

Prelude to WWI

Europe & the World in 1900



In the last few decades of the nineteenth century, there was growing unrest amongst the European nations. There had been peace for over fifty years in Europe however, the peace had been uneasy. The nineteenth century had seen a tremendous growth in the power of the nations of Europe, with Britain and Germany dominating European industries. Germany's army and Britain's navy stood supreme. The other European countries had also made their mark on the world. The French and the Dutch had conquered large parts of the Far East and the French, along with the Belgians, Germans, Portuguese, and Spanish had taken over almost all of Africa between 1880-1914. This was a time of great colonialism and empire building which saw a rapid growth in industries and arms production to defend these growing empires. Defending these empires meant also needing to have naval strength because often parts of a nation's empire was located on another continent. By 1914, all of Europe was tense and uneasy with the growing conflicts

CAUSES OF WWI

- 1) Growing Unrest throughout Europe
- 2) Naval Rivalry between Britain and Germany
- 3) Imperialism
- 4) Nationalism
- 5) Militarism
- 6) Joining of Alliances



Imperialism: - the conquest of territory and peoples of other nations

- acquisition of land to build a nation's empire
- also includes economic factors (Naval Race between Germany & Britain), Colonies had raw materials countries needed for their industrial growth.

Nationalism: - the sense of belonging and loyalty to a racial, linguistic, or historical group living in a particular place. In Europe, ruling an overseas empire was a symbol of national pride and enhancing the glory of the homeland. (ie: British Commonwealth)

Militarism: is the policy of building up military forces and weaponry and threatening armed aggression. In Britain and Germany, it began when these two nations spent millions of dollars to build up their armies and navies to compete for 'control of the waves'. (Naval Race)

Joining of Alliances:

TRIPLE ENTENTE (1907-1917)

- Britain
- France
- Russia

TRIPLE ALLIANCE (1879-1918)

- * Germany
- * Austria-Hungary
- * Italy

- Italy didn't join the alliance until May 1915

These system of alliances (allies), or treaties between governments, were intended to keep peace in Europe. War with any allied nation meant war with the whole alliance, a threat that was intended to tame war-like nations.

International Events leading up to 1914...

- 1848 Revolutions in Europe
- 1881 Czar Alexander II of Russia assassinated
- 1894 Japan goes to war with China over Korea
- 1899 Boer War South Africa begins
- 1901 Queen Victoria dies; Edward VII becomes King of Great Britain
- 1904 Moroccan Crisis
- 1905 Schlieffen Plan Developed (war strategy)
- 1905 Russian Bloody Sunday
- 1908 Bosnian Crisis -Austrian Government decides to annex Bosnia and Hercegovina
- 1909 - H.M.S. Dreadnaught launched
- 1911- Mexican Revolution begins
- 1913- Churchill prepares contingency plans paper for Britain to send troops to aid France in war against Germany
- 1914- WWI begins...

