**How Did Nationalism Act as a Major Cause of The First World War.**

The First World War is a historical event that shaped the world into what is today. As one of the causes of the war alongside imperialism, militarism and alliances, nationalism is also the linking factor between the other reasons. Nationalism is a concept of national consciousness that elevates one nation above all others and prioritizes the development of its culture and interests over those of other nations or supranational groups. The origin of nationalism is traced back to Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Elie Kedourie (1993, 1) is unambiguous regarding the origins of nationalism: 'Nationalism is a concept that originated in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. These notions have become firmly naturalized in Western political vocabulary, which has been appropriated for use by the entire world.' This encapsulates the conventional view of nationalism's origins and spread: nationalism as "a criterion for determining the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state, and for the right organization of a society of states." (Kedourie 1993, 1), the foundation of modern political systems, was born in Europe and is now shared worldwide.

During the 19th century, the ideology of nationalism was gaining momentum among the European nations this resulted in an increased faith in one's own country, its leadership, economy, and military force. Many nationalists became blind to their own country's flaws. In foreign affairs or global rivalry, they were sure that their country was just, righteous, and faultless. This kind of faith causes many nations to feel strongly that their country, way of life, and culture were superior to those of every other country. Therefore, in order to propagate their way of life, these nations sought to conquer neighboring continents. Underlying this sense of supremacy was a link to something greater worth fighting for, a sense of national identity and, for many, independence and self-rule. Following the Spring of Nations in 1848, an increasing number of European nations gained independence and became nation-states, notably Germany, Italy, Serbia, and Bulgaria. However, by 1914, there were many more nations on the continent with self-rule ambitions, particularly within Austria-Hungary.

As a result of Pan- Slavism, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Austro-Hungarian Empire's heir to the throne, became the most obvious manner nationalism precipitated World War I. Many, repressed Slavic tribes within the Austro-Hungarian Empire desired to establish separate nation states. They were fed up with having to speak German, bowing to the alleged superiority of German culture, and having their personal demands sacrificed to the requirements of the empire. As a result, nationalist movements erupted across the Slavic lands. Serbs were among the most aggressive nationalists. The archduke was slain on Serbian land by the Black Hand, a militant nationalist Serbian group, in protest of their country's ongoing membership in the Austro-Hungarian empire.

On July 23, 1914, the Austro-Hungarian empire issued an ultimatum to Serbia with a number of unequivocal demands. Serbia refuses to comply with the stringent ultimatum. Because a number of alliances between European countries were already in place, different countries supported either the Austro-Hungarian Empire or Serbia, depending on their allegiances. Russia, France, and England were willing to employ military force to support Serbia, while Germany was prepared to go to war with its ally, the Austro-Hungarian empire. World War I began out soon after.

Meanwhile, imperialism had most likely misled the great nations about the true nature of conflict. Imperialism is a system in which a powerful nation seizes, governs, and exploits territory beyond its borders. It was a major cause of World War I. Several European countries were imperial powers prior to World War I. Even before WWII, the United Kingdom was the most powerful imperial power. During these times, France, Germany, Spain, and Portugal were the leading global imperial powers. Imperialist nations impose authority over other territories through infiltration and annexation, political pressure, military conquest, or war. Competition for new territories and possessions, as well as imperial competition, raised tensions between key European countries and contributed to the onset of World War I.

Nationalism arose as a result of increased citizen participation in government, the establishment of empires, and times of economic and social transition. Wars, imperial conquests, political discourses, rivalries, journalism, and popular culture all made significant contributions to pre-war nationalism.

Expansion of the British empire, German nationalism as a result of German unification, Serbian nationalism for a Greater Serbia, and other factors all contributed to an upsurge in nationalist feelings and a number of significant events during World War I. Apart from the Crimean War and the Franco-Prussian War, there had been over a century without a major confrontation between two European powers. With the exception of France, none of the great powers had suffered defeat in the half-century preceding WWI, and triumphs over lesser-equipped forces in Africa and Asia had undoubtedly led to a foolish overconfidence in each nation's ability to win a war in Europe.

According to Jennifer L. and Steven T. (2020), nationalism was closely linked to militarism. Nationalism led to overconfidence among Europe's major military nations involved in World War One. Many of these countries, including Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the United Kingdom, expected to win the war quickly and with low losses. Instead, the terrible battle lasted four years and killed millions of people. It fostered delusions about the relative military strength of European nations. This later materialize as a confidence that they would win a war. For instance, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia thought his empire was upheld by God and guarded by a sizable standing army of 1.5 million troops, the biggest land force in Europe during peacetime. Russian leaders believed that their country had the upper hand over the lesser countries of western Europe due to its vast population. The nation's heavy industry, which had developed quickly in the late 1800s, was where the French put their trust. Paris likewise placed a lot of emphasis on its defenses, particularly a wall of fortified concrete barriers encircling its eastern boundary.

Militant nationalism is defined as loving one's own country while despising others. Many living in the Great Powers considered their nations to be militarily superior and better equipped to win a future war in Europe. Militant Nationalism arose as a result of escalating unrest among Europe's many countries in order to safeguard their own national interests. Their desire to better their own country resulted in a big and catastrophic World War that resulted in the loss of many lives and resources. This military nationalism prompted the forces to go to war among themselves in order to achieve their own personal objectives. Their hostility, economic competence, and the resulting international tensions drove the forces against one other, laying the path for a broader war. This was the driving force behind the First World War.

Apart from the effects of Imperialism and military nationalism, nationalism brought about WWI through the following chronological events. The first being, Napoleon's failures in Europe. Following the Napoleonic Wars, several countries in Europe, particularly the old Holy Roman Empire and France, saw a rise in revolutions. These revolutions aimed to replace old global values of absolute aristocracy with new nation-states founded on liberal values. Despite its failure, liberalism did not perish, and the growth of nationalism would soon lead to some extremely significant events, which will be discussed in depth.

The Rise of Central European Empires in the mid-1800s. The union of Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy in the mid-to-late 1800s resulted in the formation of new empires attempting to demonstrate their strength to other empires such as Britain and Russia. This sowed distrust and friction in France (which was opposed to a unified Germany) and Britain (which wished to balance everyone's influence in Europe so that no one was stronger than the other). Followed by, the Ottoman Empire's Demise in Europe - The Ottomans, known as the "sick man of Europe," progressively lost territory in the Balkans to those seeking independence, including Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, and Greece. Their nationalisms would exacerbate the geopolitical situation throughout the planet.

Finally, the geopolitics of the world in 1914 after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Ottoman, and Japan were major empires with an enormous swath of land all across the world. Furthermore, they were all nationalist, militaristic, imperialist, and distrustful of each other to some extent, with Germany and France preparing for a round two of the Franco-Prussian war, Serbia and Russia acknowledging each other as "Slavic brothers," and Britain vowing to protect Belgium if they were invaded. All of this brewed nationalism and ego to the point that distrust is rampant and the least thing can spark a conflict.

In conclusion, nationalism was regarded as a major cause of World War I because it fostered a strong sense of pride and allegiance to one's nation. As each country strove to assert its own national identity and interests, this resulted in competition and violence between them. Furthermore, the concept of "national self-determination", the view that ethnic groups have the right to form their own nation-states, contributed to tensions between countries. Various European countries made alliances with one another for security and support in the years leading up to the conflict. These alliances, however, eventually resulted in a web of treaties and commitments that drew countries into the fight, as one country's actions would eventually include its allies. The commencement of the war was also influenced by nationalistic rhetoric and a desire for expansion. Imperialistic powers such as Germany and Austria-Hungary regarded the war as an opportunity to extend their borders and resources, whilst smaller nations saw it as an opportunity to attain independence. Overall, nationalism played a crucial role in the start of World War I because it fostered a sense of competitiveness and hostility among countries, eventually drawing them into a web of alliances and commitments that culminated to the outbreak of war.

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