hercegovina settling down peacefully as semi-autonomous members of a federated state without any longer feeling the pull of South-Slav nationalism. The police arrangements at Sarajevo on the 28th

of June may have left something to be desired, -- although, 50 years on in the 20th century, we are less inclined to be dogmatic on this point -- but there is abundant evidence that the murder was the exclusive work of the Black Hand Society.

35. The Serbian Cabinet may have had prior knowledge of the plot -- Jovanovich, who was Minister of Public Works, later claimed that this was the case[4] -- but Pasich, the Serbian Premier, denied it, and the best verdict would, on the whole, seem to be "Not Proven." Singularly little attempt appears to have been made by the Allied Powers at the time, or by Allied historians subsequently, to investigate this not unimportant point. France, Britain and Russia all accepted the Serbian Government's protestations of innocence without question, and in 1914 there was no direct evidence to support Austrian suspicions to the contrary. In excuse for this fateful naivety, it should be said that Britain and France both found themselves ill-served at Belgrade that summer. The British ambassador designate had not arrived in Serbia at the time of the murder -- he did not reach the country until the 27th of July -- and the British charge d'affaires, a man relatively new to the Balkans, was ill. The French ambassador appears to have suffered a breakdown upon hearing of the assassination of the Archduke,

36. On the 29th of June, the day after the murder of the Archduke and his wife, Count Berchtold, the Austrian Foreign Minister, told Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Austrian Chief of Staff, that the time had come to settle the Serbian question once and for all. The occasion, indeed, could scarcely have been more propitious, since the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were united in anger and grief at the assassination. There was some opposition to immediate action from the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, but this was eventually overcome when Tisza was warned that Austria would experience serious military difficulties if the diplomatic activity preceding war were to be conducted by fits and starts. Berchtold also told Tisza that "if we should compromise with Serbia, [the Germans] would accuse us of weakness, which would sensibly effect our position in the Triple Alliance, and the future policy of Germany".

37. This desperate clinging to an ally was by no means unique to Austria-Hungary. Germany, with less reason, felt much the same way; and France very understandably felt even more dependent on her alliance with Russia. The disadvantages of this dependence are perhaps too obvious to require comment.

38. In any case Austria's first move was to sound out German official opinion. In every way the result was satisfactory to Count Berchtold. The German government agreed that Serbia would have to be punished and, indeed, was in favour of immediate offensive action. Germany and Austria found themselves at one in their appreciation of the situation. Both agreed that the Balkan Wars and subsequent Serbian policy endangered the very existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Austria, for her own safety's sake, was unwilling to let matters drift, and Germany was unwilling to see her only trustworthy ally in Europe go down. Other,

probably minor considerations were that Kaiser Wilhelm had been a personal friend of the murdered Archduke and that both the Kaiser and the Austrian Emperor regarded the Serbian state as having been founded by regicide and murder as long ago as 1903.

39. At Potsdam on the 5th and 6th of July the Kaiser met his military and naval leaders. The Kaiser's opinion, expressed to the Austrian chargé d'affaires, was that "Russia would not enter the lists for Serbia which had stained itself by an assassination. France too would scarcely let it come to war as it lacked the heavy artillery for the field armies. Yet although a war against Russia-France was not probable, nevertheless the possibility of such a war must be borne in mind from a military point of view."

40. Thus assured of German support, Austria drew up on the 19th of July an ultimatum to Serbia so stiff that it was believed Serbia would be forced to fight. Count Berchtold admitted to Tisza that there was a possibility Serbia would accept all the terms, but he added that this would mean a profound humiliation for the South-Slav kingdom. Austria did not immediately deliver the ultimatum, however, because she wished first to take certain military measures which would permit a smoother mobilization and because Poincaré, the French Premier, was then visiting the Tsar in St. Petersburg. Berchtold felt it would be better to delay the ultimatum until Poincaré had left Russia so that the two Entente Powers could not immediately confer on common action.

41. On the 23rd of July the Austrian Government finally presented its ultimatum to Serbia. In addition to insisting that Serbia publish an official apology, the ultimatum contained nine specific demands:

(1) The suppression of any publication which fostered hatred against Austria-Hungary.

(2) The dissolution of Narodna Odbrana and any other similar terrorist societies.

(3) The elimination from the State Corps of Instructors of those who fostered hatred against Austria-Hungary.

(4) The removal from military service and the administration of all officers and officials who were guilty of propaganda against Austria-Hungary.

(5) The right to allow Austrian officials to co-operate in Serbia in the suppression of the secret societies.

(6) The convening of a judicial investigation into the murder of the Archduke, in which investigation Austrian officials would participate.

(7) The arrest of the two Serbian officials who had supplied the weapons to the assassins.

(8) Active measures to prevent the smuggling of arms and explosives into Austria-Hungary and the dismissal of the customs officials who had smuggled the assassins into Austria.

(9) An explanation of certain hostile and contemptuous remarks made by Serbian officials after the assassination.

Serbia was given 24 hours in which to agree to the terms of the ultimatum.

42. The Serbian Government at once appealed to Russia for protection, and Russia publicly announced that it could not remain indifferent to the Austrian-Serbian dispute. The Serbian reply to the ultimatum was conciliatory in tone, although the often repeated statement that the Serbian Government agreed unconditionally to the great majority of Austrian demands is not in fact borne out by a study of the document. The Serbian reply began by professing Serbia's "pacific and moderate policy" and by claiming that the Serbian Government could not be made responsible for "manifestations of a private character." Serbia was "pained and surprised at the statements according to which members of the Kingdom of Serbia are supposed to have participated in the preparations for the crime committed at Sarajevo." The Serbian note promised to publish an official apology, although one which on several points was differently worded from the Austrian prototype. Serbia agreed to pass a law ordering the suppression of publications fostering hatred of Austria-Hungary but did not promise actually to suppress such publications. She agreed to suppress the Narodna Odbrana, although protesting there was no proof of the allegations made against this society by Austria. The third and fourth points concerning the dismissal of instructors and officers and officials were agreed to, contingent upon proof of their guilt.

43. The fifth and sixth points, which demanded the co-operation of Austrian officials in Serbia in the suppression of the secret societies, and in an investigation of the murder of the Archduke Ferdinand, could not help but embarrass the Serbian Government. British and French historians have commonly taken the high ground that Serbia could not possibly have accepted these demands, and retained her national sovereignity. There may, indeed, have been a sense in which this was true, but the statement requires amplification. The men who controlled the Serbian secret societies, especially the Black Hand, were by and large the same men who on the 10th of June, 1903, had murdered King Alexander Obrenovitch and Queen Draga and placed King Peter on the throne. By 1917, at the trial in Solonika of the nine men accused of belonging to the Central Administration of the Black Hand, six still were regicides. The regicides had retained a large measure of political power ever since 1903, and the Carnegie Report on the Origins of the Balkan Wars had referred to the Black Hand as "a government within a government." The President of the Black Hand, Dimitrievich, was actually the head of the Intelligence Section of the Serbian General Staff. An impartial investigation of the Black Hand Society would almost certainly have compromised

the monarchy in regards to the murders of 1903, the terrorist activities of Serbian komitadji bands in Bosnia, Hercegovina and Macedonia, and the outbreak of the First, and especially of the Second, Balkan Wars. There is considerable reason to believe, too, that at least some Cabinet Ministers, and possibly Crown Prince Alexander, would have been found to have had guilty foreknowledge of the Sarajevo assassinations.

44. In its reply, therefore, the Serbian Government claimed not clearly to understand the fifth Austrian demand, but added that Serbia would be willing to accept "such collaboration as agrees with the principles of international law, with criminal procedure and good neighbourly relations." The sixth point was refused on the grounds that the co-operation of Austrian officials in an inquiry in Serbia would be a violation of the constitution and the law of criminal procedure.

45. The seventh point had demanded the arrest of two Serbian officials. The Serbian reply was that one of these men, Major Voja Tankovich, had already been arrested. (Tankovich, incidentally, had been the officer in command of one of the firing squads on the night of the 10th June, 1903, and had since been employed as one of Dimitrievich's hatchet men. His arrest, as it turned out, brought him into no danger.) Ciganovitch, the other Serbian official whose arrest had been demanded was "not available." It is now known that the Serbian Prime Minister, Nicolai Pashich, personally ordered that Ciganovitch be hidden. In April 1915 Ciganovitch was paid his back salary as an employee of the Serbian State Railway from the time in July 1914 when he had been sent into hiding.

46. On the eighth point, the Serbian Government agreed that it would reinforce and extend its border controls against the smuggling of arms and explosives into Austria and that, after an inquiry had been made, it would punish any frontier officials found guilty of assisting the Archduke's murderers to enter Austria. On the ninth point Serbia agreed that after Austria-Hungary had actually furnished specific examples of the objectionable remarks allegedly made by Serbian officials and had provided satisfactory proof that these remarks had been uttered, an explanation would be forthcoming.

47. The Serbian reply ended with a promise to inform the Austrian Government of the execution of the measures proposed and by a suggestion that if the Serbian reply should not be deemed satisfactory, the quarrel between the two nations might be referred either to the International Tribunal of the Hague or to a Conference of Great Powers.

48. The Austrian Minister in Belgrade hurriedly scanned Serbia's reply, declared it unsatisfactory, and left the country the same evening. Serbia had anticipated this reaction. Two hours before the note had been delivered to the Austrian ambassador, Serbia had ordered general mobilization and had transferred the seat of government from Belgrade to Nish. Serbia was thus the first nation to mobilize in the First World War, but too much should not be made of this, since the Serbian military preparations were purely defensive and undertaken in answer to a serious threat. After considering the Serbian note, Austria ordered the mobilization of eight army corps along the Serbian frontier.

49. Germany gave full diplomatic support to Austria, even although no German official had seen the contents of the ultimatum before its delivery. Once the Austrian ultimatum had been studied by the Chancellories of Europe, international tension immediately deepened. Even Germany considered the terms harsh. On the 24th of July Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, told the German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, that any state which accepted such terms would virtually cease to count as an independent nation. He suggested that the crisis might be mediated by England, France, Germany and Italy. In Petrograd, Sazonov told the British Ambassador, Sir George Buchanan: "Russia cannot allow Austria to crush Serbia and become the predominate power in the Balkans, and secure of the support of France, she will face all the risks of war".

50. On the same day Count Berchtold, for the first time, promised Russia that "Austria will not lay the least claim to any Serbian territory." Two days later Germany informed Russia that in the light of this declaration "the responsibility for a possible disturbance of the peace of Europe through a Russian intervention rests solely upon Russia." On the 26th of July, too, Germany proposed to France that their two countries mediate between Austria and Russia. France did not reply to this note.

51. However, on the 27th of July France and Italy both agreed to Grey's proposal for four-power mediation. Russia answered that she accepted in principal but was unwilling to have such mediation take effect immediately. Germany rejected the proposal on the grounds that the dispute between Austria and Serbia concerned only those two nations. Germany's rejection of four-power mediation should not be considered an indication that she favoured a general war, but rather as a reflection of Germany's distrust of the impartiality of any four-power tribunal containing Italy, France and England. Germany was perhaps strengthened in her attitude by the fact that the Kaiser's brother, Prince Henry, who was in London at the time, had been told by King George V: "We shall try all we can to keep out of this thing and shall remain neutral." The German Ambassador at St. Petersburg now suggested that Sazonov should attempt direct mediation with Austria. This was done, and Sazonov suggested that the Serbian reply might serve as a point of departure for an agreement, but Austria rejected the proposal, adding that she had, in any case, already declared war on Serbia.

52. Austria was thus the first of the European Powers to declare war during the crisis, but Vienna's military preparations, like the diplomacy of the Ballplatz, was apt to proceed in waltz-time. The declaration of war was not followed by any <u>blitzkreig</u> offensive; a sporadic bombardment was opened up across the Sava opposite Belgrade; but no Austrian troops were yet ready to cross the Serbian frontier.

53. On the evening of the 27th of July German policy changed dramatically. Up until this time Germany had refused to give an inch, had steadily supported the Austrian position, and had declined all offers of mediation by the Powers. Now, however, the German Government learned that the British Grand Fleet, which was to have been dismissed to its peace-time

stations that day at the close of manoeuvres, was being kept concentrated and that all naval leave had been cancelled. This may have had some influence on the German decision to adopt a more conciliatory line. At all events, Berlin began for the first time to press Vienna to accept mediation of the dispute.

54. On the night of the 28th of July the famous exchange of cousinly telegrams between the Tsar and the Kaiser began. This was the Willy-Nicki correspondence of which so much was heard after the war. Nothing came of it, however. The Kaiser rejected the Tsar's offer to have the dispute arbitrated at the Hague and the Tsar rejected the Kaiser's appeals for Russia not to mobilize. By the 29th the German Chancellor was telegraphing his ambassador in St. Petersburg: "Please tell M. Sazonov that we are continuing to mediate; condition, however, would be suspension for the time being of all hostilities against Austria on the part of the Russians."

55. Russia, however, was now demanding rather more on Serbia's behalf than Serbia had claimed for herself. Sazonov told the German ambassador that "Russia's vital interests demanded not only the respect of the territorial integrity of Serbia but also that Serbia should not sink to the level of a vassal state of Austria by the acceptance of Austria's demands that infringed on her sovereign rights." This was vague but sweeping -- almost any one of the nine points of the Austrian ultimatum could be interpreted as an infringment of sovereign rights. Neither Germany nor Britain were willing to agree to this Russian formula, and Sir Edward Grey proposed as an alternative that Austria, in exchange for a cessation of Russian mobilization, should halt her armies after they had occupied Belgrade. When Austria decided to reject this formula, Germany, now thoroughly alarmed, demanded that her ally change her mind and accept Grey's proposal. Before this pressure could take effect, however, a new factor was introduced which changed the entire situation. Reports reached Berlin and Vienna that Russia had ordered general mobilization.

56. The Austrian declaration of war on Serbia had been signed by the Emperor late on the 27th and had been delivered early on the 28th. The news reached St. Petersburg during that afternoon and the Russian General Staff at once began to exert pressure to have the Tsar sign orders for general mobilization. Here again it is difficult to say how much of this military pressure should be attributed to the desire for war and how much to a genuine fear that the slow pace of Russian mobilization would place her at a serious disadvantage vis à vis Germany in the European war which soldiers everywhere now believed inevitable. It is worthwhile noting, however, that Russian military leaders were amazingly confident in the summer of 1914 and that the German General Staff considered this over-confidence could probably be turned to advantage in active operations.

57. There were, however, two different opinions in St. Petersburg on the important question of general mobilization. No one in any senior government position anywhere in Europe was under any delusion as to what Russian general mobilization would mean. It would in all respects be equivalent to a declaration of war, for Germany could not afford to allow

Russia the extra time which an uncontested mobilization would give her. Nevertheless, Germany had promised that she would not immediately mobilize if the Russian preparations were restricted to the Austrian border. Only the night before, the 27th of July, Sukhomlinov, the Russian Minister of War, had assured General von Chelius, the German Military Plenipotentiary, "...in any case we will not mobilize on the German frontier."

58. Of all the European armies only the German was really ready for a major war. Somewhat unfairly, this efficiency has since been held against Germany, possibly on the theory that soldiering is in any case a disreputable profession and that if it has to be done at all it is at least preferable that it be done badly. However, that may be, the mere fact of German military efficiency certainly played a part in the precipitation of war. Germany calculated that she would have to fight on two fronts, against France in the west and Russia in the east. She calculated too, perhaps less reasonably, that in the political context in which she found herself a two-front war was not only inevitable but also desirable.

59. This reasoning again had nothing to do with the desire for war as such. Germany had a marked military superiority in the west. In the east, however, Russia possessed a vast reservoir of manpower which could only slowly be developed into an effective offensive weapon. For many years the German military plan had been based on a rapid offensive against France which would knock that country out of the conflict before Russia could mobilize and attack in the east. Once France had been disposed of, Germany would turn and deal with Russia. This was sound military thinking, but by 1914 the German General Staff had pushed the logic of the situation a step further. They argued that even if a one-front war against Russia were politically possible, it would be too dangerous, because once Germany was deeply committed in the east there would be grave danger of France attacking in the west. This apparently had not been the view of General von Schlieffen, who had originated the German war plan, and today it must remain an open question as to whether or not the German General Staff was correct in its assumption that France would have been unable to resist the temptation of seeking revenge. In any case, the question is academic. At no stage of the crisis did France ever consider abandoning her sole European ally, for she was afraid that, once Russia had been disposed of, the victorious Germans could not resist the temptation of settling accounts in the west. There is thus a sense in which the First World War was a sort of suicide from fear of death.

60. In St. Petersburg on the morning of the 29th of July two mobilization orders were actually drawn up, one for partial mobilization against Austria and one for general mobilization against both Austria and Germany. Both orders seem to have been signed by the Tsar, but for the time being the decision as to which would be issued was postponed. Late on the afternoon of the 29th the Russian Chief of Staff, General Yanushkevich, gave the German military attaché his word of honour that mobilization had not been decreed and -- perhaps because he felt that a gentleman's word of honour would not carry sufficient weight before the bar of history -- he even offered to put this assurance in writing.

61. "I considered that I had a perfect right to put such a statement into writing", Yanushkevich said later, "for mobilization had not taken place up to that moment. I still had the mobilization order in my pocket."[6] Warning telegrams had already gone out, however, advising the heads of the Russian military districts that the 30th of July would be the first day of general mobilization.

62. The order for general mobilization itself was to be telegraphed to the districts two and a half hours before midnight, but while this order was actually in the process of being sent a countermanding instruction arrived from the Tsar. For the time being Russia was to proceed only with partial mobilization against Austria.

63. There is still a certain amount of doubt as to the exact sequence of the Russian mobilization. Sukhomlinov, the Russian Minister of War, later claimed that the Tsar's countermanding order had been disobeyed and general mobilization proceeded with on the 30th of July. Other sources deny this. In any case, it is certain that on the 29th the French ambassador at St. Petersburg, Paléologue, learned from Basili, the Russian Vice-Chancellor for Foreign Affairs, that 13 army corps were being mobilized against Austria and that general mobilization was being begun in secret. The French ambassador appealed for only partial mobilization, but Basili replied that the question had been thoroughly examined by the military authorities and that partial mobilization was impossible.[7] On the strength of a number of unconfirmed but converging reports the German General Staff deduced that Russia either had, or was about to, declare general mobilization. At six o'clock that evening the German ambassador, Pourtalès, delivered a note from Bethman to Sazonov: "Further continuation of Russian mobilization measures will force us to mobilize and in that case a European war can scarcely be prevented."[8]

64. On the 29th Germany promised England that in exchange for her neutrality she would promise not to annex French territory in Europe, to respect the neutrality of Holland and to penetrate into Belgium only if French troop movements made this necessary. The last point at least was a deliberate lie; the German ultimatum to Belgium, alleging French provocation, was already in the German Embassy in Brussels ready to be delivered. In any case, on the 30th the British Government rejected the German offer.

65. Whether or not Russian general mobilization had secretly begun on the morning of the 30th, there is no doubt that the Tsar was convinced that morning to change his mind and authorize it. Sazonov telephoned the Russian Chief of Staff and said, "Well, carry out your orders, General, and then disappear for the rest of the day."[9] Telegrams were sent to the Russian military districts decreeing general mobilization for the 31st of July.

66. It is hard not to believe that this decision marked the point of no return. Once the scarlet posters had gone up in Russia announcing general mobilization on both the Austrian and German frontiers, a major European war was inevitable.

At 3:30 in the afternoon of the 31st of July the German Government sent a note to St. Petersburg demanding that Russia suspend every war measure against Austria-Hungary and Germany within 12 hours. If this were not done, Germany would mobilize. This note was delivered to the Russian Government at 11 p.m. At the same time a German note to Paris asked if France would remain neutral in a Russo-German war and demanded an answer within 18 hours. The German note to France was delivered at 6 p.m. The German Government had no real hope that the French answer would be anything but a rejection, but the German ambassador in Paris was instructed, in case France should agree to neutrality, to demand the handing over of the fortresses of Toul and Verdun as pledges of neutrality. There is no direct evidence to indicate whether this was merely a monstrous diplomatic miscalculation or a deliberate move to make certain of war with France. Most probably it was the former, however, for in another attempt to confine the war to the east the Kaiser telegraphed King George V on the 31st, saying that although for technical reasons Germany had to mobilize on both the east and the west, if Britain would guarantee French neutrality, Germany would refrain from attacking France. The King's reply was sufficiently discouraging for the Kaiser to abandon this approach. To the German note France replied that she would act as her own interests dictated.

67. Although it is doubtful if anything could now have prevented war, Austria made a last-minute attempt to renew direct negotiations with Russia. These negotiations were actually begun on the 31st of July, but on the 1st of August, Russia broke them off, saying that the attitude Germany had adopted made any further discussion impossible. During the course of the afternoon of the 1st of August, both France and Germany ordered general mobilization.

68. As Germany had repeatedly warned during the crisis, her mobilization meant war. At five o'clock on the afternoon of the 1st of August, Germany declared war on Russia; the declaration of war on France was delayed until 6:15 p.m. on the 3rd.

69. The German war plan called for the immediate movement of troops into two neutral neighboring countries, and this is the most telling of all the accusations which were later brought against German diplomacy. Her General Staff believed that Germany's interior position made this plan necessary, and diplomatic flexibility was sacrificed to military expediency. Incidentally, too, neither the Kaiser nor the civilian Government appear to have recognized all the implications of this until it was too late. At all events, early on the morning of the 2nd of August, German troops invaded Luxembourg, and at 7 p.m. that evening the German ambassador to Brussels presented his country's ultimatum to Belgium, demanding free passage for German troops. Belgium rejected this ultimatum at seven o'clock the next morning.

70. A legend has developed that it was the invasion of Belgium which brought Britain into war on the side of the Dual Entente, but a close consideration of events does not entirely support this view. According to Churchill, the

British Liberal Cabinet was overwhelmingly in favour of remaining neutral. Certain members of the Cabinet, however, including Asquith, the Prime Minister, Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, and Churchill, who was First Lord of the Admiralty, favoured the full support of France because they felt that only in this way could the balance of power be maintained on the continent. The staff conversations between Britain and France were not of a binding character, and the British Government had always been at pains to point this out to the French Government. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister, Churchill, Grey, and some senior officials of the Foreign Office felt that it would be impossible to allow the German High Seas Fleet to attack the French coast and were of the opinion that British interests demanded active participation in the war. At noon on the 2nd of August Mr. Asquith received a letter from Bonar Law, the leader of the Opposition, which had been written the previous night by Austen Chamberlain.

71.. Asquith read it aloud to the British Cabinet:

> Dear Mr. Asquith,
>
> Lord Lansdowne and I feel it to be our duty to inform you that, in our opinion, as in the opinion of all our colleagues whom we have been able to consult, it would be fatal to the honour and the security of the United Kingdom to hesitate in the support of France and Russia in the present situation; and we offer our unhesitating support to the Government for all measures which it may consider necessary to this end.

72. Asquith, who had been unable to obtain a Cabinet majority in favour of intervention, would now, if necessary, be able, with the support of the Conservatives, to obtain a majority coalition. At two o'clock that afternoon, five hours before the German ultimatum was delivered to Belgium, Grey was authorized to promise France that the Royal Navy would give all the protection in its power if the German fleet entered the Channel or went through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against the French coasts or shipping. The French Ambassador at St. James, M. Paul Cambon, reported to his Government that this guarantee of naval assistance would sooner or later lead to full intervention, in spite of the fact that the British Parliament would have to vote an actual declaration of war. This opinion seems to have been shared by at least two Cabinet Ministers, Lord Morley and Mr. John Burns, who resigned. It was feared that four others might do the same, but before this could happen, word of the German ultimatum to Belgium was received and Cabinet unity was assured. On the morning of the 4th of August the British Government sent an ultimatum to Berlin, demanding that Germany respect Belgian neutrality; this ultimatum had not been answered when the time limit ran out at midnight, and Britain declared war on Germany.

73. Throughout the whole crisis the third member of the Triple Alliance, Italy, had stood aside, bargaining for territorial compensation as the price of her support. When war came, the Italian Government declared its neutrality on the grounds that the Austrian war with Russia was not defensive. This decision came as no surprise to any of the Powers.

* * *

74. The assessment of the events briefly recapitulated here still continues, and it is rare even now to find an historical judgement that is not decisively influenced by the nationality of the historian. Nevertheless, it is possible to make certain general judgements about the origins of the First World War.

75. In the first place it seems only fair to say that Serbian policy in the Balkans was very closely identified with, if not indistinguishable from, the policy of the Black Hand Society. The activities of the Black Hand and of Narodna Odbrana, tolerated by a government which was not perhaps strong enough to oppose them, constituted an open threat to Austria-Hungary and a long standing invitation to war. And Austrian officials may not have been altogether wrong in their belief that Serbia was dominated by a coterie of murderers and conspirators with whom it was impossible to deal on any normal level of civilized diplomacy. In many European Chancellories in 1914 the Austrian view was scarcely credible; it is, however, more credible now that we have seen how murder gangs have captured older and larger states. Dimitrievich and the Black Hand are more believable after our experiences with Hitler and Stalin.

76. Nevertheless, it can be said, too, that Austria undoubtedly wanted war with Serbia and that Austria's ultimatum and Germany's support of it clearly ran the risk of embroiling the continent in a major conflict. Both Austria and Germany thought it unlikely that matters would be pushed so far, but both were willing to accept the risk that they would be. Russia's support of Serbia increased this risk, as did the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia.

77. Moreover, the whole atmosphere of Europe was at this time conducive to war, and this atmosphere had been only partially engendered by the conflicting policies of Serbia, Russia and Austria in the Balkans. For years Germany's hard line had given offence to both France and Russia. At times it almost seems as though nations, like individuals, can forgive injuries more readily than they can forgive insults. The recurrent crises of the decade before 1914 had in large measure been caused by Germany -- and more by Germany's tone than by her intentions. Germany's diplomats may not have been blood-thirsty men, but they were often unnecessarily rude. And there was some excuse for European diplomats of another tradition regarding Prussian arrogance as more sinister than it really was.

78. Yet when all this has been said, it is hard not to come back to the fact that the partial mobilization against Austria which Russia ordered on the morning of the 30th of July made the risk of a European war acute, and that Russia's general mobilization on the 30th or 31st turned that risk into a certainty.

79. An acute observer of his time looking back on those fateful summer days had this to say:

> But there was a strange temper in the air. Unsatisfied by material prosperity, the nations turned restlessly toward strife, internal or external. National passions, unduly exhalted in the decline of religion, burned beneath the surface of nearly every land, with fierce if shrouded fires. Almost one might think the world wished to suffer.[10]

80. It may indeed have been so, and if it was, the world was soon to get its wish. As the conscripts began to muster at their mobilization depots all across the continent, the long, golden afternoon of Europe's most spacious age faded rapidly into night and our times darkened with startling suddenness. When the great armies of all the Powers swung out along the dusty August roads to the frontiers, the soldiers left behind them not only their wives and families but also a whole era and an entire way of life.

81. Strictly speaking, it is no part of this study to inquire what happened to nations or individuals as a result of the First World War. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that, of all those who played a prominent part in the diplomatic activity of the 37 days between the 28th of June and the 4th of August, not one was killed in action. Few diplomats or politicians, indeed, exposed themselves to this danger for any prolonged period of time. Count Tisza, the Hungarian Premier, and Winston Churchill both fought at the front, but they were unique in this. Gabriel Princip, the murderer of the Archduke, died in prison. Dimitrievich was executed by a firing squad in June of 1917 in Solonica, charged -- it is now generally thought falsely -- of conspiring to murder the Serbian Crown Prince. Each of the three great Empires of Europe fell, and the Old World, which had seemed so splendid, prosperous and assured, passed away, never to be reconstituted. The regret that was felt by most civilized men for the tragedy of this war was not, however, universally shared. One country at least felt that it might all have been worthwhile. The new Serbian Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which emerged as a result of the Treaty of Versailles, corresponded in most particulars to the ideal of the Black Hand. Appropriately enough, therefore, in 1920 there was placed in the Sarajevo street where it all began, a bronze plaque commemorating, not the murdered Archduke, but Gabriel Princip, his assassin.

82. This report was written by Major D.J. Goodspeed.

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