

## *The "Outbreak" of World War One*

### **Media criticism**

An article in a popular magazine can be a reliable source of historical information, as long as it fulfils certain conditions. The following exercises are aimed at determining the elements that allow multi-media materials (also materials that can be used on the Internet) to be treated as a reliable source of knowledge. It is worth remembering that important information can be communicated not only in paragraph text but valuable conclusions can also be drawn based on the attached illustrations, maps, charts, recordings. So, pay attention to the additional materials – in this case pictures included in the considered article on the First World War.

### TASKS

1. Compare the information included in the article from the magazine "Centuries speak" entitled ["Feast of the War. European Societies in the Presence of the Outbreak of the First World War"](#) with the information from the textbook regarding the outbreak of the First World War. Which of the following sources provide more information about:
  - Political causes of the war;
  - The goals that were supposed to be achieved with the war by its participants;
  - The economic situation in Europe at the time of the war outbreak;
  - Reaction of European societies to the outbreak of the conflict.
  - a. Discuss the following problem as a class/group: Is an article in a popular magazine able to complement or substitute knowledge from textbooks and specialist history books?
2. Try to determine the origins of the illustrations included in the article. Based on the information from the article, is it possible to answer the following questions:
  - From what historical period does a given illustration come?
  - Who is the author of a given illustration?
  - What kind of illustration we are dealing with (picture, photo, poster, postcard, etc.)?
  - a. What are the important elements that make an illustration/drawing/photograph/painting a reliable source of knowledge?
3. Identify the elements present or repeated on different figures that confirm the connection between joining the war and such values as patriotism, heroism, sacrifice, and glory.
  - a. What do the similarities in the illustrations from a variety of countries joining the war included in the article mean?

4. Working in a small group, focus on the Hungarian beer advertisement shown in one of the article's illustrations (p. 33).
  - a. Try to describe in your own words the scene depicted in the poster.
  - b. How was the subject of the war outbreak and general optimism of the society about joining the conflict used for marketing purposes?
  - c. Discuss in front of the group/class, if the subject of war can be found in modern advertising and marketing campaigns. What are possible reasons?
  - d. Discuss in front of the group/class the following issue: Can advertising materials be a reliable source of historical information? Justify your answer.
5. Which elements of the article suggest that it is a reliable source of information? What other elements that are not included in this article can prove the reliability and credibility of a source of historical information?