

Chapter 7 Lesson 1

Causes of the War: the system of nation-states that developed in the 19th century led to competition not cooperation. Each state was influenced by its own self-interest. Many of the leaders of Europe believed that war was an acceptable tool to preserve the power of the state.

MAIN:

Militarism: *the aggressive preparation for war* often connected to nationalism. (My army is bigger and better than yours) As the size of armies grew, so did the influence of military leaders. Military leaders had created plans for the military and often political leaders were incapable of making changes.

Alliances: Europe had divided into two main alliances with other smaller alliances. The Triple Entente was an alliance of France, Russia and Great Britain. The Triple Alliance was an alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. These alliances had existed for several years. Alliances increased the dangers of militarism.

Imperialism: There was a great deal of competition for lands abroad, especially in Africa, led to conflict and increased already existing rivalries.

Nationalism: There was a growth in nationalism throughout Europe. Large, powerful states were guided by self interest and success. They had large militaries, industry and imperial holdings. At the same time, not all ethnic groups became nations. There were ethnic minorities that dreamed of their own state. This was particularly true in Austria-Hungary and the Balkans.

In the early 1900's, there were conflicts (especially in the Balkans) that tested the alliances and pushed Europe toward war. The major states of Europe were angry with each other and believed that protecting their alliances was important.

The Outbreak of War:

World War I was caused by both these main (**MAIN**) issues but also by the way that the states of Europe responded to a crisis in the Balkans.

The Assassination and response:

By 1914, Serbia (with Russian support) was attempting to create a Slavic state in the Balkans. (Nationalism) Austria-Hungary was concerned because they had large Slavic minorities and did not want to deal with issues that might arise from this Slavic state.

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife, Sophia, were travelling in Bosnia when they were assassinated by a young Bosnian Serb (Gavrilo Princip). Princip was a member of the Black Hand, a Serbian terrorist group working to free Bosnia from A-H.

The government of A-H was unsure as to whether the Serbian government was involved or whether it was truly just a terrorist group. But A-H did not really care. It saw this as an opportunity to eliminate Serbia and its desire for an independent Slavic state. A-H wanted to attack Serbia but feared a response from Russia. To prepare for this possibility, A-H asked for Germany's backing if war with Russia broke out. Kaiser William II of Germany gave A-H his

approval, promising full support if war broke out between A-H and Russia. On July 28, 1914, A-H declared war on Serbia.

Russia wanted to support Serbia, so Czar Nicholas II ordered a partial *mobilization* (process of assembling troops and supplies to prepare for war) of the Russian army. Mobilization was seen as an act of war. The generals of the Russian army informed the Czar that a partial mobilization against just A-H would not work. Their plan included war against A-H and Germany. To mobilize against just one would create problems. The Czar ordered a full mobilization (July 29) even though this would be considered an act of war by Germany.

The Conflict Broadens:

Germany warned Russia and gave them 12 hours to stop the mobilization. When Russia did not stop, Germany declared war on them (August 1).

The Germans also had a military plan. The Schlieffen Plan called for a two front war against France and Russia. This was based on the fact that France and Russia had an alliance started in 1894. According to the plan, Germany would hold against Russia, while attacking France in a rapid invasion. They would attack France by going through Belgium (which was neutral). After the defeat of France, Germany would turn to Russia.

Under the Plan, the Germans could not just mobilize against Russia. Based on this, Germany declared war on France (August 3). Germany demanded permission to cross Belgium. But Belgium was a neutral nation.

Great Britain declared war on Germany (August 4) because of the violation of Belgian neutrality. GB was also motivated by an alliance with France and Russia. By August 4, 1914, all of the major European powers are at war.

The United States:

The US attempted to remain neutral. Many Americans supported the British. British officials worked very hard to gain and maintain that support through the use of propaganda. The British even cut the transatlantic cable from Europe to the US to ensure that America heard their news of the war from Great Britain. There were also financial ties to the Allies via large amounts of bank loans. If the Allies won, those loans would be repaid. If the Allies lost the money would most likely be lost.

In spite of our efforts toward neutrality, the naval war between G. Britain and Germany helped lead to America's involvement. Great Britain had used a blockade to prevent German ships from bringing in supplies to Germany. In response, Germany set up a blockade of Great Britain and used unrestricted submarine warfare to enforce the blockade. Unrestricted submarine warfare is the use of submarines to attack ships with no boundaries or rules. On May 7, 1915, Germany sank the Lusitania. About 1,100 civilians died including 100 Americans. The US government issued a strong complaint to Germany and Germany suspended unrestricted submarine warfare.

In January of 1917, the British decoded a message from Germany to Mexico. It is now known as the Zimmermann telegram. This telegram encouraged Mexico to ally with the Central Powers and go to war against America if needed. Although Mexico did not carry through with the plan, this helped push America into the war. On February 1, 1917, Germany once again resorted to unrestricted sub warfare. This upset the US. Between February 3 and March 21, the Germans sank six American ships. President Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany on April 2, 1917.

The United States entered the war officially in April of 1917, although significant numbers of troops did not arrive in Europe until 1918. This change gave the Allies fighting in the trenches a much needed boost.

