

Causes of World War I

MAIN causes of WWI

Militarism: Arms/ naval race.

Alliances: Triple Alliance/ Entente.

Imperialism: Countries falling out over growing empires

Nationalism: Countries wanting to build empires and become independent.

Triple Alliance: Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Brought together by a mutual desire to increase empires. Austria-Hungary and Germany were also culturally similar sharing a language.

Triple Entente: Britain, France and Russia. France and Russia brought together by a mutual fear of Germany. Britain and France signed Entente Cordiale in 1904 because Britain was worried about Germany's growing naval ambitions. Russia had also fallen out with Austria-Hungary over Serbia.

The Arms race- Admiral Tirpitz recommended building up the German navy to the Kaiser and they did. Britain's navy was tied to the Two Power Standard- meaning that it had to have a navy to beat the nearest two rivals combined. Britain built the Dreadnought in 1906. Germany started building them too, and the rivalry continued. Especially as Britain didn't see why Germany (small coastline) needed a big navy.

Moroccan Crisis, 1905 (the Tangiers Crisis). Kaiser tried to test the Entente Cordiale by trying to stir up an independence movement against the French in Morocco. An international conference was called to solve the dispute. Britain sided with France. The Kaiser was humiliated. Moroccan Crisis 1911 (the Agadir Crisis). Kaiser sent a gunboat to Agadir. France and Britain worried the Kaiser wanted to start a naval base there. Another international conference called. Kaiser forced to accept French rule in Morocco, but got some territory in the Congo.

The Kaiser- being blamed for international relations

The Kaiser's Weltpolitik (World Policy)
The Kaiser wanted to be a giant international power commanding the same influence as Britain and France- therefore it tried to be influential in other areas of the world and build a big empire; its place in the sun.

This causes tensions with other big empires

The Kaiser therefore does actions such as the Tangiers Crisis of 1905 and the Agadir Crisis of 1911 (interfering in Morocco against the French). He also sent a telegram to Paul Kruger in the Transvaal, congratulating them for fighting the British and upsetting the British.

The Kaiser issued the blank cheque to Austria-Hungary. Without that guarantee of support, Austria-Hungary may never have felt secure enough to declare war on Serbia

This caused Britain and France to get closer together



This caused Britain and France to get closer together against Germany

The Kaiser also began a naval arms race with Britain by building a large navy whilst it only had a small coastline.

This caused Russia, Britain and France to get closer together

The Kaiser also upset the Russians by refusing to renew the Reinsurance Treaty in the early 1900s. This was a non-aggression pact guaranteeing the Russians would not fight the Germans in a war. When the Kaiser refused to sign this, this made the Russians suspicious.

The Balkans

- 1908: The Bosnian Crisis. Austria-Hungary annexed (took over) Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbians were upset about this because they wanted the Bosnians to be part of their Greater Serbia as both were Slavic nations. Russia (also a Slavic nation) supported Serbia, but was not ready to fight Austria-Hungary. Russia let them have Bosnia, but went away and started re-arming.
- 1912-1913: The Balkan Wars. Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria formed the Balkan League to send the Turkish out of the Balkans. They took a lot of land and Serbia expanded. The Treaty of Bucharest ended the conflict (under Britain and Germany) but Serbia felt strong enough now to challenge Austria- especially with Russian support.