

## THE ISSUE OF RESPONSIBILITY

### 1) Serbian Responsibility

- Serbia's encouragement of Slavic nationalism within Austria helped foster the enmity between the two nations.
- The Serbian government, or members of it, knew of the attempt to be made on Franz-Ferdinand's life and did nothing to stop it.

### 2) Austrian Responsibility

- Austria-Hungary was a multi-national state existing in a world of nationalism. The dominance of the German and Hungarian elements was threatened because they would do nothing to grant the other nationalities equality.
- Refusing to recognize the need for internal reform, Austria resolved to destroy Serbia.
- The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was deliberately designed to provoke a Serbian refusal. (See illustration #5)
- Austria resisted all the attempts by the Powers to have the issue brought to the conference table.
- Austria did not want a general European war but knew her policies ran the risk of provoking such a war.

### 3) Russian Responsibility

- Russia encouraged the Slavic nationalism in the Balkans that created such tension in that area.
- Russian desire for the Straits was a contributory cause of the crisis in 1909. (See illustration #4)
- Russia was the first Power to order complete mobilization, an action that her generals, at least, knew was tantamount to declaring war.

### 4) French Responsibility

- The French governments 1870 - 1914 kept European tension alive by publicly avowing to get Alsace-Lorraine back from Germany when possible. (See illustration #2)
- French imperialism was in part responsible for the crises in Morocco.

- After 1909 the French did little to restrain Russia's Balkan policies. i.e. Russian money to Slavic nationalist groups. Russian scheming behind the Balkan League.
- Poincaré assured Russia of French backing in the event of a war with Germany without giving specifications as to cause. This was in effect a "Blank Cheque".

#### 5) British Responsibility

- The least responsible of all European powers.
- A negative sort of guilt might be assigned for her failure to make her position sufficiently clear to Germany.

#### 6) German Responsibility

- German diplomacy relied too heavily on the threat of war. i.e. Morocco 1905 and 1911, ultimatum vs. Russia 1909.
- This type of diplomacy created tremendous tensions and, when successful, resulted in the humiliation of the other nation which would then resolve not to back down again.
- When not brutal, German policies were often clumsy and created resentment, suspicion and fear.
  - i.e. - sympathy with the Boers (1899-1902)
    - building of a high seas fleet
    - over-aggressive colonial policy
- The above aspects of German diplomacy coupled with the tremendous power of her military machine resulted in the constricting alliances and the armaments race. (See illustration #3)
- Germany must therefore bear the chief responsibility for the dangerous state of tension in Europe (1890-1914).
- Germany did little to restrain Austria in the Balkans after 1890.
- Germany gave Austria "Blank Cheque" backing for a war with Serbia (July 5, 1914).
- German politicians were aware of the possibility of a general war but gambled on localizing it. (See illustration #5)
- Germany did little to get Austria to bring the 1914 crisis to the bargaining table.

- Germany was too committed to the Schlieffen Plan. This resulted in the total surrender of the politicians to the generals after the Russian mobilization. (See illustration #2 and #3)
- The resulting ultimatums to France and Russia and the German mobilization ended any hope of the Tsar reconsidering his hasty decision to mobilize.
- The German attack through Belgium ended all diplomatic activity and brought Britain into the war. (Germany had broken a treaty signed in 1839 guaranteeing Belgian neutrality).

It can be said that none of the major Powers wanted a European war yet all, with the exception of Britain, pursued policies that made such a war highly probable.

## DOCUMENTS AND ALLIANCES PERTINENT TO 1914

### 1) The Dual Alliance

- Between Austria and Germany
- Formed in 1878 and renewed every 5 years.  
Provided for:
  - a. Mutual assistance in the event either party was attacked by Russia.
  - b. Benevolent neutrality in the event either party was attacked by any other power.
  - c. The treaty was to be kept secret.
- The treaty was later supplemented by various agreements between the general staffs of the two nations.

### 2) The Triple Alliance

- Signed in 1882 and renewed every 5 years.  
Provided for:
  - a. The assistance of Austria and Germany if Italy was attacked by France.
  - b. Mutual assistance if any of the parties concerned was attacked two or more powers.
  - c. Benevolent neutrality if one of the parties was forced to declare to defend its interests.
- The Treaty was emasculated in 1902 when Italy stated that she would not fight against France.

by  
war

ITALY DID NOT ENTER THE WAR IN 1914.

### 3) The Franco-Russian Military Convention

- Signed in 1892 and to last as long as the Triple Alliance
- Provided for:
  - a. Mutual assistance if either party were attacked by Germany.
  - b. Immediate mobilization of all forces if one of the members of the Triple Alliance mobilized.
  - c. The preparation of specific plans by the general staffs of the two nations.
  - d. Total secrecy of the terms.

### 4) The Anglo-French Entente

- Signed April 8, 1904.
  - a. France gave Britain a free hand in Egypt.
  - b. Britain recognized the dominant role of France in Morocco.
  - c. Promised co-operation in all matters concerning the terms of the Entente.
  
- These terms were NOT kept secret.

### 5) The Anglo-Russian Entente

- Signed in 1907.
  - a. Divided Persia into spheres of interest for both parties.
  - b. Settled boundary disputes in the region

### 6) The Anglo-French Naval Agreement

- Signed in 1912
  
- The French were to concentrate their naval forces in the Mediterranean and protect British interests in that area.
- Britain would protect the French Atlantic coastline.

### 7) The German “Blank Cheque” to Austria

- Received in Vienna July 6, 1914. (?)
  
- Promised German diplomatic support in Bulgaria and Rumania on behalf of Austria.
  
- Germany stated that Austria knew best how to deal with Serbia.
  
- Promised complete German support.

### 8) The Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum to Serbia - issued July 23, 1914.

- Called on Serbia to:
- a. Suppress all propaganda against Austria
  - b. To search for and find all persons guilty of terrorist activities vs. Austria.

- c. To suppress all publications directed against territorial integrity of Austria.
- d.
  - i. To dissolve the secret societies working against Austria.
  - ii. To remove all officers in the Serbian army who were involved in anti- Austrian propaganda.
- e. To agree to Austrian co-operation in fulfilling these tasks in Serbia.