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Atentat U Sarajevu

(Assassination in Sarajevo)
(YUGOSLAV-CZECH-COLOR)

Pula, Aug. 10.

Yugoslavia Film release of Jadran Film-Kinema Sarajevo-Barrandov Studios production. Stars Christopher Plummer, Florinda Bolkan, Maximilian Schell. Directed by Veljko Bulajic. Screenplay, Stevan Bulajic, Vladimir Bor, Paul Jarrico; camera (Eastmancolor), Jan Curk; art director, Vlado Bankovic, Bohumil Pokorny; music, Ljubos Fiser. Reviewed at Pula Film Fest, Aug. 2, '76. Running time, 136 MINS.

Ferdinand Christopher Plummer
Sophie Florinda Bolkan
Shastar Maximilian Schell
Gavrilo Irfan Mensur
Cabriniovic Rados Bajic

Reportedly the seventh pic version of that assassination in Sarajevo of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's Grand Duke Ferdinand and his wife, which was the immediate cause of the First World War. It does not add much new, and is a well-made but meandering tale, cross-cutting the lives of the doomed couple and their assassins, a terroristic political group. Young Bosnia, made up of students and workers in this Austrian-controlled duchy.

Christopher Plummer and Florinda Bolkan, latter a noted Italo name, are the cardboard royal couple who are in love, with the husband scheming for an invasion of independent Serbia, also part of what is now Yugoslavia, when he replaces the aging Emperor Franz Josef.

They seem to sense their peril and pic even has a sort of collusion when each eyes one of their future assassins during an early trip around Sarajevo before the official one. Maximilian Schell is properly dour and dedicated as the terrorist chief who tries to stop it when he learns it may precipitate a war and time might work in their favor against the Austro-Hungarian plans in collusion with the German Kaiser.

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Pic fills in with the students coming into Bosnia from Serbia and having some narrow escapes. But Schell is picked up by chance by the police and tortured to death. The students decide to go ahead and succeed at the loss of their own lives.

Film is directed with a standard academic knowhow but does not imbue this with more than a pedestrian look at a historical happening. Even parallels with current terrorism and politico assassination cannot dispel a rote feeling in this flaccid retelling of history.

The Emperor Franz Josef is first seen nude and dressing from a frail, sickly man to Emperor. But this early symbolical note is submerged by the ensuing buildup to the assassination that is predictable and finally a one-note affair sans a more probing feel for character, time and place except in a carefully-controlled surface rendition.

On its historical trappings and visually acceptable production standards it could stand a good playoff chance abroad. But fast urban slottings are the main possibilities. There is reportedly an English track version and it also has some fair names values to help. Oliver Unger is handling English-speaking countries.

Film will reportedly rep Yugoslavia at the San Sebastian Film Fest in Spain in September.

—Mosk.