

ARTICLE ON THE ASSASSINATION OF THE ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND & THE START OF THE WAR

1. Read the article.
 - a. Circle any words or phrases that don't make sense
 - b. Ask your seat partner about them.
2. Read the article again.
 - a. Highlight the most important idea in each paragraph
 - b. Compare what you highlighted with what your seat partner highlighted.
3. Glue the article into your notebook on the correct page.
4. In the space of the large margin leftover on the notebook page, create a timeline of the most important events of the article.

SARAJEVO, JUNE 28, 1914: THE ASSASSINATION OF ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND

by Michael Shackelford

Events Leading Up to Murder

Bosnia and Herzegovina were provinces just south of Austria which had, until 1878, been governed by the Turks. The Treaty of Berlin (1878) settled the disposition of lands lost by the Turks following their disastrous war with Russia. Austria was granted the power to administer the two provinces indefinitely. Bosnia was populated primarily by three groups – Croats (Roman Catholic), ethnic Serbs (Serb-Orthodox) and Muslims (left from the days of Turkish rule). There is no ethnic group [of] Bosnians. Many Bosnian-Serbs felt a strong nationalistic desire to have their province joined with that of their Serb brothers across the river in Serbia. Many in Serbia openly shared that desire.

The Annexation

On October 6, 1908, Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina directly into the Austro-Hungarian empire. The reasons were complex. Annexation would remove any hopes Turkey might have for reclaiming the provinces. Full inclusion into the empire would give Bosnians full rights and privileges. It may have been an act of will by the Austrians, just to show that they were still an active, sovereign power. For whatever reason, the annexation caused quite a stir in Europe. The move was not exactly legal. Russia, particularly, was upset, even though the Russians had earlier given their consent to the annexation. (Austria was supposed to help Russia in the Dardanelles first) After Austria paid Turkey a cash settlement, most of Europe calmed down. The Serbs, however, did not. They coveted the provinces for their own Serb empire.

The Black Hand

A secret society called Ujedinjenje ili Smrt, ('Union or Death') was founded in Belgrade, an outgrowth of an older Serb nationalist group: Narodna Odbrana . The Black Hand took over the older group's work of anti-Austrian propaganda within Serbia, sabotage, espionage and political murders abroad – especially in provinces Serbia wished to annex. The group included many government officials, professionals and army officers. When it was learned that the Heir-Apparent to the Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand, was scheduled to visit Sarajevo in June of 1914, the Black Hand decided to assassinate him. Three young Bosnians were recruited, trained and equipped: Gavrilo Princip, Nedjelko Cabrinovic and Trifko Grabez.

The Serbian Government

Because of its many government and army members, the Black Hand's activities were fairly well known to the Serbian government. When Prime Minister Pasic learned of the assassination plot, he had a difficult problem on his hands. If he did nothing, and the plot succeeded the Black Hand's involvement would surely come to light. The tangled connections between the Black Hand and the Serbian government would put Serbia in a very bad position. It could even bring on war with Austria. Should he warn the Austrians of the plot, he would be seen as a traitor by his countrymen. He would also be admitting to deeper knowledge of anti-Austrian actions in Serbia. A weak attempt was made to intercept the assassins at the border. When that failed, Pasic decided that he would try to warn the Austrians in carefully vague diplomatic ways that would not expose the Black Hand.

The Warning

The Serbian Minister to Vienna, Jovan Jovanovic, was given the task of warning the Austrians. Because of his extremist, pan-Serb views, Jovanovich was not well received in Austrian Foreign Ministry offices. He did, however, get along better with the Minister of Finance, Dr. Leon von Bilinski. On June 5, Jovanovic told Bilinski, that it might be good and reasonable if Franz Ferdinand were to not go to Sarajevo. "Some young Serb might put a live rather than a blank cartridge in his gun and fire it." Bilinski, unaccustomed to subtle diplomatic innuendo, completely missed the warning. "Let us hope nothing does happen" he responded good humouredly. Jovanovic strongly suspected that Bilinski did not understand, but made no further effort to convey the warning.

Preparations

The three Black Hand trainees secretly made their way back to Sarajevo roughly a month before Franz Ferdinand. A fourth man, Danilo Ilic, had joined the group and on his own initiative, recruited three others. Vaso Cubrilovic and Cvijetko Popovic were 17-year-old high school students. Muhamed Mehmedbasic, a Bosnian Muslim, was added to give the group a less pan-Serb appearance. Four Serbian army pistols and six bombs were supplied from Serbian army arsenals.

The Visit

photo of F.F & Sophie at City Hall Franz Ferdinand accepted the invitation of Bosnia's governor, General Oskar Potoirek, to inspect the army maneuvers being held outside Sarajevo. The Archduke's role as Inspector General of the Army made the visit logical. It had also been four years since a prominent Hapsburg had made a goodwill visit to Bosnia.

The visit would also roughly coincide with his 14th wedding anniversary. While his wife Sophie, not being of royal blood, was not permitted to ride in the same car as her royal husband back in Vienna, such taboos did not apply to provincial cities like Sarajevo. During the visit, Sophie would be able to ride beside her husband -- a thoughtful anniversary gift. Security during the visit was not tight. Franz Ferdinand was a brave man and disliked the presence of secret service men. Nor did he like the idea of a cordon soldiers between the crowd and himself. For the most part, Franz Ferdinand was welcomed warmly by the Bosnians. Sarajevo was not seen as hostile territory. Arrangements were not based on the assumption that the streets were lined with assassins. As it was, only Sarajevo's hundred and twenty policemen were at work.

June 28, 1914

At around 10:00 a.m., the archducal party left Philipovic army camp, where Franz Ferdinand had performed a brief review of the troops. The motorcade, consisting of six automobiles was headed for City Hall for a reception hosted by Sarajevo's mayor. The chosen route was the wide avenue called Appel Quay, which followed the north bank of the River Miljacka. In the first automobile rode the Mayor, Fehim Effendi Curcic, and the city's Commissioner of Police, Dr. Gerde. In the second automobile, its top folded down and flying the Hapsburg pennant, rode Franz Ferdinand, Sophie and General Potoirek. The driver and the car's owner, Count Harrach, rode in front. The third automobile in the procession carried the head Franz Ferdinand's military chancellery; Sophie's lady in waiting; Potoirek's chief adjutant, Lieutenant Colonel Merizzi; the car's owner and his driver. The fourth and fifth automobiles carried other members of Franz Ferdinand's staff and assorted Bosnian officials. The sixth automobile was empty -- a spare should one of the others fail. The morning was sunny and warm. Many of the houses and buildings lining the route were decorated with flags and flowers. Crowds lined the Appel Quay to cheer the imperial couple. Amid the festive crowd mingled seven young assassins. They took up their assigned positions, all but one along the riverside of the Appel Quay. First in line was Mehmedbasic, to the west of the Cumurja Bridge. Near him was Cabrinovic. The others were strung out as far back as the Kaiser Bridge.

The Bomb

The motorcade approached and the crowds began to cheer. As Franz Ferdinand's car passed Mehmedbasic, he did nothing. The next man in line, Cabrinovic, had more resolve. He took the bomb from his coat pocket, struck the bomb's percussion cap against a lamppost, took aim and threw the bomb directly at Franz Ferdinand. In the short time it took the bomb to sail through the air, many small events took place. The car's owner, Count Harrach, hearing the bomb being struck against the lamppost, thought they had suffered a flat tire. "Bravo. Now we'll have to stop." The driver, who must have seen the black object flying, did just the opposite -- he stepped on the accelerator. As a result, the bomb would not land where intended. Franz Ferdinand, also catching a glimpse of the hurtling package, raised his arm to deflect it away from Sophie. She sat to his right, and so was between Franz Ferdinand and Cabrinovic. The bomb glanced off Franz Ferdinand's arm, bounced off the folded car top and into the street behind them. The explosion injured about a dozen spectators. The third car was hit with fragments and stalled. Merizzi received a bad cut to the back of the head. Others in the party received minor cuts. The first and second cars continued on for a few moments then stopped while everyone assessed who was injured and who was not.

After the Bomb

Cabrinovic swallowed his cyanide and jumped into the river. The trouble was, the poison was old -- it only made him vomit -- and the river was only a few inches deep. He was quickly seized by the crowd and arrested. The motorcade continued on to City Hall, passing the other assassins. Either because they thought Cabrinovic had succeeded or from lack of resolve, they failed to act. At City Hall, a furious Franz Ferdinand confronted the Mayor. "Mr. Mayor, one comes here for a visit and is received by bombs! It is outrageous!" After a pause to calm himself, he regained his composure and let the Mayor speak. The Mayor, either completely unaware of what had happened, or personally ill equipped for crises, launched into his prepared speech. "Your Royal and Imperial Highness!...Our hearts are full of happiness..." By the end of the Mayor's speech, Franz Ferdinand had regained his composure and thanked his host for his cordial welcome. Activities at City Hall were observed as planned.

Changed Plans

Discussions were held as to whether to change the rest of Franz Ferdinand's schedule. The Archduke did not wish to cancel his visit to the museum and lunch at the Governor's residence, but wished to alter his plans to include a visit to Merizzi in the hospital. The same motorcade set out along the Appel Quay, but neither the Mayor's driver, nor Franz Ferdinand's driver had been informed of the change in schedule. This would have been Merizzi's job. The young assassins had counted on succeeding on the first attempt. With no assurance that Franz Ferdinand would follow his original itinerary, the remaining assassins took up various other positions along the Appel Quay. Gavrilo Princip crossed the Appel Quay and strolled down Franz Joseph Street. He stepped into Moritz Schiller's food store to get a sandwich. As he emerged, he met a friend who inquired about a mutual friend.

The Wrong Turn

The Mayor's car, followed by Franz Ferdinand's car turned off the Appel Quay and onto Franz Joseph Street, as originally planned, to travel to the museum. General Potoirek leaned forward. "What is this? This is the wrong way! We're supposed to take the Appel Quay!" The driver put on the brakes and began to back up. Franz Ferdinand's car stopped directly in front of Schiller's store – five feet away from Princip.

The Shots

Princip was quick to recognize what had happened. He pulled the pistol from his pocket, took a step towards the car and fired twice. General Potoirek happened to look directly at Princip as he fired. He thought the gun's report unusually soft. Both Franz Ferdinand and Sophie were still sitting upright. Potoirek thought the shots had missed, but given the assault, ordered the driver to drive directly to the Governor's residence.

Arrest

Princip then turned the gun on himself, but was mobbed by the crowd. Police had to rescue Princip from the crowd before they could arrest him. Princip had swallowed his poison, but it was from the same batch as Cabrinovic's. He was violently ill, but did not die.

Mortal Wounds

As the car sped across the Lateiner Bridge, a stream of blood shot from Franz Ferdinand's mouth. He had been shot in the neck. Sophie, seeing this, exclaimed: "For Heaven's sake! What happened to you?" She sank from her seat. Potoirek and Harrach thought she had fainted and were trying to help her up. Franz Ferdinand, knowing his wife better, suspected the truth. Sophie had been shot in the abdomen and was bleeding internally. "Sopher!! Sopher!! " he pleaded. "Sterbe nicht! Bleibe am Leben fr unsere Kinder! " (Sophie dear! Sophie dear! Don't die! Stay alive for our children!) The cars rushed to the Governor's residence. Sophie may have died before they arrived. Franz Ferdinand died shortly afterward.

The July Crisis

The murders of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie brought Austro-Serbian tensions to a head. Serbia had been fomenting trouble for Austria for many years. For many in Vienna, the double murders provided the 'last straw' for a get-tough showdown. The trail back to the Black Hand would not be unraveled for years to come. Vienna felt she could not wait for conclusive proof and acted based on the mass of circumstantial evidence. As Vienna took a hard line against Serbia, the other powers in Europe took sides. The wheels of war gained speed. The stakes far outgrew the squabble between Austria and Serbia. The Crisis of July turned into world war, just over thirty days after Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie were shot.

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