WORLD WAR I
THE TEMPER OF WAR

Wars don't just happen. Usually events occur months and even years before that create a climate for war. All it takes is one spark to set off the war. In 1914, that spark was the assassination of the Archduke of Austria-Hungary. Yet, it was these earlier events, the **underlying causes,** that set the stage for World War I. These underlying causes included **nationalism, imperialism, militarism,** and **alliances.**

Nationalism was an important source of tension in Europe by 1914. During the late 1800's, **nationalism** helped to unite people with a common language and culture. However, *strong pride in one's country -* a sort of super patriotism - led some people in Europe to look down on, and dislike others. This type of **nationalism** was often an outlet for people (usually the rich and powerful) bored with their lives. These people were eager to prove that their nations were better than their rivals' nations.

Paired with this, **nationalism** in Europe created deep mistrust and even hatred between nations. France and Germany were bitter rivals. In 1871, Germany seized Alsace-Lorraine, an area rich in iron ore, from France. Austria-Hungary and Russia were rivals in Eastern Europe. Russia encouraged Slavs in Austria-Hungary to rebel against their rulers. Slavs included peoples of Eastern Europe such as Poles, Czechs, Slovaks and Serbs.

Imperialism *(the rule of one country over others)* was another source of tension. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia scrambled for colonies in Africa and Asia. Each nation wanted to profit from new markets and raw materials. Often, two or more nations competed for power in the same area. This competition sometimes led to wars in places far from Europe.

Specifically, Britain and France had many colonies in Africa and Asia. Germany had few colonies and wanted more. Germany did not become a nation until 1871. Now it wanted a "place in the sun." Britain and France feared that Germany's desire for more colonies would interfere with their own **empires**.

Militarism was a third source of tension. **Militarism** is *the policy of building up strong armed forces to prepare for war.* European nations prepared for war by building up their armies and navies. The military build-up led to new tensions. When Germany expanded its navy, Great Britain felt that its naval power was threatened. So, it built more ships. This naval race heightened tensions between these two nations.

By 1914, Europe was divided into two armed camps or **alliances**. An *alliance is an agreement between countries to support their shared interests.* Great Britain, France, and Russia formed the Triple Entente or the **Allied Powers**. The other camp was the Triple Alliance or the **Central Powers,** which was formed by Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy. The rivalry between the two camps had been growing for many years. Each country had built up its army and navy to prepare for war. Members of each **alliance** promised to support each other in case of attack. The **alliance system** increased tension because any crisis involving one member of an **alliance** affected that nation's allies. It also meant that a fairly minor incident could lead to a general war.

Question: How did elements of nationalism, imperialism, and militarism lead to the formation of the Allied Powers and the Central Powers? Use a specific example from each of the "isms" to support your answer.