

**AUSTRIA-
HUNGARY
AND THE WAR**

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Austria-Hungary and the war by Ernest Ludwig

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ERNEST LUDWIG

**AUSTRIA-
HUNGARY
AND THE WAR**

Austria-Hungary and the War

BY

ERNEST LUDWIG

I. and R. Consul for Austria-Hungary

IN

CLEVELAND, OHIO

WITH A PREFACE BY

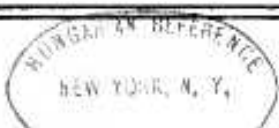
DR. KONSTANTIN THEODOR DUMBA

Ambassador of Austria-Hungary

NEW YORK

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INTRODUCTION

I recommend to the kind attention of the American public this book, written by the Austro-Hungarian consul in Cleveland, on certain vital phases of the struggle which is convulsing Europe. The reader will find in these chapters a comprehensive presentation of the political forces and historical developments which led to the initial clash of arms. This volume contains authentic information about the Near East, a region so little known in the United States; it offers a graphic description of conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the two Austrian provinces coveted by Servia, and throws an illuminating light upon the real, the underlying, causes of the world-conflict. These causes I may be permitted to summarize in concise form.

It should be borne clearly in mind at the outset that for more than a century Austria-Hungary and Russia have been keen rivals in the Balkan Peninsula. Owing to its geographical position the Dual Monarchy is the predominant economic factor in Southeastern Europe, and in the course of her commercial expansion has sought, quite naturally, to secure a market for the output of her industries in Servia, Bulgaria and European Turkey. On the other hand Russia, swayed by sentimental and territorial considerations, has sought to exercise exclusive control over the newly constituted Slav

countries of the Balkans. This claim to political mastery the Russian government has based upon the racial affinity of all Slavic nations, upon the bond of kinship offered by the Greek church, common to all the Balkan states, and upon the fact that these states owe their existence to the many wars waged by the great Northern power upon the Turkish empire.

Back of the activities of Russian diplomacy in the Balkan Peninsula is her legitimate desire to secure the opening of the straits of Constantinople, closed to her by treaties, and thus to obtain a free outlet from the Black Sea for her commerce and her crops, and the unhampered passage of her fleet to the Mediterranean. In the pursuit of these objects the statecraft of St. Petersburg has sought to control the Balkan states and to prevent any of them, especially a vigorous and progressive Bulgaria, from occupying Constantinople, the key to the Dardanelles. In her endeavors to establish and maintain such a hegemony in Balkan affairs, Russia inevitably has menaced the vital commercial interests of Austria-Hungary.

The antagonism between Russia and Austria-Hungary found expression in perpetual diplomatic strife, aggravated by the underground activities of Russian consuls, reinforced by unofficial agents and priests. Austria-Hungary, in support of her interests in the disputed region, could employ no such extraneous forces as were placed within the grasp of Russia by the accident of her kinship to

the Balkan states, but relied upon her commercial travellers and upon the importance of the economic interests common to the Dual Monarchy and the small states south of the Danube.

After the congress of Berlin in 1878, which was called to adjust the boundaries of Southeastern Europe following the Russo-Turkish war, the newly created kingdom of Servia maintained, through King Milan, close relations with Austria-Hungary. Inasmuch as the Dual Monarchy had received from Europe a mandate for the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the restoration of order in those two Turkish provinces, King Milan, and subsequently his son, King Alexander, relinquished every pretension to expansion westward into Bosnia and Herzegovina, and concentrated their efforts upon an educational campaign in Macedonia, especially in the districts inhabited by a Bulgarian population.

This régime of harmony was interrupted violently in 1903, by the assassination of King Alexander and the election of King Peter Karageorgevitch, the scion of a banished house, to the Servian throne. No sooner had the Karageorgevitch been restored than it became apparent to all the world that a new order had been established in Servia. An aggressive pro-Russian reigned at Belgrade. The beginning of the new rule was also the beginning of that rapid process of subordination to Russian dictation whereby Servia became a mere outpost of Russia, chosen to provoke and harass the neighboring