Controversy A: Was Germany responsible for WWI?

Weltpolitik – World Politics

Flottenpolitik - Navy Politics

Bismark:
- Was in charge of German foreign policy
- He allowed Germany to dominate the Great powers.
- He isolated France in 1882 with the Triple Alliance.
- He maintained a close relationship with Russia by introducing the re-insurance treaty which lasted 3 years and was a promise of neutrality unless France or Russia was attacked.
- He tries to side with Britain and he aimed to court the British and encourage them to join the Triple Alliance – He didn’t succeed.
- He gained limited colonial possessions – Togo, Cameroon, South-West Africa, Tanganyika and part of New Guinea.
- He had no empire but was building a master plan.

Weltpolitik:
- This was a foreign policy adopted by Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany in 1890. A break from Bismark's 'Real Politik'.
- The aim was to transform Germany into a global power through aggressive diplomacy, the acquisition of overseas colonies and the development of a large navy. This was very much aspirational rather than a clearly defined program.
- A defined turning point was when it begins to isolate other countries.
- There was a rise in social Darwinism – 'Survival of the fittest' – Germany feels the need to develop in order to be better.
- They also get the ideas of Eugenics which is the science of killing off disabled/thick/weak people so that only the fit can reproduce.
- There was a rise of socialism – unites everybody by starting a war in another country.
- There was also a rise in right-wing which influenced the Kaiser.

Flottenpolitik:
- This was all the naval laws and was introduced in 1898. It led to German expansion.
- Germany creates the Dreadnoughts (a type of battleship.)
- This policy had middle class support groups.
- This was also a completely German policy as the army belongs to Prussia whereas the Navy doesn’t. This was very patriotic.

Both policies were planned to lead to world hegemony (world domination) and dominate Mitteleuropa. They wanted to focus on Africa and call it Mittelafrica. They also wanted Congo and Central Africa.