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The Three Empires At The Center Stage Were Ruled By Cousins



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Germany, Russia, and Britain—the three **empires** at the center stage of World War I—were ruled by cousins. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany and King George V of England were first cousins, King George V and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia were first cousins, and Tsar Nicholas II and Kaiser Wilhelm II were third cousins.

Considering that the three emperors were descendants of King George II of England, Wilhelm's II mother was a sister to George V's father, and George V's mother and Nicholas II's mother were sisters, the three emperors were also fifth cousins.

Back then, **Queen Victoria** was called the "Mother of Europe" because she was closely related to the emperors of most European empires. For instance, George V and Wilhelm II were her grandsons. However, she discouraged any relationship between the duo and never wanted them together. She even stopped the two from visiting her at the same time.

George V's mother, Princess Alexandra of Denmark, also discouraged any fraternization between George V and Wilhelm II. However, she ensured that George V maintained a close relationship with Nicholas II, the son of her sister, Dagmar. The cousins maintained the rivalry and alliance by the time they became emperors.

Although the trio never believed that the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria would lead to war between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, they knew it could. And such a war would definitely drag them in because Austria-Hungary was allied with Germany and Serbia was allied with Russia. At the same time, Russia was allied with France and France was allied with Britain.^[1]

The cousins had lost the power to stop the war by the time it became imminent. The assassination and subsequent crises had been hijacked by army generals, politicians who were more concerned with "national pride," and arm dealers who just wanted to make money.