

BLACK HAND OVER EUROPE

by Henri Pozzi

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Consisting of: WAR IS COMING AGAIN by Henri Pozzi

Translated by FRANCIS J. MOTT



<http://www.hic.hr/books/blackhand/>
Croatian Information Centre

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About the Author

Henry Pozzi is of an old French Protestant family. His mother was English, a direct descendant of Hampden. He was for nearly thirty years a member of the French and English Intelligence Services in the Balkans and Central Europe; and ten years in charge of the Balkan Secret Service of "Le Temps". Therefore the author is by far the

best qualified person to discuss the events displayed in his work "War is Coming Again". The book was prohibited in the Little Entente, Greece, Turkey and in Yugoslavia.

After the suicide of Vojislav M. Petrovic, a Montenegrin, an ex-attache to the Yugoslav Legation in London who had been preparing a small book on the history of the Sarajevo assassination in the light of his knowledge of the Pan-Serbian organization called the Black Hand, Mr. Francis Mott, a well-known English publisher, received a letter from Paris, claiming that Petrovic's death was only one in a long series of crimes committed by the Pan-Serbian terrorist organization Narodna Odbrana, which bore the direct responsibility for the first world war. The author of the letter urged the publisher to print Petrovic's unfinished manuscript, along with Pozzi's book, written on the basis of the author's personal experiences and sources of information, as to warn the English of the dangers France and all Europe would be exposed to if they continued supporting Serbian expansionist political parties. The letter also emphasized the fact that the French press had either slandered or ignored Pozzi's book. This, however, did not diminish its contemporaneity and prominence. Among other things, Pozzi accurately anticipated the murder of the Serbian King Alexander, and indicated the perpetrators and reasons for his assassination.

Publisher's Note

"Black Hand over Europe" is an English translation of Henry Pozzi's book "La Guerre revient", originally written in French, and published in London, most probably in 1935 (there is no indication of the exact date of publishing).

The author surveys the political situation in Yugoslavia between the two World Wars, and shows how the Yugoslav state was created for the simple purpose of implementing Serbian domination over the non-Serb nations within Yugoslavia.

This book is distinguished by Pozzi's excellent knowledge of the political situation in mid-eastern Europe and represents a valuable testimony of his time.

Last year, the Croatian Information Centre decided to reprint the English version of the book due to the growing interest of the world public in the motives behind Serbia's expansionist policy which existed at the time the book was published and which was to escalate in the aggression against Croatia in 1991.

No alterations have been made to the original edition, however, certain incorrect terms and names have been marked by asterisks, with explanatory notes and corrections added at the end of the book. The French original was translated into Italian, Bulgarian, Hungarian and German, and since it was prohibited in the Little Entente, it was never translated into Croatian.

For this reason the Croatian Information Centre is currently preparing the first Croatian edition.

Introduction

Henry Pozzi's work Black Hand Over Europe was published in 1935, at the daybreak of the second world war. It is an expose of the tangled political situation in eastern Europe devised by arbitrating powers in Versailles, from the perspective of a first rate connoisseur of everyday affairs on the Balkans.

Political and social problems in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes escalated in the late twenties and early thirties. This phase lasted until the beginning of the second world war. In 1928, the most prominent Croatian political leaders (Stjepan Radic, Pavle Radic, Djuro Basaricek...) were assassinated in the Skupstina (Serbian Parliament) in Belgrade, because of their resistance to Serbian expansionist policy. This incident was followed by the coup d'etat of King Alexander and the dictatorship which was legalized by the octroyed constitution in 1931. Persecutions, political assassinations, and open repression were applied by the military and police apparatus, directed by General Petar Zivkovic, so as to destroy "tribal, religious and regional parties", and establish the ideology of "Yugoslavianism".

In 1933, the great Croatian author Miroslav Krleza wrote that his people's historical and cultural traditions were lost in the satrapy of anonymous chiefs of cabinets. Albert Einstein and Heinrich Mann appealed to the world to protect Croats from the oppressing regime imposed upon them by the Belgrade dictatorship.

The assassination of King Alexander during his official visit to France, in October 1934, was the culmination of "Yugo-Serbian" unitarianism, which in turn gave birth to political extremism, by means of political terror, social indigence and cultural repression.

Pozzi exposes the ambitions and imperial dreams of an insignificant Balkan oppressor, Serbia, which throttled other "Yugoslav" nations under the guise of a unitarian Yugoslavia. The familiar image of Serbia as the

"Piemont" of the Balkans crumbled before accounts of the institutionalized repression of the regime which did not even conceal that its Yugoslavianism was nothing but the mimicry of Pan-Serbian ideology.

Pozzi's interview with the Croatian politician Ante Trumbic, at the descent of his political career, reveals tragic rancour of betrayed expectations of Croats and other peoples.

The author provides examples of the Serbianization of Macedonia, which was systematically turned into "South Serbia", and reflects at the same time the foundation and Greater Serbian goals of various irregular Serbian organizations (governmental and military). He substantiates his analysis of everyday life, and lucid observations of political controversies interlaced with accounts of men-in-the-street, all of which represent invaluable statements from a contemporary viewpoint. Beside picturesque descriptions of Belgrade as a caricature of a European metropolis, a contemporary Babylon on the crossroads of East and West, one finds minute observations about the politically primitive military leadership, the corrupt bureaucracy and an acute social crisis. Written in a brisk and fluent journalistic style, and relying on the information source, rather than on a personal viewpoint, *Black Hand Over Europe* has maintained its documentary significance to date. The superb analysis revokes any doubt about the author's impartiality, which may be aroused by his definition of Serbia as the "Balkan thief". The author's observations of historical precedents of Greater Serbia's contemporary policies are accurate. They are based upon the concealed findings of the Carnegie Commission on the ethnic cleansing of non-Serb civilians during the Balkan War, and upon the analysis of documents that expose Serbia's role as Russia's exponent in the Sarajevo assassination, and they highlight upon Serbia's imperial traits in the "defensive" pact of the Little Entente.

The contemporaneity of Pozzi's work derives from the concord of present and past historical manifestations and circumstances. *Black Hand Over Europe* is a grave warning to all those who still, like their predecessors, underestimate the "Balkan" precedent. The continuity in Serbian expansionist policy is shown as the main source of the political and military destabilization in Europe and the entire world. In 1935, Pozzi concludes: "There can be no catastrophe in the Balkans that will not sweep into France and thence through Europe; and there can be nothing else but catastrophe in the Balkans!"

Relatively unjust peace is never an alternative to war, it is its excuse.

Author's Preface to the English Edition

I wrote the following chapters fifteen months ago, on my return from a long trip I had just made in the Balkans and in Central Europe, where I had been so often since the War to study the state of things created by the peace - by the false peace.

Since 1912 I have taken part there in all the events of the day; I have known intimately all the statesmen, I have had an entree everywhere, and I have received the confidences of ministers and revolutionaries. All doors have been open to me, and all means of information, official and private, have been at my disposal.

I knew about the preparation of the Sarajevo attack three months before the assassination of the Archduke. I knew all about Serbian guilt in the preparation for the War (in league with Russia) for I held the proofs in my hand that Serbian officials themselves had given me.

I knew all about the Bulgarian intervention against the Allies in 1915; I knew how it could have been avoided, and I know the men who were criminally responsible for it. I know all about the machinations, the dishonesties, the manoeuvres and the traffic of consciences which took place during the peace negotiations.

It is because the guilty ones knew I held all these secrets and was determined to reveal them that the publication of my book produced in France the effect of a bombshell. It was not possible to prohibit its sale for, thank God! France is still a free country; but, at the request of the Legations of the Little Entente, all the great French newspapers were silent about it and even refused to accept the notices offered to them by my publisher. Only a few independent journals, mostly provincial papers, spoke of "La Guerre Revient", as my book was called in France.

But nothing could stop the diffusion of the truth. In a few months more than 30,000 copies have been sold in French-speaking countries, and about 10,000 copies have gone abroad.

I have received hundreds of letters of congratulation. Two were signed by former French Ministers of Foreign Affairs. I have been asked to give more than fifty lectures in France and Belgium. Only a month ago I spoke at Louvain, the martyred city, before the students of the great Catholic university there.

All the great newspapers of Belgium, Germany, Italy and Austria have devoted long articles to my book, and in England "The Contemporary Review" has given it prominence.

The assassination of King Alexander at Marseilles (which I had predicted) gave a new force to my words. In the issue of "L Oeuvre" dated 12th October, 1934, Senator Henry de Jouvenel, former French Ambassador in Rome, called me "a prophet". It is not very difficult to be a prophet if all one has to do is to tell an obvious truth!

Two months after the publication of my book the Supreme Court of Belgrade sentenced me by default to twenty years of hard labour and the White Hand (the Panserb terrorist and military organization) sentenced me to death. I have been warned that if I attempt to give evidence at the Marseilles Trial I shall be assassinated.

But this is just one more reason why I should go! One of the things I am the proudest of is to have in my veins, by my English mother, the blood of the great Hampden, who held his own alone against the tyranny of the Stuarts; and, through my French ancestors, the blood of the Huguenot refugees, who preferred exile and the galleys to the denial of their faith. Do what they will, I shall go to the trial and place my book upon the stand as evidence of the tyranny of the regime which the murdered king represented.

Since I wrote my book fifteen months ago events have taken place rapidly in Central and Eastern Europe. There have been in quick succession, the Balkan Pact, the dissolution of the ORIM in Bulgaria, the Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement, the assassination of Chancellor Dolfuss at Vienna, that of King Alexander at Marseilles, the Hungaro-Yugoslav conflict, the German re-armament, and finally, a few days ago, the Italo-Yugoslav rapprochement.

I owe a few explanations of these more recent events to my English readers who are as interested as my French compatriots to learn the truth.

We must not let ourselves be hypnotised by the German question. The German danger which people pretend to have discovered during the past few weeks was not born overnight; it has existed for months, and all the governments in Europe knew of it.

This danger may eclipse, but it does not lessen, the gravity of the Balkan problems; problems born of the fraudulent and violent peace of Trianon. On the contrary, it aggravates them, because now the people who have been the victims of the false treaties, and to whom justice has been refused for sixteen years, know where to go to obtain justice and they are going there!

Let us take the above mentioned events one by one.

The people of France and England have not understood the significance of the coup d'etat in Sofia in the May of 1934. A very clever Serbian propaganda has distorted the truth. The truth is that when the Bulgarians learned, through their knowledge of the Secret Protocols of the Balkan Pact (the text of which the reader will find farther on), that the Pan-Serbs were determined to take as a pretext the first incursion of ORIM comitadjis into Macedonia in order to destroy once and for all the organizations defending the cause of their martyred brothers, they sought for a means to avoid the catastrophe menacing them.

As Bulgaria has no army, the only way was to bow before Belgrade. Bulgaria preferred humiliation to annihilation. The Bulgarians in the pay of Belgrade took advantage of this situation to make the coup d'etat. Understanding that this was the only way to save the independence of his country, and his own life, King Boris ceded. The present Bulgarian government is an anti-national government, detested by the great majority of the country. It maintains itself in power only by the support of Serbia, who threatens to intervene if it is overthrown. The ORIM has not been destroyed; it is stronger than ever. A month ago in Paris I talked for an hour with one of its new chiefs. As for King Boris, he is only waiting for the right moment to rid himself of the ministers whom Serbia has imposed on him. Taking advantage of the difficulties which Belgrade was undergoing as a result of the death of King Alexander, he has already shaken off the more compromised of them.

In spite of appearances (and I insist on this point) the Bulgarian national sentiment has not changed, any more than the Pan-Serbian hostility towards Bulgaria.

The mad dreams of the Belgrade imperialists have not changed either. No one in French official circles is ignorant of the fact that definite pacts were signed in Belgrade last June (1934) between Nazi delegates and the government of King Alexander. It was agreed that in exchange for her neutrality, should Germany try to enforce the Anschluss, Belgrade was to annex Austrian Carinthia. If Italy came to the aid of Austria, Belgrade would intervene against Italy. You will observe that Belgrade would not intervene as a friend of Germany but only as an enemy of Italy. The Pan-Serbian policy is made up of this sort of hypocrisy.

After the assassination of Chancellor Dolfuss, when Italy mobilised 50,000 men in the Brenner pass, the Serbs mobilised 100,000 men near Maribor, at the Carinthian frontier. The Serbs were in with the Austrian Nazis to such an extent that the latter crossed the frontier freely with their arms and trained themselves for two months in the region of Maribor; and after the failure of the putsch on July 25th the defeated Nazis were able to find a refuge in Yugoslavia, where the police did not go beyond disarming them. And they still move there freely to-day.

The Pan-Serbs of Belgrade were the direct accomplices of the assassins of Dolfuss; just as they had been the accomplices of the assassins of the Archduke in 1914, and for the same reasons. They hoped to profit by the disorders, and even by the war that might be provoked by the death of the Austrian statesman. They accused the Hungarians of having aided the assassins of King Alexander. They knew very well that this was not true, for they

know better than anyone why and by whom the king was killed. But they saw in it a convenient pretext to destroy Hungary because she obstructs the Pan-Serb imperialism.

The English people do not know, any more than do the French people, that last December the Little Entente had everything prepared for a general attack against Hungary. They counted on France to paralyse Italy. They were some tragic scenes at Geneva between M. Laval and the Czech and Serb delegates. War was near then. The attitude of Mr. Anthony Eden, the Italian delegate, Baron Aloysi, and of M. Laval (who frankly declared to Yevtitch and Titulesco that the French public opinion would refuse to make war under these conditions) would not have prevented the catastrophe if an unexpected intervention had not taken place. This came from Poland, who informed M. Laval that if the Serbs and Czechs attacked Hungary the Polish army would attack Czechoslovakia. This alone, last December, saved peace.

As to the murder of King Alexander, it was prepared by Croat patriots. The King had already missed being the victim of ten attacks launched against him. The Croats hold him responsible for the regime of terror which they suffer and which is inconceivable to a justice-loving Englishman, as he will see as he reads these pages. All Croatia, all Slovenia, are determined to free themselves from the atrocious tyranny weighing on them. They are determined to cut loose from the Pan-Serb exploitation of which they are innocent victims. At the time of the funeral of King Alexander the French newspapers told how the entire population pressed crying and sobbing along the railroads (I have seen tears in the eyes of Frenchmen reading these accounts) to salute the body of their "beloved sovereign". They published photographs. The stories were deceitful and also the photographs.

In reality, the police and the Pan-Serb organisations had mobilised the populations in their villages and had conducted them by force to the stations and into the cities, and had ordered them to cry, to sob, and to throw flowers.

The Croats and Slovenes, however, displayed their real sentiments on this occasion. At Zagreb, while the crowd filed (by order) before the royal coffin, and covered it (by order) with flowers, the widow of the great patriot, Stefan Raditch, publicly spat on the coffin. The Serbian censorship overlooked a photograph, which appeared in "L Illustration", and which shows Slovenes standing behind the police and laughing and nudging each other as the coffin was lowered.

Continual riots, which amounted to revolutionary attempts, have taken place in the last five months from one end to the other of Croatia and Slovenia. Those at Zagreb, Bled and Ljubljana have been terribly bloody. At Bled, more than 25,000 peasants attacked the Serbian troops, who fired on them with machine-guns.

The assassins of the King are considered by the five million Croats and Slovenes as heroes. The Pan-Serbs have asked the French government to "arrange" the trial of these men and to guarantee their death in advance. Their requests have been granted, and all the documents essential to their defence, all the documents revealing the bloody and corrupt regime that the King had authorised and favoured in Croatia and Slovenia, have been removed from the brief. At Marseilles, the Serb Secret Police, composed of veritable ex-convicts, menace the witnesses, and closely follow the examination in which delegates and the police of the Serbian White Hand participate in the most scandalous and illegal fashion. It can be said in advance, and I say it with a heavy heart, that the trial will be a parody of justice, and that everything will be done to silence the voices of those free men who will try to tell the jury the truth about the cause of the murder of Alexander Karageorgevitch.

I can affirm, and I have this information from an absolutely responsible French source, that the French government has promised Belgrade that the accused will be sentenced to death and executed as rapidly as possible thereafter. It would have been done already (for everything had been prepared to have the trial take place at the end of March) if the defence had not made an appeal before the Supreme Court against certain violations of the law by the examining magistrate.

I affirm, moreover, that the accused men (who were not at Marseilles on the 9th October) are held responsible, not only for the death of M. Barthou, but also for the deaths of two women killed near the royal car. Now, the film taken that day, which is not allowed to be shown in France, proves that neither M. Barthou nor the two women were shot by the assassin. This is why, without a doubt, they have refused to let the people of France see it and judge for themselves. As for me, I have been warned from an official source that if I persist in my desire to appear at the trial I shall be assassinated.

Certain people who believe all they read in the French Press will say that Belgrade and Rome are about to become reconciled. Before the German menace Serbs and Italians forget their old hatreds and listen wisely to the French counsel of reconciliation. Significant conversations were exchanged at Belgrade three weeks ago between the special Italian ambassador and the Prince-Regent Paul.

Conversations, and especially diplomatic conversations, are only idle talk. The only things that count in the lives of individuals as in the life of peoples, are facts.

Now, the facts that had caused the hostility between Italy and Yugoslavia still exist. They are the Italian claims upon the Balkan regions along the Adriatic which are inhabited by Italians, but which have been given to Belgrade (in violation of the Treaty of London, April 26th, 1915), and the Pan-Serb aims on Venetia, Istria and Fiume (Rijeka).

Belgrade knows that Italy will never let the Serbs annex Bulgaria, Albania and the Austrian province of Carinthia, and Belgrade is determined to have them. Rome is sincere, Belgrade is not. Rome subordinates everything to the desire to obviate the German peril; Belgrade (which is pro-German, for she counts on Germany to help her destroy Italy) conceals her German sympathies in order to rest on good terms with France who, for once, is in accord with Italy. It is important that the reader should follow the coming events with the closest attention.

That Germany is a menace to-day there can be no doubt! But it is our fault - the fault of those who did not hesitate in 1919 to make the peace one of "nonsense, violence and hypocrisy". Germany's claims for equality of rights are just, exactly as are those of the other vanquished nations - Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria.

But in order to avoid this danger, England, France and Italy should not rush to that other extreme which is leading us directly to war: under the inspiration of Benes, and the French politicians who share his ideas, they are recommencing the encircling of Germany - this encircling which led us to war in 1914. There is where the mortal peril lies.

I fear that Great Britain's foreign policy, which would attempt to save peace by pacts and by the recognition of the rights of the conquered nations, will materialise too late. If she continues her hesitations, unable to choose between a France who cries PEACE but harbours war-makers, sadists and oppressors among her followers, and a Germany who has risen strong and defiant from the tomb of Versailles (and ready to offer a helping hand to those lesser nations who are bound in the chains of Trianon, Neuilly and Saint-Germain) then war will come. If she allies herself with Russia, France and the Little Entente before these reparations have been made, in an effort to preserve a peace of injustice that is fast tottering and crumbling, war will come. If she allies herself with the Machiavellian Benes and the Pan-Serb war-makers and oppressors, then also war will come.

We few who understand, in this Europe so sorely tried by the ravages of war and the horrors of an unjust peace, we turn to England asking: "Has the time come for you to declare yourself?"

Only England can answer.

Paris

April 5th, 1935

Henry Pozzi

[The Croat Problem](#)

I. THE PERIL

War is coming again to Europe! The storm will come from the Balkans - that historic tinder box of the world which has now been made even more inflammable by the incorporation into Serbia of Croatian, Macedonian, Hungarian, Slovakian and Dalmatian* territories, under the name of Yugoslavia. (* Dalmatia was an autonomous Croatian region under Austrian administrative rule within the Habsburg Monarchy. For this reason, the author mentions Dalmatia as separate from Croatia)

I have made many friends in Serbia, but since July and December 1923 I have been unable to hide even from them my fears of a coming conflagration.

Yugoslavia was born out of the chaos of the Great War in a flurry of acclaim, but alas, none of the aspirations and ambitions for which Serbia went to war are likely to be realised: she is slipping irresistibly towards an unknown abyss, and we French are bound to her by bands of steel.

Even going back ten years it was easy to see something gripping Yugoslavia by the throat. But in the years since then the grip has been tightened, and tightened in my opinion by the dictatorship established by King Alexander Karageorgevitch. This dictatorship, however much it may claim a temporary success, must inevitably have the effect of poisoning all the Yugoslav organism. Whether the poisoning is incurable or not is the question for which I have sought an answer during two months in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and central Europe.

Belgrade says: "The difficulties through which we are passing are nothing more than a simple growing pain. They will disappear of their own accord when we have suppressed their causes, that is to say, finished the

material and moral unification of our country and definitely reduced our internal and external adversaries to a state of impotence".

Opponents of the dictatorship say: "There is no remedy: those who have seized power in Yugoslavia today, and who maintain that power by inhuman violence are leading her, and Europe with her, to a bloody catastrophe".

Between the men who proclaim these two points of view lies a gulf that every day widens, and all the men in Europe who are in touch with affairs know it. The man in the street does not know, for the Press is kept out of the inner circles.

Oh, yes! The Press has made "special investigations" of Yugoslav conditions; but what have they amounted to? What "special representative" has drawn attention to the occupation of one half of Yugoslavia by troops and police recruited from the other half; troops that are not even able to speak the language of their "compatriots" in the occupied zones?

In what European newspaper has it been stated that in all the cities of Croatia (even at Zagreb, the seat of the government in Croatia) all the Croat-owned coffee-houses had to be closed to the troops because of the terrible fights that continually broke out between the Croats and the Serbs?

Not one!

And yet, if Europe only knew, its every corner is tied up with the financial and political unity of Yugoslavia.

I know that I am in danger of being accused of exaggeration by those few special correspondents who have passed an agreeable day or two in the company of Serbian local government agents; who have been taken among the middle-aged women and gigolos at Sarajevo or across the aged stone of a Dalmatian quay?

How I should like to believe that they are right!

But the peril towards which Europe is heading by way of Yugoslavia is a mortal peril. Everything that strikes or menaces Yugoslavia strikes or menaces France; because militarily and politically since 1918 France's destiny has been bound to that of Belgrade.

There can be no catastrophe in the Balkans that will not sweep into France and thence through Europe; and there can be nothing else but catastrophe in the Balkans!

This fact must not be forgotten.

I passed over the Yugoslav frontier in the dark hours which precede the dawn, and it is significant that the first person I saw once I had passed the frontier was a soldier, half-hidden though he was behind a clump of trees, which his hands crossed upon his rifle. He was one of a group of men who were guarding the railways, bridges, switches, tunnels and stations. I saw thousands of these patrols from Susak to Ljubljana, from Zagreb to Sarajevo: entire regiments of them fully equipped for the field; rifles loaded, cartridge belts filled.

Literally they infested the international train. They questioned, verified, rummaged and searched. We were forbidden to leave our compartments. We might have been criminals. Soldiers with fixed bayonets made a minute inspection of the train from end to the other. Valises, sacks, hat-boxes, provision baskets, benches, cushions, partitions, roofs, floors, and springs, even to the linings of clothing, all were scrutinised, turned upside down and sounded. All foreign newspapers were confiscated.

"What are they hunting for?" I asked the guard. "Bombs!" he replied simply.

At Zagreb soon afterwards I was told that malcontents had been more active and more audacious than ever. In less than a week more than twenty-two railroad coaches had been demolished by bombs on Slovene lines, and fourteen on Croat. In one month more than fifty bombs had been discovered under the coal of locomotives or in the casing of cars. Not only property but lives had suffered. Three gendarmeries had been dynamited! One of the bombs currently used by the terrorists was given to me for inspection in a little Zagreb coffee house. It was not made by Communists, but by Croat and Slovene revolutionaries in Austria. It was about the same size and shape as a cigarette packet - charged with a terribly powerful new explosive, cheap and easy to handle.

I was given the exact formula of its ingredients and an agent of the Croat railroad even told me how to use it. It would not be in the public interest to publish these details here.

And these Slovene lands, where bayonets bristle and the war-dogs strain, what are they like? To the north, the mauve mountains, vegetation of a tremendous richness and variety, splendid forests and innumerable torrents, make a land of pure enchantment. To the south, sunshine makes them almost incredible.

But as one penetrates into Croatia, the landscape changes little by little, the wild rugged scenery of the north is left behind, and gives place to sober country, which though beautiful, takes on an ordered, civilised air.

The forests are less expansive; great plains roll into the distance, peopled, fruitful and entirely given over to agricultural exploitation; the magnificent and savage crags which everywhere penetrated the Slovene

woodlands and prairies now disappear. Divided by little clusters and green hedges, the meadow-lands, where glossy cattle and great bands of horses graze, remind one of the richness of the French Normandy farms. Interminable vineyards, interspersed with thousands of fruit trees, cover rounding hillocks of red soil. Expansive villages press their comfortable, violet-tiled houses around low churches with high, tapering belfries. Among the immense fields of maize and sunflowers, of sugar beet and grain already in sheaves, great farms are hidden in the verdure of opulent orchards. In all directions, over roofs and fields, a network of electric wires gleams in the sunshine. Wide macadamised roads, leading across new steel bridges abound everywhere, and the whole scene is one of strength, of richness, of industry and of ordered civilisation.

Yet here, even more than in Slovenia, on the roads and paths which stretch out across the country; on the village squares, along railways, near bridges at the foot of which women wash their linen in the bounding waters of torrents, everywhere are armed men; the outward and visible sign of the dictatorship. Beauty, plenty and industry are here in state of siege!

Our train stopped at a little station, and as I sat looking curiously at a detachment of infantry in marching order going down the street, a voice said in my ear: "Serb troops."

As if it were necessary to tell me! As if it were not enough to look at those spare, flat faces, with the black drooping moustaches and the close-set eyes! Every man of them was a Serb from Old Serbia. And so it was throughout Croatia; Serb sentries mile after mile along the railway; Serb gendarmes and police searching the trains and patrolling the country; Serb officers to verify my passport three times in six hours; Serb horsemen to halt my car later with an imperious signal.

Not a Croat nor a Slovene carried arms, or wore a uniform, or shared even a minute part of all this pomp and power, despite the fact that one third of the Yugoslav army is made up of Croats and Slovenes. The Croatian soldiers are among the best in Europe for their discipline, their endurance and their military spirit: yet all their military service is done far from their own country, either in Macedonia, or in Choumadia (Sumadija) on the other side of Belgrade.

"And it's preferable," Colonel T. said to me as we were dining with some Serb friends at Hotel Esplanade. "In ten years or so this generation will be replaced by the young generation which will have been 'Serbianised' to the core: then we shall be able to permit local recruiting. Until then, impossible! The young Croats are still imbued with pre-War ideals!"

All the important government employees are Serbs from Old Serbia. I mentioned this to a Croatian merchant to whom I had brought a letter from his parents in Paris. I pointed out that not only were the really important posts filled with Serbs, but also all those government jobs in which there was something to direct or to command, to superintend or to learn.

"That is nothing," said the merchant. "If you take our postal and telegraph services you will find that every single one of them is a member of the police. All my foreign letters without exception are opened before I get them.

The Orient Express takes twenty hours to go from Milan to Zagreb in the heart of Croatia. It takes seven to go from Zagreb to Belgrade. Yet the difference, moral and material, is greater between Zagreb and Belgrade than it is between Milan and Zagreb.

There in lies the root of all the trouble between this Balkan Belgrade and this European Zagreb. Yugoslavia is the scene of a conflict between two mentalities and two civilisations, between which there could be no agreement except by mutual goodwill, patience and reciprocity in face of a common task.

The forceful energy of Serbia and the cultured intelligence of Croatia supplementing each other could do great things. They could create between the Adriatic and the Danube a great monument to world peace - a nation of southern Slavs.

Of this new people Serbia would have been the arms and Croatia the brains. But instead of this new nation there is an unnatural yoking of unlikes who, because of their false alliance, are fast becoming bitter and irreconcilable enemies.

These two people are typified in their two chief cities. Zagreb by its atmosphere, the lay-out of its streets and homes, by its churches and stores and its cafes and hotels, is occidental. Belgrade, despite its transformation since the War, its modernism, and its tremendous growth in population, remains an oriental city. Centuries of barbarous domination, plus the Asiatic and Slavonic influences, have impregnated it with Balkanism.

The Serbs are Balkan to the marrow.

How different is Zagreb and the whole of the Croat lands! Their spacious and solid homes, orchards and prairies as well kept as gardens, are monuments to the method, harmony and intelligence applied everywhere!

Think, then, of these two warring mentalities thrown together into this cockpit of a country. The Serb, filled with Slav mysticism and Ottoman brutality; the Croat, emancipated by a long association with the Western world. Unity, under such conditions, is but an empty dream. It might have been possible; for the Croats, detached at the end of the War from Hungary, which for nearly ten centuries had been almost a second home to them, were ready to forget the past and build a new future with the co-operation of the Serbs. Despite the fact that their Slav ancestors were lost in the mists of time, undiscoverable in the passage of the centuries, the Croats were ready and willing, for the sake of prosperity, to have them reborn. They proclaimed themselves Southern Slavs with enthusiasm. They called themselves Yugo-Slavs, and they meant it literally and whole-heartedly.

Unfortunately the Serbs thought differently!

Pasitch, credited with the genius of a Bismarck, but in reality a Serb-obsessed politician with the skill of a horse-trader, knew that his countrymen thought differently. His life was dedicated to the grandeur and apotheosis of Serbia. His was the frenzied vision which started the ball rolling in the way it is rolling to-day - towards war.

He saw, as did the other leaders at Belgrade at the end of the War, that Serbia's territorial acquisitions meant fabulous personal profits; opportunity for fraud and pillage. To them the Croats were not long-lost brothers to be welcomed back into the fold, they were sheep leading themselves willingly to the shearing. To them Yugoslavia was no Serb-Croat-Slovene kingdom that had happened along miraculously, it was merely an enlarged Serbia!

That was all!

Today the same brutal blindness persists. Not a Serb talks of Yugoslavia or Yugoslavs. They talk always of Serbia and Serbians.

The Croatians, deprived of the administrative rights they had enjoyed under Hungary, protested immediately, and the Slovenes joined with them, but Serb magistrates and agents rapped them on the knuckles. By the beginning of 1920 Croatia and Slovenia were shaken by an intense political agitation against Serb domination.

Belgrade became all the more brutal. The Croat and Slovene peasant organisations, the backbone of the opposition, were declared illegal and at once dissolved. Their founders and their leaders were imprisoned or forced to leave the country.

Then arose a great new chief with an ardent soul and a voice of bronze. Stephan Raditch!

Raditch was produced by the need of the moment. But he was not allowed to interfere too much with the power of Belgrade. Arrested, condemned, put behind bars, he still threw his immense personality beyond and stirred his people to such a pitch that King Alexander, to stay insurrection, offered to make peace and to have Raditch for a minister. That was in June 1925; through the agency of Raditch the Croats and Slovenes saw themselves on the brink of political justice again. But they rejoiced too soon; for in June 1928, Raditch fell in the Yugoslav Parliament, mortally wounded by the bullet of a Pan-Serb representative, and six months later came the coup d'etat, especially aimed against the Croats and Slovenes, by which parliamentary government in Yugoslavia was ended, and the military dictatorship set up.

And now, after years of this regime, crushed by new and ever-new taxation, under the military heel, bowed but not broken, Croatia dreams only of freedom from the Serbs. She is a nation of outlaws. Her outlaw bands (university men, workers, peasants) roam from one frontier to another, fighting Serb volunteers and troops, blowing up military posts and public buildings, shooting gendarmes.

A merciless guerilla warfare goes on in the forests and the hills day after day. From July 1932 to the end of February 1933, more than 200 soldiers and police were killed, over 20 posts and gendarmeries were destroyed, and the insurgents lost over 300 men.

The dream of a unified South Slavdom has withered and died in less than sixteen years, and now its corruption stinks across the length and breadth of Europe.

II. THE OPINION OF A CHIEF

This Serbo-Croat conflict endangers the very existence of Yugoslavia. The day that the Croats and Slovenes break away, then Yugoslavia will disappear from the map. Serbia, deprived of nearly five million of her inhabitants and their resources, will drop again to a little nation of fewer than ten million people, of whom two million, the Macedonians and the Germano-Hungarians of Banat, are her mortal enemies. Serbia's military power would no longer be a political pawn in the European game which France is playing with one eye on Serbia as an ally. And if once the balance of the game breaks, God knows where we shall end.

With this fact in mind, I asked myself repeatedly if, in the interests of Yugoslavia, of France, of Europe, it were not possible to effect a reconciliation of these warring peoples. I put my question to Serbian friends. "Go and see Dr. Trumbitch," said one celebrated doctor, a confidant of King Alexander. "He is the leader of the Croat

Opposition. He does not like Belgrade, but Belgrade respects him. He will be as impartial as anyone can be in this country today."

There was no trouble about the interview. Dr. Trumbitch lived in a cold, austere apartment guarded by policemen in uniform and in plain clothes. I lost no time in coming to my point. "Is it true, Mr. Minister, as your compatriots in exile in Paris and Geneva pretend, that there is no possibility of an entente between the government of Belgrade and the populations of Croatia and Slovenia?" "None!" "None, Mr. Minister? To-day, perhaps not, for the passions on both sides are over-excited; but to-morrow, if the necessary gestures of conciliation were made?" "They will not be made!" With his hands on his knees, his face the colour of old ivory, Dr. Trumbitch answered me in a hard voice that hammered home each syllable. "They cannot be made," he continued after a pause, during which, with eyes half-closed, he seemed to be meditating his words. "Even should the men of Belgrade desire an appeasement, not a Croat, not a Slovene, after all they have suffered, would accept. Should we desire such a gesture, the Serbs, whose pride will always refuse to recognise that an adversary can be right, would never consent." "I beg you to say this, sir, and say it to all your compatriots: that between us and the Pan-Serb camarilla which directs Yugoslavia to-day, it is not a question of force, for they are by far the strongest, but it is a question of time, a question of patience, until the day arrives when accounts will be settled. "You will kill the unity of Yugoslavia." Dr. Trumbitch bounded from his chair, transfigured with anger. "The unity of Yugoslavia! There has never been such a thing! There is a Serbia who has seized Croatia, Slovenia, Banat, Macedonia, Montenegro, Dalmatia and more; and who has tried for fourteen years to transform them into mere Serb provinces. At first, as long as Pasitch was able to impose his will, things were better. He had no more affection for us than the rest of Belgrade, but he measured the consequences of open conflict with us. He proceeded secretly, by a sort of underground work. They gave it a semblance of form then, but since the vote for the constitution of unity in 1921 all that is ended; the men of Belgrade are convinced that no one can resist them, and they do not pretend any more.

"They have swept away traditions, customs, local liberties—all that has made for centuries the qualities, the faults, the distinct personalities of our diverse peoples. Serbianisation is carried to extremes under the name of national unity. That unification, sir, is a unification downwards. It is the illiterates who command the educated; imbeciles who command the intelligentsia. Everyone in Yugoslavia, be he Dalmatian, Hungarian, Croat or Macedonian, must think, speak, pray and love in Serbian. While they are at it, they might as well demand a prenuptial certificate affirming that the future couple can say in Serbian, with a Belgrade accent: "I adore you" and without which the marriage will not be celebrated. You will see: they will come to it!

"Yugoslavia has never existed but on the paper of banknotes, stamps and official documents. For eight million so-called Yugoslavs the word 'Yugoslavia' is only the synonym for oppression, suffering, and intellectual and moral abasement. "What Croatia and Slovenia were before the War, you know! Theoretically they were dependent upon Hungary, but in reality they administered themselves. Their culture, their civilisation, made them the equal of any occidental country. Their riches and prosperity were legendary. The probity, the political conception of their administrators, and their devotion to public interests, made them an elite. The corruption of the Serbs, on the other hand, and the trickery and incapacity of their administrators, was the laughing stock of Europe: they have imposed that upon us. Our wealth, the fruit of our labour and of our intelligence, they are bent upon destroying, going as far as to impose their antiquated legislation upon our co-operative banks which the technicians of all Europe admire. "This, sir, is what union with Serbia signifies for the Croats and Slovenes from an economic standpoint alone."

The former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Serbo-Croat-Slovene kingdom paced the room like a lion in a cage. He spoke in broken sentences, weighing essential words, repeating them in a low voice, as if he were speaking to himself. "To pretend to make an extremely centralised State, unified in its language, its customs, its civil and fiscal legislation, as in England, for example, or in your own country, of a nation composed of pieces and morsels hastily assembled, as in our monarchy - what stupidity! What ridiculous vanity! "Decentralisation and not centralisation should have been the order of the day in Yugoslavia. They should have aided the existing state of things by creating four or five great administrative centres, those which history has created: Belgrade for the Serbs, Ljubljana for the Slovenes and Dalmatians, Zagreb for the Croats, Sarajevo for the Bosnians, and Skoplje for the Macedonians. A central government composed of representatives of each region, of each nationality, and which quite naturally would have been situated at Belgrade, would have presided over the common destiny. The unification would then be accomplished unconsciously, the national customs of each nationality being preserved, and only those being abandoned which the common welfare demanded."

"A sort of Switzerland, Mr. Minister?" I interjected. "If you will! Or even something like your France before the revolution, when the legislation and central administration under the king, admitted the co-existence of a

provincial legislation and administration." "Perhaps it would be possible, Mr. Minister, to achieve this ideal at a later date...."

"Too late, sir!" Dr. Trumbitch cut short my words. "Too late; with all the bitterness, all the deception, all the hatreds engendered by the acts of this clique of aspirants and mercenaries who have tyrannised and exploited for fourteen years all who are not of their blood. What the authors of the coup d'etat of January 1929 desired was not to defend the principle of national unity said to be menaced by us Croats. Oh, no! That is only a specious argument designed to justify the inexcusable violation of the oath taken by King Alexander in the eyes of occidental democracies, and particularly in the eyes of France. It is a diplomatic lie. The real aim of the dictators was to render possible the destruction of all civilisation and culture other than their own, which incidentally, is the most inferior of all our diverse peoples. In a penitentiary the prison guards do as they wish, and Yugoslavia for the last few years is nothing but a prison camp! "If you do not believe what I say, go and talk of these things to the Hungarians of Banat, whom the Serbs treat as they had never been treated by the Turks; go and talk to the Macedonians, who have been subjected to a regime of violence which for a long time I have refused to believe and which will dishonour Serbia in the eyes of the world the day that it is known. Speak of an entente with the Serbs to our populations of Croatia and Slovenia, to the Italians on the Adriatic coast, to the Montenegrins, to the Bosnians, whom the Serb administration and police persecute, pillage and assassinate - speak to them and see what you will get! "No! They have gone too far. Because we have dared to insist upon our just part in the administration of a State in which, intellectually, morally and materially we constitute incontestably the elite; and because we have dared to denounce the shameful wastes and robbery of a rotten government, the people at Belgrade have imposed on us a tyranny which we, free men that we are, refuse to support any longer. "The corruption and the laziness of the Turkish officials killed the Turkey of the Sultans. They are surpassed by those of the Serbian administrators who have been imposed upon us by force. From the highest to the lowest, all are for sale; all traffic their authority. They do not even take pains to hide the fact, for the example comes to them from the ministers, of whom there is not one who does not claim his commission for civil and military supplies. Your great French enterprises of munition, aviation and public works know something about this!" "You are severe, Mr. Minister, with the directors of Belgrade!" I suggested. "Severe? But do you know, sir, to cite only one example, that no one in Yugoslavia at the present time, outside a few Serb personalities who received and dissipated them, knows the exact figure of the sums paid by Germany as reparations? "You do not believe me? Very well, amuse yourself by trying to trace these payments in the Yugoslav Budget! You will find nothing, or next to nothing! This money is not considered by our Serb chiefs to be the common property of the nation, but as booty belonging to them. They have utilised it for certain secret needs of Serbia; in particular to pay for the lying propaganda carried on in foreign countries. How easy it is! They are answerable to no one but themselves.

"What about the loans floated in France, and in particular the 7 1/2 %? What about the advances that your treasury has granted to Yugoslavia? Do you know that nine-tenths of them have been employed in Serbia alone, without parliamentary control, and without accountable justifications? That is true, I swear, yet all of us, Croats, Slovenes, Dalmatians and Macedonians will have to repay them; if they ever are repaid, for I tell you frankly - and Korochetz, Matchek, Previtchevitch, Spaho and Budak, all the chiefs of our national opposition, will tell you the same-that these loans will be absolutely repudiated by us when we are released from the Serbs. "The present taxes crush us. Calculated on gold values they are four to five hundred per cent. greater than those which we paid when we were dependents of Hungary, and they are often ten times greater than the Serbian taxes. Yet the revenue is devoted nearly exclusively to Serbian agriculture, commerce, industry, railroads and government employees. We are sheared like sheep. We pay dearly, I can tell you, for the honour of being Yugoslavs!"

"But, Mr. Minister," I said, "the Serbs have the right to say that their country, having been ravaged, pillaged and emptied of all its resources by four years of enemy occupation, should receive the first attention of the central government before your own, which, naturally, has not suffered from the War."

Dr. Trumbitch, who was walking towards the window, stopped abruptly: "And who pretends to the contrary, sir?" he said, returning to sit near me. "Not I! And who would complain about it in Croatia, where the lowest of our peasants has an innate feeling for justice and right, if those who are taking our money had treated us decently and openly. But it is the spoliation, the robbery and the tyranny which raises the Croats against the Serbs, and will keep them so raised until the day when we come out victors. Force may temporarily crush right, but right always finishes by triumphing over force, especially when those who are in the right possess a culture, a morality, and a civilisation superior to their oppressors. "You are not going to compare, I hope, the Croats, the Slovenes, or the Dalmatians, whom centuries of artistic, moral and intellectual communion with Austria, Italy and Hungary have made pure occidentals, with these half-civilised Serbs, these Balkan hybrids of Slavs and Turks. They are

barbarians, even their chiefs - whose occidentalism goes no further than their phraseology and the cut of their clothes! You knew Pasitch! He was a true Serb! You know Marinkovitch, Givkovitch, Lazitch, Fotich? Do they have the same mentality or the same morality as the statesmen and soldiers of France or Germany? Would France or Germany have tolerated a dictator who had been the assassin of a woman? Yet Serbia has honoured Givkovitch, murderer of Queen Draga. It is men like these who are determined to crush us! What else can you expect from them? "There is no longer, today, in Croatia, Slovenia or Dalmatia, either individual or public liberty. We live in about the same fashion, and under the same regime as the Macedonians. A little longer and nothing will differentiate us from them. "Take, for instance, the liberty of the Press. The Serbs will tell you that it is guaranteed by law.

Quite right! So it is! The first article of that law says: The Press is free. But the second says: This liberty is conditioned by law... There is nothing to stop our newspapers from printing all the news - nothing at all. But the proofs of each number must be submitted to the police, and only the censured copy may be printed. If they disobey the Censor, what is the result? Immediate arrest; suppression of the journal and anything up to three years in prison for the editor and the responsible director. Do you want an example of the liberty which our Press enjoys? Three months ago, on the occasion of my birthday, I received several hundreds of telegrams from my friends in Croatia, Slovenia and Dalmatia. As it was impossible for me to thank them individually, I sent a note of thanks to the papers. Its publication was prohibited by the police censor under the pretext that I was seeking to transmit an order to my friends by an indirect method.

"It is useless to tell you that the right of free association, the liberty of speech, which we fully enjoyed under the domination of Hungary, are no more to-day than memories. You know it already. The only people who have the right of free association, the right to exchange their ideas, are the Serb immigrants. Why, only a few days ago a priest named Rudolph Jesima was sentenced to three months' hard labour for daring to suggest to a tax-collector that he should give the peasants in his district a little time in which to pay their taxes. For having said that in his opinion Belgrade was not so well kept as Zagreb, a peasant called Antoine Ekarta was fined 500 dinars; whilst another peasant, Etipe Tarlitch, of the village of Drinska Slatinika, was condemned to two months' imprisonment by the court of Osijek for criticising the dictatorship. "Individual liberty has gone! Political trials, here, succeed one another incessantly. They are all parodies of justice; and the judges, capable of anything, mercilessly apply laws which are a derision of justice and right! The accused are tortured and maimed in the course of their 'interrogations' to such a point that they nearly all have to be carried on stretchers to the hearing. All are given the maximum possible sentence of isolation, or forced labour. By this means they are utterly eliminated from society, for they are never allowed to go free again, but stay in the prison where they are deprived of water or food every other day, beaten ferociously, worked to exhaustion, piled eight, ten and twelve in damp cells swarming with vermin, and there they smother, pressed one against the other. There they live in filth and under the lash. Most of them carry from thirty to forty pounds of chains each. As for the women, better death than what awaits them on the part of the Serb police and jailers.

"The elite of our youth, sir, had to fly to foreign countries. The rest are subjected to a constant supervision. At the least pretext Serb gendarmes invade the universities and beat them without mercy. The handy men of the dictatorial police are all members of that abominable association the Novi Pokret, that filial of the White Hand and the Narodna odbrana, whose chief is no other than the colonel commanding the garrison of Zagreb; these fellows assassinate with impunity, and in the very centre of the city, all those who displease them or who cause them any trouble whatsoever.

"My old friend, Professor M. Sufflay, one of our chief men of science, was killed by these ruffians, and the Press was not allowed to mention it at all until they were commanded, under pain of instant suppression, to publish an infamous communication, edited by Dr. Bedekovitch, Chief of Police of Zagreb, which affirmed that my friend had been killed during a brawl with some of his supporters at the door of a public house. Less than a month ago one of the chiefs of the Peasant Democratic Party was clubbed to death by cut-throats of the Novi Pokret in the very heart of Zagreb.

"You saw the friends who surrounded me on the terrace of Hotel Esplanade yesterday evening. They are the members of my committee. They know my life is in danger, and so they accompany me everywhere. But they will not prevent the inevitable: I shall end as my friend Sufflay did. They will assassinate me at some street-corner, or at my door, or else they will deport me to an unknown village in Old Serbia where I shall be at the mercy of brutes who have been charged to put me out of the way. If the people in Belgrade were not certain that his assassination would provoke a general uprising of the Catholic Slovenes, Dr. Korochetz, priest though he be, would have been murdered long ago; but the Pan-Serbs of Belgrade will find means of getting rid of him yet! Assassination has always been their favourite political arm: Queen Draga and the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand

know something about that." "But, Mr. Minister," I said, "if Croatia and Slovenia succeeded in separating themselves from Serbia, what would they do? They are too small to stand alone. By what means, moreover, do you believe a separation realisable? How can you possibly beat the Serbians?"

"Liberation", replied Dr. Trumbitch, "will come to us either by revolution or by war. If the present Pan-Serb dictatorship is destroyed by a revolution and a Republic is established then we shall proclaim our independence. For my part, however, I consider revolution is improbable for a long time to come. The dictatorship, menaced by a revolution, will seek to escape it by risking all in a foreign war. That the dictatorship is visibly preparing for such a war may be seen from the provocations and attacks committed by its agents against the Italians in Istria and Dalmatia. If this war comes, then the Croats, Slovenes and Dalmatians will do what the Czechs did in 1916; and their refugees abroad, speaking and acting in the name of their compatriots who still remain under the Serbian yoke, will proclaim before the inevitable defeat of Serbia, the will of their peoples to be free from her.

"You said just now that we are too small to stand alone! We do not propose to do so, though we could do it well enough, but the future which we foresee is elsewhere. It is in a great state stretching from the Adriatic to Poland: a great federal Republic which will contain Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia and the Tyrol, and which will be joined to Poland. It would also be an impregnable barrier to pan-Slavism, which you Frenchmen do not realise is a mortal danger to occidental civilisation. And finally, economically, it would re-establish in Central Europe that harmony between production and consumption, between agriculture and industry, which was madly destroyed fourteen years ago by men who pretended to make peace by arbitrarily mangling economic and political entities born of centuries of effort and experience."

Frankly then, almost brutally, I put the final question: "You spoke of war, Mr. Minister," I said. "You and I know which war you had in mind - the war which will throw Yugoslavia into conflict with Italy. This war is inevitable. It is coming with irresistible force and rapidity. What I want to know is this: if it should break out tomorrow, what would be the attitude of the Croats? Before the Latin enemy, would the national union of Yugoslavia assume a new character as Belgrade affirms, and as her paid writers and speakers have broadcast to the world? "The Italo-Serbian war is indeed inevitable, in my view," replied Dr. Trumbitch with gravity. "Nothing, it seems to me, can prevent it, particularly since the men behind the dictatorship desire it, because in it they see their only chance of safety, and they believe that they have all the chances of victory by the constitution of the Little Entente. For months they have been organising in Dalmatia such incidents as will force Italy, they hope, to act in a manner that will give her the appearance of an aggressor. You ask me what will be our attitude? My reply is that in no case, even in case of a foreign war, would the Croat opposition consent to give its political or moral support to the present government of Yugoslavia. We have given the dictatorship no blank cheque, and in no case, not even in case of war against Italy, will the opposition in Croatia renounce its nationalist and separatist aims.

"Our children will fight on the side of the Serbs, as the Bulgarians of Macedonia, or the Hungarians of Banat will do, because they cannot do otherwise, for they will be mingled with them in the same regiments. They will do what the young men of Alsace Lorraine did in the German Army in 1914. They will fight to the end, at all events. You are at liberty to take that as you please."

"Well, then," I said, "contrary to what Belgrade pretends, such a war will not recreate the national unity of Yugoslavia, Mr. Minister?" "A war would recreate the national unity only if it were declared by a government truly representing the country," replied Dr. Trumbitch, "and the present government of Yugoslavia represents only itself. There is no national unity possible, even in the face of an enemy, in a country where several thousand men exploit and oppress millions."

I have set down for you the opinions of Dr. Trumbitch. They are the opinions of a moderate man, a man of substance and of character. He does not speak hastily, but his words come from his heart, through a sound, business brain. "Tell France! Tell Europe!" he cried as I left him. "I know it puts my life further in danger - but what matter, if Europe will but learn the truth and defend itself from the coming catastrophe!"

His last words still burn in my brain! I still hear his voice! I still see his lighted ardent eyes! And yet only a few months afterwards he expiated his "crime" in the torture-chambers of Serbia.

Will nothing teach us!

III. WHAT THE MAN-IN-THE-STREET THINKS

"Don't take Dr. Trumbitch too seriously," said the officials at Belgrade when I approached them on the subject. "He is an old man, you know! A soured old man at that. He thinks he has been dismissed unjustly, and naturally he does not love us. Dr. Trumbitch, ex-minister of Foreign Affairs though he be, is not the whole of Croatia."

Perhaps, after all, they are right! There are notoriously two sides to every question! I hammered that fact into my brain and listened in patience to the denials of Belgrade. Then I went and talked to the men-in-the-street-business men, workers, and the peasants of Croatia.

All the Croats and Slovenes whom I questioned in the course of my investigations were at one with Dr. Trumbitch. At Zagreb, at Ljubljana, at Skoplje, at Zemoun, at Belgrade even, I talked with priests, professors, doctors, merchants, and the simple people. They all backed up what Trumbitch had said-yes, even the soldiers.

What impressed me even more was the feeling which they held for France. Why does France support the Serbs against us? they asked me. France is a republic. Doesn't she know what we are suffering, or doesn't she want to know? Tell France that the day will come when we shall be free, and then we shall remember how France has stood by and watched us suffer. Yes, I said to myself, we Frenchmen will suffer deeply for our neglect of the humanities here, just as we suffered in 1915 from Bulgaria as a result of our injustice in 1913.

Apart from what I learned from the populace of Croatia and Slovenia, I have gained much knowledge from the slips made by Belgrade officials. Statements and denials made by them I have proven false - as when they denied the military occupation of Croatia and Slovenia which I had seen with my own eyes. Also I have not forgotten the hatred, mingled with fear, with which Dr. Marianovitch, President of the Press Bureau, referred to the chiefs of Croatia, Slovenia and Dalmatia. Power which is sure of itself does not talk in that fashion. Nor does an official of a sound government have to declare, as one did in my presence, that they "awaited a favourable occasion" to lay hold of the traitors.

But listen to what the Man-in-the-Street has to say! Here, for example, is Meslitch, whom I had known years before in Croatia. I met him by chance not many months ago as I was leaving the Presidency at Belgrade.

Meslitch is a Croat who had married a Serb and had lived in Belgrade for twenty-five years, making a great deal of money out of business. I cried out with delight at seeing him again, and he responded with a resounding "My dear friend!" and then added in a whisper, "Ah! So I've caught you leaving this dirty hovel, eh?" I could not conceal my surprise. "Dirty hovel?" I cried. "So that's what you call the Presidency of the Council?"

Your Dictatorship doesn't appear to impress you very much." Meslitch's jovial face creased in alarm. He seized my arm. "Hush, for God's sake," he whispered, and hurried me along. "You ought to know that we cannot speak our minds openly in Belgrade," he added a few seconds later. "We cannot meet the people we want to meet, say what we think as man to man, read the newspapers and books we like, or love where we have the desire to love. This country, that once was as honest and just as any you could find, has become a factory of beasts and cowards!" As we passed the Royal Palace, a colonel of the guards, moustachioed and smiling, saluted my companion.

Meslitch returned the salute effusively and we hurried on. "Listen, my friend," he said, "I know how you are living here. In the diningroom of your hotel you sit at the same table every day by special request of the manager, and you are given the exclusive attention of the same waiter every day. They tell you that he does not understand French, but that he will be able to understand you well enough to fetch the food and drink you want. Well, that waiter speaks better French than you do, and he doesn't lose a single word you say. He knows every move you make and reports them all to his employer." "His employer?" I asked. "What the devil does he want with my affairs?"

"Ha!" said Meslitch. "What doesn't he want? You can't guess, eh?"

"No," I said.

"Perhaps you will when you know that the waiter's boss is the Chief of Police."

I stopped and faced Meslitch. "Good God!" I said. "Has it come to that?" Meslitch shrugged his shoulders. "To that?" he echoed. "That's nothing! You ought to see!" "Oh! I've seen a little," I said. "It's obvious that things are in a bad way." "Bad way! Mon dieu! Bad way!" Meslitch's face went crimson, and he began to loosen his tongue.

Listen to him! A Man-in-the-street-a business man of Yugoslavia.

"After the victory," he said, "everyone marched hand in hand together, except the Macedonians and Magyars, which we understood! We didn't know where we were going, but everyone went there with confidence. In any case you were here, you saw! From one end of the country to the other there was the same elan, wasn't there? A common will to work together for the country, to fuse all our little countries into one great nation. Why, when King Alexander, he was only Regent at the time, visited Zagreb, he was acclaimed as he had never been at Belgrade.

"It was too good! It couldn't last! It hasn't lasted, anyhow. Peace had not been signed a year before they started eating each other. Sorry! The Serbs here were eating the others, was what I meant. They jumped upon our country, our work, our riches, like locusts! Ah, the dirty curs!"

Meslitch was so furious that he forgot all prudence and raised his voice.

"Because they were the strongest with their army of veterans and the support which France gave them, they monopolised all the positions, all the money and all the power. As for the rest of the country-nothing! And especially for us Croats, whom they hate because we are richer, better educated, more Europeanised, and also because we are Catholics while they are Greek Orthodox.

"Racial brothers, they call us! Pah! That all sounds very well in royal proclamations, in articles of propaganda, and in the communications that the Serbian Press-Bureau dictates to French journalists passing through Belgrade.

"But what is the real truth about the way we Croats are treated by our dear Serbian 'racial brothers'? God! They have crushed us with taxes, and used the money to fill Croatia with Serbian soldiers. That fact alone ought to be enough! If there were any true patriotism in Yugoslavia then Croat soldiers would do for Croatia. But not now.

The game is up! Yugoslavia is flying to pieces, and the Serbs are trying to hold it together by force. Of course, they explain the presence of the Serbian soldiers very easily. The Croat soldiers fought on the side of Hungary during the War, they say, and they are not loyal to Serbia.

"That is true up to a point, and there certainly was a lot of sympathy for Hungary among the Croat officers and officials. That the powers-that-be in Yugoslavia should want to get rid of them is quite natural. It was their right. Our own Croat chiefs were the first to admit it, and to recommend a general clear-out. But that is a long time ago. Things have altered since then-all things except the Serbian mind. That still remains as thick as ever.

There is no longer any excuse for shutting our men out of the high posts, yet men who are not Serbians by birth, and who do not profess the Orthodox faith, are rigidly excluded from all but the lowest governmental posts. Not only are there no Croats in Serbian posts, but all the best posts in Croatia are occupied by Serbians." "All?" I asked.

"As nearly all as makes no difference," replied my friend. "Do you want figures? I know them by heart.

"At the Ministry of the Interior, 113 out of 125 officials are Serbs. At the Foreign Office, 180 out of 219. At the Presidency of the Council, 13 out of 13. At the Ministry of Justice, 113 out of 136. At the Securities Bank, 196 out of 200. At the court, 30 out of 31, and so it goes on. "Add to this, my friend, the fact that all the Serb officials are Orthodox, and that hardly half of the non-Serbs are Catholic, and you have a complete picture of the state of affairs. Now, according to the census taken two years ago, the percentage of the two religions in Yugoslavia is 42 for the Orthodox, and 39 for the Catholics, the rest being Musulmans or Jews. Yet nobody dare point out the discrepancy. Do you know that for having dared to say these things to his priests, in a confidential message, the coadjutor of our Catholic Bishop of Belgrade has just been condemned by the judges to fifteen days in prison for endangering national safety. He is doing them now. I tell you, we are racial brothers all right! "After the War we came to the Serbs with open arms. They have treated us as though we are enemies. Of course we resisted, but the officials of Belgrade outlawed our chiefs and our organisations. In order to subdue us, they have smothered Croatia and Slovenia beneath Serb regiments. For the Croat patriots, whose only crime was to complain against the despotism and injustice of which we have been suffering, there has been nothing but exile, court-martial, hard labour, the gallows and assassination. You saw the railway station at Zagreb after the railroad strike in 1923, where after four days the dead were still lying where they had fallen. You know that when it became impossible for them to keep Stephan Raditch and his friends in prison any longer the Serbs simply assassinated them!

"To-day, after fourteen years of life in common, our government of Yugoslavia-our government, I repeat the joke

- in order to prevent an armed insurrection from breaking out from one end to the other of Croatia and Slovenia,

is having to keep there more than sixty thousand Serb gendarmes, police and soldiers, whilst our own boys are in the garrisons of Macedonia, commanded by Serb non-commissioned officers. In Croatia it is the peasants of Choumadia, or the illiterate brutes from Nisch or from Kragoujevatz, who supervise our populations and lend a willing hand to the police. "The Macedonians complain about our soldiers being there, but what about us? Why, you've no idea of the existence suffered by our people in Croatia. In the prisons they subject our suspects to tortures more atrocious than those of the Inquisition. Here in Belgrade in December of last year, I saw the trial of Dr. Toth, the Director of the Customs of Zagreb and some of his friends. They were accused of high treason. I saw them when they entered the court-room. It was horrible! Most of them could not walk because the police magistrates had smashed their testicles in order to make them confess to what they had not done. Dr. Toth had half his teeth broken, and had aged twenty years. My God! It was awful!

"Professor Sufflay was assassinated by the order of the Minister of the Interior, and the murder was carried out by agents delegated by the Central Commissar of Police at Zagreb. Dr. Mile Budak, one of the directing personalities of the Croat opposition, was attacked and beaten to death by the members of the Pan-Serb terrorist association, Young Yugoslavia, which the Chief of Police of Zagreb directs, and the president of which is the general commanding the garrison there. "The citizens of Zagreb ask themselves why the police did not come to defend the victim; why the assassins who were arrested by the civilians have been liberated; and who imprisoned the citizens who had handed them over to the police. "But this is not the end of it: a list of 27 political personalities of Zagreb has been discovered, a list alleged to have been drawn up by the Novi Pokret, with indications to the effect that all on the list are to be assassinated on the same night. Also it is quite well known that the aggressors of Dr. Budak, namely, Sahinovitch Saban, Sarani Adem and Voja Karakatenovitch, are all three agents of the State Secret Service, that they are all inscribed on the list of official spies and that they are paid out of the secret funds of the State. "And yet, to hear the Serbs talk, you would gather that they are astonished that we resist, that all our young people rise up against them, and that such men as Trumbitch, Korochetz, Matchek and Pavelitch encourage and direct this resistance. The Serbs are even indignant; they cry "treason!" because all Croatia and Slovenia, young and old, rich and poor, dreams of but one thing: freedom from this thing called Yugoslavia. "The words of Hungary fourteen years ago, when we Croats acclaimed the union with Serbia, have been perfectly justified.

You will see, they told us, before two years have passed the Serbs will treat you as cattle. You will regret the day you were cut off from Hungary! Their words have come true - we regret it all right." I am afraid I laughed and said: "It is a little late, isn't it? You won't stay with Serbia, and you won't go back to Hungary! Croatia alone could not make a State!" "Couldn't it?" snapped Meslitch. "What makes you think so? A free Croatia would exist very well; she would find again the prosperity that the Serbian administration made her lose. But we don't look for that. There are also Slovenia, Dalmatia and Bosnia. What about them? They would join with us, and together we would form a Catholic State extending from the Adriatic to the Danube, which would group together all the Europeans who in 1918 committed the stupidity of letting themselves become the underlings of a Balkan people. "You may say that it is too late, and that we are eternally condemned to drag the Yugoslav ball and chain along with us. You are hopelessly wrong, old friend. I don't know how the separation will take place, but I am convinced that nothing can stop it. "Don't think me rabid. I am not rabid - merely deliberate. I am a peaceful man, and, moreover, strange though it may seem, I love Serbia profoundly. My wife is a Serbian. I fought for Serbia, when there was some merit in doing so. Therefore, what I say to you I have the right to say. My words are not treasonable; they are the words of a patriot who is opposed to the governmental methods of Serbia, but who loves the country and its people still."

[Serbian Scene](#)

I. Belgrade and Impressions

The Belgrade of yesterday was half-Serb, half-Turk a mysterious, lovable city of contrasting civilizations. Today, very little of the Belgrade of yesterday remains. All that made up its originality and charm is gone. Even the old Turkish fortress has been embellished with stairs of reinforced concrete, of which every flight is horribly ornamented with cast-iron flower-pots. Those quaint little Turkish homes, with their vine-carpeted outer courts and their sweet-smelling jasmynes; all have given way to the modernity of giant buildings, pretentious and vulgar. Yesterday's taverns, where gallants used to sit and drink plum brandy and nibble salted cucumbers, have given place to the palaces which house the Ministries of War, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Agriculture, Interior, Roads and Communication.

A few still exist here and there, but by the time these words are in print they will probably have gone the way of the others. Where little more than five years ago were waste lands peopled with gypsies and mangy dogs, are now huge buildings with facades, flat roofs, and garish interiors carpeted with Oriental rugs, furnished in German style, and sheltering armies of clerks and stenographers.

Behind the colossal mass of the Ministry of Finance the ancient Skouptchina is falling slowly to decay. Here a ticket of ten dinars permits foreign tourists to visit the spot where Stjepan Radic was assassinated in June 1928. In the musty, deserted atmosphere, one's footsteps resound as in a tomb.

This new Belgrade is impersonal, cold and unoriginal. It is a caricature of other European capitals. Flashy hotels and restaurants are on every pavement, and luxury cinemas stand on every corner. Bars, cafes and shops are everywhere. The port of Belgrade is growing every hour, and will soon be one of the greatest on the Danube. The builders of the New Belgrade have killed the picturesque, warm-hearted inefficiency of the place. They have destroyed its past and killed its soul, and have inspired it with nothing but the spirit of Babylon.

From ten o'clock till midday, from five until midnight, as soon as the weather is warm enough, the wide central avenues are filled with crowds. Mihailovska Street, Place Terasia, in front of the Cafes Moskwa and Balkan, the favourite rendezvous of officers and business men; around the sweet-shops and ice-cream cafes, there is such an animation, such a coming and going of amusement-seekers, that the ordinary pedestrian has only a narrow passage left in which to walk. To the onlooker it seems as if half the population of Belgrade think only of flirting, or listening to the latest Viennese concerts, and the frivolities that are thundered by giant amplifiers to even the smallest cafe. One might also be forgiven for believing that they lived almost entirely on plain ale or iced coffee, whipped cream and sweets. Everybody is strolling, flirting, smiling and saluting that is, everybody who has a dress, as suit, or a costume presentable enough to exhibit. Splendid motor-cars move in and out among the gaily-coloured taxis.

As I walked the streets of Belgrade I tried to puzzle out the enigma which confronted me. Here was a country which for three years had been suffering an economic crisis in comparison with which the troubles of other European nations sink into insignificance. Here was a country whose affairs had been aggravated by more and more disquieting political difficulties. The Serb dinar was worth about a penny three-farthings. The trade balance of Yugoslavia was catastrophic. The harvests accumulated unsold and unsaleable in the silos and warehouses. The taxes, disproportionate to the capacity of the taxpayers, were collected with greater and greater difficulty, and very often they were not collected at all. Commerce had long since exhausted its bank credits; failures were legion, and the dinar had been saved from a bottomless pit only by a double advance by the French Government of one billion and fifty million francs in July 1931, and another 400 millions in the same year. The devaluation of the dinar had reduced the national revenue, the pensions, the mortgage values, and the purchasing power of all the salaries by more than fifty per cent. The unemployment was enormous, the cost of living mounted incessantly, and the exportation of capital was utterly prohibited. Yugoslavia had only been able to avoid financial catastrophe by means of continual and prodigal support by France.

Only the officers and police officials were still regularly paid. For two years the civil agents had been paid only on account, with arrears that ran into weeks and months. In July 1932, the professors of the University of Belgrade had received only an advance of ten per cent on their salaries for June, and I met instructors, employees of the prefecture, and railroad men in Choumadia and Southern Serbia who had not received a dinar since the month of May 1932.

Yet here were streets filled with women hurrying to the modiste, to the hairdresser, to the pastry shop; here were employees of the Ministry, army officers, and young bourgeois sitting for hours at the cafe tables spending the salaries that hardly afford them shelter. Salaries are not high in Yugoslavia. An infantry commander gets about 20 pounds a month, and on this he is asked to maintain all the extravagances of his rank! Think of the position of a second lieutenant! A chief of service at the Ministry gets 22 pounds a month, and a bank clerk, or assistant young typist, wearing a dress of rose crepe-de-chine, her legs glistening in artificial silk! She gets about 7 pounds 10s a month- scarcely the price of her dress!

How do they manage it! I asked Stefanitch. He is an old friend of mine. A true Serb. A patriot, but a realist, who was conducting me round this Balkan Babylon.

"They don't manage it!" Stefanitch replied. "All the beautiful women and all the little flappers are riddled with debts. There is not a house here, not a bit of ground, not an inheritance, that is not crushed under mortgages; there is not a moneylender who does not find more borrowers at twentyfive or thirty per cent than he has money to lend. All the people here who astonish you so by their luxuriousness live only for the outside, for appearances, for the noise they make. Don't tell them they are crazy! They would reply that the crazy one is you; and that they know what they are doing. They are counting on a miracle. I don't know what - nor do they.

"Fortunately, my friend, in spite of it all, there are still men and women who have not lost the healthy traditions of our race! Little merchants who struggle to meet their engagements; little bourgeois who count and recount before spending a sou; little clerks whom the terror of tomorrow haunts. You won't meet them in the fine shops, on the terraces of the cafes, or at the tables of expensive restaurants. They wear old clothes, shoes half-soled and mended; their wives go patiently from stall to stall at the market in order to save a few centimes on their purchases. Their only luxury is a chair at Kalemeigdan on Sunday evenings or a glass of beer in the family circle or in a little tavern. They have gained nothing from the dictatorship, and they expect nothing from it. They hate it! They work, and they suffer in silence. But it can't last!"

We passed the gilded gates of Kalemeigdan, and passed along the terrace which overlooks the admirable panorama of the suburbs and the two rivers. We make our way between massive shrubs and flowers which indefatigable gardeners sprinkle continually.

At the opening of the central lane two pretty girls, with hips and breasts accentuated, pass us. They are dressed, shod and painted like the mannequins in a fashion book.

"You see that," Stefanitch observes. "To enable them to buy what they wear on their backs, these two girls, who are probably typists at the Ministry or the Bank, have perhaps eaten scraps and leavings for six months! They earn about 1 pound 15s. a week. Perhaps not that! Yet they are wearing more than 22 pounds of dresses and hats, without counting the rest. Kept? Oh no! The second lieutenant or the student who sleeps with them is as poor as they, and he would not consider sharing their burdens. So they make the best of it they can. They take their money where they find it, and spend sixpence for the day's food: bread, fruits, a piece of cheese or salted fish.

"You can be sure of this: those two girls haven't a stitch in the world other than what they are wearing now. Why, they're not even wearing knickers, I'll bet. They live in some hole near the old port or on the route to Topsider. There you would find them going bare-foot in old run-down shoes, dressed either in a ragged chemise, or perhaps clothed only in their virtue. In their room is only a bed with a tattered blanket, a wash-basin on a bench, and a few nails in the wall to hang up their all. But perfumes, and boxes of powder, and sticks of rouge, you can bet they don't lack anything like that. They paint first and eat afterwards.

"Girls like that when I was young, when Serbia was still sane, would have been spanked by their mothers. Today, what else can you expect? They drift in the current, they do what they see everyone else about them doing."

Everyone else? Oh no, Stefanitch! Not everyone. What about the miserable shacks in the workers' suburbs on the route from Avala, from Topsider, or towards the port of the Sava in the little back-alleys behind the Central markets. There you will find bands of half-naked children who should be in school, but whom no one thinks of sending there, and who, moreover, have neither shoes nor clothing to go there in, but chase each other yelling and screaming on the dusty roads. There you will find men and women in rags, with emaciated faces, their hands dangling at their sides, who slouch on the doorsteps. There you will find old men in dark corners, hunting in rubbish piles for bread and rotten fruit.

A hundred metres from the Presidency of the Council, at Kralja Alexander Street, workers eat in the shade of the sumptuous palace that they are building. Lean men with long palikar moustaches and shaggy hair. It is noon. They have been working since dawn; and they will work till nightfall for a wage of about a shilling. Their repast consists of half a water melon, for which they have paid about a penny, and a piece of black bread, washed down with poor beer. They are stretched out on the debris, exhausted with fatigue and heat.

They sneer and mutter under their breath when a commandant of the guards impeccable in his canvas uniform, swaggers past them on the side-walk, rigid as on parade.

Along the rows of chairs at Cafe Moskwa, where young elegants in bright waistcoats and plastered hair suck sherbets and flirt with pretty girls, the unemployed may be seen in contrast. Mostly in rags, toes protruding from worn-out shoes, hair falling down their faces, they all have the same ravaged features, the same rancorous aspect of lost dogs. They dive between the tables with a rapid movement, and pick up cigarette butts and crumbs of rolls and sandwiches. I have seen them throw themselves flat on their stomachs in the mud to seize a fine morsel from between the feet of indifferent customers. Certain ones, to judge by their age, must be "heroes of the Great War." But most of them are very young.

This is all very well in the summer. But what of the terrible winter which in the Balkans covers the land under immense layers of snow and ice. What will then be the privation and suffering of these poor people of the country and the city and of the unemployed whom no one aids? "Hunger is a bad counsellor," I said to my friend. "Will there not be trouble?"

"Perhaps!" Stefanitch replied. "Perhaps! But the forces of the Government are strong!" Two gendarmes pass us- carabines in the sling, revolvers in the belt, massive and powerful. In front of us, by the corner of Pozoristina, near the Opera, go two others. A battalion of infantry coming back from exercises parades along Kalemegdan with long, rapid strides, preceded by a machine-gun section and armored cars. Four battle planes roar high overhead. We have not been walking an hour, yet we have encountered more than fifty officers or soldiers, more than twenty policemen in uniform.

Stefanitch is right. Armed force is everywhere visible. One feels it to be admirably in hand, resolved to tolerate nothing against the established order of things: sure of itself, all-powerful, irresistible.

The police, too, uniformed and plain-clothes, are everywhere; they penetrate everywhere, they inspect and spy upon us. They know everything and they are assisted in their task by the gendarmerie, which is the most important of all Europe- there is a gendarme in Yugoslavia per 500 inhabitants. This force does not merely prevent disorder, it annihilates it.

When the students at the University of Belgrade demonstrated against the government of General Givkovitch, the repression was calculatingly mild and with good reason, for numerous foreign journalists were in Belgrade at the time. There were two thousand students in the university buildings, overexcited, organised and well directed. Yet in less than an hour all had been cleared away and the hospitals and clinics of the capital had to refuse all further patients. Very few of the wounded were discourteous enough to die in public.

The following incident I saw with my own eyes. It was five o'clock in the evening. The Cafe Moskwa was filled. In the open space of Terasia Place, from which only the width of the side-walk and the street separated me, were two policemen in uniform. Immediately under the arch where I sat a portly man was sitting with his wife on the terrace of the cafe. He was talking and laughing with her. Suddenly he rose, blew his whistle for the two traffic policemen who turned on their heels on hearing his call, and pointed out a passer-by on the terrace. Then he went towards the man, who was tall and lanky, and walked slowly with a lowered head. Twenty seconds later the three agents threw themselves upon him. What a fight! All the people in the cafe rose, the passer-by made a circle round the combatants. The man fought furiously. Twice he freed himself, and twice he was seized again.

"Zivila sloboda!" (Long live liberty!) he cried, but the crowd of two or three hundred people remained silent and impassive. He got a blow from a club on the nape of the neck, enough to kill a steer. He collapsed, and in the twinkling of an eye he was bound hand and foot, his arms fastened behind his back with handcuffs, his legs bound to his hands. He groaned, and a kick on the jaw silenced him. Trussed like a roast chicken, vomiting blood, he was thrown like a sack into a taxi. Ghastly sight! I can see it still!

The whole disgusting scene did not last five minutes. The portly gentlemam, brushing himself, came to rejoin his wife who embraced him as a hero.

"A revolutionary, sir," remarked my neighbour, a little old man decorated with the Order of Saint Sava who was nibbling a raisin cake. "It doesn't do to miss one of them!"

My response must have displeased him, for he rose quickly, threw his money on the table, and sped away so quickly that he forgot to salute me.

Contrast this ugly bestiality with the gilded lasciviousness all around you, and you have a good picture of the New Belgrade- a city that is like a nouveau riche who cannot stop dancing, yet spits ugly words at his poor relations who cluster about him. Here is the Casino! Come in with me and see another side of Belgrade. It is like a harem here; hundreds of mammas with daughters to marry; hundreds of women who act as though they had no husbands, and sit with their legs crossed half-way up the thigh; hundreds of young men who hesitate between the virgins and the married women. They flirt around the little tables situated under the well-kept trees; they embrace behind thick bushes; they drink beer and iced coffee; they dance to the rhythm of the military music.

The women of Belgrade, and in fact of all Yugoslavia, are attractive and weel-made. They are rather tall and plump, the bust upright on vigorous hips, well-muscled legs and splendid teeth, they radiate health strength and a sex-appeal so ardent that it explains the astonishing birth-rate in Yugoslavia.

The ardour of the women of Yugoslavia probably explains why there is no prostitution visible throughout the whole country. Indeed, there are very few Serb prostitutes. This social function is the quasi-monopoly of Croat, Hungarian and Roumanian specialists. Was, I should say, rather because for some years now these modest workers have been hard hit by German dumping. At present, more than half of the professional love-makers at Belgrade are German and Austrian.

The German prostitutes have not come to Belgrade alone. They have been accompanied by their habitual retinue of travelling salesmen, engineers, and interloping financiers. German influence is again becoming considerable in Yugoslavia. Economic and financial influences will follow more officially at a favorable moment.

German electricity, metallurgy, public works, even aviation firms, have succeeded little by little in winning official contracts, concessions and orders of all kinds. Being too prudent to do it directly, they have transacted with middlemen in association with foreign houses.

In Belgrade to-day, Germans are everywhere. French is never spoken. Not a merchant, not one waiter out of ten understands, much less speaks, French. Nine out of ten speak and understand German. Those who understand and speak French, outside the high officials and university men, are mainly the Serbs who fought on France's side, or who were in hospital in France from 1915 to 1919.

I will give but a single example of German prowess in the Balkan Babylon. Almost 250 million francs were loaned by France to Belgrade in 1931. Of this sum a little more than half was used by the Yugoslavs to buy long-range observation planes from the German Junker works. The rest went to pay for bombing planes furnished by the Dornier establishment in Italy.

This "incident" was exposed in November 1931, before the Commission of Foreign Affairs of the French Parliament. Different representatives, among whom M. Eugene Lautier took a prominent part, and a public debate

was strongly and in great detail, and a public debate was avoided only with difficulty. The result was that the French Government made representations to Belgrade of such a violent nature that King Alexander had to go to Paris in 1931 to settle matters. The cleverness of the sovereign succeeded in a certain measure in the "stupid lunders" of his collaborators; but the French Government thereupon made the decision (to which it has strictly adhered) to regulate henceforth the military supplies contracted by Yugoslavia with French credit, and to have the prices verified by inspectors just as their own prices were verified.

Belgrade, in short, is a whirl of conflicting opinions, passions, nationalities, loyalties, and creeds. It is a mushroom growth that has swept away a piquant city of Old Serbia. Within its walls you will find intrigue, brutality and sordidness side by side with nonchalant gaiety and lasciviousness. It is a Tower of Babel built from the blood and tears of the oppressed minorities, and it lacks any cohesive force whatsoever, except the unnatural and tyrannical forces of the dictatorship.

It is the central hub of a great wheel that is turning faster every day, and which must at last fly to pieces by its own centrifugal force.

II. The Dilemma

A rat caught in a trap turns vicious not because it is full of power or of hate, but because it is full of fear. So to-day in Belgrade, the Big Men of the dictatorship, along with their minions, the petty officials and the police, are like rats in a trap, fighting against the power which their own ignorance and cupidity, handed down to them by the shades of Pasich and Company, has bound upon them. There is an old saying in China that he who rides upon a tiger dare not dismount, and that is true in Belgrade today. The men behind the dictatorship are riding upon their tiger because they can do nothing else. If the oppressed states of Yugoslavia have their dilemma of suffering, then also the oppressors certainly have their share of the dilemma, for the forces of nature almost are running against them- certainly the forces of human nature.

History is repeating itself in Yugoslavia. The lesson is not yet learned which Englishmen learned when they tried to coerce their brothers in North America. Co-operation is the secret of all national growth involving the absorption of unlike nations into a homogeneous whole. Co-operation begets co-operation as sunshine promotes growth, but coercion stiffens the muscles of the coerced and turns reasonable men into pig-headed obstructionists. Serbia, through the blind, greedy ignorance of its Pasiches and their type, has set forces in operation which must destroy Yugoslavia either through war or through revolution. Meanwhile, the tyranny grows by what it feeds upon.

Once treason to the state becomes looked upon as a virtue (as treason to the Yugoslavian state is looked upon today by the oppressed minorities who regard it as nothing more than a vehicle of Serbian domination) then those who wish to maintain the status quo must either act or else stand humbly aside and watch the nation go to pieces. What is the natural human action in such cases? Is it not to fight blindly for the preservation of the established order? Is the crime of the Serbians any greater than that? No! The real crime lies upon the shoulders of those who conceived Yugoslavia as a cloak for Serbian greed and not as a free association of diverse peoples. Let us recognise the dilemma of the Serbian people and admit that the error lies not so much in the hearts of the people as in the fight against human nature to which they have been committed.

This fact does not unfortunately solve the problem. We may understand the dilemma, but we shall not disperse the gathering hatreds and the inevitable disaster by our knowledge.

Savoir tout, c'est pardonner tout, may be all very well as a philosophic statement, but it is of little use to men who feel themselves robbed of their inheritance to feed the vanity of a crowd of megalomaniacs who have no humanity and no respect for anything but their own desires.

And the great pity is that there are some things that cannot be undone except by explosion. You may easily pack a tree-trunk with dynamite and set the fuse ready for firing, but you will not find it so easy to withdraw the charge again. All you can do is to get as far away as you can from the scene and let the explosion spend itself in the air. So it is with Yugoslavia. The dynamite of human passion and thwarted desire is laid, the fuse is lit and the train is running to its inevitable end. The explosion must ensue. Away, then, France! Away, England! Cut the ties that bind you to the doomed tree, and retire to safety, lest the inevitable explosion find you in the path of its progress and sweep you, and with you Europe, into the dust of the Past.

The catastrophe, as in 1914, will come from some minor incident. As a high Serb official put it to me, "A single police operation in Bulgaria (and it just missed taking place six months ago) will lead to the intervention of Italy, and a French counter-intervention. In a few days the conflagration will cover all Europe- a second 1914."

The Pan-Serb part, which stands behind the government and directs the king, is inclined to play this card as soon as possible, as it is persuaded that a war against Italy would instantly re-establish the unity between the Serbs and Croats, the latter having an ancestral hatred for the Italians. In addition to this, the high Yugoslav

officials are convinced that their country would come out of the conflict clothed with military glory and more than doubled in extent and power. In their eyes this is a sufficient reason for setting Europe on fire again, and it is possible that their calculations are right, though it is much more probable that they are false.

"I am telling you nothing," said my official friend, "If I tell you that Yugoslavia has offended all her neighbors since she has been directed by the Pan-Serbs, and this applies even to her allies. Under the double inspiration of Mustapha-Kemal and Venizelos (who know only too well that a new Serb victory, either over the Bulgars or the Italians would mean the loss of Constantinople by the Turks, and of Salonica and her Aegean shores by the Greeks) astonishing ententes have been effected against Yugoslavia. The people here in Belgrade are right when they complain that they are encircled by enemies. They are, and by their own fault! Only the Czechs support them, but the Czechs have never been worth much as soldiers! On the day of danger, the Serb dictators can count on no one outside France. It is true that the weight that France would throw in the balance would be worth all the others put together, and it is because the present directors of Yugoslavia know it, because they have calculated that with France's aid they will be assured of the victory, that they will not hesitate when they believe the moment comes, to risk a war in order to avoid a revolution. This, at least, is my opinion."

It was not until King Alexander of Serbia made his visit to Paris in 1931 that he was able to realise to what extent French political circles were alarmed by the aggressiveness displayed by Belgrade towards Sofia and unanimously disapproved of it.

There were reasons to believe that the peril was averted, at least momentarily. But if war is averted, there is still revolution to fear. An old friend, a Francophile, and an advisor of Yugoslavia, said to me: "The second eventuality from which Yugoslavia will not escape is the revolution, even if its governors refuse to shoulder the responsibility of a new European conflict. Revolution is not, in my opinion, likely as yet. It presupposes an accord between powerful military chiefs and groups of the socialist and democrat opposition. If it takes place, it would involve a repetition of the drama that cost the lives of Queen Draga and King Alexander. It would sweep the good away with the bad. All those who in any way served the dictators would be its victims. Politically, by the general dislocation that it would lead to, this would be the end of Yugoslavia.

"Such is the dilemma: revolution or war. There is no escape. No one in France seems aware of what the situation really is here. In France they nurse the illusion of a powerful Yugoslavia and one, in case of war, capable of giving real support to her allies. No one knows anything of the Croat question, of the Macedonian question, of the furious opposition of former parties, of the progress of revolutionary ideas: of all causes which conduce to that state of things which in the event of war would abandon and betray the army from behind. France's blindness and ignorance in face of all this is almost touching because of its enormity.

"The worst, perhaps, is that the dictators have discovered the personality of the King. Before that, he was the refuge of parties; respected, if not loved, by all. He benefited from the prestige which his father had enjoyed, and from the legend, cleverly established, that he served personally on the Macedonian front during the War. Today, the dictatorship has made a party chief of him. And what a party! It is called the Narodna Odbrana, in which is consecrated all the violences, all the blindness, all the appetites of Pan-Serbism: so from now on the Croats, Macedonians, and all the Serb opposition hold the King responsible for all the faults and abuses of his ministers, because they are convinced that they do nothing without having taken orders from him. And, unfortunately, it is true. They don't dare attack him openly because no one fancies hard labor, but most abominable rumors circulate about him. He has become the most unpopular man in Yugoslavia, after General Givkovitch and Jika Lazitch. Last April, thousands of students gathered before the royal palace. The furious charges of the gendarmes did not succeed in dispersing them, and there they stood hurling insults at the King, and accusing him of having enormous sums in the banks of Budapest and Basle, thanks to commissions he had received from foreign corporations and enterprises. I saw it with my own eyes, I can tell you the bones of old Pasitch would have turned a hand-spring in his coffin..."

"The revolution is rising, and hence war is coming."

Events must have marched terribly fast in Yugoslavia during the last few months, for no official would have said to me a year ago what so many among them have since done."

The dilemma in Yugoslavia is growing so intense that the floods of dissolution wash at very walls of the inner fortress of Pan-Serbism.

III. The Military Power

About the only thing the French people know concerning Yugoslavia, and the only thing, to tell the truth, that interests them, is that she possesses one of the best armies in the world and that they can count on her support in case of a European conflict.

This military entente between France and Yugoslavia has been the corner-stone of French foreign politics in Europe ever since the first convention was signed right after the War between the general staffs of Paris and Belgrade.

The French have not ceased to give financial aid to Belgrade since then, either directly in the form of authorised loans and advances by the Treasury, or indirectly by aiding the Yugoslav government with purchases of military supplies; and the financing by Parisian banks of great public works, railroads, fortifications, ports, and telegraph lines, all destined to reinforce its war potentialities. This uninterrupted aid, amounting to billions of francs, the French explain and justify to themselves by the fact that in arming the Yugoslavs they are increasing their own security.

The Yugoslav army has become an extension of France's might. In the event of a European war, the two would act in concert. Because of this fact the military power of Yugoslavia appears to Frenchmen as an essential factor of peace, supporting and complementing each other, the armies of France and Yugoslavia stand at the two extremes of Europe, like the jaws of a great pair of pincers. In this strategic position they doom all trouble-makers to destruction.

At least, this is how the Man-in-The-Street in France reasons. He is acquainted with international problems only as presented by his daily paper. It is the point of view of the French technicians who have contributed to the construction of the Yugoslav military machine: they know every cog, every bolt in the machine, and they are certain of the returns which they can expect from it.

In so far as they go, the Man-in-the-Street and the technicians are both right, for there exists nowhere in Europe, considering the population, a more numerous and effective force, a more abundant technical equipment, or more considerable resources of supplies than is possessed by Yugoslavia. Neither is there any nation whose peace effectives, in proportion to the number and resources of the population, attain a like level. For a total population of a little under 15 million, there are nearly 170,000 peace-time effectives. No country, with the exception of Soviet Russia, has since the War made a military effort comparable to that of Yugoslavia.

The troops are splendid. A Yugoslav infantry regiment returning from a practice march or a manœuvre is one of the finest sights in the world. The men march with their heads high, looking straight in front of them, shoulder to shoulder, marching with the same rhythmic step. They are, one would say, a steel machine; but a determined, thinking machine. Their step and their carriage recall the best shock troops of old Imperial Germany.

The officers are worthy of their men. They can well be a little proud, as they are not loth to show when one encounters them on Mihailovska, at Kalemeigdan, or at the Casino, conscious of the effect which they produce upon the women. But this concern for their appearance, this determination to be an honour to the army, even in the shine of their boots or the freshness of their gloves, they do not carry only on the promenade or at the ball. At Nisch, at Belgrade, at Veles, and at Ljubljana, I have seen officers, who were re-entering the city after a march of several hours afoot, who were yet as clean as if they had just left the hands of their orderly. Those one encounters in the remote frontier posts situated in the mountains, during any day of the week, are just as elegant, just as immaculate, as their comrades posted in the great cities.

Outside of France or England, they are the best dressed, the most eager to learn, of all officers I have seen. They are full of esprit de corps and national pride, and most thoughtful of the welfare and efficiency of their men. A colonel of our French general staff said to me last summer on his return from the garrisons of Croatia, "For them the army is a religion. They are possessed with fanaticism of their mission. They are soldiers as some men are priests. They live in a sort of mystic obsession for their duty to their country. They are overwhelmed with work, and I return to France with the certitude that they are ready, if more is asked of them, to do still more. They are miserably paid, even though they enjoy all sorts of social privileges and advantages. Well! I am sure that most of them would accept still less if the interest of the country demanded it. They are proud soldiers!"

One of the most unforgettable memories of my journey was offered to me by Yugoslav air-force officers on the 14th July, 1932, at Skoplje.

At ten o'clock in the morning, in a temperature of 120 degrees in the shade, the city drowsed at the foot of the high mountains which push it towards the Vardar, and awaited the gathering thunderstorm. The valley between the old Turkish citadel and the hazy peaks was a burning furnace. In this furnace, indifferent to the "air pockets" which tossed their planes like frail boats in a heavy sea, indifferent to the storm which pressed down upon them with deafening peals of thunder, young aviators were trying out some new battle-planes. In wild-duck formation, in attack formation, isolated or in groups, zooming into the sky, diving towards the river, gliding, falling like dead leaves, turning and twisting, they filled the valley with their triumphant flight.

They are callously brave, these young airmen of Yugoslavia. "All your bravery would be useless against the formidable 'planes of the Italians," I said the same evening to one of these officers. "You would be able to do nothing against airplanes carrying four or five men and armoured like forts. They would crush you!"

The young man looked at me pityingly and replied:

"We would bring them down by locking our propeller with theirs, and that is what we would do if we saw that it were impossible to get them in any other manner. The Italians would get tired of losing five men to our one."

And this phrase is not an idle boast made after drinking, but the expression of a deliberate will, of an unanimous decision that all the young soldiers have taken who will be called upon to take part in aerial warfare for Yugoslavia.

Such is the army upon Frenchmen count when the supreme hour sounds. It is worth the sacrifices of money that France has made, it is worth all the sacrifices that it will demand of us even yet.

But if this were all there is to it then this book would never have been written. If this great war-machine of Yugoslavia were really no more than an adjunct of France's legions, directed by the same pacific and civilised intentions as those which control the destiny of France, then it would not be necessary for me to say a word. But the truth is quite otherwise. The sword of Yugoslavia, though bright and tempered it be, is a two-edged weapon which may well strike in a way we have not altogether foreseen. Instead of being a shield of France it may prove a menace to France, and this because it is in the hands of men who have no abiding desire for peace, but who live in the spell of a lust of conquest and ambition by which they may reap rich rewards, and as a result of which, incidentally, they may maintain themselves in power against the will of the immense majority of the people whom they exploit and oppress.

In a reasonable hands, the Yugoslav army would be a factor of peace, by the respect which it inspires, by the security which it guarantees its country against all attack. But in the hands of ambitious men whose only thought is to extend their will to other territories, it constitutes, on the contrary, a tremendous danger of war in Eastern Europe.

And the peril will become daily more pressing and grave so long as the Pan-Serb imperialists are the masters of Yugoslavia.

I have already said this in substance twenty times! I permit myself to say it again only because it is the truth, and because the ignorance of this truth by the French public is leading France directly to the risk of seeing herself engaged in the near future in a clash with Italy. All the political thought, all the diplomatic activity, all the preparations of the military force at Belgrade tend, in fact, towards a Serbo-Italian conflict. The strengthening of the Little Entente had no other aim.

I have talked these things over with Frenchmen in France, and I find that there is a sense of mystery pervading everywhere. The fact is France is tied to Yugoslavia by her need of military support against her enemies and the fact is that subconsciously she does not want to realise the danger of the alliance.

This tends to put me in a difficult position because all that I say against the present state of affairs will be interpreted either as treachery against France or enmity towards Yugoslavia. It is neither. It is merely the voice of a man who has seen the danger ahead, and the voice condemns no man except those madmen at the head of things in Belgrade. The peoples of Yugoslavia, the army of Yugoslavia- they are exonerated. They are men like ourselves.

What alarms me, and what surely must alarm anyone who knows the facts, is that Yugoslavia is preparing not for defence but for aggression. The excuses of Belgrade that she is arming for protection against Bulgaria or Hungary are ridiculous. Yugoslavia alone could crush Bulgaria and Hungary as easily as France could annihilate Belgium.

Why, in view of this fact, are the Pan-Serbs arming their country without consideration for their budget? What is the feverish preparation designed to achieve? What are they aiming at? Whom do they fear? Of what are they dreaming?

The peace strength of the Yugoslav army today is 150,000 soldiers, 8,200 officers and 9,400 non-commissioned officers. Its armament comprises 2,000 light machine-guns, 800 heavy machine-guns, 250 batteries of artillery, five tank companies, and 45 air squadrons. A general field mobilisation would place at the disposition of its commandant (active and reserve), 1,200,000 first line combatants thoroughly trained and admirably organised, and about 400,000 territorials, more than half of whom are war veterans. Such an army is terribly expensive.

Out of a total of 1,040 million Swiss francs, the Yugoslav budget for 1932 allotted 277 million, or about 27 per cent, to the Ministry of War.

As I say, what is particularly disquieting when one regards things closely, and when one is acquainted with the mentality and the projects of the men who decide these things, is that the equipment, the installation, the strategic facilities placed at the disposition of the Yugoslav army since the assumption of power by the dictatorship four years ago, all appear to have been calculated to support an offensive role. All the railroad lines, recently constructed or under construction, are without exception directed towards the Adriatic coast, either by the way of Zagreb and Sarajevo, or by Veles, Monastir or Prizrend. The war aims of Pan-Serbism are written in fiery letters across the chart of its new railroad lines.

When I expressed my astonishment about this to a lieutenant-colonel with whom I was holding a conversation in the train carrying me from Macedonia, he replied:

"We Serbs, when we recognise an enemy, prepare for him in such a fashion that his attack finds us ready to get a head start on him. We are certain that when war comes again it will come over the Adriatic. Either the Italians will seize the opportunity to attack us when we are occupied elsewhere, or else we ourselves, tired of fascist blustering, will decide to settle once and for all our accounts with them.

"In a word, our present military situation recalls your own before 1814: an adversary is keeping an eye on us, and his attack at some time or another is certain; so we make all our provisions for repulsing this attack, if need be by anticipating it."

The Yugoslav military organisation is completed by two great formations which constitute something like a second army side by side with the regular army, but independent of it: the Sokols and the Tchnetniki, both placed under the direct control of the War Ministry.

For half a century the Sokols have played a role in Central and Eastern Europe: their task is to develop a national spirit by the physical and moral education of the young people. A strong organisation existed in Croatia and Slovenia at the time of their incorporation with Serbia, and one of the first acts of the Pan-Serb dicators was to dissolve them as independent bodies and transform them into State Sokols, destined to give to the youth an intensive military instruction, under the direction of officials designated by the Minister of War. All young men over fourteen years of age obliged to participate in this organisation, and later this obligation was extended to all young soldiers. The former Sokol organisations have thus become veritable centres of military preparation and training.

At the end of 1932, the Yugoslav military Sokols possessed 137,500 members, divided into 715 associations or local formations.

The Tchnetniki possess a special character and organisation. Differing from the Sokols, they form an integral part of the national army of which they constitute an elite corps. Recruited among former soldiers whose political opinions are trustworthy and who are distinguished for their physical vigour, they receive a special instruction and are obliged, twice a year, to undergo regular periods of training, each of three weeks.

Their duty is to spread Pan_Serb propaganda after the methods and direction of the Narodna Odbrana, of which all are obliged to be members, and to lend their assisatnce to the gendarmeries and administrative authorities and to keep themselves constantly at the disposition of the local military commander.

In case of war they are subject to mobilisation from the period of diplomatic tension, either on the spot, or at posts which have been given to them in advance. Each Tchnetnik must speak the language of the country in which he will be employed during hostilities so perfectly that no one will take him for a Serb. His role in time of war is to cut communication lines, destroy bridges and railroads, obtain by all means inforamtion necessary to the line troops. During peace time he recieves regular pay and important material advantages.

At present ther exist seven detachments of Tchnetniki. Each detachment comprises about a thousand men divided into "troykas" (three men), in "groupitzas" (three or four troykas), and "tchetas" (five or six groupitzas).

These detachments are quartered from Tzaribrod to Guevgueli; from Kratovo to Bitolj; from Ochrida to Ipek: in Bosnia and Slovenia: behind the Dalmatian and Istrian frontiers, and in Banat.

Such, in brief outline, is the Yugoslav military power at the disposal of the Dictatorship.

IV. Pan-Serbism

Those who did not know Serbia before the War, nor even just after the War, can have no idea of the transformation that has taken place within her borders.

Imagine a poor man, whose ancestors have lived for centuries in hovels, suddenly set free from his poverty by the wave of a magic wand. Imagine him, after generations of bowing to the lord of the manor, suddenly transported into the home of that lord.

If you can imagine that you will understand what has happened to Serbia and you will understand a lot of the feverish activity which is so foreign to the minds of countries whose history has been so dramatically changed by the War.

You will notice that I speak of Serbia and not of Yugoslavia. I do it deliberately because the latter is a mere hybrid that exists for Serbia. All that is called Yugoslavia is in reality only Serbia, for all who act, all who command, all who count in any way at all in the affairs of the nation are Serbian. The others have no influence at all upon the shaping of the national life. Considering also that the great mass of the Serbian people are illiterate, possessing the mentality of two centuries gone, it would be fair to say that Yugoslavia is not even Serbia- it is Belgrade.

In this Yugoslavia, with a territory about as large as that of Great Britain, lives a blind powerless amorphous mass of about fifteen million people which is animated, exploited and governed by a few thousands of Serbian officers, officials and business men installed in the Serb capital.

Yet nobody "in the swim" seems conscious of the enormity of the situation. Nobody seems to have analysed the state of mind induced by the events. The more I hear, the more I am led to realise that an irresistible current is sweeping things and people in Yugoslavia towards no one knows what disastrous events. There is no guiding principle other than the fevered desire for more of everything. The hypertropic development of Belgrade; the unbelievable revolution in morals and ideas which has taken place within the governing classes; the arrogance; the need to dominate and parade; the contempt for all that is beneath them; the hatred for all that is higher and stronger; the violent ambitions; and the aggressive imperialism, are all born of a too-sudden rise from obscurity to power.

The people of Belgrade who count by virtue of their official positions, their social importance, their fortune and their country in the eyes of the world, and who govern the rest of a nation as they choose, all live in a waking dream, a sort of collective hypnosis. To them prosperity is assured, and Belgrade, the metropolis of an all-powerful Yugoslavia, will tomorrow be one of the poles of Europe.

All the Serbs who today command Yugoslavia (and even those who combat the present masters and will replace them if the present regime is swept away by the excess of its abuses) have a common dogma, a similar faith in the unlimited future which awaits their race, and the irresistible and predestined force of expansion of Serbism.

All are Pan-Serbs.

In its origins and its manifestations, in the immense peril that it carries in itself, Pan-Serbism is an exact replica of Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism which have already cost the world a dreadful price.

Born of the dreams of a handful of doctrinaires; exalted by chauvinistic officers, by professors of a hasty and confused science. and by students enlightened by refugees encountered in foreign universities, Pan-Serbism is an affirmation of the Serbian pre-eminence over all Slav nationalities of the Balkan peninsula, and of its right of conquest over all the Slav lands south of the Danube. Its progress since it first appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century has been rapid, and its influence became immediately very great in all the elements of Serb society- SAVE IN THE POOR AND HUMBLE CLASS.

The Pan-Serbs are responsible for the territorial ambitions of Belgrade towards the Adriatic regions on one part, and towards Bulgarian Macedonia on the other, which began to be manifested after the Peace of Berlin.

Repulsed by Austria, who hoped to drive them away from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serbs commenced by directing their efforts towards the south, on the Bulgarian border. Crushed by the Bulgars in 1885, they took their revenge in 1913. In the meantime, Serb professors and diplomats were affirming the integral Serbism of Bulgarian Macedonia, and thus peacefully paving the way for war.

Belgrade never lost sight of the Adriatic, but Austria-Hungary, for a long time, was too strong for her. The Serbs did not decide upon the move against Vienna until they were sure of Russian support. The day that it became a reality, Pan-Serbism, intoxicated as it was by the victories over the Turks and Bulgars, did not hesitate a second.

Ten million men paid for Pan-Serbism with their lives; and the thousands of war memorials in the villages of France, England, Germany and Russia are matched by the statue of Princip, the assassin, which the Serbs raised at Sarajevo by national subscription.

In October 1908 during an assembly of all the military and civil notabilities of Belgrade held at the City Hall under the presidency of General Bocho Jankovitch, a Pan-Serb organisation of propaganda and of combat was created. Henceforth Pan-Serb imperialism had a focus, a constitution and a name, and it was called the Narodna Odbrana.

Expression of all the aspirations, of all the hatreds, of all the great national expectations, the Narodna Odbrana did not tarry long in acquiring a formidable influence in Serbia: eighteen months after its creation it counted 223 local committees, it contained all the personalities of the kingdom, and its ramifications extended into Bosnia, into Herzegovian, into Slovenia, and even into Istria.

It was the Narodna Odbrana which condemned to death and executed King Alexander Obrenovitch and Queen Draga. It was the Narodna Odbrana which made a king of the refugee Peter Karageorgevitch, the father of Alexander since murdered at Marseilles.

The avowed official aim of the organisation created by General Jankovitch was the development of a patriotic spirit and a national solidarity between all the Slavs of the Balkans under the direction of the Serbian race. Its real aim was the preparation for a victorious war against Austria which would permit the Serbs to realise their designs on Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.

In May 1911, a second secret Pan-Serb society, Unification or Death, better known as the Black Hand, was constituted under the direction of Colonel Dragoutine Dimitrievitch-Apis, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Serb general staff. Its task was to "work for the liberation of Serbs living under foreign oppression." It was not long before it had absorbed the most active elements of the Narodna Odbrana, and had imposed upon them one of its chiefs, Milan Vasitch.

The Black Hand immediately entered into conflict with Pasitch, the President of the Council, whom they accused of cowardice and obstruction to the Pan-Serb idea. It was eventually outlawed in June 1917. Its chiefs were accused of revolutionary intent and were shot at Salonica as the result of a trial by the judges of the War Council, whose "decision" was really a written order of the Prince-Regent, Alexander.

But the Pan-Serb idea which these dead men had personified has survived them.

The imperialistic programme of the Black Hand has been resumed, completed, carried to its height since 1917 by the White Hand, an official organisation created on the model of the Black Hand by trustworthy men of the Narodna Odbrana, who were at the same time henchmen of King Alexander.

By the army, which is entirely its puppet, and by the administration in which it holds all the control levers so that none can hope to enter who are not its members, the White Hand is today absolutely and exclusively master of all the interior and exterior policies of Yugoslavia.

It has become the essential machinery of the State. It decided, and its members executed, the coup d'etat of the 6th January, 1929. The first dictator, General Givkovitch, is representative type of the Pan-Serb White Hand.

It was by the members of the White Hand, acting under the instructions of Belgrade, that the Venetian monuments of Dalmatia, in Croatia, were mutilated in December and January 1931; and so many others during the last ten years have been destroyed in Istria.

The destruction of the lions in Trojir was an act of defiance flung by the White Hand into the mouth of Italy. It was their way of demonstrating to the Italian populations in Dalmatia, and to Italy herself, that Yugoslavia intended to do just as she pleased on her own territory.

Pan-Serbism has not, unfortunately, restricted itself to destroying Latin and Bulgarian inscriptions and stone lions found on conquered territories.

It is today admitted without question that the double assassination at Sarajevo was its work. The material proof has been given, not only by the publication in 1930 of official stenographic notes and the debates in extenso of the trial of the assassins, but by documents revealed since the War by Messrs. Sidney Fay and Bogicevitch, which show that Colonel Dimitrievitch-Apis, chief of the Intelligence Service of the great general staff of Belgrade and grand master of the Black Hand, was the instigator of the 28th June, 1914.

Colonel Dimitrievitch, moreover, admitted in his written confession a few hours before he faced the firing squad, that he had placed at the disposition of the assassins of the Archduke all the service of the Serbian military espionage even down to the bombs and revolvers which came from the arsenal of Kragoujevatz.

The directors of Pan-Serbism were naively persuaded that the worst that could result from the attack would be a localised conflict in which Austria and Russia only would come in conflict, the rest of Europe remaining spectators of the conflict in which Slavism, they thought, was assured to carry off a brilliant victory.

Dragomir Stefanovitch, who was for fifteen years one of my intimate friends, and who was Serbian chrgé d'affaires in Paris, told me these things years ago.

In the course of our conversations on the subject of the origin of the War, at Paris, where I saw him daily, and at Belgrade, where he had become one of the chiefs of the National Bank, Stefanovitch revealed to me what his functions had permitted him to learn of the great conflict.

He did not cease to condemn the Pan-Serbs of the Black Hand and their official accomplices for the way in which they precipitated the World War. His conscience cried out against the crime that they had committed with such sang-froid against the peace of the world.

"They were miserable wretches!" he said. "But they were so powerful, they had succeeded so well in concealing their actions, and in placing accomplished facts before those who, like Pasitch, condemned their

revolutionary methods of direct action, or more or less feared the consequences, that it was impossible to stop them. Pasitch knew! We all knew! But nothing could be done. If Russia had not supported us, if we had had to submit to the inquest which the Austrian ultimatum exacted in July 1914, we would have been caught with our hand in the sack. Well, well! We have won the match- but will we win the next one, for there is going to be a next one. Those people at Belgrade take themselves for geniuses, but really they are only asses who have been intoxicated by success. They are persuaded that victory is their natural right. They want to start trouble again, and when they do start it we shall not, perhaps, have either Russia or you to save us."

The double victory in the Balkan War had already intoxicated the men of the Black Hand, and the miraculous triumph of 1918, in which they played a most insignificant part, has made their successors lose all prudence.

They are convinced that the force of Yugoslavia will increase illimitably and that its exterior alliances shelter it from all surprises. Pan-Serbism, the absolute imbeciles without scruples who admit neither contradiction nor opposition.

All those whom it regards as obstacles to its policy of indefinite expansion Pan-Serbism looks upon as enemies; and there lies the explanation of all that at first appears incomprehensible, absurd or odious in the attitude which has been adopted since the peace treaty by the government of Belgrade towards the non-Serb portions of their country.

Those who have witnessed the violence, the abuse, the cynical contempt with which the Serbs have treated the Croats and Slovenes are astonished that the Serbs do not realise that in acting thus they are working against themselves, compromising their future and undermining with their own hands the edifice of Yugoslavia.

But those who think in this fashion reason as Frenchmen, as Englishmen, as Americans; they judge and decide with their occidental mentalities; they do not judge as Serbs. If they did they would understand immediately.

The crimes which their best friends reproach them for having committed in Croatia, in Macedonia, in Banat, and in the Adriatic provinces are considered by the Pan-Serbs as thoroughly justified and necessary. In their minds, the acts of which they are accused are not faults, but on the contrary are the affirmation of the justice of their political intuition. All the things that appear to foreign observers as aberrations of judgment, heavy with perilous consequences, the Pan-Serbs judge excellent, and declare them indispensable to the consolidation and to the existence of this Yugoslavia which, according to them, cannot live, cannot develop itself, and realise its integral destinies, unless it has one mind, one thought, one destiny- the mind, the thought and the destiny of Belgrade.

This is textually the principle invoked by King Alexander and his Pan-Serb advisors to explain and justify the coup d'etat of 6th January, 1929, in which one of the first acts was to suppress, under pretext of unification, the very traces of the former administrative parties. Here, too, is a point which Frenchmen (and Englishmen also) might do well to realise. Pan-Serb circles do not love France. They dissimulate, but they do not even admire us.

Let us not harbour any illusions. The official manifestations, the academic discourses, the telegrams celebrating the fraternity of arms and the celebrations of victory, all that means precisely nothing. They are obligatory gestures and vain words. In reality, their respect for France rests on advantages which accrue to the government of Yugoslavia. Their respect will last so long as these advantages continue. Not a day more, not an hour!

The clique which directs Yugoslavia would have cast France off long ago had they been able to get along without us.

With the people it is different. The anonymous and obscure masses of the workshop and the fields, (among whom the veterans of the Great War and the refugees of the retreat of 1915 have sown the legend of the invincible force, the immense resources, and the fraternal camaraderie of the "Franski,") these are the ones who love us, admire us, and are grateful to us for what we did for Serbia during the War. Their sentiments towards us are about the same as those which they held for the Russians before Bolshevism.

The Pan-Serb circles do not love France. How could it be otherwise? Their atavisms, their education, their political ideals, their principles of government, their ambitions for the future, their intellectual and moral formation, all are entirely opposed to those of France.

When they permit themselves to speak freely, Pan-Serb ministers and high officials sneer contemptuously at the weakness of our statesmen, the peril of our democratic institutions, and the blindness of the concessions to which we have consented during the last ten years. "Ah! If we had your army and your billions," one of them said to me. "How we would make use of them!"

Yet it is by the grace of France that their country is still existing; it is to France that they are indebted for all they possess. France has been their inexhaustable banker for fourteen years. Twice since 1918 she has saved them from bankruptcy. French power still today is the shield behind which the dictatorship of Belgrade protects itself against the popular wrath.

But what France has done and is continuing to do for them is nothing in the minds of the Pan-Serbs compared with what France has not done. We may have fought because of them, we may have saved thier armies in 1915, but even so they cannot forget that in 1918 we halted the Serb regiments who were disposed to pillage Sofia. We made it possible for them to gain Macedonia, certainly, but they prefer to remember that we obliged them to evacuate Bulgaria and that we did not support their claims upon Fiume. We have fallen out with Italy because of them, but they hold it against us that we have not ceased for ten years to put pressure upon the government of Belgrade in order to constrain them to maitain peace in the Balkans.

The Pan-Serbs have forgotten the services rendered, and they do not pardon us for the other things because of those services. Let us not be astonished. Ever since there have been politicians who envy the property of others, history has been the same. The Imperialism of weak people has always turned to pitless egotism when they have become strong.

Of this kind is the imperialism of Belgrade, and I will insist once more on this point- I do not say "the imperialism of the Serb people," because the people themselves are simple, calm, reasonable and terribly tried by six years of war. They ask only for peace for themselves and for others. They have no part whatsoever in the responsibility of the criminal errors of the governors, nor for the inconceivable madness of their schemes for expansion.

Here is what the officers and non-commissioned officers make their men learn in all the garrisons of Yugoslavia. It is taken from the Manual of the Soldier, edited by Colonel Kostich of the general staff, under the direction of the government of Belgrade. I cite it word for word:

"All our provinces are not yet reunited to our kingdom. The Italians still hold all of Istria with Goritza, Gradisca and Trieste as far as Isonzo; the city of Zara and its surrounding country, the islands of Cherso, Lussin, Lastua and Pelagosa, as well as the southern part of Slovenia. Austria still holds the northern part of Carinthia Steiermark. The Hungarians still hold the northern part of Baranya and of Prekomurje. The Roumanians still hold the eastern part of Banat. The Bulgarians still occupy the regions of Vidina and of Sofia. The Albanians still hold Scutari and a part of northern Albania.

In all the elementary and secondary schools of Yugoslavia, the same instruction is given each day to a half-million children, compulsorily and officially. The same mission of liberation of "brothers still oppressed" is presented to them as the sacred duty which will be incumbent upon them when they become men.

This hatred is buried systematically in the hearts of children and young men who learn each day by hundreds of thousands that there are lands so-called foreign that are in reality Yugoslav and must be torn from those who retain them. Tears, ruin and bloodshed will follow on this for all the people who dare to remain bound to the destiny of Yugoslavia. Psychology teaches us that there is nothing so potent as an idea sown into a young mind- beware, then, of these babies educated to war.

You will understand why so much suspicion, so much hostility, and so much hatred in Central Europe and the Balkans surrounds Yugoslavia. Those who do not know and who are astonished about it attribute it to the jealousy which the prosperity and the power of Belgrade inspires in its neighbors.

Those hostile neighbors, whose aggressive spirit Belgrade does not cease to denounce, are hostile because they know the secret intentions of the men who dominate Yugoslavia. No one shelters the least illusion as to what is being prepared. Born of war, aggrandised by war, Yugoslavia is led by the megalomania of its chiefs towards a future war. Victorious three times in succession, tripled in territory, more than doubled in population, increased tenfold in riches and possibilities, she is not yet satisfied.

The Manual of the Soldier is terrifying because of what it reveals to us of the secret projects of Pan-Serbism, and of the fearful mentality of conquering nationalism that it is trying to inculcate into the young Yugoslav generations. Yet certain geographic maps, officially edited at Belgrade, are even more terrifying in their import.

The one I have before me while writing this, and which is by no means intended for exportation to France, represents a "Greater Serbia" encircling Trieste, Fiume, all of Istria; extending up into Carinthia and towards the Austrian Tyrol to Gratz; and descending to Scutari, Drama, Thasos, and into Bulgaria well past Sofia.

It is not less ambitious than the maps which Pan-Germanism prepared to show the proposed annexation of Belgium, Denmark, the East and North of France, Basle, Geneva and Lausanne.

Do not tell the Pan-Serbs that their dreams of hegemony will shatter on insurmountable obstacles, and that they are preparing their country for a supreme disaster, for they will not listen to you. Whatever service you have been able to render them in the past, whatever friendship you have borne their country, you will become forthwith suspect and an enemy. They will accept the advice of no one, or if they are obliged to appear to accept it, they will not follow it. They will admit no contradiction. They wish neither to understand nor to know. They intend to follow to the end the road which they have traced for themselves. They do not believe that it was only by a miraculous stroke of destiny that the miniature Balkan kingdom of 1914 has become the powerful European State today.

The hypnosis of Pan-Serbism dominates everything. In the army, the diplomatic corps, the government councils, the great administrations, the men of Narodna Odbrana are everywhere, and even though they appear to occupy but a spot of secondary importance, in reality it is they who command, because all the forces of the secret organizations are behind them.

And let no one believe that this is a new phenomenon, a result of the state of intellectual and moral disequilibrium produced by the dictatorship and which will disappear if the dictatorship caves in. It has been thus at Belgrade since the day that these Pan-Serb organizations- first Narodna Odbrana, and then the Black Hand and the White Hand made themselves masters of the State.

Who, for example, was this Colonel Dragoutine Dimitrievitch-Apis, whose action was decisive in starting the World War? He was, I repeat, simply the chief of the Intelligence Service of the great general staff, that is to say, a subordinate.

But this did not prevent him from passing over the heads of his superiors, over the head of the Chief of the Government himself, and deciding, preparing and organising in its most minute details the attack of Sarajevo. He chose the authors of the attack, he sent them revolvers and bombs taken from the State arsenals of Kragoujevatz, he had them escorted to the frontier of Bosnia by officers of the regular army, he had them guided and cared for in Austrian territory by agents of the Serbian espionage, and he had them conducted in some underhand fashion to the quay of Miljocka behind which they (Tchabrinivitch and Gavrilo Princip) lay in ambush to strike.

Pasitch knew what was being prepared, but capable Prime Minister as he was, he could do nothing against it. The forces of Pan-Serbism were behind it. The all-powerful minister met in the shadows something more powerful than he.

V. Propaganda

"The more they play the idiot in that house the greater the results!"

That is what an American newspaper man said to me last year about the Press Bureau of the Presidency of the Council at Belgrade. His jibe was justified. This Press Bureau thinks and speaks Pan-Serbism for Yugoslavia. Its Director, working under the head of the government, forms opinion in the country and sends out official statements to newspapers not only in Yugoslavia, but all over the world, in which everything is coloured from the Serb point of view, and nothing contrary to the views and desires of the Dictatorship is allowed to pass. It is an amazing organization. I know, for instance, that in the summer of 1932 the Press Bureau held the key to the secret code of five foreign Legations- Great Britain, France, Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania.

The foreign correspondents in Belgrade are carefully documented and closely watched by the agents of the Bureau. Those whose independence is liable to be embarrassing to the Government are made as uncomfortable as possible. As a matter of fact, a correspondent of The Times who told the truth about the political and economic situation had his home invaded by the police one night, his papers scattered about and seized, and he was conducted to the Hungarian frontier.

The Press Bureau is backed with money. It has a reserve of several millions- doubled by secret funds from the Presidency. It knows how to use them. In its propaganda work it has the help of the Avala Telegraph Agency whose role it is to send to Yugoslav journals the official version of everything. It inundates the foreign Press with Balkan information dictated by Belgrade. But the Press Bureau not only sends out news; it collects it- from carefully primed and highly-placed observers in every European capital except Rome. Even the Secret Service and the State police work with them.

The Pan-Serb diplomats and propagandists are strikingly similar to those of Germany in that they always act as if they were dealing with imbeciles or blind men. They play their game with the cards on the table. Thus by feigning ignorance on a question with which they are thoroughly acquainted, or by manifesting incredulous surprise before certain affirmations which are brought to their notice, with a little cleverness the Press Bureau is certain to arrive at quite astonishing results.

The two men who at present share the direction of this essential cog of Pan-Serb politics are Dr. Marianovitch and his associate, Dr. Radovanovitch. Neither of them can tolerate any scepticism or contradiction

on the part of their foreign interlocutors. Each works according to his own nature, Dr. Marianovitch with more distinction and finesse; Dr. Radovanovitch with a cordial vulgarity and an inexhaustible fund of talk. But neither expects you to leave them until they have convinced you.

In the summer of 1932 Dr. Radovanovitch directed the Press Bureau alone. He arrived at the important post which he occupies by the support of secret organizations. Absolutely devoid of education, but of a pleasant temperment, he possesses one of the most prodigious faculties of elocution that I have ever encountered. As he knows he talks well, he expects to talk all the time.

I am indebted to him for enlightenment on the subject of the fate of Dr. Trumbitch, Dr. Korochetz, and M. Baricevitch, one of the leaders of the Democrat-Peasant coalition.

"We will have their hides," said Dr. Radovanovitch with fury, "I'd like to have them here in my hands and boot them to death."

Dr. Radovanovitch would have talked all night about the enemies of Yugoslavia, about the necessity of "striking first in order not to be stabbed in the back," and about the necessity of making French opinion understand this.

I went to see him prior to my departure for Macedonia where I was going to see things for myself. I visited his office a few hours before my departure for Skoplje and Southern Serbia. I asked him about the Macedonian question. "The Macedonian question," he said, "there is no Macedonian question. There isn't one because there are no Macedonian people. The regions which the Turks called 'Macedonia' are in reality purely Serb. Their inhabitants, with the exception of a few tens of thousands, are Serb- just as the populations of the provinces that you French and the English have thought fit to give to Greece in order to thank her, no doubt, for having shot your sailors at Zapeion!

"These populations, you will say to me, speak a different dialect derived from Bulgarian. But why not? For centuries our compatriots of Macedonia have had no other priests, no other teachers than the Bulgars, because the Turks tried to Bulgarise them. But today all the youth of Macedonia has again learned to speak the ancestral language. You will see with what enthusiasm the little children in our primary schools of Southern Serbia say, 'I am Serb! I am Serb!'

"I shall convince you, when I tell you that the populations which, according to our enemies at Sofia, we terrorise, violate and exterminate, have asked us for arms and ammunition in order that they might defend themselves in case of necessity against the incursions of organised bands of their pretended 'brothers' of Bulgaria."

I said: "But the Macedonians in Bulgaria say that the immense majority of the inhabitants of Southern Serbia hate you so much that nearly a half-million among them have already expatriated themselves. In order to put an end to this emigration en masse, you were forced to close your frontier over hundreds of kilometers with a barrier of barbed wire."

My interruption displeased Dr. Radovanovitch. "I know the story," he said dryly. "It is the sort of thing that Sofia serves up to the fools who listen to her."

"You are trying to suggest that the inhabitants of South Serbia are the Bulgarian race? The reply to this absurdity has been given by our great historian, Tichomir Djordjevitch in his famous book, *Nascha Juzna Serbia* (Our Southern Serbia). In it he proves that there exists at present hardly six or seven hundred thousand Bulgars of pure blood in all the Balkan peninsula. They are the last descendents of a tribe of Mongols who came to Europe in the wake of Attila, and who remained between Iskar and the Black Sea, the Danube and the Balkan Chain. Four-fifths of the so-called Bulgars who people Bulgaria, that is to say nearly five million inhabitants out of six, are pure Serb."

"Agreed, Doctor," I said, "but what do you make of the conclusions of the Commission sent by the Russian Academy of Science in 1900 to visit Macedonia and fix definitely the question of nationalities? That Commission reported as follows: 'In Macedonia there still lives the same people who in the ninth century were already called Bulgar.'"

He hesitated an instant. "The Russian Commission," he said, "have admitted they were paid by King Ferdinand to say what they said. That settles that!"

"Let us come to this pretended emigration of the Macedonian population fleeing from our bad treatment. When we entered South Serbia in 1913 we found there thirty thousand Bulgars, descendents of families who had lived there under the Turkish domination. These Bulgars preferred to return to Bulgaria and we made haste to facilitate their departure, only too happy to be rid of them."

"This horrifying story of a Southern Serbia that we have imprisoned behind a wall of barbed wire has nine lives. I certainly hope that you will help us kill it, if you still have time when you are down there to go as far as the frontier. It is true that we have had to wire certain defiles and gorges which we have found particularly favourable to Bulgarian bandits. But this does not exactly constitute hundreds of kilometers of steel walls, or lines of forts, or an hermetically-sealed frontier which have been used in the propaganda of the revolutionary committees of Sofia and their Italian and Hungarian allies!

"As for the 'atrocities', to use your expression, they do not concern us. We Serbs do not employ these methods. The Inquisition is not a Serb invention, it is Italian." "Spanish, Doctor," I corrected him gently. "Spanish." "Spanish, if you will," replied Dr Radovanovitch. "It makes little difference! Spain is worth no more than Italy! The atrocities denounced in the report of the Cranegie Commission, if they really happened, were the work of the bandits from Bulgaria, who come to pillage and assassinate, and these we have exterminated."

"Moreover, it will take you a very few hours to see what the attitude of our Southern population is. I have given orders that you may get a clear idea of it all. Wherever you wish to go our officials will conduct you. You may see the affection and the respect which the population lavish upon the dutiful men, who are our administrators.

"But do not confound the sentiments and the opinion of the Bulgar official circles with those of the popular mass whom they oppress. Don't let them make a fool of you!

"King Boris, for example, surrounded by Germanophile officers, and ignorant and dishonest officials, is detested by his subjects. Recall all the attacks directed against his life in the last few years."

I risked another interruption:

"These Bulgars affirm, and their declarations have been confirmed by the diplomatic corps at Sofia, that the ambush on the route to Kustendil was the work of individuals in the pay of your legation in Bulgaria."

Dr. Radovanvitch literally bounded out of his chair.

"Those people are capable of the most vile infamies," he cried. "Only they forget to remember that they commit more political assassinations in a month that do all the rest of Europe in ten years. We are not in the habit in Yugoslavia of assassinating or having our adversaries assassinated. They will assassinate King Boris without us!

"The day he embarrasses the ORIM or the Macedonian National Committee, his account is settled. His Italian marriage has succeeded not only in alienating him from the mass, who do not pardon him having married a Roman Catholic, but also from the true Bulgar patriots who understand that it is not Italy who can re-establish the prosperity of their country, but we only, their racial brothers!"

"But," I ventured, "King Alexander himself declared in 1930, if I am not mistaken, that the incorporation of Bulgaria into the Yugoslav community would be most undesirable."

"Yes, indeed," rejoined the Doctor. "His Majesty said that. But events have happened quickly since then in Bulgaria and elsewhere. His Majesty has since completely changed his opinion, as I can prove to you, because he himself told me."

"Doctor, take care!" I said. "We are going into the realm of dreams. I spoke with too many people last year in Bulgaria not to know the truth; I questioned too many Europeans; there are too many of my compatriots established in the country since the War, who are thoroughly acquainted with it."

"Not in the realm of dreams at all," replied the Doctor. "No, in the realm of realities of tomorrow!"

"A Balkan Federation, eh?" I asked. "A first step towards the United States of Europe so ardently desired by Arstide Briand?"

"No!" thundered Radovanovitch. "As General Givkovitch said to you here last year, the United States of Europe is the panacea of a quack doctor, the politics of a paralytic for weak nations. We are a strong people, led by men who do not waste words, and are not paralysed, I can tell you!

"A Balkan Federation such as certain irresponsible foreign circles advocate, which would leave to each of its members its administrative autonomy, its own political regime and even its finances and its personal army, is impossible! Those Utopias which certain lawyers would institute would have no other aim than to lull our vigilance in order to rob us!

"Our idea is a Federation grouping together all the peoples of the Slav race established between the Black Sea, the Aegean, the Adriatic, the Alps and the Danube. It will not comprise Greece, but the present Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania and the Slav populations still under foreign domination. Such an ideal is not possible, it is not desirable and it will not be realised, if it does not come into being by the crystallisation of all these peoples around the central nucleus, Serbia.

"That is how it will happen, sir. And it will inevitably happen either in peace or in war."

War! I did not criticise the word. I have heard it so often last year, and again since my return here. Yesterday I heard it again from the lips of a peaceful professor at the University at whose side I dined at the French Legation and who said to me: "War is terrible, of course, but without it the entire social body dies. Peace is decadence!"

How like the German professors of 1914!

I said to Radovanovitch: "So Serbia is destined to play in the Balkan Peninsula the role which has been assumed by Prussia in Germany?"

"Exactly," the Doctor agreed. "All the Slavs of the South, under whatever may be the region they inhabit, whatever may be the State which they obey today, all have the same origin - Serb. The day is near when all will group about their common source, Serbia, for the integral realisation of the destinies of a great people!"

Enthusiasm transfigured the face of Dr. Radovanovitch. He was "living" his dream.

"Sofia, Skoplje, Bitolj or Ochride are all Serb," he went on. "Salonica has never been Greek; it has a Serb city peopled with Southern Serbs. Its affiliation to Greece has been its death sentence! It will not revive, it will not find again its lost prosperity, until it becomes again the great commercial port of the Balkans towards the Mediterranean and the Orient. And it cannot become this great port unless it returns to Yugoslavia, of which it is a natural and historical dependency. It is the same with Drama, Seres, Janina, Kastoria, which have been of no importance since they were delivered to the degenerate Greek nation.

"In the meantime, I tell you frankly, we have had enough of the collusion between the government of Sofia and associations of bandits installed in Bulgaria, where they conduct an abominable propaganda against us, and do not cease to organise attacks in Southern Serbia.

"Our general staff itself will proceed with the clean-up that Bulgaria refuses to make. We shall start by putting Sofia in her place for the last time. If nothing changes, we will appeal to the League of Nations, on giving it notice that we, since Sofia is powerless, are going to proceed ourselves to carry out the necessary police operation. Once this is done, the first attack committed on our territory, or against one of our subjects in Bulgaria will be the sign for our soldiers to occupy the departments of Sofia, Petrich and Kustendil."

"And after that?"

"What do you mean, after that? What do you expect would happen? We will exterminate a few dozen brigands, to the great satisfaction of the peaceful populations whom they terrorise; we will burn their haunts; King Boris and his clique will be eclipsed, and a few weeks later, in an unanimous spirit, the Bulgars, liberated by us, will proclaim their intention to unite with Yugoslavia.

"And I, my dear Doctor," I said, "am persuaded to the contrary. The entry of your troops into Bulgaria will rise against you the entire country. In all Bulgaria there will be but one desire. The closest national union will surround King Boris. It will be a war to death."

Dr. Radovanvitch made no sign.

"But," I went on, "in all that, what are you going to do about Italy? you don't suppose that if you invade Bulgaria, and especially if you express the intention of remaining there, that Italy will watch you without acting, do you? Italy will never permit you to install yourself at Salonica; she will never permit you to incorporate Bulgaria into Yugoslavia.

Your march on Sofia will call Italy up against you."

A gleam passed in the depth of his grey eyes:

"Italy will attack us," he agreed. "We know it! But what about that! She may have tanks, artillery, technical means that we do not have. She may have twice as many troops as we have. But what of that? Sooner or later it will be necessary for their men to encounter our own, man to man. Then we shall see. The Austrians had four men to our one in the Great War, but each time the Austrian troops hurled themselves against our own, they were crushed, and each Austrian (they proved it at Carso) is worth two Italians. All the carnivals and the parades of fascism have not changed the heart of those runaways of Caporetto. Let them come if it pleases them! We will teach them to run again.

"And what about France. Are you not our allies? If Italy attacks us, you will be obliged to aid us. Your interest is our interest, for Italy menaces you far more than she menaces us. She wants Albania, she wants Carinthia, Istria, and all the Dalmatian coast, but she also wants Corsica, and Tunisia and Algeria from you. Italy is much more your enemy than Germany is, but she can do nothing against you because of us, nothing against us because of you."

Dreams of madness! Certainly, but dreams which all those who are masters in Yugoslavia pursue obstinately and untiringly. Just as Russia, for three centuries, pursued the mad dream of Constantinople.

These mad dreams will cost Europe much blood, and first of all France, if she does not shatter them while there is still time by warning the men of the Pan-Serb dictatorship that though we are their allies for the maintenance of peace, we will never be their allies in adventures of provocation and rapine which will cost Europe more dead and more than the revolver shot of the Pan-Serb Gavrilo Princip!

The Bulgarian Scene

I. Bulgaria The Unlucky

Twenty years ago Bulgaria was incontestably the most powerful of the four little Christian states in the Balkan peninsula which were pushing Ottoman domination step by step out of Europe.

She was not even then in possession of her natural frontiers, because the Austro-German politicians were desirous of avoiding the constitution of a Bulgarian State whose extent and force would have barred the route to the ambitions of Austria. But she was well on the way, and her power seemed to be destined to dominate in the Balkans.

She had recovered Western Roumelia in 1885 as a result of a war with Serbia, which had been brought about by the diplomacy of Vienna, and thus was master of two-thirds of her own national territory. Macedonia, the third portion of the Bulgarian body, remained Turk.

However, it was only Turk politically, thanks to the efforts of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (the ORIM) which had galvanised the Christian populations of Macedonia to a realisation of their Bulgar blood and destiny. So well did they do their work that the first victory of the Balkan Allies in 1912 was won in the Valley of the Vardar by the volunteers of the ORIM.

A profound sentiment was generated in the Balkan mind of the ethnic unity of all of the Bulgarian populations established in the peninsula, from the Black Sea to Albania, and from the Danube to the Aegean Sea.

The man who reigned at Sofia possessed an exceptional intelligence, a spirit of intrigue, a total absence of scruples, a knowledge of men and a profound contempt for them, and these qualities seemed just those needed in the fetid political atmosphere of the Balkans to enable him to realise his profound dreams. In order to prevent a recurrence of the German opposition of 1878, he had formed precious friendships at Berlin and Vienna. The Russian friendship had already been established. Finally, a close alliance, in which the most insignificant eventualities had been foreseen and regulated, united him to Serbia and Greece.

The Bulgarian mobilisation decree in September 1912 called to arms nearly half-a-million thoroughly trained men, filled with enthusiasm, and provided by Creusot with a crushing superiority in artillery. This peasant army, advancing irresistibly in less than six weeks to the very doors of Constantinople, stupefied Europe.

The Great Powers, however, were interested in seeing to it that the Bulgars should not solve the question of the Orient and so the dream of Bulgaria was checked. There followed the armistice of 1912, the interminable negotiations at London, the refusal of the Serbs to respect the agreement which they had concluded with Sofia in regard to the division of eventual conquests; the sullen attack on the Serbian positions by the Bulgars on 29th June, 1913; the Greeks' rush to the aid of Belgrade; the intervention of Roumania who attacked the Bulgarian armies from the rear; and the treaties of Bukarest on 10th August, 1913, and of Constantinople on 29th September.

If there is one thing that is widely known about the history of the two Balkan Wars, surely it is the story of the shameful way in which Bulgaria turned and attacked her ally Serbia by surprise because she (Bulgaria) believing herself to be the stronger, was determined to keep for herself alone all the fruits of the victory gained in common. The annals of Serbian history ring with this felony of Bulgaria, and how she paid the price of her treason.

What a fine moral story it makes! The good little boys from whom the bad little boy tried to steal marbles, how splendid to see them triumphant and the bad little boy discomfited!

The little that has so far been permitted to escape from the archives of revolutionary nations has thrown some light on the "Bulgarian felony" of 29th June, 1913. Here again we find the hidden hand of Serbia plotting and planning that Pan-Serb dream of aggrandisement which was and is charged with so much evil for Europe. Enough has been revealed to show that the responsibility for the Bulgar act does not lie with King Ferdinand. He bears the burden of enough faults without adding this one. The author of the second Balkan War was Pasitch, President of the Serb Council.

I will give here my own personal contribution to the truth on this point of history.

From May and June 1912, more than four months before the Greco-Serbo-Bulgar attack against the Turks, Pasitch sent instructions to his foreign agents ordering them to make it known that Belgrade intended to take to herself all the Macedonian regions.

It was Pasitch who had the idea of withdrawing the Serb troops from the front at Tchataldja on the pretext of their extreme exhaustion, and of having them occupy the regions of Macedonia on which Serbia had cast her spell-notably Skoplje, Veles, Kumanovo, Kicevo, Chtip and Prilep.

It was Pasitch who took the initiative to push into this same Macedonia bands of irregulars, or tchetnitzi, organised under the direction of Colonel Dimitrievitch-Apis by the Narodna Odbrana. When the hour arrived for the resistance of the Macedonian population by ruthless bloodshed.

To Pasitch, finally, is due the honour of having set before the eyes of King Ferdinand the mirage of an imperial coronation at Saint-Sophia, and to have persuaded him that he could achieve this only if Constantinople were taken by the Bulgarian armies alone.

And while the old fox of Nisch was thus duping Ferdinand, the Serbian Generalissimo Putnik was busy regrouping and distributing his divisions: meanwhile, the Greek general staff pushed their men along the coast of the Aegean Sea and the Macedonian regions bordering Albania; the cabinets of Belgrade and Athens busied themselves with plans for the division of the territories, promised Bukarest the territory of Dobroudja, and so insured the success of the coup which they were meditating.

When the news came to Paris that the Bulgar troops had just attacked the Serbs I myself heard the triumphant exclamation of the Serbian Minister, Vesnitch: "At last we have got them!" Yes, they "got" them, as Bismarck, "got" France with the Ems dispatch.

One wonders today what blindness possessed the Bulgars that they were not able to see the manouvres which were being prepared against them. Too late it was when their eyes were opened- they were literally surrounded by the Serbo-Greek armies.

Yet the quality of their soldiers was so superior that they would have triumphed even then if the Roumanian armies had not stormed them in the rear, This is the true story behind the legend that the Bulgars attacked the Serbs without warning. They were obliged to do so! Their only hope of safety lay in taking the offensive before their adversaries. But unfortunately this planted the responsibility for the second Balkan War upon them and they carry the responsibility of it before the world.

The same men who worked in liason with Pasitch and with Venizelos to promote the second Balkan War, were those who used their influence six years later upon the English and French plenipotentiaries to ensure that the quartering of Bulgaria might be completed to the profit of Greece and Serbia. Thus did the Machiavellism of Pasitch end in the triumph of Serbia over its old rival, Bulgaria.

France should not forget, however, that her part in the second Balkan War succeeded in depriving the Allies, at the most critical hour of the World War, of the aid of Bulgaria, whose intervention on their side would probably have saved them two million lives.

Bulgaria, in fact, threw herself into the war only to regain her Macedonian territories. But she did it only after having offered her alliance to the Allies in exchange for the territories which the Serbo-Bulgar convention had formally promised to her a few years before.

In 1915 Bulgar public opinion was pro-Ally, not pro-German, and its opposition to the decision of King Ferdinand and his ministers to join with Germany caused such mutinies in the army that the government of Sofia had to imprison en mass those politicians who were hostile to the intervention of their country against Russia and her Allies.

The Bulgar troops in the Great War fought without enthusiasm, save when they were fighting against the Serbs or the Roumanians. They displayed an antipathy towards the Germans so violent that it was impossible to billet the soldiers of the two countries in the vicinity of each other. After the reoccupation of Macedonia and Dobroudja in 1916 (her war aims being attained) Bulgaria had but a single thought- to retire from the struggle.

The peace imposed upon her by the treaty of Neuilly left her crushed: she had to pay a war indemnity proportionally much greater than that of Germany; she had more than 135,000 killed, as many invalids and mutilated; she had to give to Serbia the new Bulgarian lands of Strounitza, Bossilegrad, Tzaribrod and the Valley of Tinok; to Greece she had to surrender all Southern Thrace with Dedeagatch, Gumuldjina and Xznthi; and to Roumania, Dobroudja. Moreover she suffered the loss of Macedonia and of all access to the sea.

The facts of the two Balkan wars and of the Bulgarian participation in the World War have been mentioned here only in so far as the knowledge of past facts seemed to me necessary to the proper understanding of the present situation, and notably of this peril of a Balkan War which mounts again on the horizon of Europe.

The Bulgars are still indignant over the pitless way in which the Allies treated them in 1919. They are deeply sensible of the present designs of Belgrade on their national independence. Each day they are reminded of their position and their future fate by the systematic provocations and the unreasonable hostilities of their powerful neighbour.

With all this, no Bulgar hides his bitterness. But I have not encountered a single one, be he minister, representative at the Sobrania, mechanic, farmer or shepherd, who did not bow before the accomplished fact. The Macedonian chiefs themselves (who have not ceased for fourteen years to struggle for liberation, not by war, but by pacific means) say simply:

"We have lost the war, we must pay!"

The Serb attitude, however, has remained uncompromising and hostile; the official Serb propaganda has never neglected an opportunity to prejudice, in every way possible, her neighbours in Bulgaria.

The most striking example of this deliberate hatred that I know is the dispatch sent to the Agence Avala in 1928, from the frontier station of Tzaribrod, by Vasitch of the Yugoslav Legation at Sofia on the day before the Bulgarian 7 1/2% loan was floated in Paris. The aim of this loan was to support the stabilisation of the lev, and its success was of vital importance to Bulgaria. The message dispatched to the world from Tzaribrod announced that the Bulgars were massacring one another in the streets of Sofia, that the province was in revolution and that a state of siege had had to be proclaimed throughout the kingdom. All the newspapers of Europe and America reproduced it. The whole thing was a tissue of lies. The Bulgarians denied it strenuously, but it was too late, the mischief was done.

The loan was saved simply because the Paris Bourse remembered that Bulgaria was the only Balkan borrower (including Yugoslavia) who returned what was lent her.

Nothing reveals better the atmosphere which reigns on both sides of the frontier, as well as the true attitude of the two governments, than the welcome reserved by each of them for each other's subjects. In Bulgaria, the Yugoslav subjects come and go as freely as do the Italians, the Americans and the French. In Yugoslavia, the Bulgarian subjects, when they have succeeded in getting there at all, and God knows what difficulties the Yugoslav consular authorities create before giving them a visa, are subject to the most humiliating police supervision. Brutal expulsions await them at each step. Those who have obtained permission only to cross Yugoslavia are not permitted to leave the station when they change trains. On the morning of 6th July, 1932, I was standing on Ljubljana station, waiting for the express to Zagreb, when I saw a Bulgar being mercilessly beaten by the police for having asked to go to a pharmacy fifty yards from the station to buy some medicine for a child. Two policemen were hitting him right and left, after having torn off his collar and spat in his face. They released him only upon my intervention, which was all the more vigorous when I discovered that the sick child was a little French boy going to rejoin his parents in Bulgaria.

Bulgaria has had neither minister nor charge d'affaires at Belgrade for three years. A consul represents her. Why? Because the Yugoslav government systematically refused to accept the candidates successively proposed to her by the government of Bulgaria.

At Sofia, on the contrary, as everyone knows the Yugoslav Legation, and the consulate, directed by one of the cleverest and most intelligent diplomats of the Pan-Serb Government, M. Voukchevitch, is the rallying centre for all the adversaries of the present order in Bulgaria.

The Yugoslav military attache at Sofia, Colonel Chektich, was convicted of having created an organisation of paid assassins for the purpose of suppressing the most conspicuous of the Macedonian chiefs. Few diplomats at Sofia consented to shake hands with him, and his departure was welcomed by all the diplomatic circle.

"You are playing a dangerous game," I said in the summer of 1932 to M. Voukchevitch, whom I have known long enough under such circumstances that give me the right to speak frankly. "If a Macedonian were to shoot down one of your men here in the street, which you will agree would be his absolute right after all that your men have done, what complications would not ensue? In fact, I am compelled to believe, my dear Minister, that you are seeking for an incident?"

Voukchevitch laughed. "If that incident takes place, it will be rigorously settled. I know that I am personally marked out by the ORM and the National Committee!"

At the Union Club in Sofia I mentioned what I had heard in Belgrade about the aversion of the Bulgarian people for King Boris. The man to whom I mentioned this fact was not a Bulgarian, but the charge d'affaires of a nation that is quite friendly towards Belgrade.

"Such a statement would be absurd," he replied, "were it not so dangerous and so calculated to make mischief. To think that a people as sensible, as basically pacific and estimable as the Serbs should permit themselves to be led by such men as are now at the head of affairs."

The official Yugoslav propaganda against King Boris is, however, carried out with inconceivable stupidity. So stupid it is, in fact, that one would think the Yugoslavs were aiming to consolidate Bulgar sentiment around their sovereign.

No long investigation is necessary to learn the real sentiments of the Bulgarian people towards King Boris. The Bulgars, the refugees, the Macedonians, the inhabitants of the foreign colony, all are unanimous. His popularity is complete.

"He is extraordinary," said the French military attache to me after an interview with the king. "He is just in his views; he has a wonderful power of assimilation. We talked politics, literature, aviation. He knows all, he understands all, he is acquainted with all. He is an absolute charmer!"

The Bulgarians love their king for his simplicity of appearance, his benevolence and his continual solicitude for the needs of the humble. Rare are the Bulgar hamlets that have not seen the sovereign's sports car stop in their midst, and the king get out and start to talk familiarly with the peasants. Thus he enters into their problems, encourages them with his counsel, and even comes discreetly to the aid of the very poor. From his father, Czar Ferdinand, he takes his precise and clear intelligence, the finesse of his mind, and the prudence and the sharpness of his political vision. And those who loved his mother find again in him the admirable qualities of heart which make Bulgaria venerate her memory.

In this country, where to believe the news stories, the most insignificant party chief or representative does not dare leave his home unless he be surrounded with armed guards; where a bullet awaits those who have forfeited the esteem of the ORIM or the Macedonian National Committee, King Boris comes and goes alone in his car with Queen Jeanne or with his chauffeur.

It will be said by the enemies of Bulgaria that this is not true, and that King Boris has been attacked twice—in both cases with nearly fatal results. The first attack half-destroyed the Sveta Nedelia Church of Sofia on 16th April, 1925, where the king was to attend the funeral of one of his generals and was prevented from coming only by an unforeseen chance. The second was an ambush which had been prepared for him in a deserted part of the route from Orhanian to Sofia. Here again the sovereign escaped only by a miracle.

For a long time these two attacks were attributed to militant communists. As a result, the popular reaction against the Bolshevik Party was such that, in spite of the intensity of the economic crisis so favourable to its propaganda, it has lost all influence on the political life of Bulgaria. "In Bulgaria," said the Red International Syndical in December 1931, "the position of the Red syndicates is very weak. It has only 1,136 adherents out of 16,000 in the textile industry, and 1,230 adherents in the tobacco industry out of 30,000 workers."

It is certain that the Bolsheviks participated in the attack of 16th April, 1925, but they acted only as individuals. The coup itself had been prepared by non-communist agents. As for the ambush of Orhanian, that is another story. It was executed by Bulgars in the pay of foreigners.

"The men who surround King Boris; all the high political and administrative personnel, military and official, are imbeciles or dishonest men," said Dr. Radovanovitch to me at Belgrade.

That there are not lions among them is clear from the results. The deplorable system which at each general election sweeps away the administrative personnel and replaces them by the friends and puppets of the victorious party does not succeed in pushing valuable men to the first rank at Sofia. But the Bulgarian ministers do not have a monopoly on the simpletons.

And if it is true (as M. Henri Prost wrote) that the Bulgar officials, miserably paid and uncertain of their future, "display proof of their heroism by refusing the bribes which are offered to them," others, in neighboring countries, do not have this virtue. No Frenchman or Englishman who has done business with a Yugoslav, a Roumanian, or a Greek administration will contradict me when I affirm that backsheesh (which is called at Belgrade, "reimbursement of expenses"; at Athens, "for the unforeseen"; and at Bukarest, "Cigarettes for Madame") has to be allowed for in the estimate of foreign corporations when they quote these nations for public contracts.

Ask a certain great French corporation what it had to distribute to enable it to obtain the concession for the new bridge over the Sava!

All the condemnation which the Pan-Serbs heap upon Bulgaria is an attempt to justify their attitude of hostility towards her. They pretend that Bulgaria is devoured with a desire for revenge, and they make much of her alleged secret rearmament.

The Bulgars, they say, no more accept their defeat than do the Hungarians or the Germans. The Yugoslavs also allege that the Bulgars are the secret allies of Fascist Italy, and allege that they have received from Rome enough rifles, munitions, cannons, machine-guns and equipment generally to arm more than 300,000 men."

"We are not only ones to know it," says Belgrade. "The French Intelligence Service also possesses proof of it."

The French War Ministry has made a study of the military situation of Bulgaria, with a view to verifying the sensational reports of the Yugoslavs. But I have reasons to doubt that they have confirmed all the information furnished by Belgrade.

The treaty of Neuilly allowed Bulgaria an army of 33,000 men, made up of 20,000 soldiers, 10,000 gendarmes, foresters and customs guards, and 3,000 frontier guards. These men have to be enlisted volunteers—the officers for twenty years, the men for twelve. Bulgaria is not allowed to possess military aeroplanes, arsenals, arms or ammunition factories, or more than a few dozen machine-guns and pieces of light artillery.

It may be that its effective force and its armament exceed these figures by a small margin. The army may comprise about 40,000 men (of whom 4,000 are frontier guards) instead of 33,000, and may possess a number of cannon and machine-guns nearly double that authorized by the Peace Treaty. But what chance would an army like this have against Yugoslavia?

Of the magnificent Bulgarian military organization of former times, no more than the shadow of a shadow survives. Twenty years ago the Bulgarian armies crushed the Turks and opposed the united Serbs and Greeks. Today she could not even resist a Greek attack.

As for this secret convention with Italy, by means of which Bulgaria is alleged to have promised help to Italy in the event of an Italo-Yugoslav conflict, this has become a nightmare to the Pan-Serbs since the marriage of King Boris with Princess Jeanne of Savoy.

"If the Bulgars were not backed by the Macaronis," Dr. Marianovitch said to me, "they would be less insolent, or we should have given them a kick in the behind long ago. Sofia is in the pay of fascism; the gold of Mussolini greases the palm of her ministers and her generals, just as it feeds the banditry of Mihailoff and the propaganda of the National Committee. We have proof that hundreds of Italian machine-guns, millions of cartridges and grenades, and tons of explosives have entered Bulgaria in the past two years, hidden in oil barrels or boxes labelled Preserves or Farm Tractors.

He was annoyed with me when I expressed surprise that Italy and Bulgaria, being able to communicate freely by sea, should be reduced to such subterfuge. If machine-guns and munitions from the Italians do enter Bulgaria, it is not necessary to hide them in grease casks or clothing bales.

That Italy, believing in the inevitability of an armed conflict with the Yugoslavs, plays the Bulgar card against them (as she plays the Hungarian card in Central Europe) it would be an insult to her political sense to doubt. That she makes an effort to furnish them with the means of action which they lack, appears likely, since it is undeniable that any aggression against Sofia would see Rome rise up against the aggressor.

But who is really at bottom to blame for this state of affairs?

Let us not forget that for half-a-century now Bulgaria has been baulked by Belgrade upon every occasion that she has attempted to attain a national unity. Nor must we, when we seek to understand the nature of the quarrel which separates the two neighbors, forget that Bulgaria, in spite of the ambush of June 1913, and in spite of the injustices of 1918, has vainly sought to live on friendly terms with her powerful neighbor. She has no more merited the implacable hostility and the incessant provocations of the Government of Belgrade than had France merited the hatred of victorious Germany from 1870 to 1914. Yugoslavia could easily have made herself a friend of Bulgaria. If this Italo-Bulgar alliance really does exist, one must agree that everything possible has been done by the Serbs to throw Bulgaria into the arms of the Italians.

And, after all, what has Yugoslavia to fear from Bulgaria? She has neither howitzers nor heavy artillery. The few training-planes which she might transform into war-planes have neither speed nor power and would be annihilated at once. Her only aerodrome is near the frontier at Sofia, which serves at present as a base for French, German and Polish commercial lines to the Levant. She has no arsenals; no small-arms factories, no munition works or chemical plants for making asphyxiating gas. Her roads and railways are in an unimaginable state of ruin; her rolling-stock non-existent.

Moreover, the Bulgarian people, whom a universal suffrage and a democratic spirit render masters of their destinies, wish to hear no more about war at any price, even though it be for Macedonia, which is the flesh of their flesh and the cradle of their race for which they have already fought three times.

The Bulgars have no means to make war, nor do they wish to do so.

They will go to war only if the Pan-Serb imperialists, ignoring the fear of Italian intervention, and France's counsel of moderation, decide to destroy the Macedonian revolutionary organisations, and to occupy all or a part of Bulgaria.

"If they did that, Gospodine," said the old priest to me as we stood before the tomb of the national poet, Ivan Vasov, among the geraniums and cedars of the garden of the Sveta Sofia, "if they did that, the bones of our dead sons would rise up and rout them."

II. The Macedonian Question

In the heart of the Balkan peninsula, stretching from Lake Orhrida, which washes the Albanian frontiers, to Drima on the Aegean Sea; from Salonika to Mount Shar north of Skoplje, lies Macedonia, a beautiful country nearly three times as large as Belgium and inhabited by two and a half million people who possess the same language, the same culture, and with few exceptions, the same religion. Of this people, seventy per cent, are pure Bulgars.

Behind this country lie twenty centuries of tumultuous and tragic history, Rome, the Barbarians, the Crusades, Venice, the Ottoman, Alexander and the Empire of the Old World. On of the most powerful efforts for liberty of the Turks; always crushed, always regenerated, up to the victory of the Balkan Allies in 1912. A first distribution of Macedonian lands between Belgrade and Athens after the first Bulgar defeat in 1913. A second in 1918 after the World War and the second Bulgar defeat.

Today, a heavier servitude than the old one rests upon Macedonia, because the new masters are stronger than the Turks, and more violent, and Europe, this time, supports and approves them. Five to six hundred thousand Macedonians (an entire people) have sought refuge in Bulgaria since the annexation of their country by Greece and Serbia.

Those who were able to leave have left, since the peace of July 1913, and since the Armistice of October 1918, rather than suffer foreign domination. All the intellectuals, all the teachers, all those whom their antecedents or their relations rendered undesirable or suspect, have been expelled since the installation of the conquerors. Thousands more, before the frontiers closed, fled and abandoned all their property, often leaving behind them all or a part of their family.

Of the same blood, the same language, the same traditions as the Bulgars, they have been received by them as brothers.

Finally, the Greek authorities expelled thousands of Macedonian families en bloc after the disaster of Smyrna, in order to install the Hellenic population of Asia Minor on their lands and in their homes, which they had confiscated without indemnity. The outcasts of Macedonia were shepherded by the Bulgarian Government, with the aid of the League of Nations, towards Bourgas, on the Black Sea and towards Dobroudja.

There they transformed what was before only broken stones and swamps into a flourishing country. Nothing distinguishes these Bulgars of Macedonia from the Bulgars of Bulgaria in the midst of whom they live. They are neighbours in the same villages, a number of them have won high social positions, some have become ministers, even Presidents of the Bulgarian Council.

Yet all have remained Macedonian. They look incessantly towards their beloved Fatherland, towards the obscure hamlets, the little white-and-rose cities of the frontier. There they were born and there most of them lived for so long that, if the barriers were removed tomorrow, every one of them would return to his native land.

"But your fields, the lands which the Government of Sofia have given to you and which your children and you have worked for fifteen years," I asked a Macedonian labourer near Belica, "would you abandon them?"

"My lands?" he replied. "They are over yonder in Macedonia. They are waiting for me. I hope to live long enough to return and sit on the stone bench which my father had placed under the apricot-trees before the door. He, also, is waiting for me."

Five hundred thousand Macedonians in Bulgaria, where they are at home, where they have married, where they have nothing to fear from anyone, still think and speak as this old peasant of Belica.

Fifteen hundred thousand Macedonians, in the annexed land under Greek or Serbian domination, live and have their children in the hope of this return, and in the expectation of it.

What a tremendous pressure is here! What a colossal weight of desire waiting only for the right moment to take shape in action.

Soon after the annexation, attempts were made to "Hellenise" or "Serbianise" the Macedonians who remained in their country, and when they attempted their first gestures of revolt, they had the breath knocked out of them by the crushing violence of their new masters. The gendarmes, the prison, the certainty that they had no chance of help from anyone, has taught them in the past fifteen years to walk straight along the road indicated to them. They have become docile, respectful, obedient. They have learned to smile through their tears.

I have seen them, and the memory of the decay into which these free men have fallen makes my blood boil still.

The Macedonians in Bulgaria are waiting also. But they are free, and for fifteen years they have pursued an obstinate dream that they will liberate their lost brothers. All the resources they have are consecrated to this task. There is not one among them, wherever the hazard of exile has placed him, who does not belong to a

society, an association, a group of some sort destined to keep up among its members, and especially among the youth, the sentiment of national solidarity and the cult of a native land momentarily lost.

These organisations have their form in associations of Macedonian women; student associations; organisations for the assistance of old people, orphans, sick; associations for propaganda abroad; all form a network that lets nothing pass between its meshes.

Not a Macedonian in Bulgaria! Not a Macedonian in foreign countries! That is the national slogan. And the apex of this organization is a handful of men working in broad daylight with legal methods and means; the Macedonian National Committee, which commands its energies, centralises its resources, and directs its activities.

In the shadow, beside the National Committee, but absolutely distinct from it, absolutely foreign to its work and actions, is another group of men, directed by other chiefs the ORIM. We shall meet with it again.

The Macedonian question has existed for half a century. The desire for Macedonian liberty has become a burning obsession. This determination for liberty cost the Turks their possessions in Europe. Initial cause of the two Balkan wars, it was in order to liberate Macedonia that Bulgaria prepared the coalition in 1912, and it was in order to seize her from the victorious Bulgars that the Serbs and the Greeks, in turn, joined against her in 1913. Macedonia was indirectly, but certainly, at the origin of the World War. A hot spot, indeed!

III. THE ORIM

ORIM . What innumerable legends surround it!

" Organisation of bandits," say the Serbs.

"Union for a sacred aim of liberation of a people atrociously oppressed," say the Macedonians.

"The heroic personification of a great idea " , wrote Stephan Raditch on 19th June, 1928, the eve of his assassination at Belgrade.

What is this ORIM -this Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation? Let us go back forty years.

In 1893 Serbia and Bulgaria were still very small. The Red Sultan pressed his yoke upon the lands of Macedonia which extend from Ochrida in Albania to Adrianople in Thrace ; from Mount Char, which is south of Nisch, to Salonika at the mouth of the Vardar.

Three Macedonians, the oldest of whom was not thirty years of age : Dane Groueff, a teacher, Dr. Tatcheff, a young doctor and a professor, Pere Tocheff, gathered one winter evening at the village of Ressen (Resen), near Bitolj, to decide that the hour had come to put an end to it. Macedonia had suffered enough. If she were organised, if she were armed, if she had chieftains, the Turks would be thrown out.

Alone, these three were going to organise her and arm her. They swore on sacred ikons to consecrate their lives to that task.

Their programme, from which the ORIM has not deviated one iota in forty years, was : Prepare the Macedonian populations for armed combat against the oppressor; obtain security for the people and guarantees of order and justice in the administration.

Less than three months afterwards hundreds of Macedonians, young and old, had taken the oath of the ORIM . Rich and poor, great poets such as Christo Matoff, university men like Gouchtanoff, doctors of law like Todor Saeff, professors of science, merchants, bankers, officials, doctors, celebrated officers like Boris Drangoff, and also obscure peasants, poor mountain shepherds, artisans and village teachers, all had taken the oath which bound them for ever to incessant propaganda, to supreme devotion, without pity for traitors, without excuse for the cowardly.

They were subjected to an iron discipline. Courage, integrity, purity of morals, defence of the oppressed and the weak, total abnegation-they must always set the example ! Any failure on the part of members the ORIM punished as mercilessly as she strikes the enemies of the country.

Soon they were a thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand-all Macedonia !

Any Macedonian, whatever his official nationality, whether he were Bulgarian, Roumanian or Albanian, provided he were Christian and morally above reproach, could be a member of the organisation. It was subdivided into groups of ten members, each one of whom obeyed a chief or voivode elected by secret vote. All the groups of a locality constituted the local organisation, directed by an elected committee. The local committee was subordinate to a central committee, which was placed under the absolute authority of the chief, chosen from among its members to be the supreme voivode of the ORIM .

Immediately the ORIM set to work. In the solitudes of the mountains old soldiers trained volunteers. Soon the first shots echoed in the defiles, the first fires were lighted, the first bombs exploded in the garrisons, the stations and the official buildings. The Venitza (Venica) affair in 1896; Valandovo in 1897; Enidje-Vardar in 1900;

devastation and terror sown in Salonika the following year, then at Seres(Ser), then at Skoplje, then at Veles. They fought every day, everywhere, from one end to the other of Macedonia.

The Macedonian falcon was soaring !

On 2nd August, 1903, fires lighted on the mountain peaks from Kostom to Ochrida, signalled the 30,000 volunteers of the ORIM that the hour had sounded to chase the Turk. All Macedonia rose en bloc.

The struggle was fearful ; and when at last the ORIM , outnumbered, crushed, had to admit defeat, the slaughter was unimaginable. Seven thousand heads fell, 5,000 prisoners were impaled, hanged, or burned alive ; 3.000 children were mutilated or eviscerated, all the women and young girls in the regions of the insurrection were violated.

But Europe was affected. The Great Powers demanded autonomy for the martyrs provinces, and liberty, thanks to the ORIM , began to dawn over Macedonia.

But the long-awaited sun did not appear. The Young Turks had just replaced Abdul- Hamid. Hardly installed in power, they tried to settle for good their accounts with Macedonia. The massacre recommenced. The resistance of the ORIM recommenced also. Four years of struggle followed, without mercy on one side or the other ; ambushes, terrorist attacks, mass executions and insurrections without cease. Conquered in their turn by the Balkan allies, the Turks left in 1912. The volunteers of the ORIM had their large part in the victory. They had guided, informed, supported the Serbo- Bulgarian armies. They had fallen by thousands on the battlefield. They had been sacrificed in vain.

Macedonia, abandoned by the Turks, was dismembered by the conquerors who had turned against their Bulgarian ally after the Ottoman defeat. The Great War ended the disaster. The heart of Macedonia, Chtip, Skoplje, Bitolj, Veles, Ochrida, Guevgueli, became Serb. The rest, Xanthi, Seres, Salonika, Florina was Greek. A little corner was left to Bulgaria.

And while 500,000 Macedonians, an entire people, fled the domination of the Greeks and the Serbs, still more merciless even than that of the Turks, the ORIM resumed the struggle, but this time against Belgrade and Athens.

To the hangings of prisoners, the massacres of suspects, to the fearful persecutions of the people, they replied with the execution of hangmen and judges; rendering violence for violence, they matched the administrative terror by guerilla warfare, and by their infernal machines.

In the last fourteen years, hundreds of Serb stations, trains, gendarmeries, public buildings, warehouses, and munition depots have been burnt or dynamited in annexed Macedonia. The ORIM has not disarmed.

Installed in Bulgaria, where it can count on the absolute support of all the Macedonian exiles, the ORIM negotiates with the enemies of Yugoslavia, concludes alliances with the revolutionary organisations of Croatia and of Slovenia, perfects her means of action, and awaits patiently the hour of the great interior crisis of Yugoslavia which, by war or revolution, will permit the liberation of Macedonia.

She has her representatives in all the great European capitals, her diplomatic delegates, and her secret codes.

Her chief is Ivan Mikhailoff, whom the bullet of a traitor eight years ago made the successor of the great Todor Alexandroff. He is the adversary Belgrade dreads most. By the sharpness of his political sense, by his inflexible will, by the devoted fanaticism which he inspires, he has made of the ORIM , as for all men of Macedonian blood, the very incarnation of his country.

A legend persistently broadcast by the Pan-Serb propagandists declares that Ivan Mikhailoff (" Vrantche" as his faithfuls call him) lives surrounded by armed guards, never sleeps twice under the same roof, never shows himself in public for fear of the reprisals of those whose parents or friends he has assassinated. This legend I heard defended at Sofia even, at the Union Club, and in diplomatic circles by men from whom one had the right to expect authentic information.

One evening, whilst dining at the Union Club, a friend called me on the telephone.

"Are you free to-morrow?"

" Yes."

"Then a car will come to get you at your hotel."

Next day the car arrived and took me away from Sofia. We stopped in the heart of a little village surrounded by mountains of reddish tobacco leaves drying in the sun.

"Dobar-den, Gospodine ! "

Before the rhododendrons of a near-by cafe ten men were waiting in an oasis of cool shade. Young men wearing light-coloured waistcoats and correct ties, and with small clipped moustaches. Two or three spoke French.

"The ride must have given you an appetite. Let's have lunch."

The table was placed in an angle of the hall, near a veranda half covered with a curtain of fragrant honeysuckle. A simple menu ; a clear wine with which we make a toast: "To liberty for all men !" An avalanche of flowers.

I was the guest of volunteers of the Macedonian Interior Revolutionary organisation- the ORIM - "Bandits of the Orient."

I listened to them laughing about the false stories of their bloody crimes promulgated by an untiring propaganda which creates the horror and the aversion that they inspire across the world.

So these were the "comitadjis," these young men who looked like clerks or peasants in Sunday clothes?

Yes? These were the "comitadjis" !

"Bandits?" asked my table companion, a college professor of French who had just finished translating Clemenceau's *In the Evening of My Thought*, "Professional terrorists? Oh, yes, we are all that, as they always will be who fight against the oppressor.

"What stupefies us, though, is the bad faith on the part of most of your French journalists when they speak of us. "

Why are they so set on distorting our actions? You can be the friends of the Serbs if you like, but don't lie about us. Your journalists are not slaves like those of Belgrade. They have the right to tell the truth. They can write freely. Yet the truth, which when they are here they say is so clear that it dazzles them, they replace with lies when they return to their own country. Can you explain that to us?"

I explained nothing. Could I tell them how difficult it is, if not impossible, to publish the truth in the French "free" Press? Could I reveal to them all the crooked business that is placed between the reality and the public, as soon as important political and financial interests intervene?

Are they aware, these young enthusiasts who surround me, that if their country, in 1915, after interminable negotiations, ended by joining the Austro-Germans, the reason for it was that a powerful Paris newspaper, subsidised by the Serbian Government, used its influence to have the demands of Sofia rejected-the demand, that is, to have Macedonia restored to it.

The War might have ended two years sooner, 300,000 dead at the Salonika front might still be living, if the Bulgarian Government in 1915 had offered that Paris newspaper a bigger bribe than Pasitch had offered to save Macedonia for Serbia.

And what was true then is even more true to-day.

Only the newspapers of the extreme Left speak the truth on foreign political problems, and even this truth is too often mitigated by considerations of doctrine and party prejudice.

If the National Committee of the ORIM were richer than the Government of Belgrade and more generous, their cause would be supported to-day by all those who attack them at so much per line.

My neighbour continued :

"Our organisation is represented in France as a mafia of assassins and thieves living comfortably from the terror which they inspire. But, believe me, the only obscurity which surrounds us is that in which our enemies seek to hide its true character.

"For twenty years our organisation fought against Turkey. Without her incessant attacks, which discouraged and exhausted the armies of the Sultan, the Balkan allies would not have been able to win in 1912. They didn't treat our comrades as the 'plague of the Balkans' then. Then a-day we were absolute heroes in Belgrade and Athens !

"The ORIM , sir, has not changed. She is to- day what she was when her voivodes, at Skoplje, Bitolj, Veles, Valandovo, dealt with the Bashi- Bazouks of the Red Sultan. Her volunteers have always the same discipline and the same ideal. It is the enemy who has changed!

"The enemy is no longer the Turk but the Serb. Yet the ORIM remains as firm and as loyal as ever.

"The comitadji who has been charged to execute the sentence of the ORIM and who knows that on executing it he also will die, goes straight ahead to his objective. Not one has flinched. Not one has betrayed."

I interrupted him : "You struggle to free Macedonia from the Serbs. But are you sure that all your compatriots in annexed Macedonia are in accord with you? Thousands among them, I know, have demanded arms and munition of the Yugoslav authorities to defend themselves against the ORIM . On the other hand, even here in Bulgaria, the protoguerovists, who are Macedonians like you, accuse you of betraying the real national interests, and implacable battles, in which the dead accumulate, continue between you and them. Why?"

All the faces turned towards me. The French professor translated my words, and when he had finished all remained dumb. Had I then touched the weak spot in their defence?

Finally my neighbour spoke :

"You have asked me two questions. I am going to reply first to your second.

"Do you know of any great national movement that has not had its traitors? The Sinn Fein had theirs ; the Rhine autonomists who worked with General Mangin for the liberation of the left bank of the Rhine, had theirs, and the Polish patriots, also, under the Czarist regime had theirs. The Macedonian cause has its traitors also, and they are called the protoguerovists.

" They were a part of the ORIM . Personal ambition separated them from her. Disavowed by all our organisations, abandoned by the personalities whom they had succeeded in detaching for a short time from the ORIM , such as Pop Hristoff and Kiril Parlitcheff, the protoguerovists have placed themselves at the service of the oppressors of Macedonia.

"The struggle which they wage against us, by assassinating our chiefs, is directed and paid for by Belgrade. What the Serbs cannot do directly, the protoguerovists do for them. By whom have our best men been attacked? By the protoguerovists! Where do our investigations or the confessions of culprits lead us after each attack? Always, without a single exception, to the Yugoslav Legation !

"The protoguerovist, Todor Petroff, came to us six months ago, full of remorse, to tell us that he had been ordered to assassinate Professor Guiocheff. Who pushed him to this crime? Who had given him the money? Who had given him the revolver which he was to use? Colonel Sketchitch, Yugoslav military attaché at Sofia !

"You would have the ORIM save these miserable wretches? But she has been only too lenient with them. If she had struck more quickly and more harshly all those whom we mourn to-day would still be here. Not a court, sir, as long as Bulgaria is free, Will condemn the slayer of a protoguerovist, not a citizen in the street will raise his hand to defend the traitor ! " *

* The accusations which my hosts made against the protoguerovists, sold to Belgrade were still more justified than they themselves thought. " With a few thousand levas, we shall have the hides of all those fellows who fight us here," said Voutchevitch, the Yugoslav minister, to me the evening before at the Legation. " All is fair in war! The diplomacy here at Sofia is not that of Paris. Are the Macedonians ready to sell themselves? Why I find them by the shovelful! " And when I asked him what he thought of the Bulgarian propaganda which advocates the entry of their country into an integral Yugoslavia, and notably of the author-representative Petko Rossene-Tchorbadjieff the Yugoslav minister replied : " Him? The revolver which is to shut his mouth is already in the hand of the ORIM ! " A Macedonian, Stefan Petroff, confessed to the representatives of the National Committee, that he had been charged by the Yugoslav Legation to kill Rossene- Tchorbadjieff. In addition to a revolver (bearing the number 1885), Stefan Petroff had received 3,500 levas. The Serbs explained to the wretch that he must commit the murder in such a fashion that everyone would believe it to be the work of the ORIM . No denial has been made of the miserable Petroff's statement.

A muffled murmur of approbation arose from the table.

"And now," the young professor continued, "let us consider your first question : is it true that thousands of Macedonians have entreated Belgrade to arm them in order that they might defend themselves against us?

" It is true ! But what they forget to say is that those Macedonians are Serb colonists from Old Serbia, whom the Serb administration has installed on the lands and in the homes of our compatriots. Macedonians? They are about as much so as the Prussian immigrants to Alsace after 1871 were Alsatians. We make them pay dearly for their violences against our unhappy brothers of Macedonia. They have a reason for not loving us !

"But the others! There is little danger of them distributing rifles and cartridges there ! The Serbs know only too well how they would use them ! To-day, just as yesterday, there is not a peasant in Macedonia, not a woman, not a child who is not ready to shelter, to hide, to aid with all their means the men of the ORIM . I know ! Belgrade pretends that they do it only because we terrorise them. But thousands of Macedonians have been tortured, imprisoned, and executed during the last fourteen years, for having received, guided, and assisted our comrades. What about them? " *

* Your young revolutionary was right," said a French diplomatic agent to me a few days later at Belgrade.

" The mass of the non-immigrant population in annexed Macedonia is heart and soul with the ORIM . If Belgrade told the truth, how is it that the ORIM can still accomplish what she does in a country which barbed wire walls have transformed into a prison and which is occupied by more than fifty thousand soldiers, police and gendarmes.

" Who will believe that the infernal machines which still daily devastate stations, gendarmeries, railroad bridges, and munition depots after fourteen years of occupation and in spite of the hermetically-closed frontiers,

could have been introduced into Macedonia, transported, placed and exploded by agents of the ORIM without the active complicity of the population? What about the revolutionary tchetas who are in continual conflict with the Yugoslav troops? Who then hides them? Who feeds them? Who permits them to escape by secret roads when the blow has been struck?

"To be sure, according to the Yugoslavs, order and tranquillity reign in Macedonia, the Serbianisation of the Bulgar inhabitants has succeeded beyond their fondest dreams. I know all that the Agence Avala recounts. But wait until you are on the spot and see what really is, as I have seen it. Wait until you have verified only half the information you possess. It will open your eyes."

Said a young lawyer, who boasts a law diploma of the Faculty of Lausanne : "They reproach us for the means which we employ. Dynamiting trains, burning garrisons, shooting down lying judges or police executioners, denouncing to the civilised world the abuse of power, the pillaging, the abominable atrocities of which our enslaved compatriots are victims. They call these the deeds of bandits, but why does the French Press present only one side of the medal in France, when it is a question of things Serbian? They blame us for what we do. They never tell what the Serbs do."

"For those of our people who do not obey, who dare to protest, who dare to defend themselves, there is the prison, bastinado, and tortures so cruel, so odious that they are inconceivable to the Occidentals to whom we recount them. Soldiers and irregulars conduct themselves in our villages as conquerors. If the women refuse they are beaten as beasts and are violated. If they complain about it then fifty or a hundred blows of a horsewhip are added to those already received. If a peasant cannot pay his taxes the day they are due, his property is seized and given to the Serb immigrants. If a suspect does not wish to confess the crime of which he is innocent, then he is imprisoned, deprived of food every other day, awakened during the night to be beaten on the soles of the feet until he falls down unconscious. Our folk suffer tortures that even the Bashi-Bazouks did not know."

"You think I exaggerate? You will see, sir, when you are over there ! No court will listen to the complaints of the victims. Fortunately for them, too, for if it listened to them, if it pretended to give them justice, their victory would be paid later with blood and tears !"

"Well, sir, the ORIM charges itself with this vengeance. And, even then, how many times does she succeed ? Not once out of a hundred ! Twenty times in the last six years our comrades have sacrificed themselves in an effort to execute Jika Lasitch who is the paragon of cruelty and human ignominy. This brute made a hell of Macedonia, yet he has always escaped. And you would have us show consideration or pity for such !"

"They took me then "to see the dead" as they call it. I entered a low building upon the walls of which are hung photographs which the veil of time has rendered almost indistinct. In an angle, over a skull and cross-bones, a great peregrine falcon, wings outspread, beak open, seems to fly out of the wall where it is hung. An inscription, near the door, reads, "Young Macedonia, come to us! It is not painful to die for your country !"

"Here are found the photographs of all the great men of the ORIM forty years ago : Gouchtanoff, Bane Koucheff, director of the schools of Veles; Boris Drangoff, who abandoned his regiment to become the chief of a band ; Christo Matoff, the poet; Mihail Dareff, doctor of law of the University of Lausanne; Lubomir Vessoff, lawyer and journalist; Krsto Assenoff, college professor; Todor Saeff, master of science."

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Lawyer, professor, doctor, journalist, author- the faces look down at me. These, then, are the "bloody brutes," the sinister comitadjis, whose "atrocities" horrified the European public opinion which I helped to form when, twenty years ago I directed the propaganda of Bulgaria's enemies.

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For a long time I looked on the face of him who never compromised nor flinched. Harsh he was without a doubt. Implacable, and recklessly brave on the battlefield and in the prison where he still defied his judges. Insensible to all that was not for his country, his shade, after the lapse of so many years, hovers still over the youth who have flocked to the ORIM , to guide them towards battle and the supreme sacrifice. Hard ! Cruel !

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He replied : " The Turks were much more powerful than the Serbs and the ORIM weaker than to- day. However, she ended in stirring up the Balkans. The Turks were chased out. They say we have spilled blood. We have, a little. But the Serbs have spilt torrents. In comparison to the thousands of men, women and children who have been assassinated, hanged, beaten to death, tortured to death, outraged to death by the Serbs in the last fourteen years, what are the few hangmen, the few torturers, the few Serbian terrorists who have been executed by the ORIM ? As for the suffering of our annexed brothers-they would bear it a hundred fold to be delivered."

"I observed during my stay at Belgrade," I said to him, " to what an extent official circles are irritated by the persistent activity of the ORIM in annexed Macedonia. They did not hide from me that they were at the end of their patience and that they would have acted already had it not been for the formal opposition of France. They accuse Bulgaria of being the secret ally of the ORIM . The hospitality which Bulgaria accords to the ORIM alone makes possible the growing aggressiveness which it manifests. I am certain that the day is nearer when Yugoslavia, because of the ORIM , will resort to some violent action against Sofia. We French do not wish at any price to be dragged by Belgrade into another World War."

He replied : "If Belgrade makes Bulgaria responsible for the acts of the ORIM (which demands nothing of Bulgaria, is not at her service, and receives nothing from her but the shelter which she accords all Macedonians on her territory) what can we do about it? If the Serbs, under the pretext of destroying the ORIM , are mad enough to attack Bulgaria, so much the worse for the Serbs, and so much the worse for those who have not been able to stop them.

"When that day comes, France, which counts for her security on the Yugoslav alliance, will discover to her cost that it is Yugoslavia which has not ceased to use France for the realisation of her designs of conquest and oppression.

"And if the Macedonian people, in their legitimate efforts to free themselves, set fire to Europe, it is not we, but Europe who will have wished it on themselves."

" Under what conditions will the ORIM lay down her arms?" I asked him.

He replied : " That Macedonia be free ! "

I said to him : "He who directs the ORIM to- day, and whom Belgrade has sworn to destroy, he will fall as Todor Alexandroff fell."

"What does one man matter?" he responded. "The traitor who killed Todor made the ORIM more powerful with the hatred inspired by his crime. Leaders may go, but the ORIM will remain until Macedonia is free."

III. THE ORIM

ORIM . What innumerable legends surround it!

" Organisation of bandits," say the Serbs.

"Union for a sacred aim of liberation of a people atrociously oppressed," say the Macedonians.

"The heroic personification of a great idea " , wrote Stephan Raditch on 19th June, 1928, the eve of his assassination at Belgrade.

What is this ORIM -this Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation? Let us go back forty years.

In 1893 Serbia and Bulgaria were still very small. The Red Sultan pressed his yoke upon the lands of Macedonia which extend from Ochrida in Albania to Adrianople in Thrace ; from Mount Char, which is south of Nisch, to Salonika at the mouth of the Vardar.

Three Macedonians, the oldest of whom was not thirty years of age : Dane Groueff, a teacher, Dr. Tatcheff, a young doctor and a professor, Pere Tocheff, gathered one winter evening at the village of Ressene(Resen), near Bitolj, to decide that the hour had come to put an end to it. Macedonia had suffered enough. If she were organised, if she were armed, if she had chieftains, the Turks would be thrown out.

Alone, these three were going to organise her and arm her. They swore on sacred ikons to consecrate their lives to that task.

Their programme, from which the ORIM has not deviated one iota in forty years, was : Prepare the Macedonian populations for armed combat against the oppressor; obtain security for the people and guarantees of order and justice in the administration.

Less than three months afterwards hundreds of Macedonians, young and old, had taken the oath of the ORIM . Rich and poor, great poets such as Christo Matoff, university men like Gouchtanoff, doctors of law like Todor Saeff, professors of science, merchants, bankers, officials, doctors, celebrated officers like Boris Drangoff, and also obscure peasants, poor mountain shepherds, artisans and village teachers, all had taken the oath which bound them for ever to incessant propaganda, to supreme devotion, without pity for traitors, without excuse for the cowardly.

They were subjected to an iron discipline. Courage, integrity, purity of morals, defence of the oppressed and the weak, total abnegation-they must always set the example ! Any failure on the part of members the ORIM punished as mercilessly as she strikes the enemies of the country.

Soon they were a thousand, ten thousand, twenty thousand-all Macedonia !

Any Macedonian, whatever his official nationality, whether he were Bulgarian, Roumanian or Albanian, provided he were Christian and morally above reproach, could be a member of the organisation. It was subdivided into groups of ten members, each one of whom obeyed a chief or voivode elected by secret vote. All the groups of a locality constituted the local organisation, directed by an elected committee. The local committee was subordinate to a central committee, which was placed under the absolute authority of the chief, chosen from among its members to be the supreme voivode of the ORIM .

Immediately the ORIM set to work. In the solitudes of the mountains old soldiers trained volunteers. Soon the first shots echoed in the defiles, the first fires were lighted, the first bombs exploded in the garrisons, the stations and the official buildings. The Venitza(Venica) affair in 1896; Valandovo in 1897; Enidje-Vardar in 1900; devastation and terror sown in Salonika the following year, then at Seres(Ser), then at Skoplje, then at Veles. They fought every day, everywhere, from one end to the other of Macedonia.

The Macedonian falcon was soaring !

On 2nd August, 1903, fires lighted on the mountain peaks from Kostom to Ochrida, signalled the 30,000 volunteers of the ORIM that the hour had sounded to chase the Turk. All Macedonia rose en bloc.

The struggle was fearful ; and when at last the ORIM , outnumbered, crushed, had to admit defeat, the slaughter was unimaginable. Seven thousand heads fell, 5,000 prisoners were impaled, hanged, or burned alive ; 3.000 children were mutilated or eviscerated, all the women and young girls in the regions of the insurrection were violated.

But Europe was affected. The Great Powers demanded autonomy for the martyrised provinces, and liberty, thanks to the ORIM , began to dawn over Macedonia.

But the long-awaited sun did not appear. The Young Turks had just replaced Abdul- Hamid. Hardly installed in power, they tried to settle for good their accounts with Macedonia. The massacre recommenced. The resistance of the ORIM recommenced also. Four years of struggle followed, without mercy on one side or the other ; ambushes, terrorist attacks, mass executions and insurrections without cease. Conquered in their turn by the Balkan allies, the Turks left in 1912. The volunteers of the ORIM had their large part in the victory. They had guided, informed, supported the Serbo- Bulgarian armies. They had fallen by thousands on the battlefield. They had been sacrificed in vain.

Macedonia, abandoned by the Turks, was dismembered by the conquerors who had turned against their Bulgarian ally after the Ottoman defeat. The Great War ended the disaster. The heart of Macedonia, Chtip, Skoplje, Bitolj, Veles, Ochrida, Guevgueli, became Serb. The rest, Xanthi, Seres, Salonika, Florina was Greek. A little corner was left to Bulgaria.

And while 500,000 Macedonians, an entire people, fled the domination of the Greeks and the Serbs, still more merciless even than that of the Turks, the ORIM resumed the struggle, but this time against Belgrade and Athens.

To the hangings of prisoners, the massacres of suspects, to the fearful persecutions of the people, they replied with the execution of hangmen and judges; rendering violence for violence, they matched the administrative terror by guerilla warfare, and by their infernal machines.

In the last fourteen years, hundreds of Serb stations, trains, gendarmeries, public buildings, warehouses, and munition depots have been burnt or dynamited in annexed Macedonia. The ORIM has not disarmed.

Installed in Bulgaria, where it can count on the absolute support of all the Macedonian exiles, the ORIM negotiates with the enemies of Yugoslavia, concludes alliances with the revolutionary organisations of Croatia and of Slovenia, perfects her means of action, and awaits patiently the hour of the great interior crisis of Yugoslavia which, by war or revolution, will permit the liberation of Macedonia.

She has her representatives in all the great European capitals, her diplomatic delegates, and her secret codes.

Her chief is Ivan Mikhailoff, whom the bullet of a traitor eight years ago made the successor of the great Todor Alexandroff. He is the adversary Belgrade dreads most. By the sharpness of his political sense, by his inflexible will, by the devoted fanaticism which he inspires, he has made of the ORIM, as for all men of Macedonian blood, the very incarnation of his country.

A legend persistently broadcast by the Pan-Serb propagandists declares that Ivan Mikhailoff ("Vrantche" as his faithfuls call him) lives surrounded by armed guards, never sleeps twice under the same roof, never shows himself in public for fear of the reprisals of those whose parents or friends he has assassinated. This legend I heard defended at Sofia even, at the Union Club, and in diplomatic circles by men from whom one had the right to expect authentic information.

One evening, whilst dining at the Union Club, a friend called me on the telephone.

"Are you free to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Then a car will come to get you at your hotel."

Next day the car arrived and took me away from Sofia. We stopped in the heart of a little village surrounded by mountains of reddish tobacco leaves drying in the sun.

"Dobar-den, Gospodine !"

Before the rhododendrons of a near-by cafe ten men were waiting in an oasis of cool shade. Young men wearing light-coloured waistcoats and correct ties, and with small clipped moustaches. Two or three spoke French.

"The ride must have given you an appetite. Let's have lunch."

The table was placed in an angle of the hall, near a veranda half covered with a curtain of fragrant honeysuckle. A simple menu ; a clear wine with which we make a toast: "To liberty for all men !" An avalanche of flowers.

I was the guest of volunteers of the Macedonian Interior Revolutionary organisation- the ORIM - "Bandits of the Orient."

I listened to them laughing about the false stories of their bloody crimes promulgated by an untiring propaganda which creates the horror and the aversion that they inspire across the world.

So these were the "comitadjis," these young men who looked like clerks or peasants in Sunday clothes?

Yes? These were the "comitadjis" !

"Bandits?" asked my table companion, a college professor of French who had just finished translating Clemenceau's *In the Evening of My Thought*, "Professional terrorists? Oh, yes, we are all that, as they always will be who fight against the oppressor.

"What stupefies us, though, is the bad faith on the part of most of your French journalists when they speak of us."

Why are they so set on distorting our actions? You can be the friends of the Serbs if you like, but don't lie about us. Your journalists are not slaves like those of Belgrade. They have the right to tell the truth. They can write freely. Yet the truth, which when they are here they say is so clear that it dazzles them, they replace with lies when they return to their own country. Can you explain that to us?"

I explained nothing. Could I tell them how difficult it is, if not impossible, to publish the truth in the French "free" Press? Could I reveal to them all the crooked business that is placed between the reality and the public, as soon as important political and financial interests intervene?

Are they aware, these young enthusiasts who surround me, that if their country, in 1915, after interminable negotiations, ended by joining the Austro-Germans, the reason for it was that a powerful Paris newspaper, subsidised by the Serbian Government, used its influence to have the demands of Sofia rejected-the demand, that is, to have Macedonia restored to it.

The War might have ended two years sooner, 300,000 dead at the Salonika front might still be living, if the Bulgarian Government in 1915 had offered that Paris newspaper a bigger bribe than Pasitch had offered to save Macedonia for Serbia.

And what was true then is even more true to-day.

Only the newspapers of the extreme Left speak the truth on foreign political problems, and even this truth is too often mitigated by considerations of doctrine and party prejudice.

If the National Committee of the ORIM were richer than the Government of Belgrade and more generous, their cause would be supported to-day by all those who attack them at so much per line.

My neighbour continued :

"Our organisation is represented in France as a mafia of assassins and thieves living comfortably from the terror which they inspire. But, believe me, the only obscurity which surrounds us is that in which our enemies seek to hide its true character.

"For twenty years our organisation fought against Turkey. Without her incessant attacks, which discouraged and exhausted the armies of the Sultan, the Balkan allies would not have been able to win in 1912. They didn't treat our comrades as the 'plague of the Balkans' then. Then a-day we were absolute heroes in Belgrade and Athens !

"The ORIM , sir, has not changed. She is to- day what she was when her voivodes, at Skopje, Bitolj, Veles, Valandovo, dealt with the Bashi- Bazouks of the Red Sultan. Her volunteers have always the same discipline and the same ideal. It is the enemy who has changed!

"The enemy is no longer the Turk but the Serb. Yet the ORIM remains as firm and as loyal as ever.

"The comitadji who has been charged to execute the sentence of the ORIM and who knows that on executing it he also will die, goes straight ahead to his objective. Not one has flinched. Not one has betrayed."

I interrupted him : "You struggle to free Macedonia from the Serbs. But are you sure that all your compatriots in annexed Macedonia are in accord with you? Thousands among them, I know, have demanded arms and munition of the Yugoslav authorities to defend themselves against the ORIM . On the other hand, even here in Bulgaria, the protoguerovists, who are Macedonians like you, accuse you of betraying the real national interests, and implacable battles, in which the dead accumulate, continue between you and them. Why?"

All the faces turned towards me. The French professor translated my words, and when he had finished all remained dumb. Had I then touched the weak spot in their defence?

Finally my neighbour spoke :

"You have asked me two questions. I am going to reply first to your second.

"Do you know of any great national movement that has not had its traitors? The Sinn Fein had theirs ; the Rhine autonomists who worked with General Mangin for the liberation of the left bank of the Rhine, had theirs, and the Polish patriots, also, under the Czarist regime had theirs. The Macedonian cause has its traitors also, and they are called the protoguerovists.

" They were a part of the ORIM . Personal ambition separated them from her. Disavowed by all our organisations, abandoned by the personalities whom they had succeeded in detaching for a short time from the ORIM , such as Pop Hristoff and Kiril Parlitcheff, the protoguerovists have placed themselves at the service of the oppressors of Macedonia.

"The struggle which they wage against us, by assassinating our chiefs, is directed and paid for by Belgrade. What the Serbs cannot do directly, the protoguerovists do for them. By whom have our best men been attacked? By the protoguerovists! Where do our investigations or the confessions of culprits lead us after each attack? Always, without a single exception, to the Yugoslav Legation !

"The protoguerovist, Todor Petroff, came to us six months ago, full of remorse, to tell us that he had been ordered to assassinate Professor Guiocheff. Who pushed him to this crime? Who had given him the money? Who had given him the revolver which he was to use? Colonel Sketchitch, Yugoslav military attaché at Sofia !

"You would have the ORIM save these miserable wretches? But she has been only too lenient with them. If she had struck more quickly and more harshly all those whom we mourn to-day would still be here. Not a court, sir, as long as Bulgaria is free, Will condemn the slayer of a protoguerovist, not a citizen in the street will raise his hand to defend the traitor ! " *

* The accusations which my hosts made against the protoguerovists, sold to Belgrade were still more justified than they themselves thought. " With a few thousand levas, we shall have the hides of all those fellows who fight us here," said Voutchevitch, the Yugoslav minister, to me the evening before at the Legation. " All is fair in war! The diplomacy here at Sofia is not that of Paris. Are the Macedonians ready to sell themselves? Why I find them by the shovelful! " And when I asked him what he thought of the Bulgarian propaganda which advocates the entry of their country into an integral Yugoslavia, and notably of the author-representative Petko Rossene-Tchorbadjieff the Yugoslav minister replied : " Him? The revolver which is to shut his mouth is already in the hand of the ORIM ! " A Macedonian, Stefan Petroff, confessed to the representatives of the National Committee, that he had been charged by the Yugoslav Legation to kill Rossene- Tchorbadjieff. In addition to a revolver (bearing the number 1885), Stefan Petroff had received 3,500 levas. The Serbs explained to the wretch that he must commit the murder in such a fashion that everyone would believe it to be the work of the ORIM . No denial has been made of the miserable Petroff's statement.

A muffled murmur of approbation arose from the table.

"And now," the young professor continued, "let us consider your first question : is it true that thousands of Macedonians have entreated Belgrade to arm them in order that they might defend themselves against us?

" It is true ! But what they forget to say is that those Macedonians are Serb colonists from Old Serbia, whom the Serb administration has installed on the lands and in the homes of our compatriots. Macedonians? They are about as much so as the Prussian immigrants to Alsace after 1871 were Alsatians. We make them pay dearly for their violences against our unhappy brothers of Macedonia. They have a reason for not loving us !

"But the others! There is little danger of them distributing rifles and cartridges there ! The Serbs know only too well how they would use them ! To-day, just as yesterday, there is not a peasant in Macedonia, not a woman, not a child who is not ready to shelter, to hide, to aid with all their means the men of the ORIM . I know ! Belgrade pretends that they do it only because we terrorise them. But thousands of Macedonians have been tortured, imprisoned, and executed during the last fourteen years, for having received, guided, and assisted our comrades. What about them? " *

* Your young revolutionary was right," said a French diplomatic agent to me a few days later at Belgrade.

" The mass of the non-immigrant population in annexed Macedonia is heart and soul with the ORIM . If Belgrade told the truth, how is it that the ORIM can still accomplish what she does in a country which barbed wire walls have transformed into a prison and which is occupied by more than fifty thousand soldiers, police and gendarmes.

" Who will believe that the infernal machines which still daily devastate stations, gendarmeries, railroad bridges, and munition depots after fourteen years of occupation and in spite of the hermetically-closed frontiers, could have been introduced into Macedonia, transported, placed and exploded by agents of the ORIM without the active complicity of the population? What about the revolutionary tchetas who are in continual conflict with the Yugoslav troops? Who then hides them? Who feeds them? Who permits them to escape by secret roads when the blow has been struck?

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He replied : "The ORIM knows only Macedonia, and will liberate Macedonia for Macedonians. Her money is Macedonian. Not a lev comes from foreign hands. Let them lie who have sold their consciences."

I said to him: "What is the objective of the ORIM ? As powerful as she may be, as disciplined and ready for sacrifice as are her volunteers, she alone cannot hope to conquer Yugoslavia. What good then to keep up an agitation in Macedonia which only results in augmenting the suffering of your people?"

He replied : " The Turks were much more powerful than the Serbs and the ORIM weaker than to- day. However, she ended in stirring up the Balkans. The Turks were chased out. They say we have spilled blood. We have, a little. But the Serbs have spilt torrents. In comparison to the thousands of men, women and children who

have been assassinated, hanged, beaten to death, tortured to death, outraged to death by the Serbs in the last fourteen years, what are the few hangmen, the few torturers, the few Serbian terrorists who have been executed by the ORIM ? As for the suffering of our annexed brothers-they would bear it a hundred fold to be delivered."

"I observed during my stay at Belgrade," I said to him, "to what an extent official circles are irritated by the persistent activity of the ORIM in annexed Macedonia. They did not hide from me that they were at the end of their patience and that they would have acted already had it not been for the formal opposition of France. They accuse Bulgaria of being the secret ally of the ORIM . The hospitality which Bulgaria accords to the ORIM alone makes possible the growing aggressiveness which it manifests. I am certain that the day is nearer when Yugoslavia, because of the ORIM , will resort to some violent action against Sofia. We French do not wish at any price to be dragged by Belgrade into another World War."

He replied : "If Belgrade makes Bulgaria responsible for the acts of the ORIM (which demands nothing of Bulgaria, is not at her service, and receives nothing from her but the shelter which she accords all Macedonians on her territory) what can we do about it? If the Serbs, under the pretext of destroying the ORIM , are mad enough to attack Bulgaria, so much the worse for the Serbs, and so much the worse for those who have not been able to stop them.

"When that day comes, France, which counts for her security on the Yugoslav alliance, will discover to her cost that it is Yugoslavia which has not ceased to use France for the realisation of her designs of conquest and oppression.

"And if the Macedonian people, in their legitimate efforts to free themselves, set fire to Europe, it is not we, but Europe who will have wished it on themselves."

" Under what conditions will the ORIM lay down her arms?" I asked him.

He replied : " That Macedonia be free ! "

I said to him : "He who directs the ORIM to- day, and whom Belgrade has sworn to destroy, he will fall as Todor Alexandroff fell."

"What does one man matter?" he responded. "The traitor who killed Todor made the ORIM more powerful with the hatred inspired by his crime. Leaders may go, but the ORIM will remain until Macedonia is free."

IV. BEHIND THE BARBED WIRES

I was taken from Sofia to see for myself the Bulgaro-Yugoslav frontier, and the barbed wire which Dr. Radovanovitch had dismissed so contemptuously. A great yellow motor-car hummed up to the hotel door before dawn, and in it two men were waiting for me. In a few seconds we were going full speed across sleeping Sofia, and heading towards Yugoslavia.

No sooner had we passed the suburbs where the first trams were just starting to leave their depots, than we seemed to reach the mountains. The road thereupon became mostly a simple dirt track poised upon the edge of precipices, at the bottom of which bright gleaming threads of water could be seen winding among splendid forests and heaps of fallen rock. Rudimentary wooden foot-bridges, for the most part without railings, carried us high over dry gorges which the torrents had cut. On our left, thick forests of beech and oak scaled the rocky inclines. On the right, not a tree : they had been felled by the Turks who found that the only way they could combat the comitadjis of the ORIM was to fell the scores of thousands of acres of forests, where their adversaries concealed themselves.

The silence was absolute.

An unexpected sight suddenly made me seize my field-glasses. Five or six hundred yards to the left a slender black silhouette stood out against the flaming sky; a helmeted soldier with a tapering bayonet.

My companion pointed his arm towards the apparition.

" Serb sentinel ! " he said laconically.

It was then that I saw in the dry grass ahead of us a narrow ditch, which constitutes the line of the Bulgaro-Yugoslav frontier.

Behind the ditch (which is but two feet in width and about eighteen inches in depth) on the Yugoslav side are the barbed wires.

Imagine a wall of steel wire six feet in height and seven feet thick. Imagine a hedge of wire whose twigs are so crossed and intercrossed, so stretched by iron stakes which maintain them, so interspersed and entangled from the ground to the top that even a little dog could not get through. That is the Yugoslav frontier.

Every eight feet in the centre of the wall are round holes, a yard in diameter, two in depth, half hidden by dry bushes. In the centre of each hole is the sharp point of an iron stake. Disaster to him who seeks to slip under the wires ! Six weeks before my visit, near Guechevo(Gecevo), a woman, tired of being beaten and violated, tried to get through, and spent two agonised days impaled on one of these points.

Behind the barbed wires are six, seven or eight parallel rows of pits, and reinforcing the barbed wire is a wall of cheval de frise, a yard in height, and a yard and a half in thickness.

Every two hundred yards there are thatched shelters, each about the size of a large dining-room table. They are arranged to slope downwards towards the frontier in such a way as to enable men to crawl under from the Yugoslav side and to fire towards the Bulgarian side from two loop-holes provided at ground-level. Under each shelter is a rough dugout. Each evening, from twilight, a sentry mounts guard there.

Between these watch-posts, among the brush and thistles, zigzags a narrow trail. All night long a police dog prowls there, and he is trained to warn the guard of any living being approaching the barbed wire from either side of the frontier. There is one of these dogs for each three watch-posts.

Four machine-guns are mounted at each fort : three are turned towards the Bulgar plain, and the fourth towards the annexed villages-a fact which puzzled me in view of the Yugoslav claim that their populations are all won over to Yugoslavia.

All along the mountains on the crest of which the frontier runs, the line of barbed wire and little forts runs in an unbroken line. Over hill and dale, and through the villages it goes. At Petritch, at Strezimirovci, at Izvor, at Guechvo, I saw houses where the yard was in Serbia, and the kitchen in Bulgaria. Watermelons and cucumbers in these gardens have different nationalities. To plant vegetables, or to sow grain, or to harvest, the peasant who has remained Bulgar while his fields have become Yugoslav, must get a permit from the authorities of the neighbouring city.

I saw cemeteries cut in two by the frontier. Better still, even graves where the head of the dead was in the centre of the barbed wire and his feet on the outside. I saw Bulgar mothers, whose children were in Yugoslavia, come to weep a few yards from the tombs of their dearly beloved which they were forbidden to approach.

What a grand thing, peace, when the conquerors understand it thus !

There is a bullet for anyone coming from the Yugoslav side to the barbed wire, even though it be only some old woman or little child who has come to try to see from afar their parents, children, or husband.

On 11th August, 1931, somewhere between Besica and Nasalopsi, was to be seen the corpse of a little girl of twelve years of age, who had remained in annexed Macedonia after her parents had fled to Bulgaria. The pathetic little corpse lay four days on a mound, a hundred yards from the barbed wire, under a temperature of over a hundred in the shade. She had been killed by a machine-gun while she was throwing kisses to her mother standing on a neighbouring eminence on Bulgarian territory.

"We are in a virtual state of war with Bulgaria " the chief of the Press Bureau said to me at Belgrade.

Indeed !

With its man-traps, its night-watch posts, its reinforced blockhouses in which machine-guns point their leather-hooded mouths towards distant horizons, the wall of barbed wire stretches over two hundred miles. It is being reinforced, perfected, extended every day, until soon it will extend in a single block from the Danube to Albania.

Under impenetrable thorn hedges are hidden fields of ditches with sharp pointed stakes. France has furnished them. They come from the front of Champagne, of Verdun, of Artois, where they protected the heroes of the Great War. To-day they imprison a people !

At two or three places, near a blockhouse, a narrow passage has been made through the barbed wires. These are closed by means of movable bars, and may be opened for the cars of foreign tourists.

" I had chosen a main road to go from Yugoslavia to Bulgaria," Harry Franck, the American explorer wrote in the Indianapolis Star, on 7th March, 1932, "but on reaching the frontier I found a network of barbed wire 10 feet in height, all along the frontier. After having waited two days for permission to pass, I had to drive four days more over impracticable roads in order to find the only opening."

" The work of giants ! " you will say of this hermetic enclosure ; this formidable fortification of an entire frontier. No ! The work of convicts ! The barbed wires have been stretched, the man-traps and the sentinel posts dug, and the block-houses constructed, by the Macedonian population requisitioned en masse for this work in all the villages, hamlets and farms neighbouring the frontier.

One fine morning, a Sunday preferably, when all the inhabitants are assembled for church, the gendarmes arrive, reinforced by bands of irregulars, and shout : " Let's get going ! Ouste ! En route ! "

For those who protest or resist, there are twenty-five cudgel blows on the buttocks, or a sound beating with rifle stocks. "If I had as many ten-dinar notes as I have horse-whipped these louts," said the inspector of police, Djogonetitch, to me last year at Veles, " I wouldn't have to wait for my pension ! "

Yet Inspector Michel Djogonetitch, smiling, affable, inexhaustibly complacent, has nothing of the brute in him-so long as he is kept away from the Macedonians.

I saw an old man near a frontier blockhouse in the region of Petritch whose hands were nothing but sores as a result of having stretched barbed wires.

A few kilometres from Tzaribrod, I saw Serb gendarmes, jokingly throw some young Bulgar peasants head first into the midst of a network of barbed wire. The victims, their faces lacerated, rose without a word.

Working on the mantraps near Nasaloksi, I saw a young girl thrown on the ground, her skirts tucked up to the waist, and given fifteen blows of a horsewhip because she didn't work fast enough. Blood streaming down her thighs, she started again with her digging.

I saw and I heard many other things. I did not see them in the company of Macedonians or Bulgars, nor did I hear them from others. I saw them alone and with my own eyes. In fact, the Bulgars and Macedonians will not even know that I went there until they read these lines, if they do read them, for I was all alone, as I always am when I wish to see things for myself. It is thus that I saw the wall of wire.

But the wall of wire is not all.

On the crest, which runs immediately behind the ridge upon which the barbed wire has been placed, and at a distance varying from two to three miles from it, a new series of blockhouses has been constructed. They are spaced at a distance of from three to four miles, and form a much more powerful defence than do even the barbed wires. These little forts are armed with six light and four heavy machine-guns, and two rapid-firing guns. The blockhouses, near the barbed wires, are occupied by about ten men, but those of this second line have a garrison of about twenty-five to forty soldiers commanded by an officer.

A few miles behind, situated upon yet a third range of hills, higher than the first two ranges, is a third fortified line. Placed at intervals of eight miles, and equipped with long-range guns, these garrisons are manned by a personnel of over a hundred.

Still further along, on the fourth line of mountains, are supplementary forts of the most modern type, guarding from their almost inaccessible heights all this truly extraordinary organisation.

From the Bulgarian hills which are close to the frontier, one can see clearly with the naked eye the essential details of the first two systems of fortification. With field-glasses one may, on a clear day, see the whole of this quadruple barrier of steel and reinforced concrete which the Yugoslav general-staff erected "to put an end to the incursions of volunteers of the ORIM on to the territory of annexed Macedonia."

That, at least, is the reason given by Belgrade to justify both the colossal expense which these works represent, and the violent and total separation of the two halves of the Macedonian peoples which it causes. Let us analyse this reason. The Pan-Serbs say that there are 10,000 of the ORIM. This figure is grossly exaggerated, of course, but let us accept that exaggeration, and even make it 15,000 or 20,000, which is pure madness. Of these few thousands, the biggest revolutionary bands which ever penetrated into annexed Macedonia did not exceed fifty men.

We are asked to believe, in other words, that Yugoslavia has been compelled to fortify her frontiers in this colossal manner in order to prevent a few irregular bands from penetrating a region occupied by more than 50,000 soldiers. If it is true, what a lamentable confession of weakness it makes! Besides what becomes of the official statements that Macedonia is happy to have become Serb again and that the comitadjis of the ORIM are received with gunfire when certain of them succeed "by chance" in penetrating into annexed Macedonia.

No, the whole thing is preposterous! It is about as ridiculous as would be a concentration of the British Fleet in the Irish channel for fear of an invasion of England by the Sinn Feiners.

It is true that the barbed wires have almost entirely halted the incursions of the volunteers of the ORIM into annexed Macedonia. Henceforth they are obliged to cross Roumania and to take a train at Belgrade for Skoplje; Bitolj or Guevgueli: This is not so easy.

It is also quite true that the barbed wire has transformed Serbian Macedonia into an immense prison, into an indescribable hell of violence and misery, from which it is no longer possible to escape, no longer possible to enter without special permission from the Yugoslav authorities. The jailors in this prison are not responsible to anyone.

These obvious truths admitted, it is only too manifest that this formidable fortification of the Yugoslav frontier from the Danube to Albania has been effected for reasons other than those given by Belgrade or denounced by the Macedonians of Sofia.

The real truth is that the Yugoslav general-staff has not forgotten the tragic lessons of the World War. It has not forgotten the Bulgar attack of 1915 and the general insurrection of Macedonia which compelled them to make their disastrous retreat from Albania. Their frontier of barbed wires makes it almost impossible for them to be attacked from the rear on the day the other trouble engages them on the North and West frontier. Thanks to the Macedonian fortifications, a few regiments of territorials will suffice to paralyse any Bulgar attack.

Poor Bulgaria ! She must be flattered in an ironic sense by these colossal preparations against her. As one recedes into Bulgaria one wonders whether the whole thing is not a dream-a giant mirage thrown by the disordered minds of Belgrade.

For where is the means of attack to which this mass of wire and cannon is opposed?

Here and there along the Bulgarian frontier, five or six soldiers and a non-commissioned officer, armed only with rifles, occupy former Turkish custom-posts. Wretched and dilapidated, too, are the brick and earthen walls of these posts. In five minutes the machine-guns of the neighbouring Yugoslav blockhouses would transform them into colanders.

V. The Valley of the Vardar

LET us peep behind the barbed wires. What impresses one immediately upon entering Macedonia is the immense calm, and the absolute order which reigns there.

In this Valley of the Vardar, under an implacable sun which makes the red alluvial soil smoke, men and women by thousands move about without a word, without a cry, not even one of those songs which everywhere else mounts into the sky. The countryside, as far as the eye can reach, is without a human noise. The atmosphere seems fixed in a peaceful seclusion. Something indefinable, inexplicable, makes people and things here unique on the earth. One has the sensation of entering an unknown world.

This sensation never leaves you, no matter where you may go in the annexed provinces.

Even the streets of the cities, where housewives press before the butcher's shops, where bands of children pass to and from school, remind one of nothing that one has seen before in the Balkans. Even the noise, if I may so express it, is silent.

The crowds going for a walk in the evening hours speak in monotones, as if murmuring, and the footsteps suggest the sober movement of a procession. They walk under the eye of the gendarmes who, rifle in sling and revolver at the belt, pace up and down the pavement. The people seem to have retired into themselves. To whatever class they may belong, all the Macedonians whom you will encounter in Macedonia, from Ochrida to Bitolj, from Veles to Guevgueli, in the cities and in the country, are the same.

"They are like poor people who are on a visit to rich relations," said a young doctor to me at Skoplje. The attitude of this people, whom he had imagined to be exuberant, amazed him.

Macedonia, which was for so long a field of agitation and violence, to-day reposes in the Pax Serbiana.

At Nisch the coaches of the international train, which had already been inspected before leaving Belgrade, were searched again from top to bottom. Passports were checked again with an exasperating minuteness. As for the baggage, an hour after our departure from Nisch the occupants of the compartment next to mine, Jews from Salonika, still wept with rage before the disaster which had overtaken their travelling bags.

And Nisch was nothing compared with what awaited us at Leskovatz(Leskovac) ! The women in the third class coaches were half undressed. The men had to take off their shoes.

The railways are guarded by soldiers as in Croatia; but infinitely more severely. There are sentries everywhere visible, and others who are not visible because they hide behind bushes at the approach of the trains: At every step on the narrow roads which cut the bright verdure of the plains, horsemen appear, advancing two by two like war-time patrols.

From Leskovatz to Skoplje, from Veles to Bitolj or Chtip or Ochrida, I must have seen a hundred massive gendarmes, riding frisky little horses with their carbines placed before them on the saddle.

Children and old men bow low as they pass. Only old women sometimes turn their heads. Near Priboz(Priboj), two young lads fled into a cornfield upon seeing the khaki uniforms. They were chased by the horsemen and harshly beaten in the face with riding whips because of their suspicious conduct.

"Anything we can do to facilitate your investigations in South Serbia, we will do ! " Dr. Radovanovitch had said to me.

He kept his word.

My coming was announced everywhere. In all the stations after Nisch special commissioners were the very incarnation of politeness when examining my passport. My valises were not searched, and, as a result, travelling companions, whose vest- pockets even were turned inside out, conceived an immense respect for my person.

At Skoplje, Mr. Jovanovitch, the representative of the Press-Bureau, took possession of me. He had been telephoned the night before by Radovanovitch. He and his friends did not leave me for a minute. I was presented to a crowd of amiable people, civil and military, and I had the pleasure of encountering them at each step afterwards. They followed me to the mosque where I thought I was alone ; to the old Macedonian quarters where

their occupation hardly appeared to call them ; even to the French military cemetery, three miles from the city, where, without me, surely they would never have gone.

I did not, however, remain long under this supervision. On the evening of the fourteenth of July a terrible storm kept me very late at the Cercle Francais on Peter the First Street. When it rained the hardest I insisted on leaving. There was no reason to hesitate any longer. My cover was complete, for the electric current had been cut off far fear of accidents, and my all-too-faithful escorts had sought shelter.

My guide, I will not give his name, took me to a house where I found a mother nursing a little girl of ten or twelve years of age. I learned that this child, having been surprised talking Bulgarian with one of her little friends, had been bound to a bench before the class, and whipped until the blood came. Her back, her hips, and her thighs were covered by great sores. She could hardly walk, and she cried with pain when she sat down. They had warned her, however, that if she missed school or arrived late the punishment would be renewed.

"Do you employ corporal punishment in your schools?" I asked Jovanovitch that same evening at the Grand Cafe. "Never!" he replied. "Do you take us for Germans ? "

" Sir," the father of the wounded child had said to me when I was getting ready to leave, "you see how they treat our children ! What they do to our children they do to us all. A Macedonian woman who enters a police station or a gendarmerie is received as a prostitute ; a Macedonian merchant who gives credit to a Serb official will never be paid, and if he demands payment he is asking for ruin ; our peasants succumb under the burden of taxes and if they are one day late in paying them, they are seized and thrown out of their homes. The shepherds who go to the mountains are allowed to take only one day's provision with them ; and one of them must come for provisions each morning and give an account to the police of what he has seen, what he has heard, and what he and his companions are going to do during the day. Our letters are opened, our children questioned at school on what takes place in their homes ; we cannot even have the right to go from one village to another without permission. But never have our people been more faithful to Macedonia! When she finally falls on the Serbs our vengeance will be as pitiless as the justice of God."

"What that man told you," said a Frenchman to me (one whom a long stay in Macedonia had familiarised with things), "is, unfortunately, the truth. There is not a word you can strike out. Nothing can give you an idea of the atrocious regime inflicted by the Serb administration on the Macedonian populations. I knew the bashi-bazouks. They were lambs compared with the Serbs ! "

The father of the little girl took me through the storm to the end of the Turkish city on the other side of the Vardar. He took me to the home of some people whose address had been given me at the French consulate by one of the guests staying there.

"My God, sir," said a woman to me as we went in, "we are lost if anyone has seen you enter."

Her husband and she looked at me curiously in the light of a flickering lamp on the corner of the table. They were puzzled by this "Franski" who did not fear the police. They plied me with questions. "Are you going to Veles? To Chtip? To Negotin? To Bitolj? You will be well received because the Serbs fear the French, but you will see nothing."

The man hobbled about painfully, and his fifty years appeared seventy. His legs had been broken with the butt-end of a musket in the prison where he had been put for two years simply because his brother had fled from Macedonia. In this prison he had to polish pencils and metal penholders. He had to polish a thousand each day, and was not allowed to sleep until he had made the count. Twice a week, in the dead of night, the gendarmes would lead him to the torture chamber where each prisoner was given twenty-five cudgel blows on the balls of the feet and on the hands, which had been previously soaked for half an-hour in warm water. Food consisted of two pounds of black bread each day, and two glasses of water at noon. The chains on his ankles weighed forty pounds.

His deformed feet and hands bore frightful scars. The broken bones had knitted together above the knee without having been set in place, and they protruded through the skin.

The man who gave me the address of these poor people asked me next day what I thought about it all. "If it were not so dangerous for them I would have given you ten or twenty other addresses," he said. "All those who leave prison are in the same state, and half of them, at least, leave it only to be cast into a common grave. What takes place in these 'houses of death,' as the Macedonians call them, is unimaginable. But you can make a pretty good guess if you have ever seen an accused man return from a questioning by the police magistrate. I saw an accused at Ochrida who had had his natural issues ' buckled' both before and behind , and was then forced to eat and drink copiously for three days. He howled with pain, but he confessed nothing-which is of little importance, since, probably, he had nothing to confess. Then they beat him unconscious in such a manner that not a tooth remained in the front of his mouth."

Dr. Trumbitch, former minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Stefanitch and Meslitch, at Belgrade, and a high Serb personality of the opposition with whom I dined at the home of a common friend at Zemoun, had furnished me such details of the penitentiary regime that I was ready to listen to anything.

"If it were known," they had said to me, "what takes place in our prisons, a cry of horror would resound all over Europe. The offices of police magistrates are torture chambers. The prisons are hells of suffering and ignominy. Thousands of human beings, men and women, even children, are tormented there and suffer without hope. Political prisoners are packed into cells too small to permit of any movement, and there they are left for weeks in an unbreathable atmosphere with their own mess rising up to their ankles. They take them out only to beat them to death or to subject them to ignominious outrages. The Valaque abomination, for which the Turks have been so much reproached, is a favourite resort when all else has failed to make the suspects confess. Even old men and women are subjected to it."

The Serbian language is enforced in the schools, yet at home the children speak to their parents in Bulgarian, for their parents know no other. Yet which language moulds their souls, and their secret personality? Which of the two languages do they employ when they reflect, when they speak to themselves? That of the mothers, or that of the schoolmasters?

All the Macedonians have had to Serbianise their names by ending them with "itch" instead of "off." From one end of the country to the other all traces of "Macedonianism" have disappeared; store-signs, menus, inscriptions on tombs, all are in Serbian. You will not find a paper, a magazine, a book, a pamphlet, or a single inscription in the Bulgarian language throughout all Macedonia. And yet fifteen years ago it was the only language spoken there. The swiftness of this change may be due to enthusiasm for Serbia, but it may not be entirely uninfluenced by the fact that the smallest letter in Bulgarian may cost its writer anything from six months to five years in prison, and a dose of cudgel blows before, during, and after.

The "loyalty" of Macedonians is impeccable. Their deference towards all who have the slightest authority is touching. They express their joy in a loud voice at having "become Serbs again."

But this loyalty, this deference, this joy, becomes a little ironic when one discovers what it hides.

"No one needs to preach hatred of the Serbs to our compatriots," Macedonian refugees in Bulgaria said to me. "They have only to open their eyes to become filled with it."

It is true.

I have returned from Macedonia stupefied, revolted, disgusted, by what I saw there; by what I heard and learned there, thanks to the special means of information of which I was able to avail myself, in spite of the immense effort on the part of Serbian agents to prevent my discovering the truth.

I am a Frenchman who profoundly loves Serbia, and has sufficiently proved it for twenty years, yet I declare unhesitatingly that the officials, judges, priests and police who represent Yugoslavia in Macedonia are a dishonour to their nation.

Before going actually to the spot and seeing things with my own eyes, I refused to admit the reality of the accusations made by the Macedonian organisations of Bulgaria against the Serbian administration in Macedonia.

But now I know that they do not contain a word that is not true. All the cases of atrocity, violence, despotism and immorality that I have been able to check have, without a single exception, been true. Materially and morally, the annexed peoples are crushed, plundered and martyred beyond all belief. And there is no chance of their getting justice, aid, or protection.

In Macedonia the Serbs confiscate, imprison, torture, violate and assassinate, continually, tranquilly and abominably.

Last August, at Topsider, a French official, whose name I cannot, to my great regret, publish, said to me : "They send down there the scum of the Yugoslav administration, all those whom it has been impossible to break or maintain elsewhere. They are a rabble of thieves, of sadists and extortioners. Their ignorance, their vanity, and their immorality is unimaginable."

Here are a few more of the things I saw in Macedonia. In one of the busy streets of Bitolj I heard frightful cries coming from the open window of a primary school. Two masters were beating half a-dozen young boys, who were tied to their benches " Dirty Bulgars ! " yelled the masters. " Sons of Macedonian sows ! I'll teach you Serb, I will ! "

A Croat lieutenant from Zagreb was with me at the time. " What these chaps are doing here, they would like to do with us at home," he said. " Devils, they are, not men ! "

Near the village of Orasac, between Kumanovo and Novoselo, I saw a peasant attached to a tree with his trousers down. His face, his back, and his belly were covered with blood. Three gendarmes and a non-commissioned officer stood round him. A fourth gendarme came out of a house. He was carrying a cat in a sack.

They tied the cat above the peasant's knees, and then pulled his trousers up over the furious cat. All the village, men, women and children, looked on in silence. The man, his flesh torn by the enraged beast, screamed in agony. "

Let's get out of here ! " said the Frenchman who had driven me there in his car. " If we intervene they will let him go, but they'll only blow his brains out as soon as we have turned our backs."

In 1915 when the armies of Belgrade retreated beaten towards Albania, after having occupied Macedonia for two years, the Macedonians fell upon the wounded and stragglers. There were atrocious reprisals. I was one of those who denounced them to the world. To-day, knowing what I know, seeing what I have seen, I should no longer have the force to condemn them.

In 1918, when she became a Serbian province, Macedonia had more than 700 churches; she also possessed 86 colleges or secondary schools, with 2,800 students and 460 professors ; 556 primary schools with 33,000 scholars and 850 teachers. The convents and churches contained inestimable treasures--the fruits of a thousand years of Macedonian culture and thought.

The churches, monasteries and schools have been confiscated, all the priests, all the teachers have been expelled, imprisoned, or deported into Old Serbia. The churches and monasteries, which even the Turks themselves had respected, have been pillaged from top to bottom.

At Skoplje, at Chtip, at Veles, in twenty villages around these cities, in the region of Ochrida and of Guevgueli, I found Serb masters in the schools and Serb priests in the churches. When I asked the latter what had become of such and such a precious ikon, statue or wainscoting, the existence of which had been known to me in advance, they replied with-out exception, "They have sent them to Belgrade."

In all the cemeteries and churches of annexed Macedonia, Belgrade has removed all the Bulgarian inscriptions from the altars, from the walls and from the tombs. In many cases they have emptied the tombs and the crypts of their contents.

At Skoplje, for example, more than forty corpses were torn from the Church of Saint- Dimitri.

" What have they done with them? " I asked Mr. Jovanovitch's assistant who was showing me the church.

"They heaved them into the Vardar," he replied.

At Veles, the Bulgarian officers who fell in the course of the last battles of the Franco- Serb offensive of September, 1918, had been interred in the old Church of Saint- Pantaleimon. Their remains were exhumed by the Serbs and cast on to the rubbish heap.

I saw cemeteries at Chtip, at Krivolak, at Veles, at Kratovo and at Ochrida in which all the Macedonian funeral monuments had been pillaged, the names and the inscriptions in the Bulgarian language effaced, and all the tombstones torn out and shattered. These places of rest now resemble demolition works.

One of the most insistent claims made by the propaganda of the Pan-Serbs is the work of sanitation and hygiene.

"In Macedonia, where malaria, typhoid and the worst venereal maladies raged, where the whole population stagnated in ignorance and filth," Dr. Radovanovitch had said to me, "we have created one of the healthiest and most prosperous regions of Europe, thanks to the millions that France has had the generosity to advance us."

What I saw was rather different.

At Skoplje, for example, hundreds of millions of dinars have gone in the construction of a colossal Military Casino, greater than the Cercle des Armees de Terre et de Mer in Paris. A gigantic branch bank of the National Bank of Belgrade has been built, and luxurious villas have been erected for officials and officers. Yet clouds of mosquitoes still breed out of the slime of the Vardar; from the sewer-mouths, and from all the stagnant pools scattered about the old city and its suburbs. The centre of Skoplje is relatively clean ; but the old quarters, where more than fifty thousand people are piled upon one another, are never sprinkled, never swept, and remain covered with decomposing refuse. A fine "Institute of Research and Prophylaxy" is situated behind the railway station. I saw herds of syphilitics, malarials, consumptives, and women and children in the last degree of exhaustion and anaemia, file through its door. The staff were devoted, the buildings spacious, but the equipment was lamentably inefficient and filthy. I saw bed-sheets there which had not been changed for fifteen days. Even quinine and disinfectants were missing.

"There is no money ! " the director said to me. At Veles, at Chtip, at Novoselo, at Kradsko(Gradsko), at Krevolok, and all along the valleys of the Vardar, the general mortality by malaria and tuberculosis and the number of syphilitics is shocking. The misery of the peasants, of the workers, and even of the merchants, defeats the imagination. Everywhere the water which the population consumes is contaminated by the worst infiltrations.

I had left Skopje, declaring to Jovanovitch that I was going to Bitolj, from where I would go by car to Ochrida. I hoped in this manner to free myself from official supervision.

However, this was expecting too much. I had not been in my hotel at Veles five minutes before the Inspector of Police, Djaganetitch, saluted me on the doorstep. The Intelligence Service functions very well in Macedonia ! He was a charming man, this Inspector Djaganetitch. He took me to his office later on and told me of his campaigns against the comitadjis of the ORIM.

"Do they still come as far as Veles?"

"We took the last nearly three years ago, near the village of Katzibego(Kacibeg)," he replied. "Fourteen men and two women. Fine slips of girls they were too. They kept us company all night !"

" That must have amused you ! " I said tactfully, but ironically.

"Oh yes! In the morning when we had to get en route they couldn't stand up. But we knew the remedy for that ! A few cracks of a horsewhip on the seat, and they ran like she-goats !

"The main thing, however, was to make the dirty curs talk. You can bet they hadn't come all the way from Bulgaria without being hidden and aided along the route. We wanted the names and addresses of their friends.

" Well, believe me, sir, we tried everything ; iron wire twisted round the head or the knees with a stick, big toes crushed with a hammer. It's a rar

e thing if a chap doesn't confess before the second foot. It's even better than the one with the teeth! You know the one, I reckon. It's this way! You put the man in a chair with his head bound to the back of it. You pry open his mouth and drill one, two, three teeth. I've seen huskies collapse at the second tooth ! At the third they tell you all you want to know. It's worth more than fifty cudgel blows.

"But this last gang we caught simply wouldn't talk. No, sir. They made a sign to stop, and then when we stopped they said nothing. The women were the worst ! We drilled four teeth, two in front and two big ones. They went a bit white, but that's all. One of them spat in my face ! I could have killed her ! I wanted to set them on burning coals, as M. Lazitch had us do near Kratovo.

" Well, all of a sudden, I found this."

He plunged his hand into a drawer and held out to me an old rusty razor.

" With that in two hours I made the dirty curs denounce more than twenty traitors ; peasants, shepherds, women, even kids ! I didn't have the time to write it all down. You tell M. Chiappe (French Prefect of Police in Paris) this method when you get back to France, it'll be useful to him."

Hastily, all that had been said to me at Zagreb, at Sofia, at Belgrade, about the procedure of interrogation in the Serb prisons came back to me. I remembered the stories I had heard of noses and ears slashed, palms of the hands and balls of the feet beaten, points of the breast ripped out with pincers, the genital parts twisted, red-hot irons applied to the loins and under the feet.

I cited these to the Inspector.

He laughed. "Good Lord, no, sir. We had to do worse than that. Do you think that a chap whose big toes have been flattened, and who suffers the thunder of God with his teeth gives a damn about that sort of thing.

" I had them all piled there in the corner, stark naked, and one of them I had held before me, his legs spread out, a weight of twenty kilos on each foot. . . . I was sitting there where you are.

"" You don't want to say anything? "" I said.

"Each time that he said `No' with his head, the sergeant gave him a rap on the nose or the eyes with his fist, whilst I advanced my chair a notch. The third notch, and I was near enough to touch him.

" ` Well, you see this razor? If you refuse to reply, I am going to use it on you. After that the rope ! But if you tell us which way you came in, who took you in and informed you on the road, we will take care of you and set you free. Understand?"

"First, I made two slashes on his loins. He talked when I took up my razor again-two pages of it."

"And you gave them their liberty?"

I heard myself saying the words as a man in a ghastly nightmare.

The fiend before me laughed. "Gave them their liberty? Why, what are you thinking of! It was that, sir, that made them talk! When the first one had said all he had to say, they took him downstairs 'to see the doctor'. At the door they put a rope around his neck and strung him up the tree in front of the little coffee-house, on the square there. The whole fourteen went like that.

"That affects you, eh? I can see that you don't know these curs !They had killed a dozen of our men, and at Kratovo and at Krupiste they had burned the homes of Serb colonists with the people inside. The comitadjis of the ORIM! It's wasting rope to hang them !A bullet in the belly, two or three strokes of the butt-end of a musket on the head, that's all they're worth ! They are brutes, good for nothing."

"And the two women," I asked. "They died without having confessed?"

"Without having confessed? Ah! I guarantee you that it didn't take long to settle them. We gave them the candle."

And so this also was true !This ghastly atrocity which Dr. Trumbitch told me about at Zagreb, and Professor P___at Belgrade.

"Why, yes, the candle!" went on Djaganetitch. "Naturally, the woman is warned. If she persists, they stand her up, light a candle or a good pocket- lighter, and raise the flame little by little until it is thrust into her genitals."

"And then?"

"And then they were strung up with the rest of them. But we have never seen another comitadji in this region since, not one. They know what's waiting for them. The sub- prefect could go alone as far as Karaslar, by deserted roads, as safely as if he were on the terrace of Kalemeigdan."

I had a talk with this sub-prefect, M. Nikolitch. He also was full of " information. "

"Do you intend to visit Kratovo?" he asked. "When you get there go and see Lieutenant Mina. He's a veteran of the armies of King Peter who dared go all alone to a region infested with revolutionaries and traitors. A real Serb ! He had a score of his old comrades at Kratovo. He installed them on the abandoned lands and in the houses. M. Jovanovitch didn't tell you the story of the marriages, did he? Ah! you must hear it. It's one of the things for which His Majesty complimented Mina.

"Mina and his bachelor comrades at Kratovo could find no one to marry, because the women would not have a Serb. But that wasn't for long! One Sunday, Mina assembled the village and told his comrades to choose a girl each. They took eleven women whose husbands had fled to Bulgaria, and who cried that they were already married.

" ' I annul your marriage !' said Mina. They refused. So Mina had them tied to benches. They were whipped by their future husbands until they could cry no longer. Then Mina warned them that they would do it again the following Sunday, and each Sunday after, until they gave in.

" For three Sundays Mina thrashed them thus, and then they said 'Yes.' Mina had a minister come from Serbia, and they were married."

I met one of the "re-married" women. She was playing on the doorstep with the son of her Serb husband, a fine lad of three or four years of age. She showed such a tenderness for him that I, knowing the story from my guide, was stupefied.

In answer to my question she replied : "I want my son to love me so much that it will be I, living or dead, who aims his rifle on the day of our liberation."

"Whatever you see you must plainly tell," Dr. Radovanovitch had said to me at Belgrade. "We do not fear the truth ! "

I have accepted his challenge as the challenge of the Pan-Serbs. I have been, I have seen, I have heard.

And now I am telling the world.

THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THE BALKAN PACT

TWO DOCUMENTS

Translator's Note.

The protocols which are reproduced here appeared in the Revue Parlementaire (Paris) 1st May, 1934. Two days later M. Pozzi was summoned to Quai D' Orsay to give an explanation of his unsolicited initiative. After being severely reprimanded for having published these secret protocols, he was advised by the Government (Doumergue- Barthou) that as he had taken upon himself the responsibility of publishing documents which did not concern him, and which might trouble the peace of Europe, the Government (i.e., Barthou) "did not consider itself responsible for his hide."

The signing, on 9th February, 1934., of the Pact by which Bucharest, Ankara, Athens and Belgrade reciprocally "guaranteed their frontiers" has been greeted, by that part of the Press which takes its cue from official circles in Belgrade and Prague, as a great historic act, a decisive guarantee for peace in the Balkans.

For having refused to participate in this Pact, Bulgaria has once again been accused of the most heinous designs against the peace of Europe. The real truth is far otherwise.

Never, since the days of April 1914 when the Russian military party and the Pan-Serbs of the Narodna Odbrana collaborated in the preparation for the assassination at Sarajevo, has peace been more directly and immediately menaced than it has been since the signing of the Balkan Pact. Never has a more audacious manoeuvre been attempted and achieved to realise ambitions of conquest and of war.

The Balkan Pact proclaims the pacific intentions of the four signatories. All the chancelleries of Europe have received the text of this Pact and approved it. They have received and approved a shadow.

The only text which counts, and which no chancellery has received nor will ever officially receive, is that of the two secret protocols in which the signatories of the Pact have stated the real objectives of their "pacifying" entente.

The first protocol was signed at Athens on 9th February, 1934, immediately before the signing of the Pact, by Messrs. Rustu, Maximos, Titulesco and Yevtich, ministers of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Greece, Roumania and Yugoslavia.

It is conceived as follows :

"At the moment of proceeding to the signing of the Balkan Pact, the four ministers of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Greece, Roumania and Yugoslavia have considered it necessary to stipulate as follows the tenor of engagements assumed by their countries and to stipulate expressly that these details constitute an integral part of the Pact."

FIRST PROTOCOL

Article 1. Any country will be considered as an aggressor who has committed one of the acts of aggression foreseen by Article 2 of the Convention of London dated 3rd and 4th July, 1933.

Article 2. The Balkan Pact is not directed against any Power. Its aim is to guarantee the security of the Balkan frontiers against any aggression on the part of a Balkan State:

Article 3. Nevertheless, if one of the High Contracting Parties is victim of an aggression on the part of any other non-Balkan Power and if a Balkan State participates in this aggression, either simultaneously or subsequently, the Balkan Pact or Alliance will produce its full effect with regard to such Balkan State.

Article 4. The High Contracting Parties engage themselves to conclude conventions appropriate to the aims pursued by the Balkan Pact of Alliance. The negotiation of these conventions will start within a period of six months.

Article 5. The Balkan Pact of Alliance not being in contradiction to anterior engagements, all anterior engagements as well as all conventions depending upon anterior treaties (engagements and treaties which moreover are public) produce their full effect.

Article 6. The expression of the preamble of the Pact : "Firmly decided to insure the respect of stipulated engagements already existent" includes for the High Contracting Parties, the respect of treaties existing between the Balkan States to which one or several of the High Contracting Parties are signatories.

Article 7. The Balkan Pact of Alliance is a defensive instrument ; consequently the obligations proceeding from the Balkan Pact cease to exist for the High Contracting Parties in respect of any High Contracting Party which should become an aggressor (as determined by Article 2 of the London Conventions) against any other country.

Article 8. The High Contracting Parties are agreed that the present territorial disposition of the Balkans is to be regarded as final. The duration of the Pact will be fixed by the High Contracting Parties during or after the two years following the signing of the Pact. During these two years no repudiation of the Pact shall be possible. The duration of the Pact shall be fixed for a minimum of five years. If at the expiration of the two years following the signing of the Pact no duration has been fixed, the Balkan Pact of Alliance shall automatically be considered to have a legal duration of five years. At the expiry of these five years, or at the expiry of whatever further period may have been agreed upon by the High Contracting Parties for its duration, the Balkan Pact of Alliance will be automatically renewed, by tacit consent, for a period equal to that for which it has been previously in force, unless one of the High Contracting Parties gives notice of its desire to terminate its agreement one year prior to such expiry. In no case, however, is a repudiation valid prior to the year preceding the day of the expiry of the Pact.

Article 9. The High Contracting Parties will inform one another reciprocally as soon as the ratification confirming the Balkan Pact of Alliance has taken place according to the legislation of each country involved.

In this long rigmarole, two points are note-worthy : Article 1 and Article 4.. Article 1 expressly aims at Bulgaria. The London Conventions provide for the different forms of aggression of which a country may be guilty. The conventions designate as an act of aggression the presence of armed bands upon the territory of an aggrieved State which are gathered together to carry out, or to prepare for, incursions upon the territory of the aggrieved country.

Now, Yugoslavia has not ceased to accuse Bulgaria of tolerating, of favouring even, " the presence on her territory" of Macedonian revolutionary organisations which were in conflict with the Yugoslav forces of occupation in South Serbia, that is to say, in annexed Bulgarian Macedonia.

The reason for the Secret Protocols to the Balkan Pact will be understood by those who understand the bellicose intentions of Belgrade as exposed in this book.

Ten times, since 1918, Belgrade has been on the point of attacking her Bulgarian neighbour in order to "settle the question." Each time, either as a result of the intervention of France, or for fear of a conflict with Italy, the "police operation" against Sofia and Petritch has been adjourned.

The occasion sought by the Pan-Serb dictatorship to "break the back" of Bulgaria with a great show of legality is provided henceforth by Article 1 of the Pact of Athens. Since 9th February, 1934., a Yugoslav military operation against Bulgaria would be rendered quite legitimate by any alleged Macedonian band which should cross the frontier and clash with the Yugoslav police forces. That day, by the application of the London Conventions, Bulgaria will be considered as being the real aggressor and the Pact will come into play, even though Bulgaria is really the aggrieved.

The consequences of such an event have been minutely provided for and organised by what Article 4. of the Protocol calls, by a sinister euphemism, "conventions appropriate to the aims pursued by the Pact."

These conventions lead to a second secret Protocol annexed to the Pact. It was drawn up and signed on 17th March, 1934., at Belgrade, in the office of M. Yevtitch, Yugoslav minister of Foreign Affairs, by the ministers of Greece, Turkey and Roumania, and in the presence of the general staff of the Yugoslav army and of the accredited delegates from the general staffs of Turkey, Roumania and Greece. A few days before, at Athens, a first agreement had been concluded, after two days of negotiations, between the chief of the Turk general staff and his Greek colleague. Preliminary accords had been agreed upon between Roumania and Yugoslavia at the end of February, in the course of three consecutive meetings held at Belgrade. The first one, at the Presidency of the Council, in the presence of the Commandant of the military staff of King Alexander; the other two at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This second secret Protocol is conceived in this manner :

"The representatives of Turkey, Greece, Roumania and Yugoslavia, expressly designated for this purpose by their respective governments, have agreed and agree upon the following articles in application of Articles 2 and 4 of the Protocol of the Balkan Pact signed at Athens, 9th February, 1934:

SECOND PROTOCOL

Article 1. The High Contracting Parties recognise and declare by common accord that if the Bulgarian Government, after an ultimatum delivered by such of the High Contracting Parties as are directly interested, should refuse to destroy the armed organisations which do not cease to invade the territory of the High Contracting Parties ; or if the Bulgarian Government declare themselves unable to proceed to this destruction, application shall be made of the dispositions of Article 2 of the London Convention of 3rd and 4th July, 1933.

Article 2. The High Contracting Parties recognise and declare by common accord that in this eventuality the Balkan Pact is to produce its full effects, and they thereupon conclude and decide as follows :

Article 3. In the forty-eight hours following the expiration of an ultimatum originating from one or several of the High Contracting Parties, these High Contracting Parties will proceed with their respective military forces, and under the conditions indicated in the following article, to the occupation of all or of a part of the Bulgarian territory :

Article 4. This occupation will cease immediately after the total destruction of the organisations enumerated in Article 1. It may be prolonged only in the case that the population of the occupied regions should manifest, by means of a plebiscite or otherwise, their desire of incorporation into one or several of the High Contracting Parties.

Article 5. If a non-Balkan Power joins the Bulgarian aggression either simultaneously or subsequently, as defined in Article 1 of the present Protocol, the Balkan Pact of Alliance shall produce its full effects with regard to this Power.

Article 6. No repudiation of the present is possible during the two years following its signature by the High Contracting Parties. This signature being equivalent to ratification, the High Contracting Parties assume reciprocally and formally the engagement to exempt the present accord from the habitual ratifications according to the legislation of each country.

The proof of the authenticity of these two documents (whose exceptional gravity I need not stress) is given by two facts.

For the past two months M. Venizelos, the greatest statesman of Greece, whom none could accuse of being in the pay of Bulgaria, has conducted the most violent campaign against the Balkan Pact and its secret annexes. Why? Because he was acquainted, and without a doubt by the same channel as I, with the contents of these secret annexes, and he is appalled.

Two months ago the English minister at Athens, (London having just received an extra-diplomatic communication of the first secret Protocol), expressed to the Greek Government the "regrets and apprehensions"

that the signing of the Balkan Pact caused the Foreign Office. Fifteen days ago, by a new step of an almost comminatory nature, the British Government advised the Greek Government of its opposition to the Pact " even going as far as to threaten it with the publication of the secret Protocols accompanying it."

The documents which you have just read have been communicated to me from two different sources at a few hours' interval. First by a diplomatic attaché at one of the great legations at Belgrade, and second by a Yugoslav government official who thinks, as do some of his colleagues, that the best way to serve his country is by betraying the governments who are leading her to destruction by vile interest or mad ambition.

Belgrade need not try to dispute the authenticity of these documents, for it knows by experience that my documentation is always irrefutable, and that I leave to her agents, direct or indirect, the lies which characterise so many of their statements.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE BLACK HAND IN EUROPE

A SINISTER echo of the Balkan drama was played out in our London Office during the November of 1934.. We had been approached by Woislav Maximus Petrovitch, an ex.-attaché to the Serbian Legation in London, who desired to publish a book which he was then engaged in writing.

Petrovitch was the author of several very well-known Serbian grammars, and the author of a book published by Harrap before the War which, through the efforts of Mr. George Harrap, succeeded in getting the English Press to use the word " Serbia " instead of " Servia." (See Mr. George Harrap's memoirs.)

Petrovitch was preparing a small book on the history of the Sarajevo incident in the light of his knowledge of the Serbian Black Hand. We gave him a corner in our office and thereto he brought all his papers, which included letters from many important British and foreign personages, summonses to the Palace at Belgrade, and an assortment of Balkan orders and official appointments which stamped him as a rolling stone in diplomacy.

We never found out Petrovitch's reason for having left his country, but we know that he was opposed to the dictatorship there. He had written against it in the English Press and never ceased from recounting the horrors reserved for those who were out of favour with the government.

He was obviously very much hated by those in power in Belgrade, and he alleged that several attempts had been made upon his life-even here in England. We discredited these reports at the time, and yet several weeks later, when it began to be known that Petrovitch was thinking of publishing a book about the Black Hand, a violent campaign was instituted against him. Mysterious voices would ring him up at his lodgings in Pimlico(These have been confirmed by his landlady and several other people in the house.) and threaten him with immediate death if he did not desist from his denunciation of the dictatorship. Petrovitch's nerves became so bad that it was only humane to take him into the country and hide him. From this retreat he only emerged because of an assurance from the police that he was quite safe-which they promptly demonstrated by asking him to leave the country within a short time of his return. It was then that Petrovitch, caught between the Home Office request for his removal, and his own fear of falling into the hands of the Serbian torturers, ran out of our office and went to his death.

He gassed himself in a room in Old Compton Street on 24th November, 1934., after having taken whisky and drugs to fortify himself against the horror of his deed. At the inquest he was described as a dangerous alien, and it was alleged that he was connected with the men who had shot King Alexander at Marseilles. Nothing could be further from the truth.

His death caused a sensation. The London, provincial and Continental Press was full of the story of the drama. Meantime the Yugoslav Legation in London was not idle. The editorial department of a famous London paper received four telephone messages one afternoon all of which were calculated to blacken Petrovitch's name.

From the moment of his death Petrovitch's half finished manuscript remained as he had left it. The mode of his death left us no option but to lock it away as part of the offal of publishing.

On 1st December, 1934., a letter was received from Paris which caused us to retrieve Petrovitch's papers from the safe to which they had been consigned. This letter was addressed from La Maison des Journalistes, and read, in part, as follows :

I read with the greatest interest the article in the Daily Mail of 27th November, Paris Edition, concerning the death of the Serb patriot as a result of threats made to him on the telephone. It is only one of the long series of crimes committed and to be committed by the Pan-Serb terrorist organisation, the Narodna Odbrana. And it is regrettable that the great mass of people are almost totally unaware of the existence of this organisation which bears the direct responsibility for the Great War.

M. Henri Pozzi, in his book, *La Guerre Revient*, an appalling expose of the situation of the national minorities in the Balkans and in Central Europe, tried heroically to call to the attention of the French people the dangers to which France and all Europe were exposing themselves should France continue to finance and support these criminal and ambitious political parties of the Little Entente, and especially of Yugoslavia. But in vain. Political and financial interests controlling the French Press smothered the book by lies, fantasies and silence. The book has not received the attention it merits. The French Governments continue their foreign policy which is inevitably leading France to another war. King Alexander has been assassinated. M. Pozzi had warned the French people and the French Government that the King was to be assassinated, by whom and why. And in publishing the secret Protocols of the Balkan Pact of Alliance he had the courage to denounce the criminal ambitions of Belgrade to dismember Bulgaria. His only recompense was a reprimand and a threat which he received 3rd May, 1934., at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (under the ministry of the late Louis Barthou). He was advised that as he had assumed the responsibility of publishing documents and facts which did not concern him, the Government (Doumergue- Barthou) did not consider themselves " responsible for his hide."

M. Pozzi is still among the living-to the surprise of some of his intimate friends.

It is your intention, I believe, to publish the manuscript which the Serb patriot left in your hands before falling a victim to the Narodna Odbrana. (By the way, this incident was systematically hushed up in the French Press.) I hope you will publish M. Pozzi's book so that England may learn, before it is too late, what an unconditional military alliance will cost, unless France changes her foreign policy.

I am sure that M. Pozzi's book, *War is Coming Again*, will be of great interest to you and will substantially corroborate the manuscript given to you by the Serb. My sincere hope is that the people of England may read this book. I feel certain that the simultaneous publication of these two manuscripts will awaken the English people to the great peril that is weighing upon them and Europe.

As the book was written before the coup d'etat in Bulgaria and the assassination of King Alexander, M. Pozzi has authorised me to inform you that he will add a chapter embracing these events and forming an up-to-date conclusion.

M. Pozzi is of an old French family, a Protestant. His great-grandfather was deputy for the Dordagne department at the time of the Revolution. One of his uncles, Professor S. Pozzi, was Senator and President of the Academy of Medicine. Another, Professor A. Pozzi, was mayor and Deputy of Rheims. His first cousin, Jean Pozzi, is French ambassador in Persia. His mother was English, a direct descendant of Hampden, and a graduate from Cambridge. One of his English uncles was the late Lord Nevill of Dunedin, bishop of New Zealand. He has been for nearly thirty years a member of the French and English Intelligence Services in the Balkans and Central Europe ; ten years in charge of the Balkan Secret Service of *Le Temps*, and was one of the confidential men of Glemenceau during the War, and is by far the best qualified man on the Continent to discuss this critical question. *La Guerre Revient* has been translated into Italian, Bulgarian, Hungarian and German. The book is prohibited in the Little Entente, Greece and Turkey, and in Yugoslavia; any government official or employee apprehended reading the book is given five years of hard labour. Needless to say, M. Pozzi is Public Enemy ,Number One in the Little Entente, Greece and Turkey.

We replied to this letter with all due caution, and eventually received the promised copy of M. Henri Pozzi's book *La Guerre Revient* which is presented to you in the preceding pages.

The book is such a remarkable confirmation of much of Petrovitch's story that we have felt bound to produce a resume of Petrovitch's original manuscript as an appendix to this book. The two manuscripts taken together are a remarkable revelation concerning the state of affairs in the Balkans to-day, and Petrovitch's unfinished story is very interesting in the light of the conclusions which M. Pozzi draws from his experiences in the Balkans.

Whilst we repose the utmost confidence in M. Pozzi's story, we cannot, naturally, regard M. Petrovitch's manuscript as being anything more than an interesting personal sidelight on the Balkan question which, by its similarity to M. Pozzi's book, is rendered of some possible historical value.

In the light of M. Pozzi's revelation of the methods used by Belgrade against those of its subjects who do not please, we are not surprised that M. Petrovitch preferred suicide in England to the " welcome " which undoubtedly awaited him in Serbia.

N.B. -M Pozzi, who has read the proofs of this book, declares that there is nothing fictitious about Petrovitch's claims and that he has evidence of an even more sensational character.

The Story Of Petrovitch

THE STORY OF THE BLACK HAND AND THE GREAT WAR by WOISLAV M. PETROVITCH

I came back to London in November 1913 after the Second Balkan War. I had previously been attached to the International Correspondence Schools in Kingsway. Now, however, I had come back in a new role, that of attaché to the Serbian Legation. I was not narrowly Serbian in my sympathies, as I was born of Montenegrin stock, and I was therefore not surprised when certain Montenegrin friends asked if I would, whilst at the Serbian Legation, keep an eye open for anything that might be in the interests of little Montenegro, who was too poor to afford a legation of her own.

I had come into the favour of King Nicholas of Montenegro through having translated into English his play *The Empress of the Balkans* which was eventually published in London by Evelyn Nash in 1913, and which was only stopped from being produced by the machinations of certain other jealous Balkan personalities.

The London affairs of Montenegro had been looked after by the Russian Ambassador, and also by Sir Roper Parkington who, acting in an honorary capacity for love of Montenegro, was Montenegro's consul-general.

It was to this great gentleman I went when I landed in London, and it was from his lips that I first heard of the real existence of the Black Hand of Serbia. (Publisher's Note. We hold irrefutable evidence of Petrovitch's close association with Sir Roper Parkington Letters in Sir Roper's own hand- writing are in our possession The last letter, dated 15th August, 1922, and , addressed to Dr. Petrovitch, Secretary, Royal Ministry of Education 81 Kralja Milutina ulica, Belgrade, Serbia, is in absolute accord with Petrovitch's story. The last paragraph reads : "I have but little sympathy with the Serbians, for they are, I understand, treating the Montenegrins very badly. It is a source of great regret to me to see that Montenegro has been taken over by the Serbians, and is no longer represented on the map of Europe.")

" King Peter Kara-Djordjevitch of Serbia," said Sir Roper Parkington, " wishes to annex Montenegro to his realm, and to realise his ambition he wants to eliminate King Nicholas at any price. Do you remember the bomb affair of 1907? " " You need say no more," I said to Sir Roper, for at the time of the 1907 outrage I had just been appointed Vice- Consul of the United States in Belgrade, and it fell to my lot to make a report to Washington of that ghastly outrage against the King of Montenegro. I, therefore, remembered the " bomb affair of 1907 " very well. My American chiefs, Mr. Moorhead and Mr. Knowles, were at first unwilling to send my report back to Washington. For it was proved by the admissions and the depositions of the witnesses, and by technical experts, that the plot had been hatched at Belgrade, and the perpetrators, whose duty it was to go to Cettinge (Centinje) and assassinate King Nicholas and his entire family, were selected from among some malcontent students at the University of Belgrade, and that the bombs they carried were made at Kragujeva (Kragujevac) in the Serbian Government munition factory.

" Do you believe there is a new plot against King Nicholas?" I asked.

" No, not a new one," he replied. " It is an old plot, as old as the organisation called Ujedinjenje (Ujedinjenje) ili Smrt, or Unification or Death. This society is more commonly known under the name of Crna Ruka or Black Hand, whose programme includes the murder of many other rulers besides the King of Montenegro, and whose final aim is the extension of Serbian rule."

I was astonished by the news, though, of course, I knew that there was a secret society of army officers under the vulgar name of Black Hand, which in 1903 had assassinated King Alexander Obrenovitch and Queen Draga of Serbia. Sir Roper warned me to keep my eyes open in my new task, and told me that if I did so I should find two governments operating in Serbia-the official one operating on the surface, and the other working under the surface, unseen and often unsuspected. This unseen government was the Black Hand.

Sir Roper gave me a copy of the constitution of the Serbian Black Hand, and of this constitution (Petrovitch's translation of this document is reproduced at the end) I have kept careful record..

I was soon to find out a good deal more of this strange organisation, however-this " State within a State " as Nikola Pasitch(Prime Minister of Serbia in 1914) once called it. But I found nothing in it half so strange and enigmatic as was its spiritus rector, its supreme commander, Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevitich, nick- named Apis (Serbian for Bee), on account of his bee-like qualities. Four- winged in his patriotic élan, Colonel Dimitrijevitich always knew the bee-line from conception to execution. Furthermore, he was not without the industrious insect's sting. Animated by the most genuine love of his native land and race, gifted in a high degree with all the qualities necessary for a successful leader of men, endowed by nature with the intelligence of a superman, Colonel Dimitrijevitich possessed at the same time a magnetism and an indefinable secret power of over-lordship, so that whenever he gave an order he would give it in a tone that admitted of as little contradiction as one of the ill-famed decrees of Minos. His commands impelled both his sub- ordinates and his superiors to blind obedience, to gigantic enterprise, to death-involving deeds or misdeeds. This able Serbian officer was the chief of the Intelligence Service in the Belgrade War Office, and it was his duty to know as much as possible of the secret preparations directed against Serbia, both in the country and abroad. Weird was this man, with his double nature-

the weirdest I ever met in my life. In his ardent patriotism, which was not questioned even by his bitterest enemies, he never shrank before any means, however gruesome they might be, provided he considered them necessary for carrying into effect what he sincerely believed to be " noble ends." It was Colonel Dragutin T. Dimitrijevitich-Apis who, as a comparatively young officer, organised and perpetrated the assassination of King Alexander Obrenovitch and Queen Draga in June 1903. He it was also who brought to the blood-stained throne of Serbia the Pretender Peter Kara- Djardjevitch-grandson of a swineherd, Kara- Djordje Petrovitich of the village of Topola. Of all who ever held sway in Serbia, Colonel Dimitrijevitich had the most wonderful way of issuing orders by representing the most formidable things in the simplest possible manner, so that his agent would carry them out to perfection without realising what an important good or evil action he had accomplished. Thanks to an army of confidential informers whom he had recruited from all social classes, Apis was the best-informed man in the kingdom. He knew well what was taking place in every State Department or foreign Legation and Consulate, nor was he ignorant of the intrigues going on at the Serbian Royal Court and even some of the foreign Courts and Chancelleries. The ante-chamber of his offices in the headquarters of the Serbian Grand General Staff was one big bee-hive of callers : army officers of all ranks, komitadjis, diplomats and domestic servants, bishops in disguise and actresses in deep veils, highly placed government officials and nondescript persons of no fixed abode. Some were there to report some- thing which they considered important enough to justify their calls ; others to crave a favour or lodge a complaint ; others again to give Apis some suggestion or to exhibit to him some secret plan, but all to make friends with the " omnipotent Apis," as he was generally called. And mighty he really was, for apart from the power which he derived from his official position and his high place at King Peter's Court, Colonel Dimitrijevitich had a singular faculty of making friends even of his sworn enemies. In the course of one short conversation (he never spoke much) he could convert some paid agent of his bitter foes, the Radicals, into either a devoted friend or a terrified servant. Not seldom did he make of his would-be assassin a member of his secret organisation. How Apis contrived to do this will remain his and only his secret. As Rasputin hypnotised a Russian Court, so Apis hypnotised the whole Serbian nation-or, at least, as much of it as he came in contact with.

In the famous restaurant " Kolorac " in Belgrade there was a long corner table which was either occupied by a number of army officers and a few civilians or else remained vacant even when the rest of the room was packed with guests. Frequent diners could notice that there were almost always the same persons sitting at it. Whenever I wished to entertain some foreign colleague or friend I took him to the " Kolorac," as the food there was prepared in the most typically Serbian manner. Our table was often in the immediate vicinity of that famous corner table, for it was the table at which Colonel Dimitrijevitich-Apis, with his permanent smile and his ever-burning cigarette, presided over a select crowd of army officers, diplomats, merchants, bankers, journalists, and other classes of the intelligentsia. Most of the conversation came from Apis, while others listened attentively, devouring as it were every word that fell from his lips. And there were not many to fall, for Apis was a man of few words. Therefore, as very seldom anybody else would venture to speak, there usually reigned a queer silence at the " long table." One evening an unknown diner, sitting with a rather riotous crowd at a neighbouring table, rose and pointed at Colonel Dimitrijevitich's table and shouted, " There is the executive power of the Kingdom of Serbia! " All the guests who heard it at once exclaimed in unison, " Long Live Apis! " just to show that not the " long table" but Apis alone was the supreme executive power. Apis and his friends, however, pretended they did not hear the remark.

How deep was the influence which Colonel Dimitrijevitich- Apis exercised upon the hostile Serbian Government itself may be shown by the fact that, while at a meeting of the Black Hand, Apis only half jokingly suggested that one of the founders of the organisation, a certain ex-priest and later Vice-Consul, Bogdan Radenkovitch, should be appointed Archbishop of Serbia. The Royal Government, to please Apis, at once accepted the suggestion and recommended Radenkovitch as its own candidate for the high post, provoking thereby a storm of indignation in the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Serbia, Montenegro, and even in the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Apis, however, was not one of the founders of the Black Hand. The Black Hand was founded by certain young chauvinists, amongst whom a journalist, Ljubomir Jovanovitch-Cupa, and the already mentioned Vice-Consul Bogdan Radenkovitch, played the principal roles. Apis was approached only after the adoption of the Black Hand's constitution and was asked to join the movement. This invitation he accepted, for he realised that the organisation would serve his own end, which was the realisation of the national ideals which Prince Mihailo Obrenovitch of Serbia (1860-1868) and Prince Nikola of Montenegro had declared to the entire Yugoslav world. Serbia was to be regarded by all as the " Piemont " for the unification into one powerful political State of all the Serbians, Montenegrins, Croatians, Bulgarians, and Slovenes.

It was Apis who first conceived and effected the secret military conventions between Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Greece. It was Apis who immediately after the conclusion of these military conventions forced the hesitant Serbian Government to take the initiative in forming the Balkan Alliance which, in 1912, to the astonishment of official Western Europe, all but threw the Turks out of Europe. Apis was the only brave officer of all the brave Serbian Army who had the pluck to go incognito to the Albanian mountains and meet the redoubtable Issa Boljetinac, the national hero of the Albanians (excelled only by Skender Beg) and conclude even with the Albanians a military alliance against the Turks.

It is true that Apis captained the conspiracy of officers which slew Alexander and his queen in 1903, but even in this Apis acted from the highest motives. He saw in the person of King Alexander an obstacle to the free progress of the Serbian people, and removed him. But let the nation which has never in its history rid itself by violent means of at least one of its good or bad rulers throw the first stone at Serbia and her Apis ! The May tragedy of 1903 represents a revolution in the Serbian history, and there have not been many bloodless revolutions in general history. How grateful, however, the Prince Regent, Alexander Kara-Djordjevitch of Serbia, has shown himself to be towards Apis, and what reward the Serbian Government has given to this national hero, history has since shown.

Prince Alexander was at first very much in favour of the Black Hand for he gave from his private purse 26,000 dinars (about, 1,000 pounds) in support of the organisation's official organ *Piemont*. A well-informed person told me that Prince Alexander, either because he sympathised with the movement, or because he dreaded its ever-increasing power, eventually did his utmost to seize its reins and become its supreme chief. But I knew equally well that the Central Executive Committee of the Black Hand politely, but firmly, declined the honour of having for its chief the Heir-Apparent to the throne of Serbia. Infuriated with this humiliation, and at the same time sickened with fear lest his own name should some day figure on the "black list" of the Black Hand, Prince Alexander forthwith founded a counter-conspiracy which he called the White Hand, and placed at its head Lieutenant-Colonel Petar Zivkovitch. The object of this practically public organisation was exclusively to counteract and, if possible, crush the action of the "Unification or Death." For years the White Hand was waiting for the opportune time for an open battle against Apis, for the latter had followers and members in almost every corner of the country and also in the Yugoslav provinces of the late Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The number of these was rumoured to have reached in the first part of 1914 close on 150,000. As according to the statutes of the organisation the vast majority of the members were to be unknown personally to one another, it would be impossible to establish their exact number, for the list of their names was made in one single copy, which was kept by Apis alone. This document he never revealed to anybody; not even to his most intimate friends, nor to the "big ten" which shared with Apis the executive power. During the farcical trial to which the exiled Serbian Government subjected Apis and his followers in Salonika in 1917, the police searched their offices and lodgings, but they never found the complete list of the members of the organisation "Unification or Death." Where was it kept? This was one of the secrets which Apis carried to his grave !

But, as I said, during the years from 1911 to the downfall of Serbia in 1915, Apis and the Black Hand were too powerful to be attacked openly by any government in Serbia. Therefore, Prince Alexander endeavoured by all means to keep up friendly relations with Apis upon whom he showered innumerable public honours and personal favours. Thus, for example, when Apis fell ill during the first Balkan War, Prince Alexander, at his own expense, summoned from Germany some of the greatest specialists who came and cured Apis.

Knowing even a little of this, it did not take me long to realise that Sir Roper Parkinson's words to me were true and that there were indeed two governments in Serbia. I was not able to form an opinion as to where the loyalties of my London chief, Dr. Slavko Gruitch, lay, but it soon became quite obvious to me that there were strong undercurrents flowing through the Serbian Legation in London. The English reader will find it difficult to believe my story. He will not understand how men could possibly work in an atmosphere of conflicting loyalties. I do not, indeed, believe that Englishmen could tolerate it. Imagine a young Englishman going from Oxford or Cambridge to join the British Embassy in Belgrade only to find upon his arrival there that the ambassador was not only working for the British Crown and Government but also for some little-known Colonel in the British Secret Service. What is a young man to do in such an atmosphere? If he has a spark of patriotism in him what can he do? If he protests he loses his caste. If he smothers his feelings he gradually loses his moral sense altogether.

I found Dr. Gruitch a very charming man indeed, and his charming American wife was a very good friend to me later. He seemed to have very little to do, and in fact there was nothing much to do in the Legation as a whole.

The first secretary of the Serbian Legation was Alexander Djordjevitch, a tall, slender, handsome man of about forty. He was, one might say, a cavalier sans peur et sans reproche, and belonged to a family which might have become the wealthiest in the kingdom, for his father, Dr. Vladan Djordjevitch, was for many years Prime

Minister during the reign of King Milan Obrenovitch. As King Milan was more of an actor than a statesman, it was Vladan who was the virtual ruler of the country. His administration was at once glorious and notorious; it is known in our national history under the name of "Vladanovstina," which means approximately "the terrorist despotism of Vladan and company." If this great statesman had followed the example of most of his predecessors, whose chief concern was to become rich over-night, he too could have accumulated enormous wealth. But Vladan was one of those painfully few Serbian potentates who were honest patriots. Whatever his personal or political enemies might have said of him, none of them had ever charged him with misuse of his high position for his personal profit. He was generally referred to as the Serbian Aristides. But he had left to his several sons only a great name, without any income. They all had to earn their living by work, and they continued in the steps of their father, in as far as personal disinterestedness was concerned.

So my colleague, Alexander Djordjevitch, was a strictly clean-handed man in the discharge of his official duties, which, however, were not many. I remember how he would come in in the morning and ask me whether there was any news from Belgrade. There were at times some highly important instructions, which I would hand to him decoded and typed, but which he would return to my desk with all the nonchalance of an Easterner, too lazy to read, asking me only to tell him in a few words what was in those despatches. There-upon he would replace his hat, tipping it slightly over his right eye, placing his walking-stick under his left arm, and pulling on further his gloves, he would leisurely walk off, with the dignified gait of a Turk with all eternity before him.

The work in the Legation was a very monotonous affair. The diplomatic and trade relations between Great Britain and the kingdom of Serbia were not very lively. Consequently our work, if there was any at all, was limited to some empty formalities, book-keeping and writing receipts of our salaries and representation fees. This stereotyped work was not infrequently varied by applying for extra contingent expenses, some parts of which were used for "propaganda" and "intelligence service"-this latter word, when translated into usual language, means nothing more nor less than authorised tolerated espionage.

As for the social work, it was also insignificant. There were very small receptions at our Legation, and these also very infrequent.

But things became still slower when the lease of 40, Pont Street expired. Now, as Dr. Gruitch knew well that he was soon to go to Belgrade to take up the duties of Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he did not take the trouble to look for a new building into which the Legation could be moved. When moving day came, we found ourselves without a house. Then Gruitch had the ingenious idea of storing his private furniture and personal effects, and moving the archives and the furniture of the Legation into a modest hotel, "Belgravia Mansions," not far from Victoria Station. It was always a source of regret to me that Dr. Slavko Gruitch, otherwise a correct and very cautious diplomat, committed the unpardonable foolishness of removing all the secret records of the Serbian Legation into a public hotel, where strange people were in and out at all hours of the day or night. And, what is more, here the Legation had no safe, no strong box of any kind, so that even the documents of the most delicate nature were stored in old sugar-boxes, which were piled one upon the other in the rooms which were destined to be Djordjevitch's and my offices!

One day in March 1914 as Alexander Djordjevitch and I were busily engaged in deciphering a dispatch which had just arrived from Belgrade, Gruitch came in and said: "Alexander, come for a minute to my room!"

Djordjevitch went out, and I remained alone to struggle with the cipher code and the dispatch. Presently my elder colleague returned to call me to his assistance.

"Yes, I would gladly come with you, but how can we leave these confidential things on the table of a public place?" I said as I placed the code and the papers in a drawer of my desk.

"Lock the desk, and leave it to chance!" said the phlegmatic diplomat.

We went through the corridor of the Belgravia Mansions until Djordjevitch opened a door, which was not that of Dr. Gruitch's office, nor did it belong to the suite occupied by the Legation. It was a small reception room. There were a few arm-chairs and a sofa in it. When we closed the door, I saw a man sitting in a chair next to the entrance. His eyes were sharp, as those of a lynx. His face pale, but mirroring determination and audacity. His aquiline nose, and his general features betrayed a man who would not shrink from anything.

He stood up as we entered the room. Six foot three would be his approximate height. His shoulders and arms were of the type which a Massai chief would have envied.

"Shake hands with Mr. Stevens!" said Djordjevitch in English, adding a word in Serbian which meant "secret agent."

I wondered why Djordjevitch, an experienced diplomat, should call me, his younger colleague, to his assistance in discharging a job which was entrusted to him, and to him only.

"Secret agent? Whose?" I asked in Serbian.

" Nobody's yet," said the first Secretary, closing his lips tightly, as was his custom when displeased-which he nearly always was-and the tired lines in his face became deeper.

Neither was I very favourably impressed by " Mr. Stevens," although he was the bearer of a personal letter from Count Beckendorff, the then Russian Ambassador in London. Gruitch had assured us that he had an oral confirmation from the writer of the recommendation. We called this gentleman " Mr. Stevens," but his real name, he said, was Senor del Val. At Djordjevitch's request I spoke to " Stevens " in Spanish, which he claimed to know well. He certainly spoke Spanish quite fluently, but not with a Castilian accent. He spoke Spanish, indeed, with a sort of Mexican accent, and his English was that of a meagrely educated man.

After a few questions had been asked in my presence Stevens was engaged by Djordjevitch and he was passed over to me for a few lessons in Serbian, thus to fit him for a mysterious voyage to Serbia. I duly gave him lessons in Serbian, and he made good progress in this most difficult language, then one day he mysteriously disappeared.

In the meantime, Gruitch had left the Legation in London and had gone back to Belgrade where he had become Under- Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In his place reigned Matej Boskovitch. I did not see Stevens again until some time in June of 1914, by which time we had received a letter from certain quarters in Belgrade concerning him. Stevens was given a sum of money, and again disappeared. His movements remained a mystery to me.

On 28th June, 1914., Gavrilo Princip, an under-aged Serbian fanatic from Bosnia, fired two fatal shots in Sarajevo.

On that fateful Sunday my chief, Matej Boskovitch, and I had hardly finished lunch when a telegram was brought in. A rough translation of it read as follows :

THIS MORNING CERTAIN BOSNIAN FANATICS MURDERED FRANZ FERDINANDE AND HIS CONSORT IN SARAJEVO STOP GIVE NO INFORMATION UNTIL FURTHER INSTRUCTS-PACU

I was utterly horrified, but Boskovitch, strangely enough, seemed quite indifferent to the news, and in fact, smiled from ear to ear. To me it seemed as though he expected the telegram.

I afterwards learned that both Boskovitch and Gruitch were supposed to have been under the command of Dimitrijevitich-Apis who, through the agency of two members of the Black Hand called Ciganovitich and Major Voja Tankositich, had trained Princip and his confederates for their dastardly task. The judicial investigation in Sarajevo, conducted immediately after the crime, not only proved this conclusively, but also showed that they were equipped with weapons manufactured in the Serbian State Arms Factory in Kragoujevatz.

The guilt of Serbia was only too apparent-or rather, not of Serbia, but of the terrible gangsters who held her simple people in thrall. Sympathy for Austria was universal. Reports from British newspaper correspondents showed that the Press in Vienna and Budapest openly accused the Serbian Government of complicity in the outrage.

Anti-Serb riots broke out in Sarajevo, Zagreb and other places in the Dual Monarchy. The storm of hostile feeling which swept Vienna was inflamed by the most violent language of the Austro-Hungarian Press, which demanded a condign punishment of the entire Serbian people. That Austria- Hungary had a right to demand adequate satisfaction from the Belgrade Government, as also some sort of guarantee to the effect that its officials would prepare no more murders in Austria-Hungary, there was no doubt, and even Serbia's friends admitted it at the time, and earnestly counselled moderation.

In the meantime, on or about 5th July, 1914, Stevens suddenly reappeared at the Serbian Legation and asked for ,1,000 pounds. I did not understand what he meant and so I asked my new chief what to do about it. Boskovitch came into my office and told Stevens that he could not legitimately expect any more money. Stevens protested vehemently and mentioned a certain agreement. Boskovitch, disconcerted by the use of the word " agreement," argued that that agreement demanded certain things of Stevens and these had not been carried out. With this Stevens broke loose and the whole thing became clear as day. I saw instantly that Stevens had been engaged to go to Sarajevo to shoot Princip and his confederates should they fail to take the poison in their phials after having murdered Ferdinand. The idea was that Stevens, who was a crack shot with a pistol (he could split an apple at a hundred paces) should stand at a distance and fire at the assassins as though he were an outraged spectator. Princip certainly shot the Archduke, but Stevens could not shoot Princip because of the intervening crowds and the police. Thus, argued Boskovitch, Princip would " squeal " and the fat would be in the fire. The spy turned for the door. When he reached it, he turned and faced Boskovitch and me, and spat out the following words : " Si no lo paga el halaco, el pagara el Turco," which means, " If you won't pay then the Turk will."

Boskovitch seemed utterly dumbfounded by the turn of events, for Stevens evidently meant mischief. The British Press, in the meantime, had not ceased to condemn the murderers, but the climax was reached, and

Stevens' trump card was displayed when on 11th July, John Bull published an article entitled " The Murdered Archduke," which on account of its historic significance, and its profound effect upon British public opinion, is reproduced here.

JOHN BULL JULY 11th 1914

THE MURDERED ARCHDUKE

COMPLICITY OF THE SERVIAN GOVERNMENT - OUR ASTOUNDING REVELATION

When we were in the House of Commons we never lost an opportunity of protesting against the resumption by this country of diplomatic relations with Servia; and again and again we pointed intercourse with the blood-stained regicides was an empty sham.

We have always looked upon Servia as a hot-bed of cold-blooded conspiracy and subterfuge- the ringleaders being the scoundrels who compassed the assassination and destruction of the late King and Queen of the country, and placed on the throne, and nominally in power, King Peter and his half -demented son; and who, during the Balkan war were responsible for the massacre and the burning alive of women and children in Albania. And knowing something of the political relations subsisting between Austria and Bulgaria- with a very definite Servian objective- we have always been prepared for such news as that which flashed around the world the other day of the brutal assassination, in the streets of Serajevo, of the Austrian Archduke- heir to the throne- and his consort. Nor were we surprised to read that Austrian suspicion at once fell upon Servia for complicity in, if not actual responsibility for, the crime. And Austria is right.

WHAT AUSTRIA AND SERVIA KNEW

The Austrian Government was doubtless aware, as we are, that about eight months ago Servia instituted a Secret Service Bureau at their London Legation at 40, Pont Street, afterwards, at the Belgrave Mansions Hotel, and then at Queen's Gate, for the main purpose of causing every possible harm and discredit to the Austrian Empire. On the other hand, Servia was doubtless aware, as we are, that Austria was supplying money and arms to Bulgaria, shipped through the Port of Burgas, on the Black Sea, with a view to the encroachment of the Bulgarian force into Servian territory on the Eastern Frontier. At the same time it was found that many Servian agents had been captured and imprisoned by the Austrian authorities, and in February it was to be secretly made away with. This decision of Servia was privately communicated to the Austrian Embassy, and by them was sent to Colonel Albin Driegall, in Vienna, a high official in the Secret Service.

Such then was the position of affairs in the spring of the present year. And now comes a revelation which will startle Europe. It was thereupon decided by the Servian regicide gang to "eliminate"- that was the brutal phrase- the heir to the Austrian throne, and definite plans were organised with this subject in view. Assassins were hired to carry out the work- 2,000 pounds "and expenses" was the price- and although, of course, we must not, without evidence, implicate the staff of the Legation proper, we do assert that the Servian Secret Service were actively at work, at the Legation, plotting the foul deed. And we are in a position to produce evidence of a character which, as we say, will stagger civilisation.

THE PLOT EXPOSED.

Now, it happened that in the month of April the Servian Legation was being removed from Belgrave Mansions Hotel to Queen's Gate. In connection with the removal it was decided to tear up and burn a large number of documents which it was considered unwise to preserve. Amongst such documents was one of the most incriminating character, and relating, as we shall show, to the projected murder of "F.F."- Francis Ferdinand, the Archduke. Never mind how, but we have come into possession of a portion of that document- rescued from the flames before its bloody story was for ever lost. It is part of an official sheet of the Legation paper, with its embossed address and just sufficient of the date can be read to fix it as on the 5th April. It is in the private code of the Secret Service. That fact, however, presents no insuperable difficulty, for we happen to have also in our possession the cypher code of the Secret Service, and with the aid of this, and other special information, we find that the document decodes first into crude Spanish which translated into English we get:-

For the total elimination of F.F. the sum of 2,000 sterling pounds paid as follows- 1,000 sterling pounds on your arrival in Belgrade by the hands of Mr G. and the rest, 1,000 sterling pounds, on finishing the work paid as above. The sum of 200 sterling pounds for expenses and to pay agents, etc., before you leave here. Your arrangements do not-----

Need we say more? The next step is with Sir Edward Grey. Will he have the courage to deal with the matter as the facts demand? In any case, we must have no diplomatic parleying and platitudinising. Servia must be wiped out!

Our agents soon discovered that Stevens had sold the " agreement " as well as certain other compromising documents to the Austro-Hungarian Embassy in London (Petrovitch alleged that Bottomley could not give the real facts without implicating Stevens. The papers were, therefore, purposely torn and burnt.), and that all those papers had got into the hands of Horatio Bottomley, who certainly made a terrible use of them. John Bull's article caused a deep sensation in London and, indeed, all over the world, for it purported to produce evidence that the Secret Service Bureau attached to the Serbian Legation in London had been privy to the plans for the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand.

No sooner were the first copies of John Bull of 11th July distributed, than our Legation building became a veritable bee-hive of inquisitive reporters from Fleet Street. Boskovitch could not give them any explanation, for he was waiting to receive " instructions " from Pasitch. However, as I had verbal instructions from Pasitch, which he gave me in May 1914, I tried to satisfy the curiosity of those journalists, not forgetting always that I was paid by the Serbian Government to use my tongue only as a true Byzantine diplomat, that is, to conceal, not to express, my thoughts.

When Boskovitch received the eagerly awaited instructions, he went, on or about 15th July, to the British Foreign Office and, upon his return to the Legation, he told us he had sent a report to Belgrade to the effect that he had had a private interview with Sir Arthur Nicolson. In reply to Boskovitch's question as to whether it would be advisable for the Serbian Legation to bring an action in the Courts for libel against John Bull, the wise British diplomat is reported to have privately advised my chief to the effect that, although the fatal article " purported to produce evidence that the Secret Service Bureau attached to the Serbian Legation in London had been privy to the plans for the murder of the Archduke," he (Sir Arthur) thought that, if the Serbian Minister were really to institute an action against John Bull, such proceedings " might fail " because- to use again the words which Boskovitch claimed were Sir Arthur's-" the writer of the article had been very careful to write with such vagueness as to prevent the possibility of any particular person complaining that he was libelled." According to Boskovitch, it was further pointed out to him that " there was no means in this country by which the executive could suppress a newspaper."

I remember how Boskovitch raged impotently because in Great Britain journalists could not be arrested when they wrote something which displeased somebody, and subjected to the favourite Balkan punishment " bastinado." He emphatically asserted that Belgrade had incomparably better and more effective methods of silencing such public writers as Horatio Bottomley, and recalled to us the " classical " example of two unfortunate Serbian journalists, the brothers Novakovitch, who just before the Balkan War (1912) were arrested, thrown into the shameful prison " Glavnyatcha " (Glavnjaca) and shot dead in cold blood, without a trial, because they " tried to escape."

Yet John Bull had to be silenced in some way, so from the "highest place" in Belgrade an emissary was sent to London. He saw Bottomley and, according to the said emissary's report, which I read but of which I could not make a copy, he offered money to the editor of John Bull to stop writing against Prince Alexander Kara-Djordjevitch's Government. As Bottomley showed indignation at such a shameful offer, the said emissary told him that he, Bottomley, would have no chance to spend the money which " he had received from Count Mensdorff," (the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in London) " for the Black Hand was a far-reaching hand."

To this plain threat, Horatio Bottomley answered with an article entitled " To Hell with Servia (Serbia)," which staggered the whole diplomatic world.

Horatio Bottomley had undoubtedly sinned during his long and meteoric career, but he only published a part of the secret documents which the Serbian Legations' spy " Mr. Stevens " had supplied to him. Horatio Bottomley has been accused of having been finally silenced only when the " highest- place " in Belgrade doubled the sum which the Austro- Hungarian Legation was alleged to have offered to John Bull to publish the third instalment. But I, who was on the spot and saw things, do hereby declare that those accusations were groundless and infamous calumnies, for Bottomley received nothing from the said emissary or from our Legation in London. Other, entirely different reasons decided the brave English journalist to discontinue his anti-war propaganda and exposure of the regicides who brought Kara-Djordjevitch to the blood-stained throne. It was another, entirely different person, said to have been in the entourage of Horatio Bottomley, who, according to Boskovitch, after having understood the great journalist's decision to discontinue, came to him and received " four figures " of " silencing money." Boskovitch, in his "justifying " despatch to Pasitch, described that " peace- maker " as a tall, blond fellow. I never saw him, nor did anybody else in the Serbian Legation in London.

So much for Bottomley's exoneration.

On 23rd July, 1914., at six o'clock p.m., Baron Wladimir Giesl von Gresringen, the Austro-Hungarian Minister to the Court of King Peter Kara-Djordjevitch, presented personally to Dr. Pacu, Pasitch's locum tenens, the fateful time-limit note which Sir Edward Grey termed as "akin to an ultimatum." By this note, the Austro-Hungarian Government, inter alia (Point 6), demanded that judicial proceedings should be taken against the accessories to the plot of 28th June, 1914., who were on Serbian territory, and that delegates of the Austro-Hungarian Government should take part in the investigation relating thereto. A reply to the said note was demanded within forty-eight hours, i.e., at six o'clock p.m. on 25th July, 1914.

Pasitch and most of the members of his Cabinet were in the provinces on an electoral campaign. Prince Alexander, according to the report of an eye-witness, came that night to Belgrade and forthwith rushed, at a late hour of the night between 23rd and 24th July, into the bedroom of M. Strandtmann, the Russian charge d'affaires, and begged the young diplomat to get up and wire to Petrograd for help. Strandtmann, amazed at this nocturnal visit by the future King of Serbia, counselled moderation and any possible means to gain time. As for the suggested telegram, he told His Royal Highness that one had already been sent to Sasonov.

When the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs received that telegram, containing the text of the Austrian note, he termed it, according to official reports, as an ultimatum, and added : " C'est la guerre ! "

We received a telegram from Belgrade, informing the Legation that the Serbian Government, in view of the fact that the Serbian Army was utterly unprepared, and, therefore, had no earthly chance to match itself against the formidable forces of the Dual Monarchy, was ready to accept, without reserve or qualifications, the Austro-Hungarian Government's ultimatum in its entirety.

All the true friends of Serbia were glad to see that wisdom prevailed over passion. For a few hours there was a general relief felt in all the capitals of Europe, and war seemed as remote a thing as the end of the world.

But at about five or five-thirty p.m. on that fateful day (25th July, 1914,) another telegram came from Belgrade. Djordjevitch and I sat down at once to decipher it, but despite the great importance of the message, the First Secretary -who was notoriously a nonchalant fellow and had an aversion to work-suddenly remembered that he had promised to attend a social gathering. Consequently he left me alone to decode the message, while he went home to dress. Boskovitch was also away-probably at the club in Lancaster Gate where he used to go every evening about that time, and from which he would return to rest only towards the dawn.

The initial lines of ciphered groups, obviously made in great haste, were not clear, and I had a lot of trouble to find out the change of the key-group, which had not been given. As there were sixteen combinations for composing the key in order to be able to transpose the message ciphers into our code ciphers, it was quite seven p.m. before I found the meaning.

Pasitch stated that he had received an urgent telegram from the Serbian Legation at Petrograd. The text of the message was quoted and Boskovitch was instructed forthwith to verify its contents with Count Benckendorff and see whether the Russian Ambassador had received any information to the same effect. I deciphered the whole telegram and made a pencil copy of Spalajkovitch's report, for I thought it might be useful for my Diplomatic History of Serbia, which I was preparing at that time. Here is an English translation of the message which I took at the time.

TELEGRAM FROM PETROGRAD

(Spalajkovitch to Pasitch)12th-25th July, 1914..

Cabinet meeting held at Krasnoe Selo under the chairmanship of the Tsar. Sasonov imparted to me : mobilisation of Military districts of Kief, Odessa, Kazan and Moscow ordered. Other military districts ordered to make all preparations for mobilisation. This means general mobilisation. All cadets promoted to officers' ranks. Officers on leave of absence recalled. To us he recommends that our reply to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum should be in a yielding spirit, but to reject all the points (especially the 6th) which cut into the independence of Serbia, at the same time to order general mobilisation. If Austria should attack us, we are to retreat without resistance and await the further development of the situation. Sasonov will have to-day a conference with Paleologue and Buchanan with respect to joint action and our armament. Russia and France maintain the thesis that the Austro-Serbian question is not a question of a local nature, but a part of the great European question, which only all the Powers can solve. There prevails in competent circles here a great bitterness against Austria-Hungary, and the mot d'ordre is war. The entire Russian nation is enthusiastic for the war. Great ovations in front of the Royal Legation. The Tsar will personally answer the Crown Prince's telegram.

(Signed in ciphers) SPALAJKOVITCH.(Serbian Minister at St. Petersburg)

At the conclusion of the above dispatch Pasitch privately requested that I should be ready to go to Dover to meet Mme. Pasitch and her elder daughter, Miss Dara, who were soon to come to London for a prolonged visit. (The fact that Petrovitch was made responsible for the welfare of the wife and daughter of the Serbian Prime

Minister is an attested fact. The English family with whom they stayed have vouched for the accuracy of Petrovitch's intimacy with the Pasitch family.)

It was only about an hour after I had decoded the whole despatch that Boskovitch came. He studied the message very carefully; then he asked me to hand him the original ciphered groups as they came from the British Telegraph Office. These I gave him, and he verified certain places to see whether I had deciphered correctly. When he was convinced in this respect, he asked me whether anybody else had seen the dispatch. I told him that Djordjevitch had helped me to decode the initial groups but that he suddenly had to go to an important social gathering. Boskovitch enjoined me earnestly to keep an absolute silence about what I had seen. He especially warned me against Nikola Mishu, the Roumanian Minister, who might try to learn something from me ; and, should Djordjevitch ask me anything with regard to the contents of the dispatch, I was to tell him that Boskovitch had come in, taken the message away from me and deciphered it himself.

Thereupon Boskovitch drove to Chesham House to try and see Count Benekendorff, but I understood from him afterwards that the Russian Ambassador, when he returned towards midnight saw him at once and gave him to understand that the Russian Embassy had received no news similar to that which our Legation at St. Petersburg had sent to Belgrade.

His Excellency the Russian Ambassador also told Boskovitch that Sasonov had communicated to him only the subject matter of the Tsar's proposed telegraphic reply to Prince Alexander's appeal transmitted through young Strandmann after the Prince's visit to his bedroom on the night of 23rd July.

I learned later in the day that Boskovitch had been to see Sir Arthur Nicolson but had never mentioned Pastich's telegram to him.

These two incidents caused me to think deeply. Why should the Serbian Minister at St. Petersburg send in reports of Russian mobilisation and war-fervour that were not known to the Russian Ambassador in London? Why should the Serbian Minister in London be so anxious to conceal the news that the Russians in London had no such news.

There could be only one answer: the Black Hand of Serbia, working through its agents in the Serbian diplomatic service, was trying to make the representative Serbian Government feel that it could assume the support of Russia and so alter its reply to the Austrian ultimatum. No other construction could be put upon it.

Towards evening another telegram was brought in. It contained the full text of the Serbian Government's reply to the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum. While it was worded in a very conciliatory and yielding spirit, it refused quietly but categorically to comply with the demands which were affecting the sovereignty of Serbia. The message added that Baron Giesl, immediately upon the receipt of the reply, had left Belgrade together with the entire personnel of the Austro- Hungarian Legation.

This meant severance of the diplomatic relations between the two neighbouring states.

It meant more, as we all know too well!

Had that fatal message of 24th July, 1914, not been sent by the Serbian Legation in Petrograd to Pasitch, the originally made reply of the Serbian Government, accepting all the demands of the Austro-Hungarian time-limit note, would have been handed to Baron Giesl who, in compliance with his instructions from Vienna, would have stayed in Belgrade, and THE WAR WOULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED at that time. Perhaps it would have been spared to mankind altogether

The Constitution of the Ujedinjenje ili Smrt - Unification or Death

I. Purpose and Name

Article 1. For the purpose of realising the national ideals - the Unification of Serbdom - an organization is hereby created, whose members may be any Serbian irrespective of sex, religion, place or birth, as well as anybody else who will sincerely serve this idea.

Article 2. The organisation gives priority to the revolutionary struggle rather than relies on cultural striving, therefore its institution is an absolutely secret one for wider circles.

Article 3. The organization bears the name: "Ujedinjenje ili Smrt".

Article 4. In order to carry into effect its task the organization will do the following things:
(1) Following the character of its raison d'etre it will exercise its influence over all the official factors in Serbia - which is the Piemont of Serbdom - as also over all the strata of the State and over the entire social life in it:
(2) It will carry out a revolutionary organisation in all the territories where Serbians are living:
(3) Beyond the frontiers, it will fight with all means against all enemies of this idea:
(4) It will maintain friendly relations with all the States, nations, organisations, and individual persons who sympathise with Serbia and the Serbian race:

(5) It will give every assistance to those nations and organisations who are fighting for their own national liberation and unification.

II. Official Departments of the Organisation

Article 5. The supreme authority is vested in the Supreme Central Directorate with its headquarters at Belgrade. Its duty will be to see that the resolutions are carried into effect.

Article 6. The number of members of the Supreme Central Directorate is unlimited - but in principle it should be kept as low as possible.

Article 7. The Supreme Central Directorate shall include, in addition to the members from the Kingdom of Serbia, one accredited delegate from each of the organisations of all the Serbian regions: (1) Bosnia and Herzegovina, (2) Montenegro, (3) Old Serbia and Macedonia, (4) Croatia, Slovenia and Symria (Srem), (5) Vojvodina, (6) Sea-coasts.

Article 8. It will be the task of the Supreme Central Directorate to carry out the principles of the organisation within the territory of the Kingdom of Serbia.

Article 9. The duty of each individual Provincial Directorate will be to carry out the principles of the organisation within the respective territories of each Serbian region outside the frontiers of the Kingdom of Serbia. The Provincial Directorate will be the supreme authority of the organisation within its own territory.

Article 10. The subdivisions of the organisation into District Directorates and other units of authority shall be established by the By-Laws of the organisation which shall be laid down, and if need be, from time to time amended and amplified by the Supreme Central Directorate.

Article 11. Each Directorate shall elect, from amongst its own members, its President, Secretary and Treasures.

Article 12. By virtue of the nature of his work, the Secretary may act as a Deputy President. In order that he may devote himself entirely to the work of the organisation, the Secretary's salary and expenses shall be provided by the Supreme Central Directorate.

Article 13. The positions of President and Treasures shall be un-salaried.

Article 14. All official business questions of the organisation shall be decided in the sessions of the Supreme Central Directorate by a majority of votes.

Article 15. For the execution of such decisions of the organisation, the absolute executive power shall be vested in the President and the Secretary.

Article 16. In exceptional and less important cases the President and the Secretary shall make the decisions and secure their execution, but they shall report accordingly at the next following session of the Supreme Central Directorate.

Article 17. For the purpose of ensuring a more efficient discharge of business, the Supreme Central Directorate shall be divided into sections, according to the nature of the work.

Article 18. The Supreme Central Directorate shall maintain its relations with the Provincial Directorates through the accredited delegates of the said provincial organisations, it being understood that such delegates shall be at the same time members of the Supreme Central Directorate; in exceptional cases, however, these relations shall be maintained through special delegates.

Article 19. Provincial Directorates shall have freedom of action. Only in cases of the execution of broader revolutionary movements will they depend upon the approval of the Supreme Central Directorate.

Article 20. The Supreme Central Directorate shall regulate all the signs and watchwords, necessary for the maintenance of secrecy in the organisation.

Article 21. It shall be the Supreme Central Directorate's duty punctually and officially to keep all the members of the organisation well posted about all the more important questions relative to the organisation.

Article 22. The Supreme Central Directorate shall from time to time control and inspect the work of its own departments. Analogically, the other Directorates shall do likewise with their own departments.

III. The Members of the Organisation

Article 23. The following rule, as a principle, shall govern all the detailed transactions of the organisation: All communications and conversations to be conducted only through specially appointed and authorised persons.

Article 24. It shall be the duty of every member to recruit new members, but it shall be understood that every introducing member shall vouch with his own life for all those whom he introduces into the organisation.

Article 25. The members of the organisation as amongst themselves shall not be known to one another. Only the members of Directorates shall be known personally to one another.

Article 26. In the organisation the members shall be registered and known by their respective numbers. But the Supreme Central Directorate must know them also by their respective names.

Article 27. The members of the organisation must unconditionally obey all the commands given by their respective Directorates, as also all the Directorates must obey unconditionally the commands which they receive direct from their superior Directorate.

Article 28. Every member shall be obliged to impart officially to the organisation whatever comes to his knowledge, either in his private life or in the discharge of his official duties, in as far as it may be of interest to the organisation.

Article 29. The interest of the organisation shall stand above all other interests.

Article 30. On entering into the organisation, every member must know that by joining the organisation he loses his own personality; he must not expect any glory for himself, nor any personal benefit, material or moral. Consequently the member who should dare to try to exploit the organisation for his personal, or class, or party interests shall be punished by death.

Article 31. Whosoever has once entered into the organisation can never by any means leave it, nor shall anybody have the authority to accept the resignation of a member.

Article 32. Every member shall support the organisation by his weekly contributions. The organisations, however, shall have the authority to procure money, if need be, by coercion. The permission to resort to these means may be given only by Supreme Central Directorate within the country, or by the regional Directorates within their respective region.

Article 33. In administering capital punishment the sole responsibility of the Supreme Central Directorate shall be to see that such punishment is safely and unfailingly carried into effect without any regard for the ways and means to be employed in the execution.

IV. The Seal and the Oath of Allegiance

Article 34. The Organisation's official seal is thus composed: In the centre of the seal there is a powerful arm holding in its hand an unfurled flag on which - as a coat of arms - there is a skull with crossed bones; by the side of the flag, a knife, a bomb and a phial of poison. Around, in a circle, there is the following inscription, reading from left to right: "Unification or Death", and in the base: "The Supreme Central Directorate".

Article 35. On entering into the organisation the joining member must pronounce the following oath of allegiance:

"I (the Christian name and surname of the joining member), by entering into the organisation "Unification or Death", do hereby swear by the Sun which shineth upon me, by the Earth which feedeth me, by God, by the blood of my forefathers, by my honour and by my life, that from this moment onward and until my death, I shall faithfully serve the task of this organisation and that I shall at all times be prepared to bear for it any sacrifice. I further swear by God, by my honour and by my life, that I shall unconditionally carry into effect all its orders and commands. I further swear by my God, by my honour and by my life, that I shall keep within myself all the secrets of this organisation and carry them with me into my grave. May God and my comrades in this organisation be my judges if at any time I should wittingly fail or break this oath!"

V. Supplementary Orders

Article 36. The present Constitution shall come into force immediately.

Article 37. The present Constitution must not be altered.

Done at Belgrade this 9th day of May, 1911 A.D.

Signed:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|---------|----|----------------|
| Major | | Ilija | | Radivojevitch |
| Vice-Consul | | Bogdan | | Radenkovitch |
| Colonel | Cedimilj | | A. | Popovitch |
| Lt.-Col. | | Velimir | | Vemitch |
| Journalist | Ljubomir | | S. | Jovanovitch |
| Col. | Dragutin | | T. | Dimitrijevitch |
| Major | Vojin | | P. | Tanksoitch |
| Major | | Milan | | Vasitch |
| Col. Milovan Gr. Milovanovitch | | | | |

Article translated from the Croatian weekly "Globus"

ALREADY IN THE THIRTIES, THE FRENCH DIPLOMAT POZZI WARNED THAT IT WAS A SERIOUS CRIME TO FORCE CIVILIZED CROATIA TO SUBMIT TO SERBIA, WHICH STILL HAD A LOT TO LEARN

By Archduke Dr. Otto von Habsburg Globus, 16 June, 1995 Page 6

In recent times, for every newest event, we get the same excuse: "This could not be foreseen!" We could say that this has become the stereotype reply of our European governments.

In practice we already encountered this during the recent reunification of Germany. If we remember the advice Chancellor Kohl received from Margaret Thatcher, Francois Mitterand, Felipe Gonzales or Giulio Andreotti, we will realise that the Berlin Wall would exist to this day, and Germany would still be divided by barbed wire, if the Chancellor had listened to western European advice.

It is probable that only a few people remember that even in German interior politics there were many statements from that time which were unbelievably absurd. Rarely before had any event such as the implosion of the Soviet Union caught people so unawares.

It is quite correct to say that the essence of politics is above all to foresee events.

Benes as a political trickster

In our time, however, there are very few people with such clear vision. If we take for instance the peace agreements written at the end of the First and Second World Wars, we will see monstrous, even inhuman mistakes. Let us look for instance at the maps drawn in Versailles, Saint Germain and Trianon, not to mention the agreements of Neuilly and Sevres. Artificial countries were established, creating at the same time more minorities than existed previously, although it was claimed that the agreements were in the interests of national groups.

Characteristic of the illustration of this procedure are the borders imposed on Hungary, which created today's still unsolved problems. This is all the more absurd when we see that the majority of the Hungarian minorities live on the border with their mother country. If only there had been a little more common sense and if only - for reasons of geographic ignorance - they had not been deceived by forged maps provided by such political tricksters as Eduard Benes, events would have evolved differently. However, something similar has happened in our time as well, when German borders were determined. If people only knew how they were really being governed they would be very surprised.

It is necessary to point out, however, that there have always been those who at critical times have been able to foresee future events but their advice was rarely listened to. Most suffered the fate of prophets and were then forgotten.

Today's conflict in the former Yugoslavia shows how damaging it was that the right to self-determination was not carried out consistently for all peoples.

In this way, for instance, immediately after the First World War in 1921, the great French journalist Jacques Bainville published a book entitled "Les consequences politiques de la paix" ("Political Consequences of Peace").

If we look at this work today, we will determine that the great thinker foresaw all later events up to the break out of the Second World War.

If Bainville, therefore, was able to foresee what was coming, it was, surely, the duty of responsible politicians to perceive the consequences of their actions.

The War Returns

In regards, particularly, to the situation in the former Yugoslavia, it is significant that a French diplomat, who worked subsequently as a journalist, clearly perceived the unhappy path of mankind in that part of the world. This was Henri Pozzi, born 1879 in Begerac, died 1946.

Pozzi received the task of preparing the peace agreement in Trianon. As a young man he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Serbs and did everything in his power to satisfy the wishes of Belgrade. He subsequently travelled to this area and because of the political respect he had, he was able to discern what he had done was wrong.

For this reason, during the thirties he published a book "La Guerre revient" (published in English under the title "Black Hand over Europe"), in which he, on the basis of his knowledge of the situation in the territories of Macedonia, Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia, foresaw what would happen.

The book remained practically unnoticed, and today it can hardly be obtained anywhere.

If we read the book, in particular the descriptions of his experiences as a journalist from Ljubljana to Skopje, we will literally have the impression that we are reading a report in which events occurring today in Bosnia and Croatia are being described.

This Frenchman tried to warn his people of the accumulation of injustices in these regions, as well as of the serious consequences.

No one listened to him, and even today no one wishes to accept the lessons of the past.

Above all, no one wanted to understand that it was a real crime to force a highly civilized Croatian nation to submit to a nation which still had a lot to learn. Many parts of the book are read as if they were written today:

the description of the attitude of the Serbs in Croatia and Macedonia or the interview which Pozzi held with Ante Trumbic in Zagreb.

It would be good if some of our leading politicians were prepared to read Pozzi's book. It is doubtful however, if they have the time or the inclination. In this way, error after error is accumulated, instead of carrying out a policy which would, at the very least, curb evil.