

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910791904903321
Titolo	The origins of World War I // edited by Richard F. Hamilton, Holger H. Herwig [[electronic resource]]
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 2003
ISBN	1-139-88303-8 1-107-38574-1 1-107-38391-9 1-107-39034-6 1-107-39875-4 1-107-38742-6 0-511-55017-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xiii, 537 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Disciplina	940.3/11
Soggetti	World War, 1914-1918 - Causes World War, 1914-1918 - Diplomatic history World War, 1914-1918 - Historiography
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (pages 525-531) and index.
Nota di contenuto	World wars: definition and causes / Richard F. Hamilton, Holger H. Herwig -- The European wars: 1815-1914 / Richard F. Hamilton -- Serbia / Richard C. Hall -- Austria-Hungary / Graydon A. Tunstall, Jr. -- Germany / Holger H. Herwig -- Russia / David Alan Rich -- France / Eugenia C. Kiesling -- Great Britain / J. Paul Harris -- Japan / Frederick R. Dickinson -- The Ottoman Empire / Ulrich Trumpener -- Italy / Richard F. Hamilton, Holger H. Herwig -- Bulgaria, Romania, and Greece / Richard C. Hall -- The United States / John Milton Cooper, Jr. -- Why did it happen? / Holger H. Herwig -- On the origins of the catastrophe / Richard F. Hamilton -- ; Appendix A: Chronology, 1914 / Geoffrey P. Megargee -- ; Appendix B: Dramatis Personae -- ; Appendix C: Suggested readings.
Sommario/riassunto	This work poses a straightforward - yet at the same time perplexing - question about World War I: Why did it happen? Several of the oft-cited

causes are reviewed and discussed. The argument of the alliance systems is inadequate, lacking relevance or compelling force. The arguments of mass demands, those focusing on nationalism, militarism and social Darwinism, it is argued, are insufficient, lacking indications of frequency, intensity, and process (how they influenced the various decisions). The work focuses on decision-making, on the choices made by small coteries, in Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia, France, Britain and elsewhere. The decisions made later by leaders in Japan, the Ottoman Empire, Italy, the Balkans, and the United States are also explored. The final chapters review the 'basic causes' once again. An alternative position is advanced, one focused on elites and coteries, their backgrounds and training, and on their unique agendas.

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