

TOP SECRET

The Killing of Arch Duke Francis Ferdinand

The news that the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand was coming to Bosnia didn't take long to reach the Green Garland, a restaurant in Belgrade, through a student grapevine. At the Green Garland, 300 students, mostly political, met daily, talking mainly of how to get back territory, including Bosnia, that Austria had recently annexed. Three Bosnian-Serb high school students--



Cabrinovic, Grabez, and Gavrilo Princip-- were intensely interested in the royal visit. They had been planning to kill an Austrian, but were not sure whom, and now a victim far more important than they had hoped for was about to present himself. As they plotted, they were overheard by an officer of Serbian Military Intelligence, Capt. Vogislav Tankosic. He, in turn, told his superior, Col. Dragutin Dimitrijevic, who, in addition to his job in Intelligence, was the head of the Black Hand, a Serbian terrorist organization whose goal was to get back Serbian land which had been seized by other nations. Dimitrijevic was known in the Black Hand as "Apis." His colleagues disagreed



about his personality--one described him as a "primitive savage," another as a "genuine patriot." Apis told Tankosic to bring the 3 students to him with the idea that he could aid them in creating a disturbance in Sarajevo, a

Bosnian town that the archduke was going to visit. This would create political embarrassments and might help the Black Hand to get into a more favorable position with the Serbian Government.

The 3 students, mere teen-agers, were brought into a dark, candlelit room where Apis sat behind a table that held a skull, a pistol, a bomb, and a vial marked "poison." He made the 3 put their hands on the skull and repeat the Black Hand oath: "By the sun which warms me, by the earth which feeds me, by God, by the blood of my ancestors, by my honor and my life, I swear fidelity to the cause of Serbian nationalism, and to sacrifice my life for it." Apis gave them each a pistol and a grenade. Later they also acquired 6 bombs, 4 Browning revolvers, and some doses of cyanide with which to commit suicide if they were caught. They were sneaked across the border to Sarajevo, where they were hidden at the house of a member of the Black Hand, Danilo Ilic. Ilic was told to get more assassins and train them.

News of the plot reached the Austrian Government, but it reached the wrong man--a confidant of the Emperor, Dr. von Bilinski, who didn't like the archduke. When he told General

Potiorek about the danger, he was reminded that civilians shouldn't interfere in military matters. The general decided not to send troops to the town, because he was afraid that the Emperor would be angry if he did. The Emperor, the archduke's uncle, disapproved of the archduke's marriage to a mere countess, Sophie Chotek, and didn't want any pomp and ceremony to accompany their visit. He had already declared the marriage morganatic and had disinherited the couple's children.



The archduke, his wife, and their entourage left Vienna on a Tuesday and spent 4 days at a small village not far from Sarajevo. One of his men urged him to go back to Vienna, because he had heard rumors of assassination plots. The group was nervous. A court photographer carrying a long flashlight hid in the bushes and tried to snap pictures of the archduke

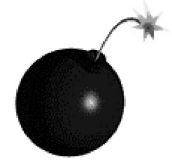


and his wife as they passed. He was arrested. The archduke decided not to cancel his visit to Sarajevo, to which he went by railway. He was met at the station and got into the 2nd car, a dark green open one, of a parade

going into the city. The archduchess wore a white dress and a big hat; the archduke wore a costume comprised of a light blue tunic and black pants with a cocked hat decorated with ostrich plumes. It was like a comic opera--at 1st. They waved to the crowds, who replied with "Zivio!" Among the crowd were 120 policemen.

Also in the crowd were 7 potential assassins, including the 3 students. Though they had been drilled in shooting and throwing bombs, no one had warned them about the hazards of shooting through crowds at a moving target. One of them was standing too near a policeman to risk shooting. Another was pinned in by the crowd. A 3rd took pity on Sophie. A 4th lost his nerve. The 5th, Cabrinovic, managed to knock the detonator from a bomb against a water hydrant and throw it at one of the cars.

Here stories of what happened differ. One account says that it fell under the wheels of the 3rd car because Cabrinovic's throw was poor; another says that the bomb landed on the hood of the archduke's car and the archduke knocked it off, whereupon it rolled under the wheels of the 3rd car. Whichever is true, the bomb exploded and wounded an army officer. Cabrinovic swallowed his cyanide, but it did not work, so he jumped into the river and was caught. Princip heard the bomb explode. Thinking the plot had succeeded, he went to a cafe and celebrated by spending his last coin on a cup of coffee. By now, the procession had reached the Town Hall. Furious, the archduke said Sarajevo should be punished and that he would not proceed with the planned ceremonies



and parade through town. He would instead go to the hospital to see the injured officer. Everyone climbed back into the cars. Count Harnack, an aide, jumped on the footboard of the archduke's car to guard him. "Don't make a fool of yourself," shouted Francis Ferdinand. The drivers of the cars didn't know about the change in plans. The 1st car, carrying the chief of police, drove along the Appel

road and turned off into a narrow street. The soldier driving the archduke's car followed. But it was not the way to the hospital. Told of this, the driver started backing out onto the road, where, by sheer coincidence, Princip was drinking his coffee. Princip looked up to see the archduke, immediately pulled out his revolver, walked over to the car, and shot the archduke in the neck. He then pointed the gun at General Potiorek. As Sophie rose in her seat, someone tried to grab Princip's arm and this spoiled his aim. The bullet intended for the general hit Sophie. She died almost at once. "Sophie, don't die. Live for the children," cried Francis Ferdinand. Fifteen minutes later, he, too, was dead. Princip swallowed his cyanide, but it only made him sick. Francis Joseph buried his nephew and Sophie very casually and marked Sophie's grave with 2 white gloves, the symbol of her position as lady-in-waiting.



artisans and even men of the upper classes were ardent patriots. They were dissimilar in everything except hatred of the oppressor.

"Such were the men into whose hands the tiny bit of newsprint was sent by friends in Bosnia that April night in Belgrade. At a small table in a very humble cafe, beneath a flickering gas jet we sat and read it.... our decision was taken almost immediately. Death to the tyrant!"



It should have ended with a series of apologies. It didn't.

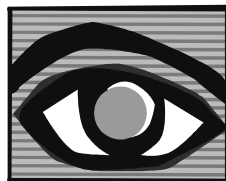


Germany and Russia got involved in the argument between Serbia and Austria over the affair. Then France got into it, and Britain. W.W. I had started. Just 4 1/2 years later, 20 million people were dead. Of the 25 conspirators brought to trial in Sarajevo, 9 were acquitted and 16 were found guilty, among them the 3 students (including Princip), who were sentenced to 20 years in prison. All 3 were dead within 4 years. Apis was later sentenced to death.

Today, on that very spot in Sarajevo where Princip stood to carry out the assassination his footprints are marked in the pavement, and on that street the Gavrilo Princip Museum has been built to honor him.



EYEWITNESS REPORT: Borijove Jevtic was arrested, too, and later described the crime in an article printed in the New York World: "A tiny clipping from a newspaper, mailed without comment from a secret band of terrorists in Zagreb, capital of Croatia, to their comrades in Belgrade, was the torch which set the world afire with war in 1914. That paper wrecked old, proud empires. It gave birth to new, free nations.



"I was one of the members of the terrorist band in Belgrade which received it.

"The little clipping declared that the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand would visit Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, June 28, to direct army maneuvers in the neighboring mountains.

"It reached our meeting place, the cafe called the Green Garland one night in the latter part of April, 1914.... The men who were terrorists in 1914 embraced all classes. Most of them were students. Youth is the time for the philosophy of action. There were also teachers, tradesmen, and peasants;