

THE KAISER'S CATS-PAW WAS ARCHDUKE FERDINAND VICTIM OF DUAL INTRIGUE?

Circumstantial Evidence Indicates That Austro-Hungarian Government Was Fully Aware of Danger Heir to Throne Ran Just Previous to Assassination--Dual Monarchy Prey to Warring Factions.

Was the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, Crown Prince of Austria-Hungary, at Sarajevo, on the 28th of June, 1914, the result of a deliberately planned conspiracy formulated by certain factions within the official circle of the Hapsburg monarchy? The appalling occurrence, the hard and fast ultimatum of the Imperial and Royal Government, its extraordinary demands and limitations, the malign atmosphere surrounding the movement of the German Emperor and his "advisers" at Berlin, the situation at Vienna and Budapest, beyond prudence justify cautious, as well as unprejudiced consideration.

Never before, in modern times, has war been determined upon with such unrelenting insistence: the welfare of others nations was cast to the winds, the pound of flesh was demanded, without submission of the bond, while Serbia's plea for arbitration, conferences, or explanations, met with studied insult, unstinted reproaches, and violent recriminations.

A confederated Austria, the consolidation of German and Magyar, had for many years received mental hospitality from prominent statesmen; in other words, "rare conciliation" and virtual abandonment of the existing Dualist system; the proposition being a central or Federal Parliament, retaining an Emperor-King, but all interests, factions and creeds to be vouchsafed proportional privileges. Archduke Franz Ferdinand made no secret of his preference for such progressive reform, while powerful classes strenuously opposed experimental changes, fearful that Hungary's influence might be lessened, unless well-defined checks and safeguards against the pretensions and tyranny of the Magyars were guaranteed.

The Slav Population.

This situation must be kept in view, for he who runs may read in it why a dangerous faction would nourish distrust of the Crown Prince. The Southern Slavs in Montenegro and Serbia aggregate 3,500,000, whereas Austria-Hungary numbered 6,500,000. Serbia was and is developing an aggressive Slav propaganda, engendering thereby unconcealed hatred of the Magyars of Hungary; whose aristocratic assertion of superiority was daily increasing.

Ferdinand aimed at pacifying Serbia. Progressive reform was retarded by his death. Who would this benefit?

Count Stephen Tisza, the Austro-Hungarian prime minister, a fanatical, courageous, as well as unscrupulous dignitary, entrenched behind military influence, as well as the Magyar Junta, fully realized his jeopardy after events in the Balkans, two years preceding the hideous murder of Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Dual Monarchy. A desperate expedient, war alone could solve the problem, a measure short, sharp, sudden and decisive. With victory in Europe, Tisza's policy would triumph—and what powers could hope to prevail against the "Triple Alliance. The fiat went forth: a deadly struggle for place and power must be compassed; but the reason could only be created by some startling and dramatic episode.

It will fall to the lot of future historians to carefully weigh evidence seemingly closely allied with facts,

AT THE NICKEL

when curcincing the circumstances that statesmen high in office, with sardonic ingenuity, permitted the heir to a Crown—the Crown of their nation—to make an official entry into Bosnia on the anniversary of a day held sacred for generations by the people of Serbia.

For over 525 years the Serbs had perpetuated in song, story and prayer, the horrible massacre which took place on "the Field of Blackbirds," when victims of a damnable plot—thousands of the flower of Serbia were ruthlessly betrayed and hacked to pieces. On that anniversary Archduke Ferdinand was inveigled into the net, whence death alone could be anticipated. This timely murder fulfilled two requisite conditions: the possibility of war while Emperor Franz Joseph lived and while the Dual system was in full force and effect.

Who Incited Crime?

The assassins of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, were tried, found guilty and punished—some executed, others imprisoned: Who incited the crime? Why was the chief perpetrator spared the death sentence? Throughout Serbia, Croatia, and Dalmatia, treason, assassination and intrigue had been reduced to a science; hence the paid spies of Austria, the "Intelligence" missionaries in Germany's service, the official and unofficial secret officers of Bosnia, must have been aware of the danger, cognizant of plot and counterplot, and known that Archduke Ferdinand and his wife, were in danger. What warning was given, what protection vouchsafed? Where were Tisza's secret police, who discovered nothing until Archduke Ferdinand was murdered and with him a woman innocent of guilt? Strange, when the first attempt failed to injure him, Archduke Ferdinand is

said to have remarked "That fellow will get the Golden Cross of Merit for this!" Within a brief time, however, a second attack emphasized the Royal Tragedy of Sarajevo!

It has been asserted that leaders in the ring of assassins, were Austrian subjects; if so, the "conferences," on the part of Germany and Austria, were absolutely and wickedly insincere—mere diplomatic hypocrisy without the remotest intention of discharging duties in accord with well defined duty. It may be that the old Emperor King Josef, was purposely deceived as to foul conspiracy over the catastrophe. Unless ulterior motives prompted the deed, and time pressed, Ferdinand might well have been protected, for it was known that the Archduke was doomed physically, suffering from ailments beyond recovery; but events were crowding the national arena, issues affecting Austria and Hungary; Archduke Ferdinand was Imperialistic but democratic; he was feared by the Magyars of Hungary, suspicious and jealous of the regard in which he was held by the army, by clericals, and by the Slavs; they dreaded the effect upon their pretentious oligarchy.

Suspicious Circumstances.

With knowledge of sedition existing, the fact that explosive bombs had been scattered broadcast, for use by scores of ruffians prepared to commit murder—yet no supervision, no detection, no suspicion, no shield raised—imparts a sombre hue to the tragic taking off of the unfortunate Ferdinand and his wife. Wilhelm II nourished no sympathetic feelings towards any of his democratic neighbors; in this respect Ferdinand equalled him; but the latter was intensely human; he had roughed it and come into contact with "all sorts and conditions"; still, he was for Hapsburg and the Hapsburg dynasty. His death hastened the blast of the war trumpet; it is well that Providence spared him the horror of witnessing the awful consequences of a butchery in which millions are stepping their hands in the blood of fellow creatures.

To casual readers, the suggestion that motives and influences attributed to the murderers Cabrinovic and Princip and their fellow conspirators, originated in other and more powerful circles, might appear prejudiced and extreme; the evidence exists and cannot be differently considered. No nation is more composite in elements, or more divided into racial factions, than Austria-Hungary; the former with a population exceeding 28,000,000, the latter 21,000,000.

These have lived for nearly fifty years under a constitution adopted in 1867, subsequent to the Italian war of independence and the Austria-Prussian war. Since then the weaker communities have, through the expansion of educative systems and the spread of civilizing conditions, demanded broadened privileges and wider state recognition. To expect such concessions from the reigning Hapsburg or Hohenzollern, the Tiszas or the Magyars, was to demand miracles. The two nations are held in unity by very flimsy bonds, the dual system really representing an alliance between powerful divisions, owing allegiance to one monarchy, with alleged safeguards providing local autonomy.

Comparison of Countries.

In recent years the Emperor Franz Josef—no doubt influenced by Archduke Ferdinand—manifested willingness to broaden the scope of national privileges throughout the empire. This only incensed a junta of conspiring factions. It would be impossible in a short space to deal with the diverse racial interests involved. The following is an estimate of racial strength of the Austrian two countries

AUSTRIA.	
Germans	9,171,614
Czechs and Slovaks	5,955,397
Poles	4,252,483
Ruthenes	3,381,570
Slovenes	1,192,780
Italians	727,102
Serbs and Croats	711,380
Roumanians	230,963
HUNGARY.	
Magyars	10,050,575
Germans	2,037,535
Slovacs	1,967,970
Roumanians	2,949,032
Ruthenes	472,587
Croats	1,883,162
Serbs	1,106,471
Miscellaneous	459,255
The Serbo Croat population of Bosnia-Herzegovina is	1,898,044

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Franz Ferdinand and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg; this exception being made because of "the close personal friendship" existing between the Archduke and the Emperor of Germany. The obsequies over, the curtain dropped before the first act of what was destined to be a terrible European disruption; usually, perhaps, a great Prusso-German tragedy.

When the King-Emperor, Francis Joseph heard the melancholy news of the 28th of June he brokenly exclaimed: "Oh! horrible! horrible! no sorrow is spared me!" Crushing as the unexpected blow, one greater sorrow, one additional catastrophe followed—that resulting from making a domestic confidant of Wilhelm II.; that of opening his heart and laying bare its secrets to a ruler prepared for the opportune time. From the standpoint of circumstantial evidence, that would be a reasonable conclusion? This—the royal sufferer became the easy prey of his crafty autocratic ally. The absolute prostration of Serbia was determined upon. Even then the old Emperor could not possibly have realized the momentous nature of his decision. Austria-Hungary and Germany contained a united population of over 117,000,000; in war times, a united army of over 7,000,000. Serbia with a population of 3,000,000 with an army less than 200,000, just emerging from a bitter struggle. Serbia was the offender hence. Serbia was to be used as an excuse, a pretext in the Kaiser's wider arena of contemplated crime. What were allies or treaties or convenants or conventions, in the lexicon of an arch-conspirator, a war incendiary, a wrecker of everything even indirectly detrimental to Hohenzollern interests or threatening to minimize the Hohenzollern dynasty.

Italy's Attitude. Since Italy declared war Premier Salandra challenges the allegation that his country betrayed its former allies, Germany and Austria-Hungary. He declares that Italy never concealed her disapproval of Austria's aggressive policy towards Serbia, and adds (June 3rd):

"Imperial history will say that Austria having found in July and October 1913, that Italy was hostile to aggressive intentions against Serbia arranged with Germany to take Europe by surprise, by confronting it with an accomplished fact. The horrible crime at Sarajevo was exploited as a pretext the month after it occurred."

More, Italy was not consulted with reference to the ultimatum. The German Emperor had his advisers in Austria-Hungary; he had been a mediator between the Archduke's morganatic wife and the Austrian King-Emperor; he attempted to interfere with Austrian officialism with the design of having trusted agents throughout the Dual Monarchy; he had them at Budapest but Archduke Ferdinand checked Berlin intrigue, and thanked God, "was no longer a vassal of Germany."

Who would care to cast the horoscope of Austria-Hungary's destiny should defeat be encountered? Spontaneous generosity upon the part of the allies may save the Dual Monarchy from utter disintegration; but the Austria-Hungary, of today, with its centralized authority would be an impossibility. Even now Baron Burian, a born Hungarian nobleman has supplanted Count Berchtold as foreign minister of the Dual Monarchy and reflects the opinions and aims of the Prime Minister Tisza. Austria remains the cat's-paw of German intrigue, and should the fortunes of war or exigencies of situation so demand Austria's German ally, if forced to the wall, will insist upon the former overruling the south-western section of Switzerland, and driving thence to the Milan plains, just as the first Napoleon reached Marengo in 1800 by the St. Bernard pass. Austria is in financial straits, her loans are a drag in financial centres, and Constantinople fallen, the question of peace or chaos must be decided. Hungary would demand another step in the direction of complete independence and a Republic form of government would meet with approval, despite Tisza, Burian or Magyar influence.

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