

## THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

*Even assuming the case  
that nobody else interferes:  
what should we gain from it?  
Only another pack of thieves  
and murderers and scoundrels  
and a few plum trees.*

Archduke Francis Ferdinand on war against Serbia

They only met once.

The prince was Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the oldest son of Francis Joseph's brother, Archduke Karl Ludwig,<sup>1</sup> - hence the Emperor's nephew. A few years after the suicide of the Emperor's only son, Crown Prince Rudolf, in 1889,<sup>2</sup> he was named Heir Apparent to the Habsburg thrones in Austria and Hungary. His youth was unexceptional except for concerns about his health; growing up, he spent much time at the court of Archduke Friedrich and Archduchess Isabella in Bratislava, whose daughter - his cousin - he was believed to marry one day. But then it was found out that his amorous chivalry was directed to one of Isabella's ladies in waiting, the Bohemian Countess Sophie Chotek, and the fat was in the fire. Frau Chotek, the descendant of an ancient yet impoverished Bohemian family, was not an acceptable match according to the Habsburg family code, and the Emperor forbade the marriage.

Yet in this matter the young prince showed tenacity - or stubbornness. He began to solicit support for his choice of bride and was able to mobilize, among others, Tsar Nicholas, Kaiser Wilhelm and Pope Leo XIII, under whose concerted salvos Francis Joseph eventually declared his capitulation. He would allow the marriage under the conditions of a morganatic union, that is, neither the wife nor eventual children had claims to Habsburg titles, privileges or possessions, and that the children were excluded from the royal and imperial succession. The Archduke had to swear a public oath and sign a deed of quitclaim, on June 28, 1900 - fourteen years, to the very day, before the couple met their death at Sarajevo.

The debacle of the marriage was not the sole reason for the increasing tension between Emperor and Prince. The Emperor was conciliative, the Prince abrasive, and, on top of it, sought "to exercise an influence on the policy of the Monarchy which the Emperor could ill brook. Their frequent sharp discussions resulted in mutual feelings of fear and hatred." (1) Despite his official status, the Prince was excluded from the business of the imperial administration as much as possible, and in his military capacity, despite having been promoted to the rank of Field Marshal, was entrusted only with decorative tasks. His character, Albertini writes,

*... was complex and full of contradictions. He hated flattery and was wont to say of anyone who cringed to him: "He is no good, he is a toady." But on the other hand - writes Brosch<sup>3</sup> - "he could never bear direct*

<sup>1</sup> Karl Ludwig died a rather ingenious death, by drinking the infectious water of the Jordan River, at the occasion of a pilgrimage.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter IV, conclusion.

<sup>3</sup> Colonel A. Brosch was Head of Franz Ferdinand's Chancery and Aide-de-camp.

*contradiction", yet demanded the unvarnished truth and those around him had the difficult task of presenting the truth which he demanded in a tactful form acceptable to his pride." (2)*

But he had comprehension of and a talent for politics, and understood the principal challenge for the Dual Monarchy - the question of nationalities. For his - shocking - habit of asking people of lower status questions and contemplate their answers, he was held to know more than the Emperor of the true situation of the realm; more than what Albertini called the "official opinion." (3)

His political outlook was in essence anti-Hungarian, and this - mutual - hostility formed his opinion on the treatment of the southern Slavs and his conviction that, in the long run, the monarchy could survive only as a trialist or federal state, in which Germans, Magyars and Slavs possessed their own statehood. His disapproval of the Ausgleich, in which the Magyars had taken, as he saw it, the whole nation hostage, brought him into sharp conflict with the Emperor, who was the founder and guarantor of the system. The Prince remained a vocal opponent of the Hungarian travesty of parliamentary procedure, in which "the eight million non-Magyars (not counting the Croats) were represented by 21 deputies and the eight and a half million Magyars by 392." (4)

Being marked as a potential reformer, he was the natural nemesis of the Pan-Slav movement, which, by the second half of the nineteenth century, had pervaded the Monarchy internally as well as, outside of her, found a political basis in the small kingdom of Serbia, which had been proclaimed by Prince Milan Obrenović in 1882, four years after the Congress of Berlin had made it a newly independent nation.

When the juvenile kingdom responded quickly to the native paraphernalia of modern politics - parties, committees, newspapers - King Milan tried autocracy, unsuccessfully enough that he had to abdicate formally in 1889, which, however, did not enjoin him from keeping the reins during the regency of his son Alexandar - in a burlesque dual kingship that ran from 1897 to 1900 - to the ministrations of whom the Queen Mother Nathalie added her own corruptive skills. When the just as autocratic-minded son married the notorious courtesan Draga Masin, a former maid of honour to his mother who was also ten years older than the groom (5) - the news of their engagement "alone was enough to trigger the resignation of the entire cabinet," including that of Minister of the Interior Djordje Gencit, who had his own, personal and intimate memories of the new queen. (6)

Old King Milan was horrified at his son's family plans and reposed to exile in Austria, where he died in 1901. The son continued a very personal reign - interpreting and, if he found it necessary, changing the constitution according to his whims, closing critical newspapers, throwing personal enemies into prison and naming schools, villages and, as Christopher Clark notes, even regiments of the army after his queen. (7) The rumour that the king - in lieu of a natural heir, for the queen remained childless - planned "to designate Queen Draga's brother Nikodije Lunjevica as successor to the Serbian throne", (8) finally provoked the military, which was complaining about arrears of pay and insufficient promotions - the royal couple was following the Balkan tradition of promoting friends and relatives to the main posts - to take action. (9)

A talented lieutenant of the army, Dragutin Dimitriević, became the nerve centre of the military conspiracy that formed itself in the summer of 1901 with the aim of replacing the royal couple. The young officer's abilities had been early recognized by the military leadership and he had been given a post on the Serbian General Staff a week after his graduation from the military academy. Professor Stanoje Stanojević, Rector of the University of Belgrade, revealed to the world in a 1922 essay on the murder of the Archduke the responsibility of this man and his organization, UJEDINJENJE ILI SMRT! [Union or Death!], also called the "Black Hand", for the murders of Sarajevo, which the initial Austrian investigation, discussed below, had erroneously blamed on NARODNA ODBRANA, the Serbian Defence Organization that had sprung up in the aftermath of the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908; both organizations, however, overlapped. In his pamphlet, Stanojević gave the following brief summary of the activities of this officer, who eventually was to become Chief of the Serbian Military Intelligence Service:

*"A restless character full of the spirit of adventure, Dimitriević was continually planning conspiracies and outrages. In 1903, he was one of the chief organizers of the conspiracy against King Alexander, in 1911 he sent an emissary to assassinate either the Austrian Emperor or the Heir Apparent. In February 1914 he conceived with a Bulgarian secret revolutionary committee to assassinate the Bulgarian King Ferdinand.*

*He took over and organized the outrage against the Austrian Heir Apparent in 1914. In 1916 from Corfu he sent an emissary to attempt the assassination of the Greek King Constantine and in the same year he seems to have sought contact with the enemy and organized an outrage against the Serbian Heir Apparent, Prince Alexander. It was for this reason that he was condemned to death and shot on the Salonika front in June 1917." (10)*

Luigi Albertini was able to entertain a correspondence with a few high-ranking former members of the Black Hand after the war. The membership total had been wildly exaggerated, Colonel Cedomilj Popović, one of the organization's founders, told him. It was not more than 2,500 but...

*"Union or Death found wide approval and membership would have been much higher if the doors had been open to all. Those who were admitted had to be tested of loyalty and capable of rendering practical service." (11)*

What about the organization's objectives? Popović explained that...

*"Union or Death had for its object the unification of all the Southern Slays of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in a national unity. The Belgrade Central Committee comprised, in addition to the members from the Kingdom of Serbia, delegates representing all unredeemed Yugoslav territories: i.e. one for Bosnia-Herzegovina, who was Gaftnović, one for Old Serbia and Macedonia, one for Montenegro, one for Croatia, one for Slovenia and Sytmia, one for the Voivodina, one for Dalmatia, who was Oskar Tartaglia. It is affirmed that Dragutin Dimitriević, in 1917, died shouting: 'Long live Yugoslavia!'" (12)*

Professor Stanojević was fascinated by the personality of his subject and describes Dimitriević as a born conspirator, a mixture of Fouché and Mazarin, perhaps.

*"Gifted and cultured, honourable, a convincing speaker, a sincere patriot, personally courageous, filled with ambition, energy and the capacity for work, Dragutin Dimitriević exercised exceptional influence on those around him, in particular on his associates and on junior officers who were all his inferiors in qualities of mind and character.*

*He had the characteristics which cast a spell on men. His arguments were always striking and convincing. He could represent the most intractable matters as mere trifles, the most hazardous enterprises as innocent and harmless. Withal he was in every respect a remarkable organizer. He kept all the threads in his own hand and even his most intimate friends only knew what was their own immediate concern.*

*But at the same time he was he was extraordinarily conceited and thoroughly affected. Ambitious as he was, he had a taste for working in secret, but he liked it to be known that he was doing secret work and that he kept all the threads in his own hand. He was incapable of distinguishing what was possible from what was not and perceiving the limits of responsibility and power. He had no clear conception of civil and political (staatlichem) life and its requirements. He saw only his own aims and pursued them ruthlessly and without scruple. He loved adventure and danger and secret meetings and mysterious activities. How far his private ambition reached is hard to say. His political ideas were dim and confused, but he was extraordinarily resolute in carrying out anything that he had set his mind on.*

*Dimitriević was convinced that his own ideas were the right ones on a matters, events and circumstances. He believed that his opinions and activities enjoyed the monopoly of patriotism. Hence anyone who did not agree with him could not in his eyes be either honourable or wise or a patriot. He, without a doubt, was all this, but he found it hard to acknowledge it in others, apart from those who obeyed his orders. It was for him to plan, organize and command, for others to obey and carry out his orders without questioning." (13)*

The origins of "Union or Death!" date back to the conspiracy of Serbian officers to murder the royal couple and other enemies of the people. The young lieutenant, already a leader, fixed the date for the first attempt on September 11, 1901, at the occasion of the royal ball held on the queen's birthday. Christopher Clark remarks:

*In a plan that seems lifted from the pages of an Ian Fleming novel, two officers were assigned to mount an attack on the Danube power plant that supplied Belgrade with electricity, while another was to disable the smaller station serving the building where the ball was in progress. Once the lights were shut off, the four assassins in attendance at the ball planned to set fire to the curtains, sound the fire alarms and liquidate the king and his wife by forcing them to ingest poison (this method was chosen in order to circumvent a possible search for firearms).*

*The poison was successfully tested on a cat, but in every other respect the plan was a failure. The power plant turned out to be too heavily guarded and the queen decided in any case not to attend the ball. Undeterred by this and other failed attempts, the conspirators worked hard over the next two years at expanding the scope of the coup. Over one hundred officers were recruited, including many younger military men. (14)*

It was eventually decided to attempt the assassination at the royal palace, where the couple's presence could be guaranteed. Aware of conspiracies - which were even acknowledged by the London Times on April 27, 1903 - the king had beefed up security and it took the conspirators a long time and great trouble to circumvent or penetrate the successive layers of royal guards. (15) The event itself became a legend for its outrageous cruelty. In the early morning of June 11, 1903, twenty-eight conspirators - all army officers - breached the palace doors and made for the royal bedchamber, the entry to which they entrusted to a box of dynamite. The huge blast that ensued short-circuited the supply of electricity and delayed the posse until they had acquired candles. The royal couple - barely dressed - was hiding in a tiny service room and it took nearly two hours until they were discovered. While the search was underway, death squads dispatched into town murdered the Queen's two brothers as well as the Prime Minister and the Minister of War.

A second search of the royal apartment eventually discovered the quarry, and, after assuring the king of their oath and peaceful intentions - to draw him out - the schemers aimed at the royal couple a cloud of pistol shots.

*An orgy of gratuitous violence followed. The corpses were stabbed with swords, torn with a bayonet, partially disembowelled and hacked with an axe until they were mutilated beyond recognition, according to the later testimony of the king's traumatized Italian barber, who was ordered to collect the bodies and dress them for burial.*

*The body of the queen was hoisted to the railing of the bedroom window and tossed, virtually naked and slimy with gore, into the gardens. It was reported that as the assassins attempted to do the same with Alexandar, one of his hands closed momentarily around the railing. An officer hacked through the fist with a sabre and the body fell, with a sprinkle of severed digits, to the earth. By the time the assassins had gathered in the garden to have a smoke and inspect the results of their handiwork, it had begun to rain. (16)*



DRAGUTIN DIMITRIJEVIĆ, RIGHT, WITH TWO ASSISTANTS

Subsequently the conspirators replaced the Obrenović dynasty with the current head of the Karadjordjević clan, Petar, whom they recalled from Swiss exile. The great-grandfather of the new king had been the "swarthy former cattleherd 'Black George' (Serbian: 'Kara Djordje') Petrović, who "had led an uprising in 1804 that succeeded for some years in driving the Ottomans out of Serbia, but fled into Austrian exile in 1813 when the Ottomans mounted a counteroffensive." (17) In 1815, another insurrection led by one certain Milos Obrenović had more success; the Ottomans accepted Serbian home rule as a principality under Turkish suzerainty, and Milos' first order of business was to kill Black George upon his return from exile, enabling the Obrenović family to rule Serbia until the slaughter of June 1903.

Quite surprisingly, the new King Petar I appeared to have learned from his studies of politics and history - he translated John Stuart Mill's *ON LIBERTY* into Serbian - the duties of a constitutional monarch, who "reigned but did not govern", (18) and did actually become one - within the bounds that the conspirators, who never disbanded, allowed. But they changed their outlook, and perhaps their inclinations - although we cannot be sure that they abandoned assassination as a political means, given what Stanojević says about Dimitriević's subsequent career<sup>4</sup> - from regicide to PanSlavism. The conspiracy, however, continued to be a force outside the authority of king, parliament or civil government, which was led between 1904 and 1918 chiefly by Nicolas Pasić, chairman of the Radical Party, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>5</sup> The conspirators had infiltrated the government already in the preparation of the coup; in its wake they were able to "secure for themselves the most desirable military and government posts." (19) Yet they did face opposition.

Within the army itself, a military "counter-conspiracy" concentrated in the fortress town of Nis emerged under the leadership of Captain Milan Novaković, who produced a manifesto calling for the dismissal from the service of sixty-eight named prominent regicides.

Novaković was swiftly arrested and after a spirited defence of his actions, he and his accomplices were tried, found guilty and sentenced to varying periods of imprisonment by a military court. When he left prison two years later, Novaković resumed his public attacks on the regicides and was incarcerated again. In September 1907, he and a male relative perished in mysterious circumstances during an alleged escape attempt, a scandal that triggered outrage in parliament and the liberal press. The question of the relationship between the army and the civilian authorities thus remained unresolved after the assassinations of 1903, a state of affairs that would shape Serbia's handling of events in 1914. (20)

The Radical Party was a specific Serbian political product, combining run-of-the-mill liberalism à la late Nineteenth Century with fervid nationalism that sought the unity of all Serbs, or perhaps all Southern Slavs, in a Greater Serbia, whose future borders, however, depended on the person one asked. The fundamental, semi-official map of Serbian nationalism, Christopher Clark explains...

*... was a secret memorandum drawn up by the Serbian interior minister Ilija Garasanin for Prince Alexandar Karadjordjević in 1844. Known after its publication in 1906 as NACERTANJE (from the Old Serbian NHCRT, "draft"), Garasanin's proposal sketched out a "Program for the National and Foreign Policy of Serbia".*

*It would be difficult to overstate the influence of this document on generations of Serb politicians and patriots; in time it became the Magna Charta of Serb nationalism. Garasanin opened his memorandum with the observation that Serbia is "small, but must not remain in this condition". The first commandment of Serbian policy, he argued, must be the "principle of national unity"; by which he meant the unification of all Serbs within the boundaries of a Serbian state: "Where a Serb dwells, that is Serbia."*

*The historical template for this expansive vision of Serbian statehood was the medieval empire of Stepan Dusan, a vast swath of territory encompassing most of the present-day Serbian republic, along with the entirety of present-day Albania, most of Macedonia, and all of Central and Northern Greece, but not Bosnia, interestingly enough.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. this chapter, n. 786.

<sup>5</sup> He led ten cabinets for a total of nine years. (21)

*Tsar Dusan's empire had supposedly collapsed after a defeat at the hands of the Turks on Kosovo Field on 28 June 1389. But this setback, Garasanin argued, had not undermined the Serbian state's legitimacy; it had merely interrupted its historical existence. The "restoration" of a Greater Serbia unifying all Serbs was thus no innovation, but the expression of an ancient historical right.*

*"They cannot accuse [us] of seeking something new, unfounded, of constituting a revolution or an upheaval, but rather everyone must acknowledge that it [Greater Serbia] is politically necessary, that it was founded in very ancient times and has its roots in the former political and national life of the Serbs."*

*Garasanin's argument thus exhibited that dramatic foreshortening of historical time that can sometimes be observed in the discourses of integral nationalism; it rested, moreover, upon the fiction that Tsar Dusan's sprawling, multi-ethnic, composite, medieval polity could be conflated with the modern idea of a culturally and linguistically homogenous nation-state. Serb patriots saw no inconsistency here, since they argued that virtually all the inhabitants of these lands were essentially Serbs.*

*Vuk Karadžić, the architect of the modern Serbo-Croat literary language and author of a famous nationalist tract, SRBI SVI I SVUDA ("Serbs all and everywhere", published in 1836), spoke of a nation of 5 million Serbs speaking the "Serbian language" and scattered from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Banat of Temesvar (eastern Hungary, now in western Romania), the Backa (a region extending from northern Serbia into southern Hungary), Croatia, Dalmatia and the Adriatic coast from Trieste to northern Albania. Of course there were some in these lands, Karadžić conceded (he was referring in particular to the Croats), "who still find it difficult to call themselves Serbs, but it seems likely that they will gradually become used to it." (22)*

The obvious problem was how to convince Turks, Greek and Austrians to "acknowledge" the history-born necessity of a Greater Serbia, so that they might evacuate the provinces indicated by the Serbs as their future possessions and whose indigenous populations longed to be awarded Serbian ethnicity, nationality and citizenship. Because some of the intended beneficiaries were not yet aware of the good fortune the future held in stock, the liberalization project needed to proceed somewhat clandestinely, and no one was better suited to this task than conspirator and regicide Dimitrijević who was then a lecturer at the Serbian Military Academy. (23)

But this was not the full extent of his activities. In the wake of the Austrian annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had led to the emergence of the Narodna Odbrana, there had remained a deep division between the official Serbian government, which had to plan and act within the boundaries of generally acknowledged political limits, and the nationalist hotheads who accepted no restriction. In early 1911, the political activist Bogdan Radenković began to contact nationalist sympathizers from all walks of life, and, in the presence of Dimitrijević, four of his fellow officer-regicides and another civilian, formed on March 3 in Belgrade the secret brotherhood UJEDINJENJE ILI SMRT!, "Union or Death", which eventually became known as the "Black Hand". (24) In today's parlance, it was a terrorist organization, adopting rituals from the Freemasons and combining them with the cell system of the underground communists. It thrived, as such clubs do, mostly on the self-aggrandizement of their founders - the conviction that they were to alter history. In their case, as we will see, they succeeded. Neophytes were inducted by meeting their hooded future brethren in a dark room and made to swear the following oath:

*"I [name], in joining the organisation Union or Death, swear by the sun that warms me, by the earth that nourishes me, before God, by the blood of my ancestors, on my honour and on my life, that I will from this moment until my death be faithful to the laws of this organisation, and that I will always be ready to make any sacrifice for it.*

*I swear before God, on my honour and on my life, that I will execute all missions and commands without question.*

*I swear before God, on my honour and on my life, that I will take all the secrets of this organisation into my grave with me.*

*May God and my comrades in the organisation be my judges if, knowingly or not, I should ever violate this oath." (25)*

It was a show, but impressive and designed to make an imprint on the mostly young members-to-be which were attracted to the world of secret male bonding - Christopher Clark has recognized the strong homoerotic tendencies of the fraternity:

*The milieu in which Dimitrijević deployed these gifts [of inducing trust and imposing his will] was emphatically masculine. Women were a marginal presence in his adult life; he never showed any sexual interest in them. His natural habitat, and the scene of all his intrigues, was the smoke-filled, men-only world of the Belgrade coffee-houses -- a space at once private and public, where conversations could be seen without necessarily being heard. The best-known surviving photograph of him depicts the burly moustachioed intriguer with two associates in a characteristically conspiratorial pose. (26)*

Given the secretive origins and character of the organization, it cannot surprise that Ujedinjenje ili smrt! subverted the civil government as easily, quickly and profoundly as it had undermined the military sphere; its members also infiltrated the various semi-official (Narodna Odbrana) and secret societies as well as the border police, spy networks and telegraph offices. Oddly enough, some party politicians and government officials mistook "Union or Death!" for an internal revolutionary committee, suspecting it to attempt domestic subversion in the furtherance of overthrowing the civil government. "This misreading," Christopher Clark points out, "made its way into many of the diplomatic records" and "would continue to befuddle the Austrian authorities during the crisis of July 1914." (27)

In the wake of the Balkan wars of 1912/13, the recently acquired provinces were admitted to the benefits of modern Serbian government. The uncertain state of security, alas, disallowed the introduction of civil liberties, and many Turkish public buildings - schools, offices, and, naturally, mosques - had to be destroyed lest they might serve as hideouts for Turkish terrorists. The latter were presumed to exist in such multitudes that the imposition of martial law and the frequent execution of suspects became a regrettable but necessary side-effect on the way into a brighter future. Critical voices began to appear in international newspapers, but the Serbian Foreign Office was, fortunately, able to rely on the British Ambassador, Sir Dayrell Crackanthorpe, who, of his own volition, corrected erroneous reports of his underlings, who presumed to criticize the sort of small errors that could not be avoided in the noble task.

It seemed to be a sign of the efficiency of Austrian and, perhaps, German propagandists that the administrative reforms in the newly liberated areas did not find the undivided applause of the international observership; especially British diplomats appeared susceptible to the disinformation campaign. From Monastir on the southern border, for example, the British Vice Consul Charles Greig reported "that Moslems under Servian rule have nothing whatsoever to expect but periodical massacre, certain exploitation and final ruin." His colleague in Skopje related "systematic intimidation, arbitrary detentions, beatings, rapes, village-burnings and massacres by Serbs in the annexed areas." Less than two weeks later, Mr. Greig warned that the "Bulgarian and especially the Moslem populations in the districts of Perlepe, Krchevo and Krushevo [were] in danger of extermination by the very frequent and barbarous massacres and pillage to which they are subjected by Servian bands" and that "murder and outrage of other kinds by bands of Servian comitaji and persons in league with them" created outright anarchy. (28) His Excellency Dayrell Crackanthorpe, however, was a good friend of the Serbs and did his best to suppress the reports he believed to be entirely fabricated, and it was only "the cumulative detail of the reports emerging from the annexed areas, combined with corroborating accounts from Romanian, Swiss and French officials that persuaded the British Foreign Office that the news of Macedonian atrocities should not be dismissed as Austrian propaganda." (29)

While "the Serbian government showed no interest whatsoever in preventing further outrages or in instigating an investigation of those that had already occurred," (30) there were voices which saw the true cause of the horrors in the recently occupied areas along the borders to Greece and Bulgaria in an administrative decree that subordinated the military authorities - who considered these areas their personal playground<sup>6</sup> - to the civil government. The officer corps

<sup>6</sup> As the result of the Balkan wars, Serbia had grown from 18,650 to 33,891 square miles and acquired more than 1,500,000 new inhabitants. (37)

mounted a protest that brought down the - once again - Pasić-led cabinet, and the spectre of a military takeover appeared upon the horizon. The Austrian Ambassador in Belgrade reported to Vienna on May 8, 1914:

*"The conflict between the Government and the conspirator party (Crna Ruka)<sup>7</sup> ... has become so aggravated in the last few weeks that a violent clash between the two rivals for power seems not impossible. ... The King, who owes his throne to the conspirators, does not quite venture to side openly with them, but his sympathies belong to the Crna Ruka, as do those of the Crown Prince. ...*

*The Crna Ruka being probably none too fastidious in its choice of means to gain its ends, I regard the possibility of violent eruptions, even of an overthrow of the Government or a coup d'état, as not entirely inconceivable developments ... unless the Government at the last moment capitulates to the military party, as it has done up to now." (31)*

Facing enlarged political instability, Belgrade's sponsors, Russia and France - the latter of whom had given her yet another credit (which amounted to twice the national budget of 1912) in 1914 (32) - resorted to the somewhat unusual step that the Russian Ambassador Hartwig, by some believed the country's true suzerain, "declared publicly that Russia's Balkan policies required Pasić's retention in office," (33) and Paris made it known that no other government than the present could hope to receive further loans. (34) These were clear messages, but still, no one knows what might have transpired had not the beginning of the Great War - only a few weeks later - given the Serbian army plenty of concern.

Again, in the continent's opposite corner, improvement in Anglo-German relations persisted; Winston Churchill mused that "the spring and summer of 1914 were marked in Europe by an exceptional tranquillity. ... Naval rivalry had at the moment ceased to be a cause of friction, it was certain that we could not be overtaken as far as capital ships were concerned," and a professor of economy noted that "Germany, from 1911, was the best market of all [for British exports]." (35) This caused fear in St. Petersburg that the coalition for the war against Germany - which would remove the true obstacle to the possession of the Straits - might fall apart at late notice. Even Paris seemed to falter. The former Prime Minister Joseph Caillaux - "suspected of softness towards Germany" and thus "hounded from office" in 1912 (36) - rejoined the French government as Minister of Finance in December 1913 and it was thought possible that he might emerge as the Prime Minister of a coalition of Radicals and Socialists, which many believed would choose a more constructive, peaceful policy towards Germany than the revanchism impersonated by President Poincaré. The Belgian Ambassador Guillaume reported to Brussels in early 1914:

*"I feel certain that Europe would profit from the policies of M. Caillaux, the Radicals and the Radical-Socialists. As I have already told you, MM. Poincaré, Delcassé, Millerand and their friends have created and pushed the current policies of nationalism, militarism and chauvinism. ... I see in them the greatest threat to the peace of Europe today." (38)*

Beginning with the annual General Staff conference of 1911, France and Russia reworked their strategy. Poincaré's bellicosity ended France's earlier reluctance to come to Russia's aid over some Balkan issue - which had accounted for France's caution during the Bosnian annexation crisis - yet it was not him alone who developed a more military orientation: "the pacifist and anti-military popular mood that had prevailed in 1905 made way for a more belligerent attitude," (39) and "by the autumn of 1912, Poincaré was firmly supporting a Russian armed intervention in the Balkans." (40) Yet this would necessarily lead to war: Austria would have to match a Russian mobilization - no way around it - which would bring in Germany, under the terms of the Dual Alliance, which would, in turn, bring in France and Great Britain on the side of Russia. Hostilities would open with a simultaneous attack of both France and Russia into Germany. Christopher Clark remarks on Franco-Russian war planning:

*The question of how fast and how many men Russia would mobilize in the event of the cases foederis, and in what direction it would deploy them, dominated the Franco-Russian inter-staff discussions in the summers of 1912 and 1913. In the conversations of July 1912, the French CGS, Joseph Joffre, requested that the Russians*

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<sup>7</sup> Serb for "Black Hand".



*double-track all their railway lines to the East Prussian and Galician frontiers. Some strategically important lines were even to be quadrupled to allow faster transit of large troop numbers.*

*The Franco-Russian Naval Convention of July 1912, which provided for closer cooperation and coordination of the two navies, was another fruit of these efforts. And there was a gradual improvement in the Russian assurances --whereas Zhilinsky promised in 1912 to attack Germany with 800,000 men by day 15, in the following year he felt able, once the improvements were put in place, to shave a further two days off the schedule.*

*The direction of mobilization was another area of concern. The protocols of the inter-staff discussions record the tireless efforts of the French staff officers to keep the Russians focused on Germany rather than Austria as the principal opponent. For while the French were willing to acknowledge the legitimacy of a Balkan casus belli,<sup>8</sup> the entire military purpose of the alliance (from France's perspective) would be defeated if the Russians deployed the bulk of their military might against the Habsburg Empire and left the French to deal on their own with a massive German attack in the west.*

*When this issue was raised at the 1912 meeting, [the Russian Chief of Staff] Zhilinsky objected that the Russians also had other threats to think about ... [Sweden and Turkey] ... but Joffre insisted that the "destruction of Germany's forces" - l'aneantissement des forces de l'Allemagne - would in effect resolve all the other problems facing the alliance; it was essential to concentrate on this objective "at any price". (41)*

Peace on the continent now rested on the slender shoulders of the pauper. His name was Gavril Princip; he had been born in a Bosnian village in 1894, and attended "irregular schooling in various places." (42) A somewhat sickly youth - he was to die in 1918 of tuberculosis - he arrived in Belgrade in 1912 to report for the last grade of high school, yet immediately felt driven to spend most of his time in the Serbian nationalist coffee-house scene. His exalted pro-Serbism had motivated him to memorize the entirety of THE MOUNTAIN WREATH, an epos about the self-sacrificing Serbian tyrannicide Milos Obilić, composed and published in 1847 by the Prince-Bishop of Montenegro. (43) That the supreme expression of Serbian nationalism was tyrannicide the young patriot, whose apprehension of Serbian history was that of a continuing enterprise in idealism and sacrifice, readily accepted. In reality, Serbian patriotism had lately expressed itself more in murder, theft and rape. Luigi Albertini explains:

*To understand the atmosphere in which this young generation lived, one must bear in mind the Serbian Comitaji movement after the Second Balkan war. For ten years, from 1902 to 1912, Comitajism was the leading element in all Balkan turbulence.*

*The first Comitajism was of Bulgaro-Macedonian origins. In 1902 armed bands were formed in Macedonia, subsidized by the Bulgarian Government, for the purpose of causing disorders which would focus the attention of Europe on the Balkans and lead to European intervention such as would end Ottoman domination in Macedonia. This province was either to become autonomous or be annexed to Bulgaria.*

*Alarmed by the claims which these bands were staking out for Bulgaria in Macedonia, Serb and Greek revolutionary circles, in touch with their respective governments, recruited armed bands in Serbia and Greece. In Serbia they arose as early as 1905.*

*The Comitaji crossed into Macedonia provoking disorders, blowing up bridges, attacking small bodies of gendarmes, committing murders, acting not only against the Turkish authorities but also against the private property of Moslems. When Turkish troops intervened they disappeared over the frontiers into their respective states, from whose governments they received arms and money. In the Balkan wars, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Comitaji had moved in advance and in support of their respective armies, fighting without regard for the rules of warfare and often indulging in arson and massacre.*

<sup>8</sup> This was the original sin, so to say, of the change in the Franco-Russian Military Convention -- now *other* than defensive scenarios, i.e. a direct attack of Austria or Germany on Russia, might invoke the casus foederis and lead to war.

*One of these battalions of Comitaji fighters was commanded by Major Voja Tankosić, who in 1903 had taken part in the plot against the Obrenović royal pair and had ordered the shooting of Queen Draga's brothers. It mainly consisted of young Serbs who were Austro-Hungarian subjects. After the war, the Serbian Government was unable to get rid of them. Crowded in Belgrade, they spent time in cafés, bragging of their exploits and dilating plans for more wars and conspiracies. ...*

*After the defeat of Turkey and then of Bulgaria, their plots for wars and outrages took Austria-Hungary as their objective. (44)*

Here were young patriots, if one can call them so, that Dragutin Dimitrijević, now Colonel and, under the code name "Apis", head of the Serbian Military Intelligence Service, could put to good use. He ordered his assistant Tankosić to select a few of the young men for a special job. The former Comitaji leader recruited three nineteen year-old Bosnian kids, Trifko Grabez, Nedeljko Cabrinović and Gavrilo Princip, all of them from "poor families and unhappy households." Cabrinović and Grabez "had suffered under and rebelled against the male authority figures in their own early lives," which draws an interesting parallel to Hitler's troubles with his father. (45) As Christopher Clark remarks, these young men were classic prey for conspirators:

*These boys had little in the way of bad habits. They were made of that sombre, youthful stuff, rich in ideals but poor in experience, that modern terrorist movements feed upon. Alcohol was not to their taste. Although they were heterosexual by romantic inclination, they did not seek the society of young women.*

*They read nationalist poetry and irredentist newspapers and pamphlets. The boys dwelt at length on the suffering of the Serbian nation, for which they blamed everyone but the Serbs themselves, and felt the slights and humiliations of the least of their countrymen as if they were their own. (46)*

The man whom Gavrilo Princip approached for patriotic guidance was, apparently by sheer accident, an old terror hand himself and a former subaltern of Major Tankosić, Milan Ciganović, who, by virtue of his being a titular employee of the Serbian State Railway was ideally placed for the intelligence and terror business. The story goes that Princip asked him outright whether he knew how to get bombs. Ciganović did, and informed his old boss Tankosić about Princip and his acquaintances.

At this early opportunity, in 1912, Tankosić rejected Princip as too young and frail, but in early 1914 changed his mind and reported Princip to Dimitrijević. Since the boys had no experience whatsoever with conspiracies, Ciganović was assigned as their handler. On May 27, he provided them with four revolvers and six 22 pound bombs, courtesy of the Serbian State Arsenal at Kragujevac, (47) and took them to Belgrade's Topcider Park for weapon training. (48) In addition, Ciganović supplied 150 dinars in cash, a map of Bosnia, cyanide ampoules - with which the assassins were to commit suicide after the attempt, to frustrate investigations - and a letter for Major Rade Popović<sup>9</sup> of the Border Guards, who was a member of Ujedinjenje ili smrt! as well as a contact for Narodna Odbrana. (49) The boys were then smuggled into Bosnia - Cabrinović by members of the underground railway established and used by the Black Hand and the military, and Princip and Grabez, it would seem, by the border police themselves - to Tuzla, where they met Cabrinović. While there will be a word or two, below, to the topic of the Serbian and Russian government's possible foreknowledge of the Sarajevo plot, the local Bosnian patriots were easily trusted with the Big Secret. A schoolteacher working for the smugglers, who took Princip and Grabez over the border to Tuzla, was reported to have told the Kerovići, the family to whom he delivered his charges for the night: "Do you know who these people are? They're going to Sarajevo to throw bombs and kill the Archduke who is going to come there." Princip then showed his hosts the weapons. (50)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The name Popović is common, and one should not confuse Major Rade Popović, the Border Guards officer, with the more famous Colonel Cedomilj Popović, a co-founder, Central Committee member and future secretary of the Black Hand, or with the young Cvijetko Popović, member of the Sarajevo cutout cell.

<sup>10</sup> The Kerovići subsequently came to grief. The Austrians tried them for supporting terrorists, and Nedjo Kerović, who had given the boys a lift on his cart, received a death sentence - eventually commuted to twenty years imprisonment. His father Mitar received a sentence of imprisonment for life. (51)

When the boys arrived in Sarajevo by train from Tuzla, they were expected by a second group of operatives, four men strong and led by Black Hand member Danilo Ilić. Ilić had recruited three more youngsters: a Muslim carpenter from Herzegovina, Muhamed Mehmetbasić, and two local schoolboys, one Cvijetko Popović and the seventeen year-old Vaso Cubrilović, a brother of the aforementioned loquacious schoolteacher. That the latter had never met Ilić before that day, and that the three would not meet Princip and the others until after the coup shows that the second cell was devised, *ab initio*, as a cutout. "In this connection," as Christopher Clark points out, "Mehmedbasić was an inspired choice, because he was a willing, if incompetent, assassin, and thus useful backup for the Belgrade cell, but not a Serb. As Black Hand members, Ilić and Princip could be depended upon (in theory) to take their own lives, or at least remain silent after the event. The Sarajevo boys would be unable to testify, for the simple reason that they knew nothing about the larger background to the plot. The impression would thus emerge that this was a purely local undertaking, with no links to Belgrade." (52)

While there are small details in which the accounts of what happened at Sarajevo on that morning of June 28, 1914, differ, the main outlines are clear. A motorcade of six' cars<sup>11</sup> waited for the royal visitors, who arrived around 10 a.m., at the train station, to take them down Appel Quay, the promenade that runs along the Miljacka River to the town hall where the official welcome ceremony was to take place.

It was a sunny day but an ominous date. On June 28, St. Vitus' Day in Austria, VIDOVA DAN in Bosnia, 525 years ago, in AD 1389, the Ottoman Turks had defeated the troops of Tsar Stepan Dusan's - fictitious - Serbian Empire at the legendary Battle on Kosovo Field, and consequently this day had become the Serbian National Anniversary day; more important than ever in the present year, for the celebrations of 1914 were to be the first after the "liberation" of Kosovo and Macedonia - resulting from the Second Balkan War - in the previous year. (53)

On a more positive note, this June 28 was also the royal couple's fourteenth wedding anniversary, and a welcome side effect of visiting the provinces was that Sophie could spend the day on the side of her husband without, as in Vienna, being relegated to a background role by the Habsburg court protocol.

The seven conspirators had positioned themselves strategically along the honoured guests' travel route, which was the same one used at every state visit. Official security was conspicuously absent: "The espalier of troops who usually lined the kerbs on such occasions was nowhere to be seen, so that the motorcade passed virtually unprotected in front of the dense crowds. Even the special security detail was missing - its chief had mistakenly climbed into one of the cars with three local Bosnian officers, leaving the rest of his men behind at the railway station." (54)

Three bridges span the river along the part of the Appel Quay the motorcade was to follow. At the first one, Cumurija Bridge, Mehmedbasić, Cubrilović and Cabrinović had posted themselves, on the riverside; opposite, on the landward side, waited Cvijetko Popović and Danilo Ilić - the latter, unarmed, seemed to rehearse the role of *maitre d'honneurs*. At the second bridge, the Latin Bridge, Gavrilo Princip waited alone; Trifko Grabez was posted on the third, the Imperial Bridge. It seems that the attempt was to take place at Cumurija Bridge, and Princip and Grabez were the reserve or backups, should unexpected developments occur.

The motorcade rolled in the direction of Cumurija Bridge. In the first car were the town's mayor, Fehim Effendi Curčić, and Dr. Edmund Gerde, the superintendent of the police. In the second car's landaulet backseats rode the royal guests, facing them, on the flip seat, was General Potiorek, the governor of Bosnia. On the front seat, aside the chauffeur sat Lieutenant-Colonel Count Franz von Harrach, the car's owner. They were followed by cars filled with local police, lower honoraries and retainers. (55)

The cavalcade moved towards Mehmedbasić, who - alas - at the point of its closest proximity found himself paralyzed, struck by dread and terror, as he had been five months earlier at an aborted attempt of his own at Potiorek. Next in line was Cabrinović, who took out his bomb and armed it by breaking the detonator - a percussion cap -- against the next lamppost. It reported with a loud crack, alarming Harrach and the driver. They turned around, perhaps thinking that a tire had exploded, yet when the chauffeur saw a dark shape flying towards the limousine, he immediately

<sup>11</sup> Other sources, e.g. Albertini, have only four cars in the motorcade.

accelerated. The bomb fell short - some say the archduke himself deflected it; others maintain it simply bounced off the back. It hit the street and exploded below the following car, wounding a few of its passengers. Only later was it determined that the detonator - in exploding - had caused a small wound on the Duchess's neck. (56) When the archduke saw the wreck of the third car, he ordered the motorcade to stop so that the injured - among them Potiorek's aide-de-camp Colonel Merizzi - might receive first aid and be brought to the hospital. Then the cavalcade proceeded to the Town Hall, where an abbreviated ceremony was to be held after whose completion the royal couple planned to visit the victims in the infirmary.

Cabrinović had meanwhile been fished out of the - almost dry - riverbed whither he had jumped to get time to swallow the small cyanide wrapper. The poison failed to work, for some unexplained reason, and, after being beaten up for a minute, he was taken to the police station. Cubrilović watched him, paralyzed - like Mehmedbasić - and Popović, overcome with dread, hid away his bomb in the nearest building. Only Princip retained his composure; initially he had assumed that the explosion of Cabrinović's bomb reported success, but when he saw Cabrinović arrested and the royal carriage resume motion in his direction, he thought of firing. The car's speed denied him a clear shot, yet he remained calm enough to take up a new position, on the way the cavalcade was to use on its return. There he waited.

Meanwhile the procession had arrived at the Town Hall, and the mayor had begun to read his prepared lines, which included the assertion that "all of the citizens of the capital city of Sarajevo find that their souls are filled with happiness, and they most enthusiastically greet Your Highness's most illustrious visit with the most cordial of welcomes ...." (57) The archduke was not convinced, it seems - he had kept almost quiet since the explosion but now urgently inquired whether bombs were indeed part of the cordial welcome. "Mr. Mayor, I came here on a visit and I get bombs thrown at me. It is outrageous. Now you may speak." (58) The mayor's address was over mercifully quick, and Franz Ferdinand asked Governor Potiorek whether one had to expect further attempts. The general did not think so, but advised to skip the rest of the official program. The party should either drive back straight to Ilidze, the small resort town where the royal couple had stayed the last three days, or return, via the Governor's mansion, to the railway station.

Luigi Albertini's collaborator and amanuensis Luciano Magrini was able to talk to two of the conspirators, Vaso Cubrilović and Mohamed Mehmedbasić, during a visit in Serbia in the autumn of 1937, and we shall follow the resulting account:

*"The Archduke objected that he must first visit Colonel Merizzi at the garrison hospital, although his wound was known to be slight. Potiorek then suggested that they should go there avoiding the town and once more passing along the Appel Quay where - he said - no one expected the procession to pass. This was not true; because the press had published that on the return from the Town Hall the procession was to pass again along the Appel Quay as far as the Latin bridge. In any case, this was the plan followed.*

*At the trial [Princip] stated that when he heard the explosion of Cabrinović's bomb he moved with the crowd in that direction and saw that the procession had come to a standstill. Thinking that 'all was over', i.e. that the attempt was successful, and seeing Cabrinović taken away by the police, he thought of shooting him to prevent his talking and then committing suicide himself. But he gave up the idea when he perceived that the procession had moved off again. ...*

*The cars again took the route via the Appel Quay. The Duchess, who from the Town Hall was to have proceeded straight to the Konak [the Governor's mansion], decided to accompany her husband and again took her seat beside him, while Harrach took up position on the running board on the left side of the car, so as to cover the Archduke with his body.*

*But Potiorek and the chief of police, who did not expect a second attempt, not only failed to realize the danger of passing along the first part of the Quay again, but also omitted the essential precaution of giving clear instructions to the chauffeurs, particularly to the driver of the Archduke's car. What happened was that the front car containing the chief of police drove along the Appel Quay, but at the Latin Bridge took a right-hand turn into the narrow Francis Joseph Street, the Archduke's car naturally following suit." (59)*

It was at this moment that the confusion over the correct route to be taken proved fatal. Harrach's sleek sports car had no reverse gear, which meant that the car had first to be stopped, the engine disengaged, and the vehicle pushed slowly back out of Franz Joseph Street, to Appel Quay, by hand. (60) This delay of perhaps twenty seconds gave Princip relatively much time to draw and steady his weapon, while the fact that the procession was essentially standing instead of moving made his aim much more certain and accurate.

Princip was not more than a few feet away from his target, at point-blank distance, and fired a round each at the archduke and the duchess with Harrach looking on - in horror - from the wrong, the opposite side of the car. The count later reported to one of Francis Ferdinand's biographers:

*"While with one hand I drew out my handkerchief to wipe the blood from the Archduke's lips, Her Highness cried: 'For God's sake! What has happened to you?' Then she sank down from her seat with her face between the Archduke's knees. I had no idea that she had been hit and thought that she had fainted from shock. Then His Royal Highness said: 'Soferl, Soferl! Don't die. Live for my children!'*

*Thereupon I seized the Archduke by the coat-collar to prevent his head from sinking forwards and asked him: 'Is Your Royal Highness in great pain?' To which he clearly replied: 'It is nothing.' Now his expression changed and he repeated six or seven times: 'It is nothing,' more and more losing consciousness and with a fading voice.*

*Then came a brief pause followed by a convulsive rattle in the throat, caused by the loss of blood, which ceased on the arrival at the Konak. The two unconscious forms were carried into the Konak where death soon supervened." (61)*

A second wave of urgent telegrams spewed forth from the Sarajevo postal station. After the first attempt, the archduke himself had directed a telegram to his uncle, the emperor, asserting the couple's well-being, while the local reporters filed their stories. Now, at just past 11 a.m. local time, the news had changed in such dramatic fashion that at first many people refused to believe it.

A moment was frozen in history; as acknowledged in the words of Christopher Clark, "the Sarajevo murders, like the murder of President John F. Kennedy at Dallas in 1963, were an event whose hot light captured the people and places of a moment and burned them into memory. People recalled exactly where they were and whom they were with when the news reached them." (62)

What was yet to be determined was the event's impact on the world. Technically, a prince had been assassinated - worse had happened in the history of the continent - but it soon became painfully clear that a whole age had come to an end on the streets of Sarajevo - the age of liberalism, civil government, and the belief in the possible, nay, imminent augmentation of the human condition by technological and philosophical progress. It turned out that what had been murdered at the crossing of Appel Quay and Franz Joseph Street was nothing less than the pride and optimism of the rational age - the foundations of the "Proud Tower" - rejected by irrationalism, nationalism, vanity and hate. When the consequences of Sarajevo had played out, thirty-one respectively seventy-six years later, in 1945 or 1990, depending on one's point of view, Europe had lost power over the globe. Sarajevo marked the beginning of the end.

