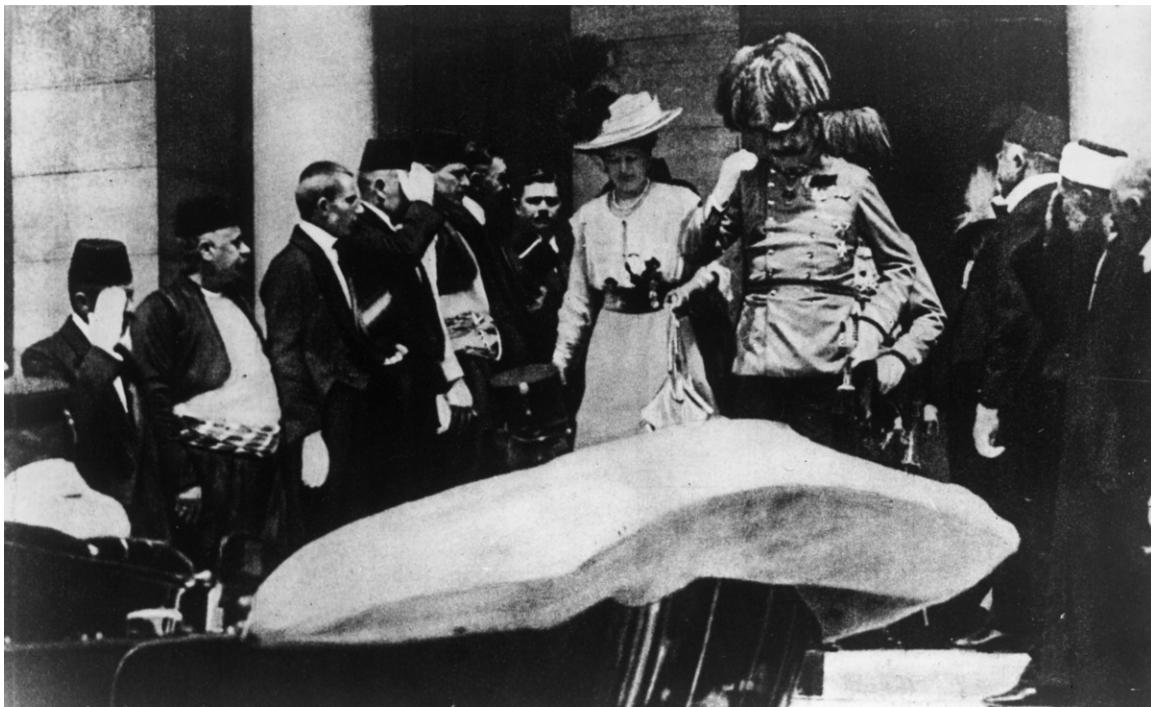


Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his Wife Sophie von Hohenburg Leave the Town Hall in Sarajevo and Get into their Car (June 28, 1914)

Abstract

Following the 1889 suicide of the Habsburg Crown Prince Rudolf and the death of his father, Archduke Karl Ludwig, in 1896, the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the nephew of Emperor Franz Joseph I, became heir to the imperial throne at the age of 36. Though not directly entrusted with affairs of state, Franz Ferdinand gained increasing influence in the military and political realms, advocating reforms in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, including a limited liberal democratic restructuring of the government and the modernization of the armed forces. A determined opponent of any attempt to break up the Habsburg Empire, Franz Ferdinand planned a federalist reorganization of the dual monarchy. By granting extended autonomy to the southern Slavs, he hoped to preempt separatist aspirations. This photograph shows Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie von Hohenburg leaving the town hall of Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, on June 28, 1914. They had been observing military maneuvers in this predominantly Slavic province, which Austria had annexed in 1908. Moments later, on their way to visit victims of an earlier assassination attempt that day, they were shot and killed by the Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip, who claimed he was avenging the suppression of the Serbs by Austria-Hungary. This assassination marked the beginning of a chain of events that led to the outbreak of World War I.

Source



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