

A black and white photograph of World War I soldiers in a trench. The soldiers are wearing helmets and carrying rifles, positioned behind a line of barbed wire. The background is a hazy, overcast sky.

*CLASS X*

*SUBJECT HISTORY*

*TOPIC THE FIRST WORLD WAR*

*PART-1*

*19.05.2020*



## Scope of Syllabus

## The First World War

Causes (Nationalism and Imperialism, Armament Race, Division of Europe and Sarajevo Crisis) and results (Treaty of Versailles, Territorial rearrangements, Formation of League of Nations).

## IMPORTANT TERMS, EVENTS, PERSONS AND DATES

- **First World War** : The War which was fought from 1914-1918 in which most of the European countries were involved.
- **The Treaty of Versailles** : The treaty was signed by the Allies with Germany. Under the Treaty, Germany was held guilty for the First World War.
- **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** : The treaty of Brest-Litovsk ended the war between Russia and Germany.
- **League of Nations** : The League of Nations was initiated on January 16, 1920 by President Wilson of USA with its headquarters at Geneva in Switzerland.

## The First World War

The First World War (1914-1918 A.D.) engulfed almost the whole world. It was fought on a wide scale on the land, the sea and in the air. About 86 nations took part in this war. Because of the unprecedented extent of its spread, impact and its total nature, it was called a *World War*.

## Causes of the War

The causes of the First World War can be divided into two categories :

- (a) The long-term causes, and
- (b) The Immediate causes.

## (a) The Long-Term Causes :

1. **Division of Europe** : Europe was divided into two hostile camps at the dawn of the 20th century. The major European nations were divided into Blocs. For example, Britain, France and Russia had

formed the **Triple Entente** in 1907 A.D. Earlier than this, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy had formed a **Triple Alliance** in 1882 A.D. They had made treaties of mutual help to each other in case of a war with the opponents. Tension prevailed in their relations with each other, bloc-wise. In the words of Prof. Fay, "*The system of secret alliances made it inevitable that if war did come it would involve all the Great Powers of Europe*".

This secret diplomacy gave rise to the feelings of mutual suspicion, distrust and hatred.

**Triple Alliance** : The **Dual Alliance**, was formed between Germany and Austria in 1879, with the promise to help each other in case of a Russian attack. In 1882, Italy also joined the Dual Alliance, thus forming the **Triple Alliance**. However, Italy entered the First World War in 1915 and fought against Germany and Austria-Hungary. After, the outbreak of the War, Germany and Austria-Hungary were joined by



the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. These four countries are referred to as the **Central Powers**.

**Triple Entente** : Triple Entente was the name given to the alliance among Russia, France and Britain. During the course of war, many other countries, such as Canada, Australia, Italy, Japan and the United States also joined the Entente.

- The alliance system bound the members of each side to provide military support whenever war broke out between any one of the members and its enemy.
- The alliances were kept secret, thus creating fear, suspicion and uncertainty.
- The alliances also made their member countries confident of military support. The European powers became more ambitious about annexing overseas territories and colonies, which resulted in frequent international crises.
- The alliances required military commitment and therefore encouraged the armament race.

**2. Nationalism and Mutual Rivalries** : The 19th century was an era of narrow and militant nationalism. Patriotism, love for one's own nation, meant hatred towards the other nations. Each nation thought about her own national interests. Nationalism had become competitive and aggressive, taking the shape of chauvinism. Germany had Kaiser William II as her new Emperor. He wanted to establish a vast German empire. **France and Germany** were old rivals. After defeating France in the **Franco-Prussian War 1870-71** Germany had seized the province of Alsace and parts of Lorraine which were rich in minerals and industrial products. The French dreamed of taking revenge and taking back their lost provinces.

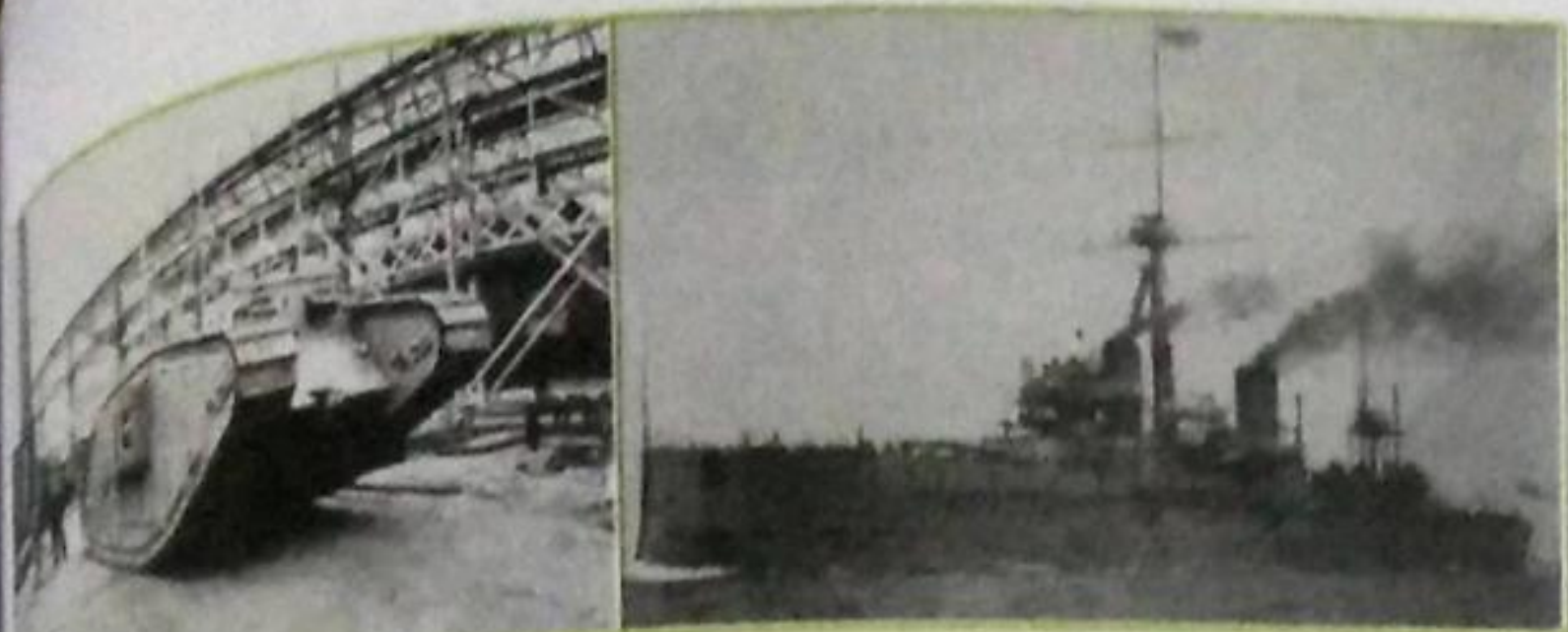
**3. Militarism and Armament Race** : In the later half of the 19th century, militarism was growing in Europe. It was caused by narrow nationalism, economic competition and international tension. Germany had acquired her colonies in Africa and

few Islands in the Pacific Ocean. In order to protect these, she made more warships and developed a powerful navy. Her Ship **Imperator** built in 1912 was the largest in the world. She had left Britain and France far behind in the production of iron and steel. She also dug the **Keil canal** deeper for the warships to remain there. Britain and France felt concerned with German war-preparations and thus, they were forced to enter the armament race. The defence spending had increased enormously between 1908 and 1914.



Europe in 1914 before the outbreak of the First World War





The naval race between Britain and Germany was intensified by 1906. The total arms spending by the six Great Powers (Britain, Germany, France, Russia, Austria-Hungary and Italy) increased by about 50% between 1908 and 1913.

#### 4. Clash of Imperialist Interests and Colonial Rivalry :

By the end of the 19th century, many of the countries of **Asia and Africa** had been occupied by Britain. France, Spain, Holland, Portugal and Belgium.

These colonies provided new markets, raw materials, increased manpower for national armies and missionaries to preach the gospel. But in due course of time, Germany surpassed other European nations in industrial production. She wanted a share in the world market. It became necessary for **Germany** to have her own colonies. This brought her into a direct clash with the existing colonial powers like Britain, France and others. This created a warlike situation.

In 1904, **Britain and France** made a secret agreement in which Britain would have political control over **Egypt** and **France** over **Morocco**. But the French claim over Morocco was opposed by Germany which declared that all the nations had equal opportunities to trade with it.

The plan of Germany to construct a railway line from Berlin to Baghdad created a fear in the minds of Britain, France and Russia.

Italy's ambitious plans in Africa and Ottoman Empire also alarmed the big powers.

Russia's expansion plan in Ottoman Empire clashed with the interest of Britain, Germany and Austria.

**Japan** which had become an imperialist power had ambitions in the Far East and was on the way to fulfil them.

Thus, the rivalry over the colonies became a major cause of the World War I.

**5. Balkan Issue :** (i) The most serious source of nationalist tension in Europe after 1871 was the area called the **Balkans**.

(ii) A large part of the Balkans was under the control of the Ottoman Empire which started disintegrating in the 19th century.

(iii) One by one, its European subject **nationalities broke away** from its control and declared independence.

(iv) Balkans became the **scene of big power rivalry** among the big powers.

(v) Each power – Russia, Germany, England, Austria-Hungary – was keen on countering the hold of other powers over the Balkans, and extending its own control over the area. This led to a series of wars in the region and finally the First World War.

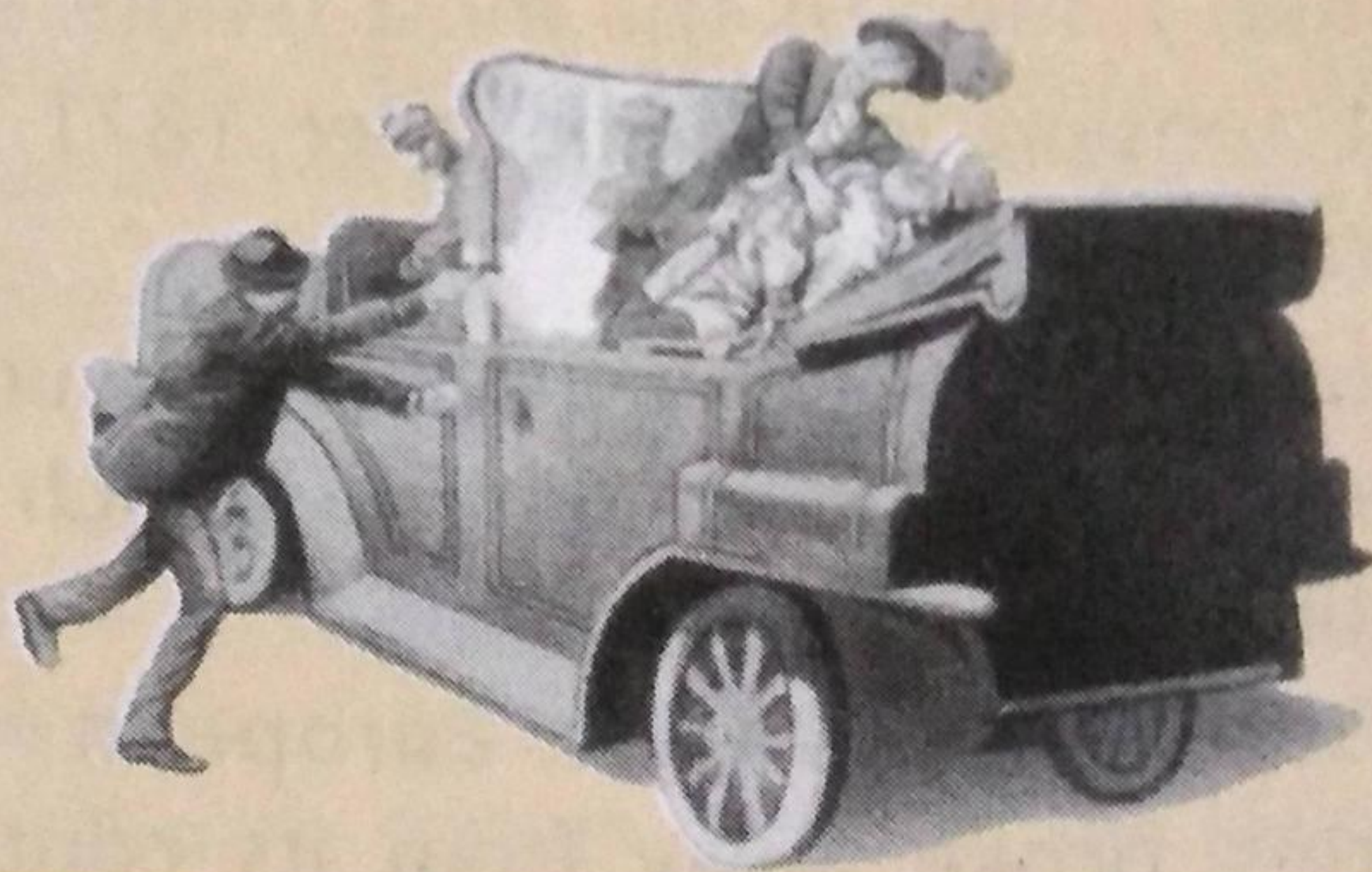
**6. Negative Role of the Press :** Newspapers and the media poisoned public opinion by presenting views in such a manner so as to increase their sale. Their hostile propaganda created an atmosphere of doubt, distrust and tension which proved harmful to world peace.

**7. Absence of an effective International Machinery :** There was no effective International machinery to enforce International laws and norms amongst nations. In the **First Hague Conference of 1899 A.D.** called on the invitation of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, where 26 nations sent their delegates, a proposal was made that no nation should increase its armies or defence budget for five years. But nothing could be finalised there, mainly because of the German opposition to the said proposal. A **second conference** again met at **Hague in 1907 A.D.** but it could also not achieve the desired result. In the absence of any International organization or Forum to sort out the causes of conflict amongst nations, they were left to themselves to safeguard their own interests through armaments, media and newspapers, secret diplomacy and alliances.

#### (b) The Immediate Causes :

**The Sarajevo Incident :** In June 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Heir-Apparent to the throne of Austria went on an official visit to





Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were shot and killed in their car on a visit to Sarajevo on June 28, 1914.

Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. There, on June 28, 1914, he and his wife were shot dead. The assassin, Gavrilo Princip, was a nineteen year old Bosnian. This dual murder had been planned in Serbia by a secret society of patriotic terrorists, called the "**Black Hand**". The Austrians blamed the Serbians for this crime, as the assassin and the fellow conspirators had received their guns and bombs in the Serbian capital, with the help of Serbian officials. Presuming this to be true, Austria made eleven demands and sent a stiff ultimatum to Serbia on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, to apprehend the criminals and hand them over to the Austrian government. Austria also sought a ban on anti-Austrian publications, anti-Austrian meetings and institutions in Serbia.



## SOLVE THE FOLLOWING SHORT QUESTIONS.

1. Name the signatory countries that fought the first world war.
2. What was the reason of the formation of of the two rival blocs?
3. What happened in the First Hague Conference, 1899?
4. What was the cause of rivalry between Serbia and Austria ?

## SOLVE THE FOLLOWING BROAD QUESTIONS.

1. Discuss the causes of the First World War.
2. How colonial rivalry led to the outbreak of First World War.