FROM “REALPOLITIK” TO “WELTPOLITIK”

In 1890, in Germany Kaiser Wilhem II dismissed Otto Von Bismarck as a Chancellor, the mastermind of the whole diplomatic balance of European powers. German policy changed from a pragmatic one of attempting to maintain the “Status Quo” (REALPOLITIK) to a more idealistic policy of expansion and world power (WELTPOLITIK).

The Emperor did not renew the re-insurance treaty with Russia (see the next timeline below), forcing the latter to seek an alliance with France. He also put himself forward as an ally and protector of the Ottoman Empire, with the intention of expanding his sphere of influence into the Middle East.

Soon after, the alliance between France and Russia (Dual Entente) would complain Germany to draw up a Plan (the so-called Schlieffen Plan) for escaping from such a sudden isolation in the middle of the Europe between the opposite fronts of the incoming war.

The balance of power, which had helped to keep the peace in Europe for most of the 19th century, was totally upset. The alliances, which were formed from this moment onwards, represent the opposing sides that were to battle it out in the First World War.