

World War I in Europe

I. Industrialization and Empire

- a. The industrialization of the late 19th century increased the power of Europeans and North Americans.
 - i. This resulted in a race to conquer or control other peoples and other lands.
 - ii. By the beginning of the 10th century, young imperial powers such as the **United States** and **Germany** were on the rise.
- b. **Technological superiority** gave all of these powers great success in expanding their empires.
 - i. However, that expansion led to a severe crisis when the **imperial powers** found themselves competing over the same territory.
 - ii. The decline of the **Ottoman Empire** meant that territory and resources would be up for grabs.
 1. As a consequence, the European powers began meddling in its affairs.
 2. **Imperialism** has clearly reached a boiling point.

II. Nationalism

- a. The flames of imperialism were also fanned by intense **nationalism**.
 - i. Nationalism not only united nations under a common language and culture; it also engendered a deep hatred of those viewed as enemies.
 1. Moreover, in the name of nationalism, **ethnic minorities** attempted to break away from empires such as the Ottoman and the **Austro-Hungarian**.

III. Militarism and Alliances

- a. To protect and expand their territories, European nations began to seek other nations as military allies.
- b. Two major systems of **alliances** developed:
 - i. the **Triple Alliance**
 1. **Germany**
 2. **Austria-Hungary**
 3. **Italy**
 - ii. The **Triple Entente**
 1. **Britain**
 2. **France**
 3. **Russia**
- c. Such was the state of Europe when the **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was assassinated by ethnic Serbian nationalists.
 - i. Because of imperialistic desires, nationalistic fervor, military alliances, and maneuverings, this seemingly isolated incident blew into an enormous war that involved all of Europe and many colonies of the imperial powers.

- d. On July 28, 1914, Austria-Hungary declared war on **Serbia**, thus beginning the **First World War**.

IV. **The Great War**

- a. World War I last for four years.
 - i. It was the most destructive war in the history of the world up until that time, mainly because of technological advances that produced such deadly weapons as the **machine gun** and **poison gas**.
- b. At war's end, many of the traditional imperial powers, such as France and Britain, were weakened.
- c. The Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, meanwhile, were dissolved and divided into smaller, weak nations.
- d. World War I also caused the destruction of Russia's old regime and aristocracy and led to civil war, revolution, and the adoption of **communism**.
- e. Instead of creating a lasting peace, the **League of Nations** proved inefficient, serving primarily the interests of the victorious nations of France and Great Britain, both of which gained territory and colonies from Germany and the Ottoman Empire.
 - i. Despite fighting alongside the Allies, Russia had no role in creating the **Treaty of Versailles**.
 - 1. Its exclusion would sow Russian bitterness.
 - ii. Moreover, the Treaty of Versailles humiliated Germany and laid the ground for the **Second World War**.
 - iii. The one nation that emerged unscathed was the United States, which became the wealthiest power in the world.