Origin of the War

Excerpted from The War of the Nations: Portfolio of Rotogravure Etchings, 526.

On June 28, 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne, and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenburg, were assassinated in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. The assassin, a student named Prinzip, was arrested and held for trial. Although he was a Bosnian, feelings in Austria ran high against Serbia, which, it was claimed, was responsible for the deed, if not positively, at least negatively, by permitting her soil to be made the basis for anti-Austrian intrigue.

At 6 o'clock in the evening of July 23, 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Minister, at Belgrade presented to the Serbian Government a note containing the demands of the Dual Monarchy with regard to the suppression of the Pan-Serbian movement and the punishment of Serbians alleged to have been concerned in the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The document, which sought to make Serbia a vassal of Austria-Hungary, was harsh, peremptory, and provocative.

Serbia's answer to the Austro-Hungarian note was sent on July 25, 1914. It conceded all the demands except two, which infringed upon its rights as a sovereign State, and these two it offered to submit to arbitration.

The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office denounced Serbia's reply on July 27 and issued a formal declaration of war the next day, the text of which follows:

The Royal Government of Serbia not having replied in a satisfactory manner to the note remitted to it by the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Belgrade on July 23, 1914, the Imperial and Royal Government finds itself compelled to proceed to safeguard its rights and interests and to have recourse for this purpose to force of arms.

Austria- Hungary considers itself, therefore, from this moment in a state of war with Serbia. COUNT BERCHTOLD; Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary.

Attempts at mediation by France and England were fruitless. Austria persisted, and Germany refused to curb her ally.

After vainly pleading with the Kaiser to intervene for peace, the Czar of Russia mobilized a portion of his army to go to the aid of Serbia; Germany invaded Belgium, Great Britain declared war on Germany, and the great conflict that was to shake the world for more than four years had begun.

American Memory. "Newspaper Pictorials: World War I Rotogravures." *Newspaper Pictorials: World War I Rotogravures*. The Library of Congress, n.d. Web. 20 Oct. 2013. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/collections/rotogravures/rotoevents1.html>.