

World War I - Why????



A. Underlying causes

- the new powerful nation (only since 1871!) of Europe, Germany challenges the power of the established imperial nation, Britain.
- It wants its “own place in the sun” and has surpassed British industrial production.



Formation of German Reich, 1871

The ISMs!

- Nationalism – What is this? You have British Nationalism, German Nationalism, Nationalism in ethnic populations of Austria-Hungary who want self-determination. Know what that is!
- Imperialism – An empire, every “Great” nation wants one! Britain (has one), Russia, Ottoman (Turks), Germany and Japan want one too. (At this time, America is practicing isolationism.)

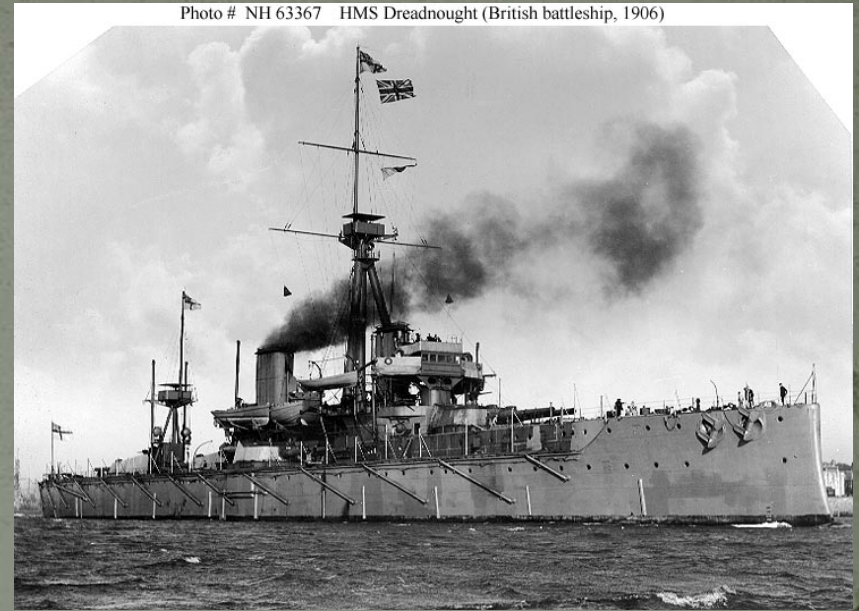


 European Alliances on the Eve of World War I. Alliance systems divided Europe into two great blocs with few countries remaining neutral.

- Tensions build - Germany has the most powerful army in Europe. But then starts to build a navy to rival the British who had the largest navy. A naval arms race begins.

- Alliances

- Germany, allied with Austria-Hungary (Central powers)
- Britain allies with old enemy France and Russia (Triple Entente)

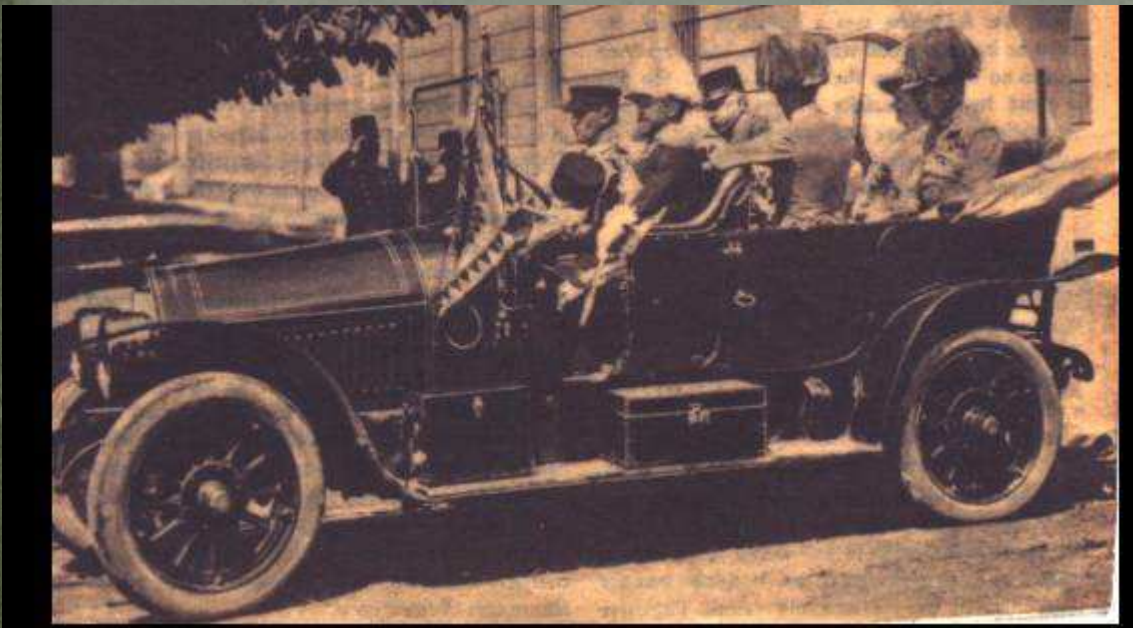




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The Spark!

- The heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary is assassinated by a Serb nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, a member of the Black Hand



Archduke just before he was
assassinated,
1914.

www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/FWWarchduke.htm

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-A7dKZ3o1g&feature=related>



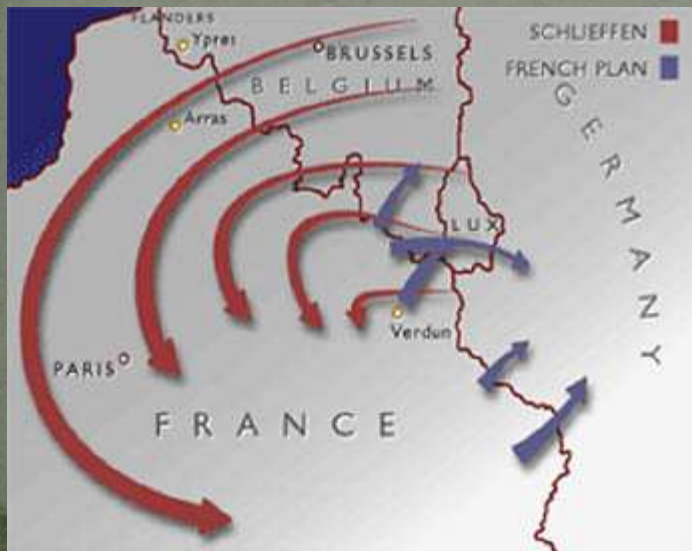
- Gavrilo Princip,
 - Member of the “Black Hand” a Serbian nationalist organization considered a terrorist organization by Austria



Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand

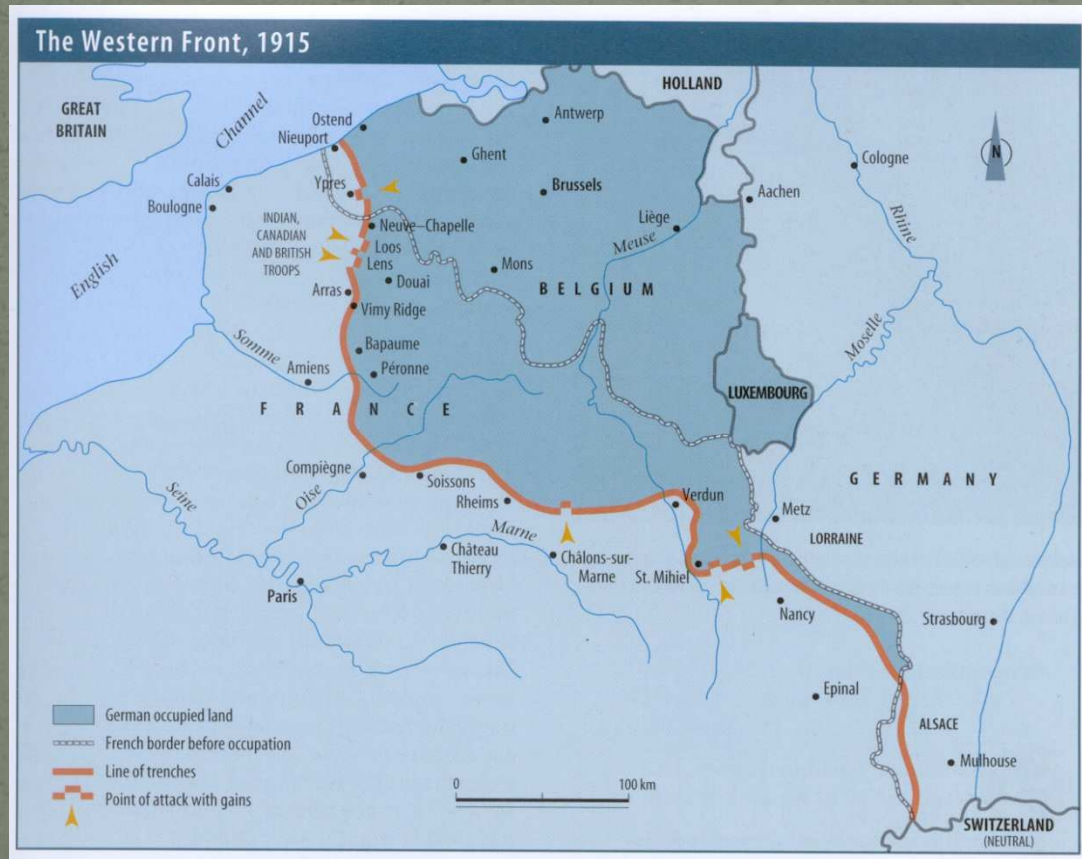
The Alliance System Drags Everyone Down

- Austria blames Serbia for the assassination
- Austria asks for and gets back up from Germany (the blank cheque)
 - <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/blankcheque.htm>
- Serbia is backed up by Russia
- Germany worries that France will support Russia as Germany fears a two-front war
- Germany attacks France first under the designs of the Shlieffen Plan (knock out France first before Russia can mobilize, then turn on Russia)
 - Because an old treaty with Britain guaranteed her sovereign independence, Britain declared war on Germany following the invasion of Belgium



B. War in Western Europe

- The plan almost works BUT - British and French are able to stop the German advance, war bogs down into trench warfare in the West. line of trenches stretch from Swiss border to English channel.



- Brutal - becomes war of attrition, Britain calls on resources of empire including Canada, Australia, India
- new technology - machine guns, gives advantage to defender.
- But both sides try to “break through” the enemy lines. Railways can quickly bring in new troops to plug any “holes in the lines”
- other new technology - poison gas, planes and tanks become tools of war

C. War in Eastern Europe

- Also a slaughter, but somewhat more mobile.
- Russians have some success against the Austro-Hungarians but little success against the Germans.
- War failures are a major cause of the Russian revolution and the downfall of the Tsar monarchy in Russia, brining about the rise of the Soviet Union



Tsar Nicolas Romanov
II, the last Tsar of
Russia

D. War at Sea

- the deciding factor - although Germans use submarines, the British have the more effective blockade, gradually starving the Germans into submission
- war at sea also brings the Americans into the war over the issue of “freedom of the seas”. in 1917. American fight on British and French side. Americans bring fresh men and more importantly, supplies

End of the War Timeline

- April 1917 – United States joins war.
 - Why?
 - #1 Unrestricted submarine warfare
 - #2 protect their investments in Europe
 - #3 fall of Russian Czar
 - #4 Zimmerman Letter
- December 1917 – Russia signs Armistice with Germany
- January 1918 – 14 points speech

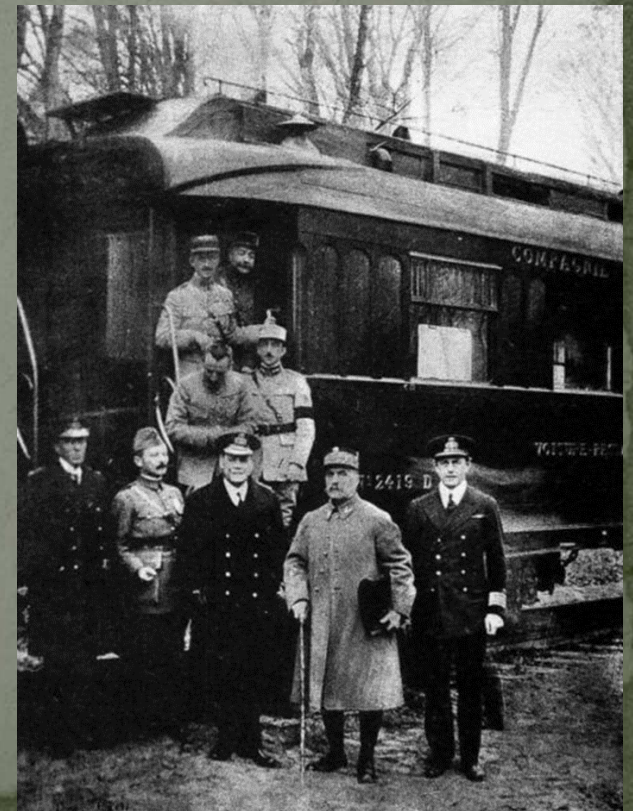
- March 1918 – Treaty of Brest – Litovsk
 - Germany get many concessions from Russia
- March – April 1918 - Operation Michael
 - 240 000 men lost on both sides (half million total)
- July – Approx. 1 million Americans in France

- August – November 1918 – 100 Days Offensive
 - Allied attack on German line
- September 29 1918 –
 - General Ludendorff tells Kaiser he cannot hold front for 2 hours – situation was hopeless
 - Requests armistice
 - Recommended acceptance of 14 points by the Parliament (Reichstag)

- October
 - Wilson wants Kaiser to abdicate
 - German gov't wants to negotiate terms based on 14 points
 - Ludendorff Changes his mind and wants to launch a new offensive
 - He is replaced

- November 5
 - Other Allies agree to 14 points but want reparations
 - Britain will not agree to article II.
- November 8
 - Negotiation begin outside Paris (Compiègne)
 - Done in Gen. Foch's private train car
 - Allies dictate terms
 - Given 72 hours to sign
- November 9
 - Kaiser Abdicates (forced)
 - Ebert becomes de facto leader of country

- November 10th
 - Germans tried to improve terms
 - Delegation told to sign by Ebert and Hindenburg
- November 11th
 - Signed between 5 and 5:20 am
 - At Compiègne on Marshall Foch's train
 - Would take effect 11 am Paris time
 - Was to last one month



- Termination of military hostilities on land or in air within six hours of signature.
- Immediate removal of all German troops from France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Alsace-Lorraine within 14 days
- Subsequent removal of all German troops from territory on the west side of the Rhine plus 30 km (19 mi) radius bridgeheads of the right side of the Rhine Removal of all German troops on the eastern front".
- Renunciation of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
- Turn over the German fleet.
- Surrender of all German submarines
- Surrender : 5,000 cannons, 25,000 machine guns, 3,000 *minenwerfers*, 1,700 airplanes, 5,000 locomotive engines, and 150,000 railcars.
- Immediate release of all French, British and Italian prisoners of war
 - No germans released until after a treaty is reached