Causes effects and aftermath of world war 1 history essay

World War I was often referred to as " The Great War". It began in 1914 and ended in 1918. America witnessed much devastation in this time period. In these four years alone nearly 9 million people died and millions more were maimed, crippled, grief stricken, or psychologically scarred (Coetzee, 11). World War I is considered by some, the first man-made catastrophe of the twentieth century. Many scholars still debate the underlying causes of World War I. There are many things that contributed to the war. The causes and effects of the war changed the lives of many people. Many of the effects of the war are still evident in today.

World War I began as a European conflict, only gradually did it develop into a world war (Ross, 6). The growing tensions between the European countries were caused by militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism. The first cause, militarism, is known as the trend toward developing military resources, both for national defense and for the protection of colonial interests. Militarism denoted a rise in military expenditure and it increased in military and naval forces. It put more influence of the military men upon the policies of the civilian government. Militarism had a preference for force as a solution to problems. This was one of the main causes of the First World War. The second cause was there were too many alliances which often conflicted with one another. Every country was pledging to protect others, creating entangling mutual protection schemes. Alliances were made in secret and they produced a lot of distrust and suspicion among the European powers. Their general suspicion prevented their diplomats to devise a suitable solution to many of the crises preceding the war. The third cause was imperialism. As fewer areas of the world were left to colonize, countries were

competing for existing colonies, and seeking to expand their borders with neighboring nations (Ross, 31). The fourth cause was nationalism. Nationalism is often referred to as the love of one's country. Nationalism involves a strong identification of a group of individuals with a political entity. It is often the belief that an ethnic group has a right to statehood, or that citizenship in a state should be limited to one ethnic group. The love of one's country easily became hatred of other countries (Ross, 29).

These were just some of the underlying causes of the war. Many people believe that the immediate cause of the war was due to the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary (Coetzee, 23). Archduke Ferdinand was shot and killed due to what was thought to be a political conspiracy (Coetzee, 23). The Austro-Hungarian Empire immediately suspected Serbian complicity in the assassination and sought to frame a response that would both somehow punish Serbia, and make the world respect Austria-Hungary's prestige and determination (Coetzee, 24).

The Great War lasted four years. After the loss of many lives, the war was finally over. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, a cease-fire went into effect for all combatants. the war may have been over, the effects, however, are still seen evident in the world today. In the aftermath of World War I the political, cultural, and social order of the world was drastically changed in many places, even outside the areas directly involved in the war. New countries were formed, old ones were abolished, international organizations were established, and many new and old ideas took a firm hold in people's minds. As Europe fell in debt from war costs, inflation plagued the continent. Additionally, the optimism of previous

decades was abandoned and a discouraging, pessimistic outlook on life was adopted after people had experienced the brutality of warfare.

I believe that we are still dealing with the effects of World War I today and will in the future. World War I took many lives and changed many people because of it. New wars were formed and as a result we are still dealing with war today. I think if World War I had not happened then all these other wars would not have happened. The war we face is a result of social and political conflict of previous decades and I think these conflicts of the past have been carried into today. The first World War proved a turning point in history; and the second, which would later arise out of its aftermath, hastened the changes which the first set in motion (Sellman, 1). A statement by Walter L. George says " This War has not ended war, and no war can end war, because war does not inseminate the spirit of peace, but the spirit of revenge (Coetzee, 161)."