

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE GREAT WAR

CAUSES

NATIONALISM

Extreme Nationalism or national self-determination is a key factor in the outbreak of the Great War. Throughout the 19th century nationalistic ideals spread and led to the unification of Italy and Germany. These nations had to prove themselves as strong independent countries and as such war was unavoidable. This pursuit of nationalistic goals and belief in national superiority resulted in the eruption of the Great War.

HOSTILE ALLIANCES

A number of alliances had been signed by countries between 1879 and 1914. The formation of the Triple Alliance and the Entente Powers is extremely important when looking at the causes of the Great War. The Triple Alliance consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy while the members of the Entente Powers were France, Russia and Britain. These were important because it meant that countries had no option but to declare war if one of their colleagues declared war first.

THE ASSASSINATION OF ARCHDUKE FRANTZ FERDINAND

The heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated on the 28th June 1914 on a visit to Sarajevo, Bosnia by Serbians. After the assassination Austria-Hungary sent an ultimatum to Serbia who in turn refused. With the Alliance System in place, the receipt of this refusal prompted Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia. This declaration led to the mobilisation of the various alliances thus, starting the Great War.

CONSEQUENCES

DEATH TOLL

The figures for the casualties of the Great War are hard to agree upon by historians. Considered the most detrimental war of that time, The Great War took the lives of roughly 13,000,000 people. It was estimated that approximately 29,000,000 million people were wounded and that the war left roughly 10,000,000 widows and orphans.

TREATY OF VERSAILLES

At the end of the Great War numerous treaties were signed, most notably the Treaty of Versailles. Germany under The Treaty of Versailles was devastated as she was found guilty of provoking the war. Under the Treaty of Versailles all of Germany's colonies were taken away and she was forced to pay 6,500,000,000 in reparations.

FORMATION OF LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Point fourteen of President Wilson's Fourteen Point Plan was carried out and the League of Nations was formed. A precursor to the United Nations, this was the first international organisation created deliberately to protect independent nations from aggression and to preserve the peace.