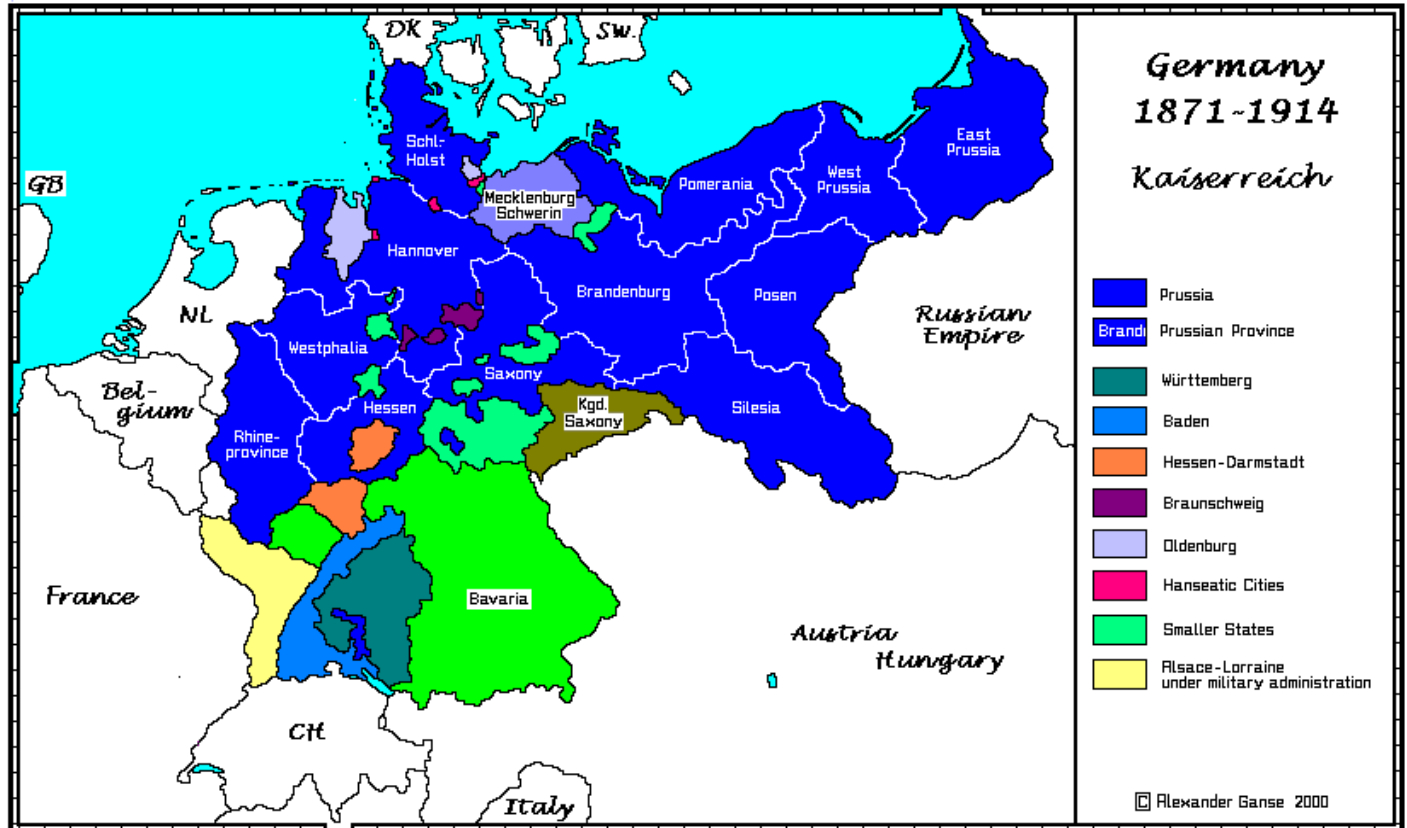## THE GERMAN EMPIRE 1871-1918

Events that led Germany into WWI

Germany was an empire made up of 26 different areas. Since the empire was formed in 1871, Germany had experienced rapid economic growth. There had been economic troubles until the government began helping in the development of manufacturing, engineering projects, and the development of chemical and automotive industries.

The German people were witnessing a change from the farming and agricultural base of the last century to a more industrial base in the new century. German expertise in building things (e.g., railroad bridges, ships) and the sciences (e.g., chemical industry) was well known. By the end of the 19th century, the German universities had become an academic and scientific magnet attracting students from many foreign countries. By 1910, the population of Germany had increased to 65 million. More than 40% were employed in industry and 35% worked in agriculture. Germany could produce enough food to feed its entire population.

The German Empire had a lot in common with their neighbor, the Austria-Hungarian Empire. Both countries had monarchies, both countries were made up of former kingdoms that had been brought together into an empire, and both considered themselves to be Germanic peoples.

At the end of June 1914, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary was assassinated by a Serbian. At this time, Serbia was part of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. The investigation convinced Austria-Hungary that the goal of the assassination was to get Serbia out of the Austria-Hungarian Empire. Austria-Hungary and Germany were both worried that if one small part of the Empire split off, other areas would want independence, as well. Both countries feared that the pieces would be taken over by Russia.

Germany worked hard to get ready for war. Germany had the strongest army in the world. In 1914, the regular German Army comprised 25 corps (700,000 men). The German Navy was the second largest in the world in 1914. It had more than 60 ships, 30 old submarines and ten U-boats, with 17 more under construction. Germany was slow to develop aircraft, but by 1914, Germany had more aircraft (planes and Zeppelins) than the rest of the world combined.

Effects of WWI on Germany

The German Empire wanted to develop, but did not have, the kind of empire that Great Britain had already developed with many colonies all over the world. As such, most of the money raised in preparation for the war, as well as the materials needed to ramp up military production, came from the German homeland.

Central Powers	Cost in Dollars in 1914-18
Germany	$37,775,000,000
Total Central Powers Costs	$60,643,160,000

The Germans had been working to expand their empire, so the army that existed in 1914 was already fairly large. As it became clear that Germany would face war on both the Western Front (mostly France) and Eastern Front (Russia), it also became clear that Germany would need a very large army.

WWI Countries	Standing Armies & Reserves August 1914	Mobilized Forces 1914-18
Germany	4,500,000	11,000,000

Part of what made WWI so horrible for the soldiers was the use of the WMD called mustard gas. This poison gas would kill anyone who did not get his gas mask on fast enough whenever a gas bomb exploded nearby. Also, mustard gas is heavier than air, so it sank down into the fox holes and other places the soldiers were hiding from the artillery shells and bombs. Many soldiers were injured or killed by mustard gas during WWI. In total, more than 1.2 million people were injured by poison gas attacks; nearly 100,000 of them died.

Effects of Mustard Gas

Country	Non-Fatal	Deaths	Total
Germany	191,000	9,000	200,000
Total	1,205,655	91,198	1,296,853

In addition to being costly in terms of lives lost, WWI was also expensive in terms of the money spent by the governments to run the war.

Central Powers	Cost in Dollars in 1914-18
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Questions to prepare for simulation to represent Germany's perspective

1. Why did Germany become an ally of Austria-Hungary and not France or England?

2. How might winning WWI have helped Germany? Explain by giving details.

3. How should Germany be dealt with as a losing country in WWI?

4. As a representative of the German government, what price would you suggest that Germany and the other countries pay to achieve a peaceful end to the war in 1918? Why?