

CHAPTER 33-THE GREAT WAR: THE WORLD IN UPHEAVAL

For the causes of World War I the acronym often used is MAIN.

Militarism. This is embodied in the arms races between various nations, the best example being the naval contest between Germany and Great Britain.

Alliances: The rival systems of alliances that obligated nations to go to war if their allies did.

Imperialism: The competition and conflict between nations over colonies.

Nationalism: The idea that ethnic groups should have their own nations, free from outside control. Nationalism was also to represent national pride, demonstrated by the existence of colonies and a superior military.

By 1914, Europe had separated into two main alliances. The Central Powers consisted of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy with the Ottoman loosely allied with Germany. The other alliance was the Triple Entente comprised of Britain, France, and Russia.

In June of 1914, Serbian nationalists assassinated the Austrian Archduke Francis-Ferdinand. Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and Russia mobilized to defend its ally. One treaty commitment after another brought most of the European powers into the war by mid-August. This conflict became known as World War I.

Neither side gained the quick victory. The western front turned into a bloody stalemate included "trench warfare." On the western front, the war went on for four years and cost millions of lives without any major gains by either side. The eastern front was more fluid but still bloody, and on that front there was also no victory for either side.

World War I saw the introduction of poison gas, aircraft, and submarine warfare, as well as the concept of "total war." Governments took over industries, imposed war and price controls, rationed some goods, and imposed a draft (involuntary military service). Women moved into the work force in large numbers, replacing the men who were in uniform. This had lasting effects and helped promote women's suffrage.

The war quickly drew in people from all parts of the globe, as Britain and France brought soldiers from their colonies to fight. Japan entered the war because of a naval treaty with Britain, and then used the war to expand her control of China. There were also minor battles in Africa and a major clash at Gallipoli in Turkey.

In Russia, continuing losses brought about a revolution in February of 1917, which forced the abdication of Nicholas II and put a provisional government in charge. By October of 1917, the government had still not remedied the problems and Lenin and his followers took control of the government.

The United States remained neutral until a German submarine sunk the *Lusitania*, a British ship carrying American passengers. The United States declared

war on Germany in April of 1917. Masses of fresh troops from the U.S. and the collapsing economies of the Central Powers brought the war to an end in November of 1918.

The Paris Peace Conference in 1919 included twenty-seven allied nations but did not include the Central Powers or the Soviet Union. The settlement, which became a major cause of World War II, forced Germany to pay for the war and broke up the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

Germany's other ally, Turkey, drove out the allied occupation forces and under Ataturk founded a democratic secular state.

The Paris Peace Conference also established the League of Nations, an international peace-keeping organization. However, there was renewed U.S. isolationism at this time, and the United States did not become a member. With no political or military power to enforce its decisions, the League had very little impact on the events to come in world history.

After the war, operating on the principle of self-determination, the map of Europe was redrawn to create Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia. A system of mandates (trusteeships) was put in place to attend to the colonies of the Central Powers. The war weakened Europe and propelled the United States to a dominant, political and economic position.

Key Concept 6.2 Global Conflicts and Their Consequences

- I. Europe dominated the global political order at the beginning of the 20th century, but both land-based and transoceanic empires gave way to new forms of transregional political organization by the century's end.
- IV. Military conflicts occurred on an unprecedented global scale.

Key Concept 6.3 New Conceptualizations of Global Economy, Society and Culture

- I. States, communities and individuals became increasingly interdependent, a process facilitated by the growth of institutions of global governance.