

# Causes of world war one



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World War I (1914 to 1918) was one of the most terrifying wars in history. This war was a total war; a war where every single country that was involved produced almost no consumer goods and used up all of their resources for the war effort. During those five years, countless amounts of soldiers lost their motivation and started to question what they are fighting for. It ended with an estimated 30 million casualties and a temporary peace treaty that lasted for on longer than twenty-one years. This war that put the central and allied powers into conflict began with the rising nationalism, endless competition for military strength, and the desire of conquering land. The tipping point that brought all of these forces into war was their system of alliances, which divided most of Europe into two sides.

Nationalism, the belief that your country is superior to others countries, slowly spread and took over entire Europe. Of course, nationalism did not rise by itself. Before and even during World War I, propaganda took place; nationalism was found in newspaper, board-sheets, music, literature, and theatre (Llewellyn). This increased European countries' pride, countries begun to feel overly proud of themselves, and some of the greater power started to feel unstoppable (Brown). Since all countries shared the same belief that their own country was always right and could win any war or conflict within months, the desire of war rose quickly while the European countries' felt eager to prove their power (Llewellyn). The desire of proving one's power was not the only idea that rose before World War I. Colonies and countries that were ruled under another nation's government started to want self-governing and independent, which later on lead to rebellions. Archduke Franz Ferdinand, a highly ranked Austria government official, was

assassinated by Gavrilo Princip; a member of a Serbian nationalist group called “ Black hand” on June 28, 1914 (Brown). This was the fire that eventually lit up to World War I, which was somehow related to all European countries’ belief that all of them were intensely proud of – Nationalism.

Militarism increased the military forces countries hold and competition of building their army and navy between countries. Arms race – a process when countries compete about the amount of army and navy they’ve got and built up more – was extremely serious between 1900 to 1914 (Poon). As Germany built a large military to protect itself from its long time enemy, France, France responded with an even larger military to keep itself safe and out of threat of the German (Brown). This process went on and on because as one of the countries’ military forces is greater than another’s, the one with less protection felt insecure and built an even greater military (Brown). Militarism not only caused European countries to build up strong forces to defend each other but also led to endless competition between counties in military buildups (Kelly). Germany, a country that increased its military buildup rapidly, threatened Britain’s position in naval forces. After Britain built its first Dreadnought (battle ship with 12-inch guns) the race begun, in 1909 to 1911, Germany built nine Dreadnoughts while Britain built 18 (Poon). Other than protection and competitions, militarism gave one the belief that war was coming and problems could be solved by wars (Poon). Thus of the strong and massive military force each country had, the entire Europe was ready for a war in 1914 (Poon).

After the belief that one’s superior to others and military forces were all build up, imperialism occurred. Imperialism, the desire of gaining land, was

accomplished by conquering more lands that could increase own power and wealth (Kelly). Countries in Europe urged for Africa and parts of Asia because those were the places where provided valuable and massive amounts of rough materials (Kelly). Germany, as a rising power, wanted to conquer a part of Africa although France and Britain already established it (Brown). This action angered both France and Britain and as they worked together to keep Germany out of Africa, they became even closer allies (Brown). As imperialism went on, more and more conflicts appeared and caused the relationship between forces to worsen. Not only that, the confrontations of competing empire sizes pushed the countries in Europe a step near war (Kelly).

The system of alliance was the force that held the countries in Europe together and caused this total war. Alliance system, built by Bismarck, was not built for military purpose at first, but since alliances were always made in secret and it increased the war tension, it became a serious problem (Poon). Before World War I, Europe was separated in to two major alliances – the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente (Brown). Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy were included in the Triple Alliance and France, Britain, and Russia in the Triple Entente. These two alliances were made to defend each other, but at the beginning of World War I, Italy became neutral and then joined the Entente (Brown). Although alliances were built to make countries safer, it ended up doing the opposite then they had expect (Wheeler). All countries in Europe were connected by alliance, so when a single conflict occurred, it caused war that involved entire Europe (Wheeler). The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand did the job in which Austria-Hungary declared war

on Serbia and Serbia was promised to be protected by Russia (Brown). This is when alliance officially took place, held the central power against the allied power, and led to World War I.

World War I ended with not much gain but great losses. Germany, used as a scapegoat of World War I, had to pay large amount of reparations. This made their economic system collapsed because they printed too much money. Also there was not enough food because all productions were made for military purpose during war. People faced a hard time and suffered starvation even after World War I ended. Italy, the country that joined the allied power during the war, did not get the land that it was promised. The United States, a country out of Europe, fought a war for foreign countries that gave it no benefit. After this war ended, the treaty of Versailles was signed. Countries insisted and wanted peace because every single of them felt exhausted, so, the League of Nations was built. Although the formation of League of Nations was a great step towards peace, the most important country, the United States, refused to join, so this peace did not last long. Soon, the “ peace treaty” that ended World War I, will cause another horrifying war that will be forever remembered and remarked with this one.

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