

Was wwi the worlds first total war critical thinking

War



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Dialogue between a teen-age boy and his grandfather.

Teen-age boy: Granddad, the history book I have says that WWI was a “total war.” But if WWI was a total war doesn’t that mean there wouldn’t be anything left of Europe? Wouldn’t all the countries be destroyed by war?

Granddad: “Total war” today probably does mean something like that because of nuclear weapons. But a “total war” in history means everybody in the country has to work hard to make sure their side wins the war. Men who can fight have to join the military. Well then, that leaves no one doing their work on the farms or in the factories so the women have to start doing the men’s work. Even children had to help.

Teen-age boy: How could WWI be the first time in all of history there was a “total war.”

Granddad: WWI wasn’t the first time that there was a “total war.” Further back in history there were some, let me think of a couple. Well, WWI was probably the worst total war yet because the world was into the Industrial Age so the weapons were terrible. And kids at home didn’t have enough to eat because all their food was rationed so the soldiers could get enough to eat.

Teen-age boy: How long have there been total wars?

Granddad: Even back in ancient times. The Peloponnesian War for one, people were slaughtered, you might say and people were sold as slaves too. Have you heard of the Mongols?

Teen age boy: Sure, Genghis Kahn. He had a huge empire.

Granddad: Well, the Mongols would run right over cities if the people didn't surrender. But in WWI they started calling "total war" a type of military strategy. So maybe that is why they say it is the first "total war."

Teen-age boy: Yes, I saw photos of the trenches where the soldiers were they were horrid and then it showed photos of their families back home. They were like ghosts or something.

Bibliography

Lynn Hunt, Thomas R. Martin, Barbara H. Rosenwein, R. Po-chia Hsia and Bonnie G. Smith. *The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures, Volume II: since 1500*. 3rd ed., Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, (2009), Chapt. 24: 793 - 796.

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