# Gavrilo Princip and the key events that caused World War 1

## Introduction

The First World War began in July 1914 and ended in November 1918. The onset was imputed to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife, in June 1914, by a less known man, Gavrilo Princip (Daily Mail par. 3). Princip was a Serbian nationalist who killed Franz Ferdinand to prevent him from inheriting the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The assassination took place amidst high tension within Europe, especially in the Balkan region, and as a result, this killing set on a chain of events that would lead to the start of the First World War. Despite the association of this war with the assassination of Ferdinand, there are several other events that led to the acts of terrorism that launched the beginning of World War 1. For example, the alliances that were formed among nations in Europe, imperialism, and militarism. In this regard, this paper is going to examine the key events that led to WWI.

## The assassination of Franz Ferdinand

As already alluded to in the introduction, one of the key events that led the start of WWI is the death of Ferdinand and his wife (Carlisle and Kirchberger 5). It was the expectation of the citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire that Ferdinand would be the heir of the empire. The death of Franz increased the tension between Serbia and Austria. The Serbians accused the Austrians of killing the archduke, and hence, the Austrians declared war on the Serbians.

In the war between Serbia and Austria, two major European powers took the sides of these rivals. On the one hand, the Russians collaborated with the Serbians, whereby they equipped them with fire arms and gave them military personnel. On the other hand, the Germans took the side of the Austrian. The Germans ordered the Russians to withdraw their military support to the Serbians; however, the Russians ignored the message. As a result, the Germans declared war on Russians. This led to the spread of the war between these two countries, making it a four-nation war. Consequently, the other European powers such France joined the war. The French took the side of the Russian and Serbians and began assaulting Germany (Carlisle and Kirchberger 63). As a result, the Germans extended their attack on France and Belgium. The British then got involved and tried to use diplomatic efforts to stop Germany from invading Belgium. However, the Germans continued their attacks on Belgium. As a result, the war expanded into larger parts of Europe due to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand.

## Imperialism

According to Ross, imperialism arises when a country invades and takes overs a section of another country (16). In the early 20th centrury, acts of imperialism were widespread in Europe and this led to acts of terrorism and mass killings when countries like Germany extended their powers to take over a section of countries such as Serbia. More powerful nations exploited and ruled less powerful countries. Imperialism resulted in two major crises that led to acts of terrorism, which contributed to the launch of World War One.

The first result of imperialism that contributed to World War One is the Moroccan Crisis that took place in the year 1904 (Ross 18). Morocco was a colony of France, and it was given to them by the British government. In the year 1905, Moroccans wanted to be free from the rule of French, therefore, they began resisting. To facilitate the achievement of independence, the Germans declared their support for Morocco in their struggle for independence. A confrontation between the French and the German was prevented by a conference that gave the French the right to possess Morocco. However, in 1911, the Germans protested the French’s possession of Morocco. To prevent the Germans from ending the French rule in the Northern African nation, the British declared their support of the French. As a result, war broke out between the two factions, the French and the British on one side against the Germans. This led to mass killings and numerous acts of terrorism committed by these countries against their enemies.

The second is the Bosnian crisis that took place in 1908, when the Austrians took over Bosnia. This triggered the reaction of the Serbians who declared war against the Austrians since they (Serbians) believed that Bosnia was their territory (Ross 21). The Serbians were supported by the Russians while the Austrians were supported by the Germans. The Russians avoided the war by withdrawing. Despite this, war emerged in the Balkan state. During this period, a lot of acts of terrorism was committed against the citizens of the conflicting nations, and hence, triggering the launch of the World War One.

## Militarism

Prior to the launch of World War One, the governments of many European countries prioritized equipping themselves with military arms (Janda 17). This led to the prominent arms race where European countries competed against one another in the militarization process. The key militarism event that led to the launch of the World War was the naval rivalry that existed in the early 20th century, between the British and the Germans in particular. During this period, the British army had the largest naval army, something that the Germans viewed as a threat. As a result, Keiser Wilhelm of Germany declared that he will build a more powerful naval army. This raised tension between these two countries and they incessantly increased the size of their naval armies to protect their country and colonies as well.

Consequently, other European powers such as France and Russia began expanding their armies. With an expanded naval army, France attacked the Germans. The French attack on the Germans was backed by the British and the military departments of these two countries worked together to attain victory over Germany (Hewitson 85). The naval arms race among European countries enabled these powers to build their armies to the top standards. Militarism that spread all over Europe was a recipe for World War since the countries felt that they had sufficient military resources to engage in imperialism. As a result, countries engaged in conflicts with one another to express their dominance and military power, and this led to the launch of the First World War.

## Alliances

The process of militarization led to the formation of alliances among European powers. Allied countries formed forces to fight against the countries that had opposing ideologies. The formation of alliances divided European powers into two factions namely the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente (Carlisle and Kirchberger 30). The Triple Alliance was formed in 1802 and was composed of Austria, Germany, and Italy while the Triple Entente was formed in 1907 and consisted of France, Russia, and Britain. Member countries of the two teams distrusted one another and this heightened the tension in Europe.

The struggle for dominance and a show of military power among these countries led to conflicts. For example, the Germans and the British engaged in incessant acts of imperialism. This resulted into a serious rivalry between these two countries. For example, when the Germans invaded Belgium to expand their colony, the British responded by providing military support to the Belgians. This led to military attacks directed at one another, for instance, the Germans attacked ships belonging to the British and killed innocent civilians in 1908. This act of terrorism led to the death of civilians from other countries. The Germans engaged in the unrestricted submarine warfare in US territories and this triggered the involvement of the US in the European war, something that the US had initially avoided (Carlisle and Kirchberger 193). The involvement of the US led to the introduction of other countries into the war, for example, Puerto Rico, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and other African countries, making it a war that involved all countries in the world.

### Conclusion

In summary, the onset of World War One is attributed to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and his wife by Gavrilo Princip. The death of Franz led to conflict between Serbia and Austria, a war that later involved other European powers such as Germany and Russia. Besides this, there are other key events and acts of terrorism that led to the launch of the Great War. The formation of alliances, Triple Entente and Triple Alliance increased tension among countries. Militarism led to the arms race where nations equipped themselves with military artillery, giving them the confidence to start up conflicts with their rivals. Finally, activities of imperialism cause conflicts in Europe and these triggered the onset of World War One.

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