

Nuova Rivista Storica

Anno CVII, Settembre-Dicembre 2023, Fascicolo III

Abstracts

JAN CHALOUPKA, *The Naval Scare of 1909*

This study looks at the extensive domestic crisis in Great Britain known as the 1909 Naval Scare, which had a major impact on the course of Anglo-German naval rivalry in the period prior to the outbreak of World War One. The primary objective of the study is to analyse the causes and consequences of the events, which drew the attention of the government and general public in regard to the rate of arming of the navy. The author mainly relies on published sources, academic publications and periodicals published at the time. The crisis can be considered an important milestone in the naval arms race. This had initially broken out at the end of the 19th century between most global powers, but with Great Britain's introduction of new types of ship in 1906 and 1907 it flared up between Great Britain and Germany in particular. A number of triggers came together in 1909 in Britain to cause an extensive government crisis which turned into public panic over the German naval threat, leading to a massive construction programme for the year 1909-10 and a significant increase in expenditure on the navy. Endeavours to reduce spending led to Reginald McKenna being appointed to head the admiralty in 1908. Did McKenna really complete his mission? Was the crisis based on justified fears, or was it a result of factors which made the situation appear worse than it actually was?

Keywords:

Royal Navy

Dreadnought

Admiral John Fisher