

Why and what happened at sarajevo history essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Wars are caused by selfishness and foolish but deliberate choices of rulers. World War I which is also known as the Great War was the result of those foolish choices made by the rulers of various countries. Europe is full with the cities of very historical importance, but I chose Austria for being the immediate cause of The Great War. The spark that caused the entire continent to be at war by August 1914 was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austro-Hungarian Empire, on June 28th 1914 in Sarajevo, Bosnia. This Sarajevo incident and Austria's response was a spark that ignited the World War I. In this paper, I intend to trace the events that lead to Sarajevo Incident and events occurred after Austria's response to this incident.

Why and what happened at Sarajevo?

The first and the most important cause of the World War I was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Serbian in Sarajevo. This murder was a result of a long ongoing tension between Bosnia and Austria over the annexation. Bosnia and Herzegovina were provinces in the south of Austria, which had been governed by Turks until 1878. In 1875, a revolt against Turks in Herzegovina and Bosnia urged Russian to call for intervention and a war. In 1878, Russia declared war against Turks to free the Balkans of Turkish Rule. Eventually, Turks lost the war and many of its lands

The Treaty of Berlin 1878 played an important role in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. The purpose of this treaty was to settle the disposition of lands lost by Turks following the Russian war. By this treaty, Turkey gave up a vast amount of Balkan area to Russia. Russia

became the most powerful country with vast amount of lands which was unacceptable by Austria as well as Britain. Under great pressure, Russia agreed to submit the treaty to congress of Great Power held in Berlin. The changes in the treaty granted Austria the power to administer or annex Bosnia and Herzegovina and divided Balkans. On October 6, 1908 Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina directly into Austro-Hungarian empire.

Bosnia was mostly populated by Croats, ethnic Serbs and Muslims. The Bosnian-Serbs wanted to get rid of Austro-Hungarian rule and join their province with that of Serbs border across the river. They wanted to make their own government and this desire was also shared by many in Serbs. However, they did not have any power to do that other than following Austro-Hungarian Rules.

To help Bosnian-Serbs get rid of Austro-Hungarian rule and join with Serbia to become a Balkan State, a secret terrorist organization called Black Hand was formed in Serbia. This group included many government officials, professionals and army officers. When the group heard about the Archduke Franz Ferdinand visit of Sarajevo, they planned to assassinate him considering him a serious threat to a union between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. Due to many government officials and army member in the group, the government was well aware of Black Hand's activities. The officials found out the assassination and wanted to stop this because they knew this would lead to the war. They could not do anything other than just warning Austria in a carefully diplomatic way that would not expose the Black Hands.

The warning given to Austria was not conveyed properly which lead to the Sarajevo incident . Jovan Jovanovic, the Serbian Minister to Vienna, was responsible for warning Austrian by Austrian Foreign Ministry Officers. Instead, he gave the warning to Minister of Finance, Dr Leon Von Bilinski, because he got along better with him than Austrian Foreign Minister.

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 humoredly. Jovanovic knew that Bilinski did not understand what he was trying to saying, but he did not care about conveying the warning any further.

Archduke Franz Ferdiand did not make any mistake other visiting Sarajevo. In 1913, Franz Ferdiand was appointed Inspector General of Austro-Hungarian Army and was very popluar with armed forces. In 1914, the Governor of Bosnia invited him to watch his troops on maneuvers with his wife Sophie. Franz Ferdiand knew that journey would be dangerous but as a brave officer he accepted the invitation. According to plan, Franz Ferdiand and his wife arrived at the station on July 28, 1914 and taken by the car to city Hall for the lunch before going to inspect the troops. On the way to City Hall, the member of Black Hand threw grenade and bombs that injured the fellowmen of Franz Ferdiand and were immediately taken to the hospital. After the lunch, Franz Feridnand insited to see the injured attendants in hospital. However, on the way to the hospital the driver took a wrong turn. Realising his mistake he stopped the car and began to reverse. One of the

members of Black Hand Group shot Franz Ferdiand and his wife and both died on the spot.

Austria's Response to Sarajevo Incident:

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo was a catalyst for war. The death of Franz Ferdinand evoked sympathy among European rulers because he was the heir of the empire so he was one of their own. Austria did not reponse immediately because if Austria struck back immediately than the war have been localized, as the world opinion was still sympathetic. Both Emperor Joseph and Field Marshal Franz Conrad Von Hotzendorf made no plans for quick campaign against Serbia. Austria decided to postopone war until the two importants matters were settle. First, would Germany support Austria if it attacks against Serbia that may result in wider conflict with Russia? Second, would it be possible to find real evidence implicating Serbian Government in the murder?

The answer to question of German involvement encouraged Austria to attack Serbia. A letter written by the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, Leopold von Berchtold, was addressed to Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany. It suggested removing Serbia power factor in the Balkans if Austria-Hungary was to regain its former prestige. The response of this letter came after two weeks. The response was in the favor of Austria. Franz Ferdinand had been the close friend of Wilhelm; therefore emotions played an important role in positive response. The German emperor also believed that Austria should act quickly to prevent further crisis. Wilhelm's backing for the action against Serbia and military support was termed as a " Blank Check", giving Austria-Hungary a free hand in Serbia.

Despite Germany's support, Austrians did not want to declare war against Serbia. The reason behind not attacking Serbia was that victory against Serbia would add a populated territory to Austro-Hungarian empire. The delaying of immediate action against Serbia lessened the international sympathy of Austria-Hungary and created fear in Austria-Hungary for losing German alliance. In order to regain this sympathy, the Austria-Hungary tried to publish a report containing evidence against Serbia for murdering. Unfortunately, they could not find any evidence and facts other than that some of their Austrian officers were involved in the conspiracy of murder. To avoid war and punish Serbia, Austria-Hungary composed an ultimatum.

The Ultimatum:

The ultimatum was proposed to Serbia to avoid war provided certain conditions were met. The conditions in the ultimatum were really tough that nobody expected them to be accepted by Serbia. The ultimatum demanded the Serbian government to officially condemn anti-Austrian publication and propaganda. It also asked for suppression of anti-Austrian societies, bar anti-Austrian teacher and books from school and punish all government officials that helped conspirators. Moreover, it demanded Serbian government to accept help from Austria in checking obnoxious propaganda and allow Austrian officials to assist in the investigation of Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

The Serbian response to the ultimatum was expected meaning definite war between both countries. Serbia was given forty eight hours to respond. The ultimatum was too tough that it was basically asking Serbia to surrender its authority and independence. Serbia could not accept all the fatal and brutal clauses of ultimatum, therefore they rejected it. This denial triggered the war

not only between Austria-Hungary and Serbia but the whole world by alliance system.

How did Alliance system lead to The Great War?

First, the alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary is the main one that