The First World War broke out in late summer 1914, but tension had been building in Europe since 1900. So why did the war start?

**The MAIN Causes**

**M**ilitarism **Militarism** - building up armed forces, getting ready for war.

**A**lliances **Alliances** - agreements to defend and help another country.

**I**mperialism **Imperialism** - trying to build up an Empire.

**N**ationalism **Nationalism** - having pride in your country, willing to defend it.

Germany wished to build up her colonial empire. This is known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Germany also built up her armed forces - known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Britain had the most powerful navy and was worried about other countries building up their armed forces. We could call this a concern about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Great Britain had signed treaties and trade agreements with France and Austria; Russia had signed treaties and trade agreements with Serbia. We could call these concerns about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Countries in Europe were very proud of themselves and would defend their country to the very end. This is known as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**The Causes of World War One**

**The Tangle of Alliances**

Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy formed the Triple Alliance in 1882 and signed an agreement to support each other militarily in the event of war. Germany and Austria-Hungary shared strong ethnic ties. Italy and Austria-Hungary, however, had land disputes and were rivals for control of the Adriatic Sea. Nevertheless, the Triple Alliance was renewed from time to time until 1913. Secretly, Italy had signed a similar treaty with France. In 1907 Great Britain, France, and Russia formed an alliance called the Triple Entente. The Triple Entente counterbalanced the power of the Triple Alliance in Europe.

**June 28 in Sarajevo**

The events of July and early August 1914 are a classic case of “one thing led to another” - otherwise known as the treaty alliance system.

The spark was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914. Archduke Ferdinand was chosen as a target because Serbians feared that after his ascension to the throne, he would continue and even heighten the persecution of Serbs living within the Austro-Hungarian empire. Serbia had gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. At that time, Serbia laid claim to several regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina which were inhabited primarily by Serbs. However, in 1908, Austria-Hungary officially annexed all of occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, adding additional fuel to the fires of Serbian nationalism.

The Serbian terrorist organization the Black Hand had trained a small group of young men as operatives to infiltrate Bosnia and carry out the assassination of the Archduke. It is unclear how active the Serbian government was in the plot, but it was uncovered years later that the leader of the Black Hand, Colonel Dragutin Dimitrijevic, was also the head of Serbian military intelligence.

As Francis Ferdinand and his group of dignitaries proceeded through Sarajevo, the first of the Black Hand operatives tossed a bomb at the Archduke’s automobile. The chauffeur saw the explosive and accelerated to avoid the impact. Sophie ducked, and Francis Ferdinand deflected the bomb with his arm, causing it to bounce off the back of the car and explode behind them, demolishing the next car and seriously injuring several aides. To avoid capture and interrogation, the unsuccessful assassin, nineteen-year-old Nedjelko Cabrinovic, jumped into the river. He was, however, hauled out of the river and detained.

As the Archduke’s entourage resumed its tour of Sarajevo, the Archduke’s chauffeur took a wrong turn and drove within ten feet of another Black Hand agent, Gavrilo Princip. Princip stepped up to the car and fired two pistol shots. One bullet hit Sophie, killing her instantly. The other hit Francis Ferdinand, who died within minutes. Like Carbinovic, Princip attempted suicide, but was captured before succeeding.

Ferdinand’s death at the hands of the Black Hand set in motion a mindlessly mechanical series of events that culminated in the world’s first global war.

**Austria-Hungary’s Reaction**

Austria-Hungary’s reaction to the death of their heir (who was actually not greatly beloved by the Emperor, Franz Josef, or his government) took three weeks. Arguing that the Serbian government was implicated in the plans of the Black Hand, the Austro-Hungarians issued an ultimatum to Serbia: bring the assassins to justice! This effectively nullified Serbia’s sovereignty. Austria-Hungary wanted to stamp its authority upon the Serbians, cementing their influence in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary’s expectation was that Serbia would reject the remarkably severe terms of the ultimatum, thereby giving her a reason for launching a limited war against Serbia.

Serbia had Slavic ties with Russia, so although Austria-Hungary didn’t really expect Russia to be drawn into the dispute, the Austro-Hungarian government sought assurances from her ally, Germany, that they would come to their aid should the unthinkable happen and Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary. Germany readily agreed and even encouraged Austria-Hungary’s warlike stance.

**One Thing Led to Another**

These were the remarkable sequence of events that led unavoidably to the ‘Great War’ - a name that had been touted even before the coming of the conflict.

Austria-Hungary, unsatisfied with Serbia’s response to her ultimatum, declared war on Serbia on July 28, 1914.

Russia, bound by treaty to Serbia, announced mobilization of its vast army in Serbia’s defense, a slow process that would take around six weeks to complete.

Germany, allied to Austria-Hungary by treaty, viewed the Russian mobilization as an act of war against Austria-Hungary, and after little warning declared war on Russia on August 1st.

France, bound by treaty to Russia, responded by announcing war against Germany and, by extension, on Austria-Hungary on August 3rd. Germany promptly responded by invading neutral Belgium to reach Paris by the shortest possible route.

Britain, allied to France by a more loosely worded treaty which placed a “moral obligation” upon them to defend France, declared war against Germany on August 4th. Britain’s reason for entering the conflict lay in another direction: they were obligated to defend neutral Belgium by the terms of a 75-year old treaty.

With Germany’s invasion of Belgium on August 4th, and the Belgian King’s appeal to Britain for assistance, Britain committed itself to Belgium’s defense later that day. Like France, Britain was by extension also at war with Austria-Hungary.

With Britain’s entry into the war, British colonies and dominions abroad, including Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa, offered military and financial assistance.

Japan, honoring a military agreement with Britain, declared war on Germany on August 23rd, 1914. Two days later Austria-Hungary responded by declaring war on Japan.

Italy, although allied to both Germany and Austria-Hungary, was able to avoid entering the fray by citing a clause enabling it to evade its obligations to both. Italy was committed to defend Germany and Austria-Hungary only in the event of a ‘defensive’ war; arguing that their actions were ‘offensive’ she declared instead a policy of neutrality. The following year, in May 1915, she finally joined the conflict by siding with the Allies against her two former allies.

Alliances brought most of the world’s major nations into the war at one point or another. What was intended as a strictly limited war - a brief war - between accuser and accused, Austria-Hungary and Serbia, rapidly escalated into something that was beyond the expectations of even the most warlike politicians.

Central Powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria

Allied Powers: Great Britain, France, Russia, Serbia, Belgium, Japan, Montenegro

*\* and Italy in late 1915*

**Match the following events to their correct date and then list them in order.**

Austro-Hungary declared war on Russia.

Due to her Alliance, Russia mobilizes to support Serbia.

Due to the alliances, Germany declares war on Russia.

France and Britain declare war on Austro-Hungary.

Germany declares war on France.

Germany invades Belgium. Britain declares war on Germany.

Serb student, Gavrilo Princip shoots Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand & his wife.

Unhappy at Serbia’s response, Austro- Hungary declares war on Serbia.

June 28, 1914

July 28, 1914

July 29, 1914

August 1, 1914

August 3, 1914

August 4, 1914

August 5, 1914

August 12, 1914

1. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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