

Lesson #2: The Causes of World War One

Imperialism- this is the policy or attitude whereby a country builds an empire, or a collection of colonies to increase its own strength and wealth, with resources and strategic location of bases.

- Germany was trying to build an empire, competing Britain, which already had a large empire.
- Countries were competing to establish colonies in Africa & the Pacific. Pride caused conflicts & disputes.
- Britain proudly claimed, "The sun never sets on the British Empire."

Militarism- this is a policy or attitude whereby the military is used as a means to solve problems and disputes. It is often referred to as "Saber Rattling".

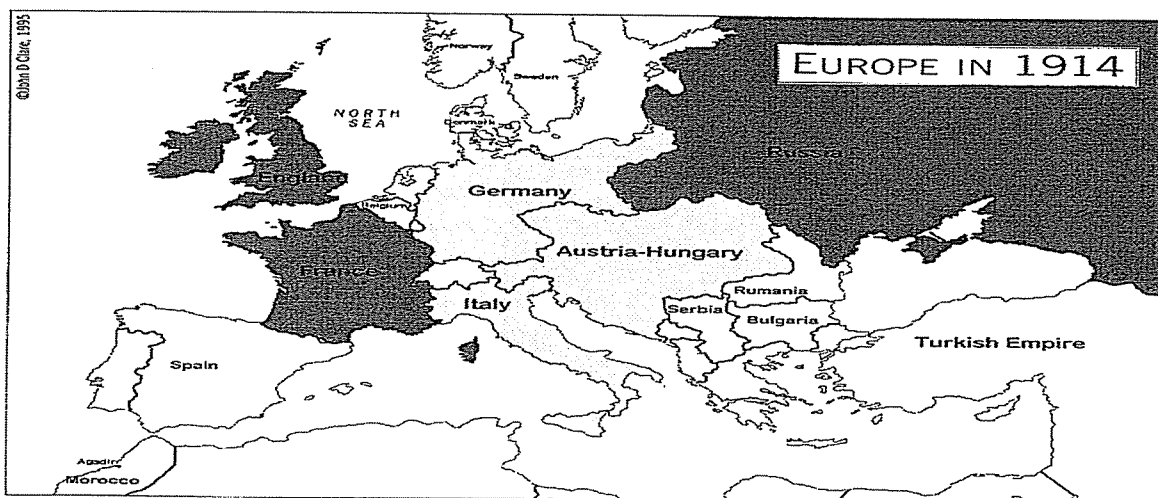
- Prior to the war, Britain and Germany had been involved in an frantic arms race. It was largely naval, as both countries produced larger battleships.
- Naval power helped ensure that countries could support and defend colonies.
- Many conflicts between colonial powers were resolved through posturing or a show of force, also known as "Gunboat Diplomacy."

Nationalism - this is a strong sense of pride in ones cultural & ethnic background. Nationalism can, but does not have to refer to ones "country". (ex. Quebec)

- Major powers were ultra-nationalistic. They were considered "jingoistic" (super patriotic, flag waving, self obsessed.)
- Smaller groups dominated by larger powers were also nationalistic. Their nationalism was expressed in a desire to be free of the colonial power.
- Countries who shared a linguistic, ethnic, or cultural link, felt an allegiance to each other. Nationalism encourages alliances.

Alliances - A series of secret and public treaties were in place to protect countries. Although defensive, they ensured that once hostilities erupted, all of Europe would be dragged into a war.

- Triple Entente- (Allies) Britain, France and Russia.
- Triple Alliance- (Central Powers) Germany, Austria-Hungary & Italy
- Even when countries tried to stay out of conflicts, treaties and alliances dragged them in.

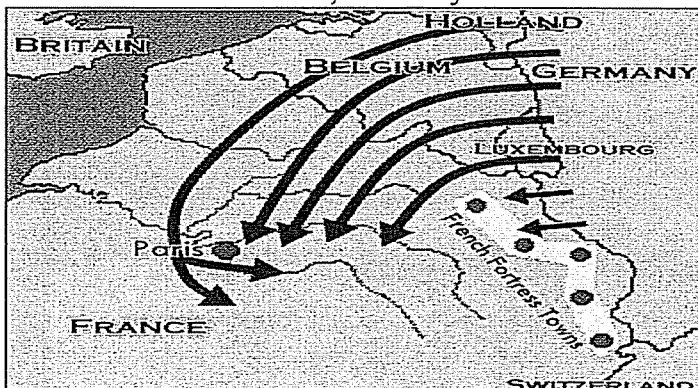


HOW it happened:

1. Consider the four reasons for the war- these conditions exist- the atmosphere in Europe is charged with tension.
2. Bosnia is part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but has a large Serbian Population. (many felt it should be part of Serbia)
3. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria Hungary visited the city of Sarajevo in Bosnia.
4. Many Bosnians didn't like it, including a nationalistic group- "The Black Hand".
5. Gavrilo Princip, member of the Black Hand, shot the Archduke.
6. Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia and insisted on harsh conditions. A list of ultimatums was delivered.
7. Austria-Hungary checked with Germany. Germany offered 100% unconditional support. This was referred to as a "Blank Cheque."
8. Serbia tried to avoid a war, but could not accept all of Austria-Hungary's conditions.
9. Austria-Hungary Declared War on Serbia.
10. Russia, supporting Serbia, declared war Austria Hungary.
11. Germany, supporting Austria Hungary, declared war on Serbia and Russia
12. France, supporting Russia, declared war on Germany and Austria Hungary.
13. Britain tried to stay out of it, but when Germany invaded Belgium on its way to attack France, Britain Declared war on Germany & Austria-Hungary.

Lesson #3: The Start of World War One

- Everyone expected the war to be over by Christmas.
- Over 30,000 volunteers converged on Valcartier, Que., for training in the first few weeks of the war.
- Soon, enthusiasm faded. It would obviously last past Christmas.
- French Canadians were opposed to fighting a war for the British.
- Since they felt no particular allegiance to France, they were not interested in fighting.
- **The Opening Move**
- The Germans faced a 2 front war with France & Russia.
- Solution: **The Schlieffen Plan**
- Weaker German units would hold along the French Border.
- Stronger units would attack Belgium, moving quickly to N. France, encircling Paris.
- With France defeated, Germany could turn and attack Russia.



PROBLEMS with the Schlieffen Plan

The plan assumed Belgium would not fight.

WRONG- they did, slowing German progress.

The plan assumed Britain would not honour an old treaty guaranteeing Belgium's neutrality.

WRONG- they did. France was going to get help..

The plan assumed that it would take old Russia a long time to mobilize.

WRONG- it took only 10 days, meaning German troops had to be moved immediately to the Eastern front.

- Because of these problems, the German offensive stalled
- Faced with a retreat, the Generals insisted that the soldiers dig in defensive trenches so they could hold the parts of France and Belgium they already had taken.

Lesson #4: Warfare in World War One

- Soldiers often got "Trench Foot"



- ✓ • Trench lines and territory didn't change much.
- ✓ • It soon became a war of attrition, rather than movement.
 - Trenches were never dug in straight lines
- ✓ • There were often 3-4 rows of trenches
- ✓ • Machine guns and barbed wire protected trench lines
 - **Chemical Weapons: Chlorine gas**
- ✓ • Chlorine 1st used by the German Army, 1915 at Ypres.
 - Fr. soldiers saw yellow-green clouds drifting towards them
 - Thought Germans were moving behind a smoke screen.
- ✓ • Soldiers experienced chest pain & burning in their throats
- ✓ • Chlorine gas destroyed the respiratory organs of its victims and this led to a slow death by asphyxiation.
- ✓ • Fr. realised it was gas & ran, left a 4 mile gap in the line.
- ✓ • BUT the German soldiers hesitated, also scared of the gas
- ✓ • Canadian and British troops retook the position before the Germans burst through the gap