

World War I & its Global Consequences ①

- In July of 1914 the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated in Sarajevo by University student Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb and member of the pro-Serbian paramilitary organization known as the Black Hand.
- This act triggered ~~the~~ a wider conflict by activating European Alliance Systems, which we discussed earlier; by September 1914 all of Europe's major powers had entered 'the conflict', and soon ~~the~~ those with colonial possessions drew in their colonial subjects as well.
- Although Princip's actions were the ~~final~~ ^{final} trigger ~~of~~ ~~the~~ that precipitated World War One other, longer-term causes must also be considered.

These include:

- ① Rigid diplomacy and fervent nationalism among all the European great powers. European leaders believed that war would resolve several contentious issues, such as those that had emerged in S-E Europe in the late 19th Century → the power vacuum that emerged there ~~the~~ encouraged competition between the two most powerful actors in the region: ① Austria-Hungary, which feared the spread of nationalism into its multi-ethnic domains and sought to use →

territorial WWI (cont.)

- ~~foreign~~ expansion as a way of reinforcing imperial loyalty, ② Russia which maintained its traditional desire for access to the Mediterranean and sought to use cultural & ethnic connections with S-E Europe to further these aims.
 → These aims led to confrontation, and triggered a wider conflict through the alliance network.

Slavic ethnic
Cyrillic language
Orthodox Christ.

② Nationalist tensions, exacerbated by media and educational systems, encouraged leaders to seek conflict rather than compromise. Imperialism had reinforced this sense among European populations, and with colonial opportunities essentially exhausted by 1914, politicians looked to their own national strength as a means of wooing increasingly large populations of new voters. Europe's political leaders also worried about broader social tensions within their societies. Labor unrest was increasing joined in some cases by feminist and minority agitation - the Irish are a good example of this in the British case. Many voices argued that war would unify populations, weakening the strength of socialist dissent. (Ironically, this did in fact occur - Socialist calls for an international general strike to prevent war in 1914 failed, as trade unions and workers rallied behind their national governments)

WWI (cont.)

(3)

- Many ordinary people, bored ~~by~~ or oppressed by industrial life, saw war as an exciting option - completely unaware of how devastating industrial warfare would actually be.

② Europe's decision to embark on war was also ~~revealed~~ ^{reflected} its global position. Europeans had begun to feel threatened by the rise of societies outside their borders.

- Japan's industrial and military surge represented a growing threat to S-E Asian colonies, while the rapidly escalating influence of the United States in the global economy had also been recognized.

- These anxieties could have prompted a new European unity, as in fact they would 30 years later after WW2; however, in 1914, Europeans turned to the safer and more familiar nationalist military response. Europeans worried about their world position but at the same time assumed that their international dominance would continue.

The result was a global war that redefined global power alignments; although many Europeans entered the conflict optimistically, assuming that as throughout the 19th Century war would be quick, decisive and glorious, WWI proved to be anything but. A new period emerged in World

WWI (cont.)

④

history "baptized in blood & death" as industrial war and its unforeseen consequences tore the world's most powerful civilization apart.

Over ten million soldiers and civilians lost their lives over the next four years, and the war's end in 1918 in Europe did not see it end elsewhere, as revolutions and civil wars raged across Eurasia for years afterwards.