



# History of the Great War, 1914-1918

*Carlton J. H. Hayes*

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"Self-interest was the dominant note of the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Great War. In economics and in politics, among individuals, social classes, and nations, flourished a self-interest that tended more and more to degenerate into mere cynical selfishness... There was no international organization. There was no general authority for the determination of disputes and for the regulation of world interests. There were at the opening of the twentieth century some fifty states, in theory absolutely independent, sovereign, and equal. In fact, the fifty were very unequal and even the strongest among them was not strong enough to maintain its independence should the others unite against it. Yet each proceeded to act on the assumption in most cases that it was self-sufficient and that its own self-interest was its supreme guide." - Carlton J. H. Hayes

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