

THE ORIGINS OF WORLD WAR I, 1900-1914

(European Option: Modern Europe, 1789-1917)

(Cambridge International AS and A level History 9389)

TIMELINE

- **May 1871**- Treaty of Frankfurt (France loses Alsace and Lorraine to Germany).
- **Oct 1873**- 3 Emperors' League (Austria, Germany + Russia).
- **Oct 1879**- Dual Alliance formed (Austria + Germany).
- **May 1882**- Triple Alliance formed (Germany, Austria + Italy).
- **Jun 1887**- Reinsurance Treaty (Germany + Russia).
- **Jun 1888**- Wilhelm II becomes Kaiser Germany.
- **Jan 1894**- Franco-Russian alliance formed.
- **Apr 1904**- Entente Cordiale created (Britain + France)
- **Mar 1905**- 1st Moroccan crises begins.
- **Aug 1907**- Triple Entente established (Britain France Russia).
- **Oct 1908**- Balkans crisis (Austria annexes Bosnia).
- **Jul 1911**- 3rd Moroccan Crisis begins.
- **Jul 1914**- Outbreak WWI.

Summary

June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand (Austria) visited Sarajevo in Bosnia (recently province of Austria). Majority of population were ethnic Serbs which hated Austrian leadership. Looked to Serbia for leadership. Sarajevo Serb activist hotbed for terrorist + activists (Tense situation). He + wife killed by Gavrilo Princip.

Assassination triggered series events that led to world war. Killing was final nail into coffin as political tension build up. Caused two opposing powers to form, Entente and Central Powers that caused world war.

Development of Alliance System

Europe in 1900

Start of 20th century, Europe dominated by six major powers. (All created alliance for power + security).

Austria-Hungary

1867 known as Austria- Hungary. Monarchy. Declining power, defeated by Prussia in 1866. Peace settlement that concluded Austro-Prussian war meant Germany now ally. Had growing interests in Balkans + Russia rival there.

Britain

Parliament + monarchy with limited power. More interested in overseas empire than Europe conflicts. Long standing distrust of France. Russia also threat e.g. Suez Canal + route to India. Russia suspected expand into area near India.

France

Only major Republic power. Lost Franco-Prussian war 1871, economy recovered quickly. Had to pay large sums money compensation for war to Germany. French gov. threatened by internal rivalries. Political parties wanted revenge against Germany, socialists no favour war. France recently signed treaty of friendship with Russia. Distrust Britain + Austria-Hungary.

Germany

Monarchy. Parliament (Reichstag) limited power + opinions influence gov. decisions. Latter half 19th century Bismarck(chancellor) controlled Germany. Priority = isolate France. Dismissed 1890 by Wilhelm II (Kaiser), aimed to make Germany leading power. Replaced with Caprivi. Feared encircled Russia + France. Wanted to consolidate Germany's position by stabilising Russia around her. Bismarck tried make France focus on Africa rather than Alsace + Lorraine + getting revenge. Knew that France would do anything possible for revenge defeat in Prussia war. After 1890 less skilfully, operators unable to deal with the alliances created by Bismarck.

Russia

Nick II (tsar) absolute monarch. Remained friendly relations Germany until Wilhelm II refused renew treaty with Russia. Russia rival with Austria. H. in Balkans.

Turkey

Ottoman Empire governed by absolute Monarch. In decline by 1900 "sick man of Europe". Losing Balkans. Britain + France assist Turkey avoid A.H + Russia gaining power.

Who was Wilhelm II?

Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albert (27 January 1859 to 4 June 1941) was last German Emperor (Kaiser) and Prussian king, ruled Kingdom of Prussia (15 June 1888 to 9 November 1918). Was eldest grandchild of British Queen Victoria and related King George V (UK) and Nicholas II (Russia). Came to throne (1888), dismissed Otto von Bismarck (Chancellor) in 1890, launched Germany on "New Course" in foreign affairs and supported Austria-Hungary in 1914 Crisis which led WWI. Often made pronouncement on sensitive topics without consulting with Ministers. 1908 interview cost him his influence, he was an ineffective war-time leader that abdicated 1918 and exiled to Netherlands.

Bismarck's Alliance

Germany large pop. + rapid modernising economy, army that superior to Austria + France. Germany had Bismarck (clever + ruthless statesman).

In 10 years leading up to German unification, Bismarck changed Euro balance of power. End of Franco-Prussian war forced France give Alsace + Lorraine to Germany. Said more German than French whereas not true + high metal industry + agriculture in 1871. Provinces economically valuable. French hated Germany + influenced foreign policy for years to come.

Bismarck knew French seek revenge for humiliation, tried to isolate France + prevent from getting allies. Britain not interested in Europe, didn't like France + Germany. Bismarck two possible allies: Austria-Hungary + Russia, would leave France weak. Problem Austria. H + Russia rivals in Balkans.

Three Emperors' League (1873)

Bismarck negotiated agreement Tsar Alexander II (Russia) + Emperor Franz Joseph I (Austria. H) + Kaiser Wilhelm I (Germany). Isolate France + hoped that calm down disputes over Balkans between Austria. H + Russia through regular meetings. League was largely unsuccessful, mainly disputes between Germany's 2 allies. 1879 league collapsed. Did not lead to significant agreements as powers found difficult reach agreement on concrete objectives.

Dual Alliance (1879)

Bismarck hoped maintain 3 country alliance. Firm agreement with Austria .H better than risky one worth Russia. Germany + Austria. H agreed to defend if Russia attacked. Defensive alliance. Pledged remain neutral if attacked by another country e.g. France. Bismarck kept alliance secret as didn't want to completely alienate Russia. Bid to maintain French diplomatic isolation + force Austrian cooperation with Russia. Made harder for Bismarck separate France + Russia. This would later drag Germany into the Balkan Crises and cause WW1.

Triple Alliance 1882

Extension of Dual. Germany, Austria. H + Italy offered to support. Italy joined to preserve nat. security + anger France for taking Tunisia previous year as Italy also wanted. Bismarck saw Italy as tool to isolate France (not useful for war). Italy insisted alliance exclude action against Britain + offer no guarantee to A. H if war break out. Same time France encouraged perse colonial ambitions in Africa.

Reinsurance Treaty (1887)

Bismarck's plan to isolate France no work. Austria. H + Italy traditional enemies + couldn't make large army to defend Germany if France invade. Germany + Russia no alliance so Germany at risk if France + Russia Ally. Bismarck signed Reinsurance Treaty with Russia to stop invade from East.

Russia + Germany agreed maintain neutral unless Germany attack France or Russia war with Austria. H. Bismarck encourage for country foreign policy to be in different areas, Russia in Balkans + Germany in West. Failed to renew treaty helping France secure Russia as ally severely affecting Germany.

Treaty seemed offer encouragement as allowed as allowed Russia Balkan ambitions + Germany remove threat Russia France collaboration.

Bismarck's influence beginning to wane. Year after treaty made Wilhelm II became Kaiser. More anti-Russian than leaders before + generals persuaded war. Bismarck resigned in 1890 + Reinsurance treaty collapsed.

Opposition to Germany

All alliances, negotiated by Bismarck, entirely defensive + intended preserve peace. Formed in secret making other powers suspicious. Suspicious intensified when Germany adopted aggressive foreign approach. Germany wanted to expand into Africa + achieve access to seas for good trading. Russia, Britain, France getting in way of success.

Franco-Russian Alliance (1894)

When Reinsurance lapsed 1890 Russia felt threatened. Russia + France steadily improved relations. Began negotiations for treaty. 1888 France gave Russia loans as wanted to keep friendly. They scared of Triple alliance so created their own defensive one. Both countries give aid if either attacked. Alliance exist as long as Triple alliance exist. Was defensive alliance.

Britain policy (Splendid Isolation)

"Splendid Isolation" Brits focused expanding + controlling empire than events at home. Tried agreement with Germany for colonies in Africa. 7 attempts made all failed. Wilhelm II

expansionist (Conflict with Brits). Britain began depart from isolationist policy, treaty with Japan 1902. Worried as Germany's economy rapidly improving. By 1914 best in Europe.

Turn of 20th century uncertain whether Britain preferred Russia, France Germany. Many Brit politicians + army preferred Germany as:

- Germany monarchy (same as Britain).
- Wilhelm II Queen Victoria's grandson
- Queen's husband was German
- German got thriving economy.
- German philosophers, writers, scientists regarded in Britain.

British alliance with France less likely:

- France republic, less politically stable than Germany.
- In Britain, Memories of Napoleon still there.
- Two countries followed history of mistrust.
- France's defeat in Franco-Prussian war showed weaknesses.
- France bigger threat to Brits colonies.
- France diplomatically closer to Russia (Brits didn't trust).

A British Alliance Russia equally unlikely:

- Russia underdeveloped economy + offered few opportunities for trade.
- Militarily weak.
- Russia wanted to expand influence in India + China (competition with Britain).

Britain chose France as scared of German Navy. Britain + France signed Entente Cordiale in 1904. France gave Britain Egypt and France got Morocco. Offered Britain end to isolation. Britain basically disagreeing with Germany by joining.

Triple Entente

Anglo-Russian Entente brought France, Britain + Russia together series friendly alliances to defend if attacked. Known as Triple Entente. 1907 Europe divided two opposing camps – Triple Alliance + Triple Entente. Created defensive purpose but both sides suspicious of other's aims.

Anglo-Russian Entente (1907)

Russia saw Germany + Triple Alliance as major threat to security. Also concerned as Austria-H + Germany take over large part of Balkans which affect trade for 40% Russia export.

Russia vast country, largest army. Defeat by Japanese made Britain not think as threat in East for imperial ambitions. Economically underdeveloped + military weak. Germany now bigger threat. Entente was marriage of convenience for both countries + agreement didn't say support each other if war.

Anglo-Japanese Alliance 1902

Britain concerned by reaction of Euro powers to loss in Boer wars. German navy made Brit. No isolationist + make allies. Made ally with Japan. Offered protection to Brit. Possession in East during war. Ally with France more surprising to Germany.

Entente Cordiale 1904

King Edward VII visit France 1904 + led to Entente. Was series agreements settle disputes between Britain + France. France gave Brit. Egypt in return recognition France control Morocco. Gave France security against Triple Alliance. For Britain offered end to Euro. Isolation.

Consequences of alliances for international stability

1907, Europe divided triple Alliance + Triple Entente. Germany strongest, Italy weakest.

1900 Germany saw itself as world power, no interest in Balkans. Austria. H worried about Balkans + Germany get involved as only ally. Italy joined as deprived of territories in N. Africa by France.

Triple Entente just series loose associations Russia, Britain + France. Agreement didn't state result of attack by Austria or Germany. System of alliances responsible as confusing + not clear.

1914 France Russia likely support in war. Britain not so much.

Naval race created tension Britain and Germany. Invasion of Belgium short term.

Alliance system worked in short term not in long. Stopped war in Balkans + N. Africa. Too many countries wanted war so alliance made worse.

Militarism + Naval Race

1900-14 Euro countries increase money on armaments. German navy £50 million 1910 to 90 mili in 14. Britain also increased. German nationalism + patriotism also growing. Defeat of British in Boer Wars made countries question military + whether strong enough. Boer means farmer. Used 'scorched earth policy' during war.

Increasing armaments

Army more important in Germany than rest of Europe. Frederick the Great expanded Prussia. Bismarck relied on his strong army to win wars + unify Germany. German generals respected. German army well financed. 1913+ army increased. Germany concerned France soon army to defeat.

Russia seen weak in Russo- Japanese war. Improved army + better transport modernise navy + military.

Austria no longer great army. Possibly win against Serbia + Balkan states but not against Europe powers.

Britain only country without conscription before war. Brought in 18 months after war broke out. People were very nationalistic and didn't mind following aggressive foreign policies to preserve pride. "scramble" caused arms race as Country had to defend country + colony.

The Naval Race: Britain + Germany

Started 1906 when Britain launch Dreadnaughts. Germany started modernising navy to defend trade routes. Britain said navy too big for their colonies.

Created tension between two countries.

Britain built Naval base on East Scotland against invasion Germany. Reasoning Failed. Public opinion in both countries supported their govts.

1914 British Navy still stronger but had larger empire to control.

Germany could use navy to defend whereas Britain had to control empire + defend.

Britain knew how to use navy in war Germany didn't. Navy heavy expense for Germany.

Rivalries overseas

Rivalries between European countries began to spread out into Africa + rest of world. Imperialism

Scramble for Africa + Struggle for Concessions

1870 Britain Germany France looked to Africa for resources. 1914 only independent ones were Ethiopia + Liberia. Russia focused mainly on China called Scramble for concessions.

Each countries reason for expansionist policy:

- Britain- Already controlled vast part of globe. 19 century Britain wanted to spread into Africa + Far East. Had largest Empire. Trade routes with India vital for Britain. Suez Canal, ports in South. People say establishment British power in Egypt caused scramble for Africa. Used excuse that making people not pagan + bringing Catholicism. Discovery of gold + diamonds made want more land. Encouraged by Cecil Rhodes. Wanted to reinforce commercial gain

- France- Suffered defeat against Prussia 1870s. Lost land. Expansion into Africa allow to continue calling great power. Gained Algeria + Senegal. French moved in land to find raw materials. Politicians believed development of overseas empire essential for + wealth, power and prestige.
- Germany- Under Wilhelm II followed “World Policy”, Bismarck preferred European concentration. Germany wanted place in the Sun. Colonies supply raw materials. In 19th century Germany had small colonies in Africa. Desired more. Politicians made change policy of conc. In Europe to Africa to boost economy. By time got involved in Africa most good land gone. Spent more than got in return.
- Italy- Unified in 1870 + wanted to become Great Power. Economy less advanced + wanted Africa. Annex Abyssinia failed 1896. Gained some trade routes in China.
- Russia- Divided between aims expand at expense of Turkey or Far East for China.

Britain + France both wanted Egypt + later negotiated + stopped war.

South Africa Expansion by Britain made conflict with Germany who had territories in S-E + S-W.

Africa plentiful in Gold diamonds etc. great powers wanted these as good for economy. Cecil Rhodes Important Figure.

1871 only 10% Africa under Euro control, by 1900 +90% under Euro rule. Easy to colonise due to weaponry + better military than Africa. Countries had to look overseas to increase wealth, power, prestige + influence, raw materials. Colonists used excuse that improving lives of Africans.

Treaty of Berlin. Countries argued over division of land which built up tension.

The Moroccan Crises

Most serious crises took place Morocco. It was independent but Britain + France both rival trading interests. France claimed borders not certain + proximity to French Algeria mentions should be there's.

1905 Kaiser Wilhelm II visited area during Med cruise to pay respects to Sultan + claimed Morocco should be independent + count on Germany for help against French expansion. Britain + France angry as wanted for trading. Germany aimed at dividing Britain + France over matter + improve German prestige. Convinced that war close. Plan failed. Crises defused conference in Algeiras 1906 only Austria supported Germany. Italy supported France. Morocco gained independence, France controlling power. Brought Britain + France together as brit gov alarmed German bullying tactics + growing navy.

Second Moroccan Crises 1908 resolved quick France + Germany.

Third Crises 1911 threatened cause war. Panther, German gunboat, sent Moroccan port Agadir undermine French power in region. Britain not involved, saw as dangerous use of

German navy. British Politicians concerned. Some German generals + politicians in favour going war, Kaiser backed down, agreeing concession France in Congo. Britain + France drew closer, Germany diplomatic defeat. Made Brit + France serious planning coordinate naval defences + military strategy combats further German challenges. 1912 German leaders felt ambitions + position in Europe menaced by growing power of Entente. German public disappointed as no naval triumphs. Anger of Germans not successes made war even more inevitable.

Instability in the Balkans

Turkey had controlled a vast empire. Began to decline in 17th century, survived 19th century due to lack of agreements.

Turkey was main loser + sick man. New Balkans states created including Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia threatened peace. New countries recognised dangers of being overtaken by Balkans States. Peace settlements regarded as temporary as not solve ambitions of small states + concerns of larger countries.

Balkan Nationalism

Turkey's weak control Balkans led to increase nationalism end 19th century. Few natural frontiers boundaries of new countries + region of different racial groups, religions, cultures. Groups agitated for freedom Turkish rule + fought among themselves. Russia + Austria. H saw situation Balkans dangerous yet power vacuum for each country to win land. Set two nations on collision course.

Austria lost leading role in Germany to Bismarck's Prussia. Could still remain power if controlled Balkans. Region dangerous to A. H growing separatism + nationalism could split up empire. Domino effect could spread affecting A. H as also full of different racial groups, Croats, Slavs, Serbs. Some say that main cause of war was the denial of self-determination to minority groups by powers in region. Some say that Austria defensive policy as collapse of Turkey scared to keep balance in power. Also, aggressive as wanted power vacuum + destroy Serbia. Germans blank check gave Austria too much confidence.

Russia lost Crimean, mid 19th century + Japanese war in 1905. Not able to extend. Had cultural + religious links with Slavs, Serbs + helped as were Orthodox Christians in area.

Britain, France + Germany lost interest in Balkans but France allied to Russia + Germany to Austria. Could not avoid being involved. Britain anti Russian until entente early 20th century. British continued avoid involvement. negotiating when problems.

Crises in the Balkans before 1914

1908-09 Austria Hungary annexed Bosnia mainly populated by Serbs. Serbs in Bosnia + Serbia + Russia angered by move. Germany backed Austria + two countries threatened invade Serbia. Potential disaster included same as 1914 crisis. Serbia + Russia backed down + resolved peacefully. Germany, Austria. H believed Russia would back down in the future. Russia believed that should never back down again.

1912, members of Balkan League rose against Turkey. Crisis persuaded great powers hold conference in London to resolve problem before European conflict. As result of conference, Serbia made gains that persuaded its people that Austria power in decline. Saw opportunity to unify Serbs outside of country e.g. Austrian Bosnia.

Reasons for outbreak of War in 1914

Before assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand 1914 Sarajevo all major European countries dealing with internal problems more pressing than Balkans. Some politicians said could develop into armed conflict but more likely to settle by diplomacy as Crises. Consequences took people by surprise.

Austrian Ultimatum

Príncipe's actions gave Austria. H excuse crush Serbia power + end threat of nationalism to empire. No desire for another negotiated settlement. On 23 July sent Serbia series of unreasonable demands with deadline in 48 hours. Ultimatum accused Serbian gov of supporting murderers, demanded Serbia prosecute assassins + end anti-Austrian propaganda. Austrian officials allowed to enter to make sure done. Serbian gov ordered to publish acceptance of demands.

Serbian gov accepted most demands but denied responsibility for murder + suggested international judgement reached by Hague Tribunal or meeting of Great powers. Events developed + much of Europe got involved:

- Russia intervened for Serbia. 29 July mobilised army to put pressure on Austria. H.
- Germany urged Austria. H not back down. 30 July Germany mobilised in reaction to Russia.
- France not concerned with rivalries in Balkans, long time enemy Germany, to support Russia mobilised 1 August.

Britain + Germany by 1914

As countries prepared for war Britain wanted stay out. By 1914 relations between Germany + Britain improving. British Politicians didn't believe would have to get involved in war even though Triple Entente. After assassination in Sarajevo, brit gov called for negotiations without indicating which outcome favoured.

1914, naval race soured relations between Britain + Germany, also had different international priorities. Britain uneasy about getting drawn into politics of continental Europe. Germany focused less on becoming world power as weren't successful. Despite this much to suggest Britain + Germany do everything possible avoid war with each other:

- Countries had close trade links. British businessmen not favour expensive war with Germany.

- Britain uneasy about alliance Russia + regarded Entente Cordiale as agreement with France that not involve fighting war.
- Britain not interested in Balkans + favoured negotiated settlement to Sarajevo crisis.
- Germany's priorities keep France weak, neutralise Russia + keep Austria. H as ally, avoid being encircled. Britain not major problem.

The road to war

1910 France, Russia, Germany, Austria. H developed offensive plans to defend if war. Austria. H decided go to war against Serbia to remove as threat to nationalism.

The Schlieffen Plan

Put forward in 1895 to defend Germany against France + Germany. Go through Belgium, defeat France in six weeks then defeat Russia. Take Russia time to mobilise so Germany win. Grey warned Germany that British could get involved if War.

The railway system

Believed that made war easily. Powers use railway to mobilise troops as fast as possible. Some mobilised before war was declared to be better prepared. By time troops reach border too late to stop war. Confusion + poor communication made war inevitable once troops mobilised.

Invasion of Belgium

Germany's concern always prospect war on two fronts:

Against France in West + Russia in East. 1905 German military developed Schlieffen plan, based on assumption that, Russia take longer mobilise + defeat due to vast size than France. Plan imagined quick success against France. By time defeat France enough soldiers to defeat Russia.

French frontier with Germany heavily defended + probably not allow Germany swift victory. Alternate way to attack through Belgium which is weak + passive. Made part of the Schlieffen plan. This posed political problem for Germany. Belgian neutrality protected by series of treaties established 1839, both Britain + France committed to defend.

Schlieffen plan formed basis of German strategy in 1914. Assumed that:

- Russia would take at least six weeks to mobilise
- France could be defeated in six weeks
- Belgium be too weak to resist German Invasion
- Britain might protest, not go to war over Belgium

- Britain could protest but not go to war over Belgium

Most serious German error was assuming Britain no defend Belgium. Belgium decisive factor which brought Britain into war. Matter of honour to defend "little Belgium + important geographically. Brits relied on Navy for defence, Belgium in N. sea dangerous base for German navy. Invasion persuaded British politicians to go to war.

European Politicians in 1914

Several Euro politicians played role diplomatic manoeuvres leading to WWI:

- **Count Leopold Berchtold-** Austro foreign minister 1912-15. Hardliner against Serbia pre. 1914 + supported Austria Ultimatum. Preferred invade Serbia immediately without ulti.
- **Bethmann-Hollweg-** Chancellor of Germany 1909-17. Came under pressure from extreme right-wing + militaristic groups for foreign policies + from liberals for domestic. Had to manage Kaiser's tendency to pursue extreme policies abroad. Supported war 1914 but hoped to be brief. Was Opposed political reform, came dependent on non-parliamentary centres influence such as court, army + bureaucracy.
- **Sir Edward Grey-** British foreign Minister 1905-16. Supported Entente Cordiale with France, feared growth German Navy. Did not make clear whether Britain go to war Germany until mobilisation + invasion Belgium.
- **Nikola Pasic-** Prime minister Serbia 1912-18. He caught between strength Serbian nationalism feeling + Serbian ambitions threat to own security. Austria blamed him + gov for Ferdinand. Promised to prosecute anybody involved, events soon out of control.
- **Raymond Poincaré-** President France 1913-20. Pursued strongly anti-German + pro-Russian policies. Sought good relations with Brits + tried to make Cordiale firm alliance.
- **Sergei Sazonov-** Russian foreign minister 1910-16. Opposed A. H influence in Balkans pre-WWI. Some believed too moderate + wanted him assert Russian influence in Region.

Declaration of War

1. Austria declare war Serbia.
2. Russia mobilises army frontiers Austria + Germany.
3. Germany warns Russia + when decline declared war Russia, France, Belgium.
4. Britain declared war Germany.

Why did break out so quickly:

- ✓ Austria-Hungary determined crush Serbia, punish for anti-Austrian campaign. Confident Serbia, weak militarily, back down. Even if not Austria believed win quick war backing of Germany.
- ✓ Germany 1 reliable ally Austria. H which not strong power. With German support show power not reckon with. Russia friendship Serbia likely cause war with Germany. Involve France causing war two fronts.
- ✓ Serbia small country, encouraged by gains in previous Balkan Crises. Majority country nationalistic. Some convinced Austria. H final state decline + others more realistic.
- ✓ Russia believed made too many concessions in past, must stand up against Austria + Germany. Russia + Serbia common interests.
- ✓ France keen keep Russia ally against Germany, had to make stand for Serbia against Austria. H.
- ✓ Britain wanted balance of power, didn't want Austria + Germany or France + Russia dominate Europe. Ententes with France + Russia not oblige Britain war against Austria. Britain not clear solution favoured beyond hope crisis remain local. Belgium independence more important for brit honour + strategic than Balkans. Treaty of London.

Some believe Russia mobilisation more important than Austrian Ultimatum. Germany took mobilisation as declare war. Russia size + poor communication longer to prepare. Others say main cause = fear. Powers scared that lose influence unless take stand:

- Austria scared lose position of power if let Serbia no punish.
- Britain threatened German navy + Belgium Invasion.
- France resist German ambitions + try get Alsace and Lorraine.
- Germany afraid encircled Russia + France + support only good ally, Austria.
- Russia saw as champ of Slavs + afraid seemed weak previous Balkan Crises.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION c. 1894-1917

(European Option: Modern Europe, 1789-1917)

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TIMELINE

- **NOV 1894**-Nicholas II becomes Tsar
- **FEB 1904**-Start of Russo-Japanese War
- **JAN 1905**-Start 1905 Rev.
- **OCT 1905**-October Manifesto Issued
- **NOV 1905**-Sergei Witte becomes prime minister
- **APR 1906**-Duma introduced
- **JUL 1906**-Stolypin becomes prime minister
- **SEP 1911**-Stolypin assassinated
- **JUL 1914**-Start WWI
- **MAR 1917**-Nicholas II abdicates + Prov. Gov. established
- **OCT 1917**-Oct Rev. led by Lenin
- **JUL 1918**-Nicholas + family murdered by Bolsheviks

Summary

From 1894 Russia ruled by Tsar Nicholas II (Absolut Monarch + unlimited power). Nicholas determined to model Gov. just like Alexander III (his father). Nicholas badly educated + chose ministers that bad at job (exception = Sergei Witte). Nick had support Russian nobility + full authority of Orthodox Church.

Peasants + workers dissatisfied with conditions causing Rev 1905. Troubles spread to middle classes. Army saved Nicholas II but didn't do reforms. 1906-1914 army + police maintained order while opposition groups (divided and disorganised).

1914 WWI most supported countries involvement. Drastic defeat due to obsolete and outdated army caused national morale to suffer. Nicholas went to front lines to control his army, backfired. Nicholas bad general and nobody capable of governing in his place. Nicholas lost support + FEB 1917 Rev broke out and Nicholas abdicated.

Throughout 1917 chaos continued. Prov. Gov. led by Alexander Kerensky faced problems over distribution of land + devastation of war. NOV 1917 Vladimir Lenin led Bolsheviks to

overthrow Gov. Bolsheviks governed Russia 1917-24, ended war with Germany, set up 1 party state + economic changes. Civil war broke out 1918-21.

Russia beginning 20th century

Many different ethnic groups, languages, religion at the time. Nicholas II alienated different ethnic groups because of **Russification** – enforcing Russian language + orthodox religion throughout. Not so many loyal to Tsar anymore.

Second half of 19th Century 10% lived in urban + earned living from trade, industry, government service.

Who was Nicholas II?

Nicholas II (18 May 1868 to 17 July 1918) was last Emperor of Russia, ruling 1 Nov. 1894 until abdication 15 March 1917. Carried out anti-Semitic pogroms, Bloody Sunday during 1905 Rev, executions of political opponents and caused Russo-Japanese War. Given nickname “Nicholas the Bloody”, Soviet Historians portray him as a weak leader who caused military defeats and the deaths of millions. Estimated that 3,300,000 Russians killed in WWI. Following February Revolution 1917, Nicholas abdicated on behalf of himself and his son. He was imprisoned with his family and sent to Tobolsk and then Ekaterinburg (Ural) April 1918. Eventually killed by Bolshevik guards 16 July 1918. Remains buried St. Petersburg 80 years later.

Social hierarchy in Russia

Vast majority = peasants. Most burdened to their land with high taxes. Most peasants liked Tsar but hated tax collectors. Peasants rioted in protest to burdens (non-Rev). Their aims were social + economic changes. No political parties in Russia. Scattered groups wanted change + some extremists overthrow tsar. Until the 1880s peasants paid poll tax + tax on vodka + goods, nobility exempt. Peasantry liable long periods of military service, couldn't travel to other part of country without passport. Peasants had to buy freedom. Emancipation gave peasants freedom but poor land. Productivity was very low. Gov tried to keep peasantry isolated and ignorant.

Money invested into improving industry rather than agriculture. Condition of peasantry perhaps Russia's most serious problem. Famines frequent because poor transport, Gov. couldn't disperse excess food across Russia. Widespread poverty + production low. Peasants encouraged to move from West (problems worse) to Siberia (lots of land). 1893 Land Bank founded to give locals money to buy land. 1905 redemption payments cancelled (made little difference). Harsh climates + poor communication made difficult attract migrant Labour.