

Turning point in modern history



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World War I, also commonly referred to as the Great War or War of Wars was a massive military conflict that featured a basis in Europe and commenced in the summer of 1914 while ending combat-wise in late 1918. This conflict involved the precipitation of all of the world's great powers, arranged in two contrasting alliances featuring the Allies and the Central Powers. Over 70 million military personnel and citizens had been engaged in one of the most prevalent and impactful wars in human history. As a whole, it was the second deadliest conflict in history, with over 9 million combatants killed at the hands of substantial technological advances in artillery and firepower.

The grand overarching question becomes, to what extent was the First World War a turning point in modern history? Presently, most historians conceptualize World War One as a crucial point in modern history. Manly that it constituted a massive global turning period in the history of modern European nations as well as the world - favoring and increasing certain pre-war advances and attitudes whilst placing them upon the center of a contemporary historical stage. In summation, World War One shuffled the proverbial " deck" for the future and such everlasting implications.

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Introduction – Setting the Global Stage

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, on 28 June 1914, is classified as the immediate ignition of the global conflict. In conjunction with the application of imperialistic policies, these can be seen as long-term issues to Europe, creating a crucial backbone and sustenance for future war. Consequently, due to Ferdinand's assassination by Yugoslav nationalists, this caused a Habsburg provocation in antagonism to the Kingdom of Serbia. The invocation of the several alliances formed caused within several weeks the major powers to be mobilized and the transmittance of conflict all over the world.

On the 28th of July the conflict sparked openly, commencing with the Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia, and then preceded by the German powered invasion of France, Belgium, Luxembourg regions; which was sequentially preceded by a Russian offensive against Germany. After the German

invasion of Paris was impeded, a static state was reached and the Western Front settled into a battle of attrition featuring a deadlocked trench line that remained essentially until 1917. With the Eastern European region, the Russian army succeeded against the Austro-Hungarian forces until being driven back by the German army. Following the German defensive during 1918, the United States joined the trench warfare among the western front and collectively the allied alliance drove back the German armies using a series of successful offensives. Germany eventually agreed to a cease fire on 11 November 1918, which would later become known as Armistice Day.

By the war's end, the four major powers had been defeated. Both the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires fell and as a consequence no longer would exist. From this event, the revolutionized Soviet Union emerged from the shadow of the Russian Empire, while the map and boundary lines of central Europe were completely redrawn into numerous smaller states. In addition, the new political establishment of a League of Nations was formed in the goal of preventing any repetition of such internationalized conflict. In conclusion, the collective combination of the permeation of European nationalism spawned by the war, the disintegration of empires, and the repercussions of Germany's reparations within the Treaty of Versailles led to the beginning of World War II in 1939.

The Conceptual Birth and Attitudes of Total War

While previous wars within the 19th century were principally of quick duration and localization, the First World War bred and allowed the incident of the 'total war'. The war of 1914 was considered by many historians the first total war in history in the sense that most inhabitants of such militaristic

countries were not permitted to avoid the encompassing impact. The boundary between soldiers and civilians was erased in conjunction to technological advances. Submarines began to target merchant ships and projectiles such as bombs were dropped over main economic and social cities. Moreover, the principal populations became engaged by the needs of the war and consequently any actions were assumed to be geared to such wartime requirements and collective societal success. War was painted into a new portrait, the blending of the colors of military power bleeding into collective, effective mobilization and creating the need of localized regulation of economy.

The Great War also introduced to its audience the notion and practice of unhindered warfare. As mentioned earlier, the concept of warfare had recently been revolutionized through the catalyst of novice technological creations as well as the use of new weapons and combat techniques. War consequently had become increasingly more destructive and pervasive. World War One in this level was like no prior war in history. The Western Front was decisively immobile from the war's start in 1914 until its end in 1918. This offensive featured trenches that stretched from England to the Swiss regions. The main forces of France, Germany, and England, by 1916 had faced advances in relativity of a few miles over the time period of several months. Casualties reached immense highs on both sides, with propaganda based victory data-based using national birth-rates to counteract the losses

What made the First World War so different from applications of total war in the past was the evident political and social impact of the Industrial

Revolution, making this the first international war of an industrialised age. According to British historian and soldier Edward Richard Holmes, “ This happened to be a demonstration of the prodigious strength, resilience and killing power of modern states.” Industrialization bled into nationalism altering the existing social hierarchy. It can be argued that such a state helped the alteration of beliefs through a paradigm shift. This can be seen in relation, to the French Revolution of 1789, which can be considered as the first attempts to utilize citizenship and patriotism in conjunction to a national war effort. Within this philosophy of revolutionary France, young men were conscripted into armed forces. This was expected as their duty as able-bodied citizens, as well, the remaining population was expected to make sacrifices for the war. The ‘ People’s War’, was a concept developed in the 19th century in conjunction to an increasing sense of national identity and marriage of the unified state. By the mid World War One timeframe, it was titled as ‘ Total War’ - a union of society and individual groups in response for war in a socially economic, as well as what can be considered a spiritual basis. Proving attitudinal shifts that even despite, protests and debates, war became a commonly supported idealized state it with victory for being the overall cost and goal.

III. Diplomatic impact and Shifting the Global Balance of Power

European diplomacy and international relations were immensely altered as a result of World War One. By the traditional definition, diplomacy was the art of initiating intelligence and acumen as an amendment of foreign implications, and armed conflict was as a last result. The occurrence of W. W.

I. and the use of “total war” began the brewing of later ‘cold war’ diplomacy and began the influence of employing the use of emotional responses such as fear as the principal weapon for political achievement. Nazi diplomacy and the use of “bluffing” in the 1930s would later be an obvious example in this connection. The Anglo-French policy came as an initiation from the looming threat of total war. The major European powers attempted to manoeuvre around the possibility of war with each other with much success until 1914. Instead, it can be inferred that Europe principally exported its wars, this within what can be considered the terminating era of imperial expansionism.

Within Europe as a whole, alliances were born with the perceived intention of preserving solidity. The empires of both Germany and Austria-Hungary united by 1879, and were later joined by Italy in the year of 1881. This was duplicated in 1894 with the unusual political grouping of a governmentally republican based France and Russia under the umbrella of imperialism. Then, in the year 1904, Britain agreed to an ‘Entente Cordiale’ with France, and later in 1907 with Russia.

The notion was that each alliance would provide support to its members – the ‘Triple Alliance’, consisting of Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Germany in contrast to the ‘Triple Entente’ of Russia, France and Great Britain. An attack upon any one major power by another would therefore generate a wide-ranging and all inclusive European war. The case of Great Britain, was that this was not specifically what could be considered an alliance of formalities, but instead an “casual” military union using the French. It can be theorized, that the First World War resolutely created an unstable European empire; and thus caused a crumbling of such primacy upon the

world stage. Such strain human and material strain came as a result of the conflict and establishment of alliances. Within four-year conflict, Europe had used up most of its economic resources and savings. As a consequence, heavy debts became prominent, and left Europe many post-war difficulties and large amounts of reconstruction.

However, while W. W. I. established to weaken Europe's pre-eminence, it gave opportunities for regions outside of Europe to establish, specifically, Japan and the United States. In addition, China was able to enable new processes of industrialization. Additionally it can be said that this commenced the generation-long process of cracking the chains of European colonialism and monetary dominance. In reference, non-European powers were the principal root of the Allied victory. This imperative requirement for outside international intervention altered the root of the European system of balance of power, and demonstrated a regional diplomatic inability of Europe. Specifically following the postwar years, Britain and France occasionally required foreign assistance in regulating the political power scale in Europe.

The other side of global shift was the rise of super powers. As the war had decisively altered the European states, other nations rose as formidable global players. The United States proved itself as having a strong military and economic basis. The newly established Soviet Union was equally as important. Communist leaders sharply transitioned the country from a tsarist regime into a global example leading a revolution against the fundamentals of capitalism. Despite the both the United State's isolationist policies and the Soviet Union's socialist reconstruction, it can be concluded that the nativity

of these two super-powers greatly influenced socio-directional shifts of the world within future contexts.

IV. The Utilization of Totalitarian dictatorship and the Shackles of Modernity

The First World War can also be considered the garden of totalitarian dictatorship, sowing the seedlings of Italian, Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism of WWII. The ascent of Mussolini was deeply intertwined with the sentiments of the Italian population concerning post war issues and the incapacity of a liberal regime to maintain a tentative peace in contrast to social revolutions. Additionally, Adolf Hitler and the adoption of Nazi policies and philosophies is considered by many historians as an additional byproduct of World War One. The reparations induced by Versailles Treaty provided Hitler with ample political footing and an anti-foreign intervention campaign in denouncing the democratic Weimar Republic. In the terms of Soviet Russia, the First World War enabled the Bolsheviks a window to power as the foundations of the tsarist regime cracked beneath the impending ax of war.

According to historian, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, “[the war] was a moment of passage between the 19th Century and 20th Century, and was a beginning of modernity in a way.” It can be debated that such a consuming and shocking experience of total war denounced the optimistic idealism of human progression. Perhaps it can be thought that this cold modernistic approach lead to intellectual homelessness? The emotional void into which was filled by totalitarian movements, the conclusion that totalitarian ideologies of fascist and communist descent thrived under vast numbers of advocates featuring morally shattered intellectuals

V. Economic and Technological Impact on Society

Material usage and destruction of the Great War was overwhelming.

Innumerable industrialized and suburban infrastructures such as factories, railways, mines, and inhabitable locations were ruined. Additionally, many regions of viable agricultural plots were utterly devastated as well. The core powers such as Britain and France essentially became debtor-nations.

In the post-war years, reconstruction and recovery were crucial issues shouldered by government. It was an imperative need to shift productions and economy back into normalcy in order to balance the employment needs of returning soldiers, to repay international and domestically based loans, and balance inflationism. As a consequence of this, it can be said that World War One plowed the mechanized path to a “ Second Industrial Revolution”. The requirements that were demanded from combat and mobilization acted as a fuel for inventions and investigation of untraditional methods.

Automobiles, airplanes, and synthetics became common in the post-war era.

An increasingly fundamental alteration affected the general humour of the European fiscal systems. The economic boom within a period of war, such as the regulation of capitalistically based free enterprise costs, called into question the benefits of wide spread distribution. As the impact of Great Depression further developed and permeated all aspects of everyday existence, the evidence of war based on national economic management provided a model for handling problems within the country. This demonstrated the changes between state interventions in economy which followed a path of steady increase, whereas policies of laissez-faire receded.

Between the years of 1871 and 1914, additional institutional and scientific developments, made differences to the conduct of warfare, this thrived on the occurrence of European war. Colonialism prior to 1914, and additional notable wars external of Europe, such as the South African War and the Russo-Japanese War gave only partial clues to what the Great War would unleash.. With complete mobilisation, the development of million man armies became feasible. By 1914, Germany, France, Russia, and Austria-Hungary alone had mobilised approximately three and six million men. Additionally, with this backdrop of the 20th century, new developments electricity and chemistry became just as important as steam and iron industries in the context of industrial importance. In the region of communications, the telegraph was quickly replaced through the telephone in 1876, and then by the utilization of wireless and radio in 1901. During this same time period, trains had developed the capabilities of exceeding speeds of 160kph. The first cars made an appearance, and the development of the diesel engine allowed the submarine an ideal wartime weapon. Two years afterwards marked the Wright brothers' first flight, adding the ability to harness the skies for the means of war. Increasing changes also brought about an innovative generation of artillery and machine-guns, most of which would remain used right the way through the early years of the 20th century.

The 19th century itself allowed the industrial and economic transformations for much of Europe. The explosions of vast populations, urbanisation, and scientific invention, became the soul of the age of iron and steam. As mentioned, the developments featuring railways and steamships allowed such a revolution in transport for large armies and supplies to be capable of

being mobilized long distances in short amounts of time. Developments in metallurgy lead to novel explosives and innovative propellants for enhanced firearms, and to a grand change in communications with the invention of the electric telegraph. The wars of this mid-19th century time period gave the first indications of the implications of such new industrialization and the potential for mass armies. Particularly crucial were the wars preceding the unification of Germany. The Austro-Prussian War and the Franco-Prussian War demonstrated the merging of bureaucracy and efficient railway system as an example in mobilization and modern efficiency.

VI. European Demographic Impact

As a whole the expenditure of World War One in human terms was immense, approximately 10 to 13 million had perished as a result of the fighting, especially the able-bodied who were had been chosen for tactical combat reasons. As a demographic result, the surviving unbalanced populations consisted of principally of widowers of war and orphaned children. Civilian populations suffered from famines and the consequences of such malnutrition. The European nations were, on the whole, fractured through resource depletion and population distortion in the post-war period.

The War in addition managed to dislocate and alter many of the population distribution patterns of Europe. The resulting instability and frequently occurring domestic infighting as well as the shifting of land based boundaries caused millions in migration. Within Russia, the Bolshevik Revolution caused Russian citizens to vacate political strife, and relocate throughout Europe. Czechoslovakia, was essentially a multinational creation. This settlement

shift created fluctuations of minorities within the new states, and many continued a pattern of oppression and discontent under foreign rule.

The First World War falls under the accreditation of affecting the rate of women's emancipation. Women in Europe as a whole seemed to demonstrate higher rates of progression during the length of the war in contrast to an entire collective of feminist attempts within the prior century . Referencing historian Gail Braybon, "...many women did find the war a genuinely liberating experience. It was very important to them that they were actually supporting the war effort, although lots of them didn't really think much about what the war was about. They knew that their friends, relations, husbands, sons were abroad. They were dying. There was a shell shortage. And they felt they really could do something to support the war effort. It was very exciting for a lot of them." This modern warfare trumpeted aloud for the communal effort, women merged into all genres of employments. They inversed the traditional masculinized view of the era, inflating the balloon of equality and allowing it to soar to new heights of gender recognition. Explicitly by the end of the war, the Weimar Republic took the lead in the trend, Britain proceeded at a slightly more hesitant rate, but regardless the inclination of women's emancipation was propelled.

VII. Analysis

World War I was not merely concluded with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, such an influence of political, economic and psychological effects permeated the lives and generations of people long after the last shot was fired. New political changes altered the postwar world via adaptations of more liberal forms of government, some of which remain still in place today.

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As a consequence of the punishments imposed from WWI, an angered Germany and its hostilities rose to the point where it provoked the Second World War two decades later. The influences brought forth by fledging technologies, impacted economies of European countries as well as altered many modernist perceptions and thoughts.

The Great War consequently altered international and diplomatic relations into the 20th and 21st centuries. As a result of the war, Japan emerged as a principle military power, hence allowing an establishment within international policies, as well as trade. Japan allowed the United States as a new supplier, which still retains immense political and economical power today.

Additionally, the intercontinental trap of the clichéd developmental weapons race commenced, as the view of military force, and its capabilities was now greatly altered. Prior to WWI, wars were largely isolated to only regional areas between few combatants. The embodiment of this lust for control formed itself within the League of Nations. While many historians deem any political actions taken by the league as ineffective, it can be concluded to have laid a conceptual foundation of the United Nations.

Egoism through the groundwork for WWII was established. The retaliatory actions through the centralized powers allowed the political fuel that Adolf Hitler would need for retaliation and German reunification. The consequence of hyperinflation served as a warning to the consequences of severe cultural despair. Leaving the universal question, to what extent can or should war

can be considered a consistent way to revive economic depression and what are the consequences of such necessity.

The entirety of the event of World War One can be considered as the mark of the modern era, and the opening of the metaphorical Pandora's box of the modern age. The European economies fell into disarray while simultaneously giving financial buoyancy to a novice America. The Russian Empire was reinstated with a commencing with a socialist, and then later transforming into a Stalinist system. Both the German and Austro-Hungarian Empire, fell out of existence and the culminating aspect became that many borders were the result of imperial change. It can be questioned about the manner in which many of these established Middle Eastern and Eastern European borders still cause conflict between specific interest groups among our 21st century issues.

The society of every warring European nation was altered. In Britain, lower class consciousness increased as the class system evolved. In France, an entire generation of men had been lost in combat, and as a result caused a large demographically based shift. Eastern European peoples found themselves reborn in fledgling nations, while Germany began a new path, establishing a new identity free from the taint of imperialism. War became a new living, breathing entity, as the lessons and socio-consequences within the industrial age were appropriated to weapons and would later discover the consequence of the human element. Tanks, machine guns, aircraft and chemical weapons were all refined and their technological secrets captured, causing lethal and simultaneously constructive effects. From such analysis, World War One is evident of a major modern turning point in history. Such <https://assignbuster.com/turning-point-in-modern-history/>

permeating effects resounded in the world for decades in the forms of changing politics, economics, international relations, and public opinion.