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During World War I, Britain's King George V eliminated all German references and titles from the British royal family. This image depicts a *Punch* cartoon, created by L. Raven Hill and published on 27 June 1917, of the King taking that action. Its title is: "The King has done a popular act in abolishing the German titles held by members of His Majesty's family." Image online via Wikimedia Commons.

Britain entered the war because Germany invaded Belgium. Then the rest of the dominos fell.

Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, expressed his emotions (on August 3, 1914) when negotiations to avoid war failed:

The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime.



Here is an extraordinary fact. Many heads of European states, at the time, were closely related:

- Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and Kaiser Wilhelm II were cousins.
- The German Kaiser was Queen Victoria's oldest grandson.
- Wilhelm called the King of England (George V) "Uncle."

In short, a nasty squabble (among members of Queen Victoria's extended family) got out of control. Ultimately, millions of other people were pulled into the fight.

Diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany broke down in February of 1917. Before James Gerard left the American Embassy in Berlin, he was asked to sign a reworked version of an old (1799) treaty addressing how the two countries would deal with each other's merchant vessels (like the *Lusitania*) if hostilities broke out.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ALL-IN-THE-FAMILY-Lusitania-Sinking)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

Questions 2 Ponder

What Makes Family Squabbles So Nasty?

Before WWI, several European heads of state were close relatives who couldn't work-out their differences before dragging the world into war.

Among other things, the German Kaiser was Queen Victoria's oldest grandson. It seems logical, then, that Britain's King and Germany's Kaiser could have settled their country's differences without going to war.

SO ... why didn't they?

Do you think that the "politics" of growing tensions, between European countries in 1914, took precedence over royal family ties? Explain your answer.

Family squabbles, in our own time, can take-on nasty lives of their own. Why is that?

Do you think that people, from the same family, are less-tolerant of each other than they are of friends or even strangers? Explain your answer.

Media Stream



American Embassy in Berlin before WWI

Image online, courtesy the Brigham Young University Library.

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ALL IN THE FAMILY

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