

Key Concept 4.1: Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War, and eventually to efforts at transnational union.

Theme: World War I, caused by a complex interaction of long- and short-term factors, resulted in immense losses and disruptions for both victors and vanquished.

Aim: To what extent did the total war in Europe spread to non-European theaters transforming the war into a global conflict?

I- Middle East

- a) Britain took great steps to protect the Suez Canal in Egypt.
- b) The British gained support from Arab groups who resented Ottoman domination of the region.
- c) Arab revolts against the Turks throughout the war ended the Ottoman Empire's grip on the Middle East.
 - 1) The Arabs received military assistance from such figures as Lawrence of Arabia.
- d) The Armenian genocide by the Turks resulted from Ottoman claims that Armenians were cooperating with the Allies.
 - 1) Perhaps a million Armenians died in what became the first of several genocides in the 20th century.

II- Japan in East Asia and the Pacific

- a) Japan sided with the Entente during the war and significantly increased its influence in the region.
- b) It conquered Germany's island colonies in the Pacific.
- c) It increased its sphere of influence in China.
- d) Japan's dramatic increase in the size of its navy and army led to its recognition as one of the Great Powers in post-war global diplomacy.

III- Total War

- a) Involved mass civilian populations in the war effort.
- b) Massive conscription drafted most able-bodied men in their youth.
- c) In some cases, civilian populations became targets.
 - 1) Early in the war, Germany used Zeppelins to bomb London.
 - 2) The British blockade resulted in significant starvation in Germany.
- d) News was censored; propaganda lionized men at the front and dehumanized the enemy.
 - 1) Intense nationalism demanded support from the entire population.
- e) Economic production was focused on the war effort.
 - 1) Labor unions: saw increased influence and prestige due to increased demand for labor.
 - 2) War promoted greater social equality, thus blurring class distinctions and lessening the gap between rich and poor.
- f) Women replaced male factory workers who were now fighting the war.
 - 1) Changing attitudes about women resulted in increased rights after the war.
 - Suffrage, job opportunities.
- g) Rationing of food and scarce commodities was instituted
- h) People financed the war by buying bonds.

“The soldiers who faced one another along the the Western Front were drawn from remarkably similar societies. On both sides there were industrial workers and farm laborers. On both sides there were aristocratic senior officers and middle-class junior officers. On both sides there were Catholics, Protestants and Jews. Anyone seeking fundamental differences of national character will look in vain in the records of the trenches. There could be no better illustration of this point than four of the finest novels written about the war by former soldiers—Henri Barbusse's *Under Fire*, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Frederic Manning's *Middle Parts of Fortune* and Emilio Lussu's *Sardinian Brigade*—which depict the experience of service in the ranks in almost interchangeable ways.”

Source: The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West, Niall Ferguson (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 118.

“The Somme was the battle of total planning. On paper, there was no way this offensive could go wrong. The confrontation had been on the drawing boards for months on either side of the front, while at least a million soldiers and 200,000 horses, along with untold quantities of rifles, canons and munitions, were being assembled. The countless tents, field kitchens, field hospitals, command posts and halting-places looked like little cities....The British had even built a special bunker along the front line for Geoffrey Malins, the man assigned to make their victory film. The Germans, supposedly wiped out by days of shelling, nevertheless proved to be alive and kicking at the start of the battle. Their barbed-wire barriers, their strong positions, their machine guns, all were still intact. It was the greatest slaughter in British military history. Of the 100,000 men who moved out that day, more than 19,000 had been killed by noon. Forty thousand were wounded. [British Army] General Sir Beauvoir de Lisle reported ‘It was a remarkable display of training and discipline, and the attack failed only because dead men cannot move on.’”

Source: In Europe: Travels through the Twentieth Century, Geert Mak (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007), pp. 108-09.