

The World's Greatest War

The readers of The Commoner will be interested to know how the European war began. As a matter of historical interest, and to enable its readers to form a better conception of the causes and reasons animating the declarations given by the respective countries preceding their entry into the present European war, The Commoner reproduces, as far as possible, the official notes, documents, declarations and statements as given from day to day in the press dispatches.

On the 23rd of July the Servian government received at Belgrade, Servia, a note from the Austro-Hungarian government bearing on the relations between the two countries and dealing directly with the assassination at Sarayev on June 28 of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife.

A Berlin cablegram, dated July 23, states: "A note from Austria, couched in the peremptory terms of an ultimatum and demanding a reply by 6 o'clock Saturday evening (July 25) was delivered to the Servian government at Belgrade this evening at 6 o'clock."

Concerning the contents of the Austrian note to Servia a cablegram from Belgrade, Servia, dated July 23, says:

"The note reviews the relations with Servia since 1909 and complains that, although the Servian government promised loyalty to the Austro-Hungarian government, it has failed to suppress subversive movements and agitations by the newspapers, and that this tolerance has incited the Servian people to hatred of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and contempt for its institutions. This, says the note, culminated in the Sarayev assassinations, which are proved by depositions and confessions of the perpetrators to have been hatched at Belgrade, the arms and explosives being supplied by the connivance of Servian officers and functionaries.

"The Austro-Hungarian government, continues the note, 'is unable longer to pursue an attitude of forbearance, and sees the duty imposed upon it to put an end to the intrigues which form a perpetual menace to the monarchy's tranquility. It therefore demands from the Servian government formal assurances that it condemns the dangerous propaganda whose aim is to detach from the monarchy a portion of its territory, and also that the Servian government shall no longer permit these machinations and this criminal, perverse propaganda.'

"The note then gives the terms of a long formal declaration which the Servian government is required to publish in its official journal on the front page, condemning the subversive propaganda, deplored the fatal consequences of this, regretting the participation of Servian officers in this propaganda, repudiating any further interferences with Austro-Hungarian interests, and warning all Servian officers and functionaries and the whole Servian population that rigorous proceedings will be taken in the future against persons guilty of such machinations. This declaration must also be officially proclaimed to the Servian army, and the Servian courts must undertake to suppress subversive publications and dissolve immediately the pan-Servian society styled 'Narodna Odbrana,' confiscating all its means of carrying on a

propaganda, and suppress all similar societies having anti-Austrian tendencies.

"Servia is further enjoined to eliminate from the educational system such tendencies, to remove all officers and functionaries guilty of an anti-Austrian propaganda, whose names and deeds the Austrian government reserves to itself the right of communicating to the Servian government; to accept the assistance of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian government in this work of suppression; to prosecute the accessories to the Sarayev plot; to arrest Maj. Tankavitch and a Servian state employe, Ciganovitch, who are compromised by the Sarayev magisterial inquiry; to stop the illicit traffic in arms and explosives across the frontier; to dismiss and punish the Servian officials in the frontier service guilty of assisting the assassins across the frontier; to furnish the Austrian government with explanations of anti-Servian utterances credited to high Servian officials since the Sarayev crime, and, finally, to notify the Austrian government promptly of the execution of all the foregoing demands. Appended to the note is a long memorandum detailing all the facts of Servian complicity by the magisterial inquiry at Sarayev."

SUMMARY OF SERVIA'S REPLY

Following is a London cablegram dated July 26:

"An official summary of Servia's reply to the Austrian ultimatum shows that Servia expresses willingness to submit to all the demands of Austria except one. Even to that demand, which apparently was that Austrian officers should play a large part in the inquiry into the Sarayev plot, Servia does not give a formal refusal, but asks explanations.

"The official summary of the reply to the ultimatum is as follows:

"First. Servia agrees to the publication in its official journal, on the front page of the formal declaration submitted by the Austrian government, condemning the subversive propaganda and deplored its fatal consequences, regretting the participation of Servian officers in this propaganda, repudiating any further interference with Austro-Hungarian interests and warning all Servians that rigorous proceedings will be taken in the future against any persons guilty of such machinations.

"Second. Servia agrees to communicate this declaration to the army in the form of an order of the day.

"Third—It promises to dissolve those societies which may be considered capable of conducting intrigues against Austria.

"Fourth. Revision of the laws governing the press.

"Fifth—Dismissal from the army and navy of officers and the removal also of civilian officials whose participation in an anti-Austrian propaganda may be proved. The Servian government, however, protests against Austrian officials taking any part in the inquiry.

"Sixth—The Servian Government asks for an explanation as to just what part the Austrian officials are to be called upon to take in the inquiry into the Sarayev plot, and it is announced that Servia can only admit such participation as would be in accordance with international law and good neighborly relations.

"Seventh—To sum up, Servia accepts all the conditions and all the demands of Austria, and makes reservations only regarding the participation of Austrian officials in the inquiry. It does not give its formal refusal to this point, but confines itself to asking explanations.

"Finally, if the Austrian govern-

ment finds this reply inadequate, Servia appeals to The Hague Tribunal and to the powers which signed the declaration of 1909 relative to Bosnia and Herzegovina."

The note expresses the hope that the response will dispel all misunderstandings that threaten neighborly relations, and says that Servia has given proofs of her pacific and moderate policy throughout the Balkan crisis.

"The Servian government," the note continues, "cannot be held responsible for manifestations of a private character, such as are common in all lands and escape official control. The Servian government has been painfully surprised by the statements connecting persons in the kingdom with the Sarayev outrage.

"It expected to be invited to cooperate in the investigation of the crime and was ready to prove by deeds the earnestness of its action against all persons concerning whom communications should be made, without regard to situation or rank.

"The government of Servia condemns all propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary, namely, all aspirations to detach from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, territories which form a part thereof, and sincerely deplores the lamentable consequences of such criminal actions.

"It regrets that certain Servian officers and officials, according to the Austrian communication, have participated in these, thereby compromising neighborly relations. The government disapproves of and repudiates any attempt to interfere with the destinies of the inhabitants of any part of Austria-Hungary."

SERVIA'S REPLY UNSATISFACTORY

Servia's reply to Austria on the 25th, after the Austrian government had refused an extension of time, was considered unsatisfactory. A Vienna cablegram, dated July 25, says:

"Diplomatic relations between Austria-Hungary and the Servian government were broken off at 6 p.m. The Servian government waited until the last moment before replying to the ultimatum that had been delivered by Austria. Only ten minutes before 6 o'clock when the time limit set by Austria expired, the Servian premier appeared at the legation and presented his government's reply to the Austrian minister. No details of the document were then made public, but the terse statement was made that it was unsatisfactory."

AUSTRIA DECLARES WAR

On July 26 the Austrian foreign office sent the Servian minister, M. Jovanavitch, his passports, and war was declared against Servia on July 28 by a manifesto which was one of the briefest of momentous documents in history. The text is as follows:

"The royal government of Servia not having replied in a satisfactory manner to the note remitted to it by the Austro-Hungarian minister in Belgrade on July 23, 1914, the imperial and royal government finds itself compelled to proceed itself to safeguard its rights and interests and to have recourse for this purpose to force of arms. Austria-Hungary considers itself, therefore, from this moment in a state of war with Servia. Count Berchthold, minister of foreign affairs of Austria-Hungary."

STATEMENT OF AUSTRIAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Concerning Servia's reply a Vienna, Austria, cablegram, dated July 27, says:

A communication issued by the Austro-Hungarian foreign office today sets forth the Austrian view of

the Servian reply to Austria's ultimatum demanding the cessation of the Pan-Servian agitation and the punishment of those concerned in the assassination at Sarayev of Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his consort. The communication also gives the reasons for Austria's dissatisfaction with Servia's reply. It follows:

"The object of the Servian note is to create the false impression that the Servian government is prepared in great measure to comply with our demands.

"As a matter of fact, however, Servia's note is filled with the spirit of dishonesty, which clearly lets it be seen that the Servian government is not seriously determined to put an end to the culpable tolerance it hitherto has extended to intrigues against the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

"The Servian note contains such far-reaching reservations and limitations, not only regarding the general principles of our action but also in regard to the individual claims we have put forth, that the concessions actually made by Servia become insignificant.

"In particular our demand for the participation of the Austro-Hungarian authorities in investigations to detect accomplices in the conspiracy on Servian territory has been rejected, while our requests that measures be taken against that section of the Servian press hostile to Austria-Hungary has been declined and our wish that the Servian government take the necessary measures to prevent the dissolved Austrophobe associations continuing their activity under another name and under another form, has not even been considered.

"Since the claims in the Austro-Hungarian note of July 23, regard being had to the attitude hitherto adopted by Servia, represent the minimum of what is necessary for the establishment of permanent peace with the southeastern monarchy, the Servian answer must be regarded as unsatisfactory.

"That the Servian government itself is conscious that its note is not acceptable to us is proved by the circumstances that it proposes at the end of the note to submit the dispute to arbitration—an invitation which is thrown into its proper light by the fact that three hours before handing in the note, a few minutes before the expiration of the time limit, the mobilization of the Servians took place."

EMPEROR ISSUES MANIFESTO

A cablegram states that a manifesto issued at Vienna by the emperor after stating that it had been his fervent wish to dedicate his declining years to preserving the empire from the burdens and sacrifices of war, says: "Providence has decreed otherwise. The intrigues of a malevolent opponent compel me in defense of the honor of my monarchy and for the protection of its dignity and the security of its possessions to grasp the sword after long years of peace."

The manifesto refers to the ingratitude of Servia for the support the emperor's ancestors afforded to Servian independence; how Servia for years has pursued a path of open hostility to Austria-Hungary; how Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which injured no Servian rights, called forth in Servia outbreaks of the bitterest hatred. "My government," continues the emperor, "then employed the handsome privileges of the stronger, and with extreme consideration and leniency only requested Servia to reduce her army to a peace footing, and promise to tread the paths of peace and friendship."

Then recalling that was Austrian forbearance two years ago that enabled Servia to reap the fruits of the struggle against Turkey, the emperor