

# 3 Effects and results of the First World War

## Key questions

- What political and territorial changes resulted from the First World War?
- What economic and social changes arose?
- What were the immediate wider implications of the war for international relations?

## Overview

- The exposure of so many millions of people to modern warfare and the nearness of death, destruction, pain, loss, fear and much heightened emotion had profound and long-lasting effects. The table on page 62 outlines the military casualties, but it should be remembered that these are not simply statistics – the casualties had a dramatic effect on the nations involved and the people left behind.
- The war also had considerable impact on the political boundaries of Europe, and there were changes worldwide as the victorious powers gained, and the vanquished powers lost, overseas possessions. More significant, however, was the profound political effect of such losses and the experience of war. The emergence of extreme right-wing and left-wing regimes and the desire for political change in some democracies can all be attributed to the war.
- The war also brought major social and economic changes – in attitudes to women, in the relationship between the individual and the state, in the balance of world trade and in the disruption of the old pre-war economy.
- Such an unprecedented experience also affected the world economy, international relations, nationalism and imperialism, and culture, science and technology. It signified a great turning point in world history, after which the previously unthinkable became the norm. Prior to the First World War, there was a widely held belief in Europe that humanity was progressing through industry, the arts, scholarship, and even physical development. Such a view took a considerable blow in the aftermath of the war, as people dwelt on the vast – and, many argued, pointless – loss of life. To some it seemed akin to a medieval plague.

## Timeline

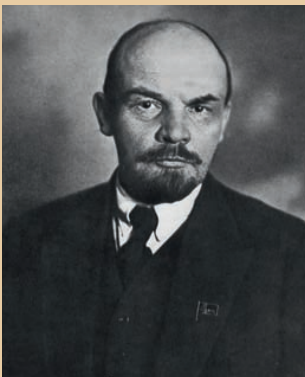
- 1917 Feb:** tsar overthrown in Russia
- Oct:** communists take power in Russia
- 1918 Nov:** armistice is signed
- 1919 Jun:** Treaty of Versailles and other Paris Peace treaties
- Aug:** socialist revolution in Germany fails
- 1920 Jan:** League of Nations is formed
- 1922 Oct:** Mussolini becomes prime minister of Italy
- 1923 Jan:** France occupies the Ruhr
- 1925 Dec:** Locarno Pact
- 1928 Aug:** Kellogg Peace Pact
- 1929** Great Depression begins
- 1933 Jan:** Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany

**Fact**

Petrograd was the name given to the Russian capital St Petersburg during the First World War. It was there that the fate of Russia was decided in 1917, but the communists moved the capital to Moscow in 1918. Petrograd was renamed Leningrad in 1924, before reverting to its tsarist name, St Petersburg, after 1989.

**Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924)**

Lenin was the leader of a minority group of communists which favoured a small conspiratorial party dedicated to revolution, and which changed Marxist theory to suit Russia. Its members argued that it was possible to go from a feudal monarchy to a revolution without going through a transitional capitalist phase. Lenin took power by force and was a beneficiary of the First World War. He played on anti-war feelings, but was faced with a civil war in 1918, which he won by showing the ruthlessness and strong organisation that tsarist Russia lacked. He masterminded the imposition of communism in Russia but was forced to make concessions to the peasants that were later reversed by Stalin, his successor after 1928. Lenin laid the basis of a one-party dictatorship that lasted until 1989.



**Some military casualties of the First World War**

Country	Killed	Wounded	Total	Percentage
Australia	59,000	152,000	211,000	64%
Austria-Hungary	1,200,000	3,620,000	4,820,000	74%
Canada	67,000	173,000	241,000	39%
French Empire	1,385,000	4,266,000	5,651,000	75%
Germany	1,718,000	4,234,000	5,952,000	54%
Great Britain	703,000	1,663,000	2,367,000	44%
India	43,000	65,000	108,000	7%
Italy	460,000	947,000	1,407,000	26%
Japan	250	1000	1250	0.2%
New Zealand	18,000	55,000	73,000	66%
Russia	1,700,000	4,950,000	6,650,000	55%
Serbia	128,000	133,000	261,000	37%
Turkey	336,000	400,000	736,000	46%
USA	117,000	204,000	321,000	8%

Source: R. Wilde, europeanhistory.about.com

The table above outlines the losses suffered by the key nations involved in the First World War. It also shows some surprising variations among casualty rates as a percentage of those mobilised, with those of Russia and Germany, for instance, being much higher than those of Britain, yet lower than those of Austria and France. As the losses fell heavily on men of military age, the long-term demographic effects were considerable.

**What political and territorial changes resulted from the First World War?**

The greatest political change during the war was the Russian Revolution of 1917. The war brought to light the many problems and weaknesses of the Russian regime. The heavy casualties, the shortage of food and the decision of the tsar to command his own forces – and therefore take on the blame for Russia’s military defeats – led to mass discontent by February 1917. In Petrograd tens of thousands took to the streets in protest, and the tsar’s troops refused to fire on the crowds. Nicholas II was at Pskov with his forces and was advised by leading generals and politicians to abdicate. The new provisional government decided to carry on with the war, creating even more discontent. The one group that supported peace was the Marxist party, called the Bolsheviks and led by **Vladimir Ilyich Lenin**. Their slogan ‘Peace, Bread and Land’ won them increasing support, and they achieved power by a sudden takeover of Petrograd in October 1917. Lenin withdrew from the war and signed away large areas of Russia at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Though some areas, such as the Ukraine, were later recovered, other areas were not taken back by Russia until after the Second World War.

The Great Powers and empires that entered the war did not all survive it.

- Germany saw the abdication of the kaiser in November 1918 and the establishment of the first lasting republican democracy in German history, with a constitution announced in the city of Weimar.

- Russia experienced two revolutions in 1917, one of which ended the Romanov dynasty that had ruled since 1613 and the whole institution of tsarism. The second, masterminded by Trotsky and Lenin, ended the parliamentary democracy that had been set up in its place and brought about the first communist state, which lasted until 1991.
- The Austro-Hungarian Empire fell apart at the end of the war. Instead of preserving the monarchy, the war brought about its downfall.
- The French Third Republic survived, but it faced increasing instability in the years leading up to the Second World War and finally fell in 1940.
- The British Empire survived but was faced with growing nationalism in its colonies and social unrest at home.

The war brought about the growth of the political left in the victorious powers, which was met by a counter-movement from the political right. In Italy, after a disturbed post-war period, a right-wing dictatorship emerged from 1922 under **Benito Mussolini**, which owed much to the discontent brought by war. Mussolini's dictatorship lasted until 1943. A nationalist, right-wing racialist state emerged in Germany after 1933, which again owed much to post-war discontent. The defeats suffered by Turkey inspired a revolution in the central homeland against the Ottoman sultans. This led to a new, secular, reforming regime under Kemal Atatürk, a successful military commander of the First World War who modernised the country.

Of the rulers who had been so enthusiastic for war in 1914, the Russian tsar Nicholas II was murdered along with his family; the German kaiser Wilhelm II became an exile in Holland; the Ottoman sultan Mehmed VI was overthrown; the Austro-Hungarian emperor Karl I was forced to abdicate in 1918 and watched his empire broken up.

Failure also awaited the democratic wartime leaders: in the US, Congressional elections went against the Democrat president Woodrow Wilson, and he fell from power. The Democrats remained out of office until 1933. In Italy, political power went to a new nationalist party and the parliamentary system came to an end. David Lloyd George, the British wartime prime minister, was forced from power in 1922 and never held office again. His party, the Liberals, suffered a long-term decline and never again formed a government, though their successors, the Liberal Democrats, did form a coalition with the Conservatives in 2010.

## The peace treaties

Germany had signed an armistice in November 1918 but did not expect to have peace terms imposed upon it as though it had unconditionally surrendered. As a result of a conference of victorious powers in Paris, this is exactly what happened and, as will be shown in [Chapter 3](#), it was a major cause of the next world war. The Treaty of Versailles was imposed on Germany after lengthy and often acrimonious discussions between the Allies, all of whom came with different agendas: the French wanted revenge and future security; the British desired imperial gain; the USA wanted world peace and future international co-operation and trade; Italy and Japan were seeking territorial gains. Other Parisian suburbs gave their names to separate treaties with Austria (St Germain), Hungary (Trianon), Bulgaria (Neuilly) and, in 1920, Turkey (Sèvres) – though this treaty was challenged by Turkey, which drove Greece from its allocated colony in Smyrna and forced the Allies to renegotiate at Lausanne in 1923. Turkey, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Russia were not invited to the Versailles discussions, but merely informed of the results.

### Benito Mussolini (1883–1945)

Mussolini was leader of the right-wing fascist movement in Italy, and the country's ruler from October 1922 to 1943. He became a dictator and aimed to make Italy a new sort of totalitarian state in which the state controlled hearts, minds and all aspects of life. He failed, and his decision to support Hitler in 1940 brought defeats and his own dismissal by the Italian king, Victor Emmanuel III. He was executed in 1945 by communist opponents.



## The new Europe

The map of Europe was transformed by the peace treaties, as the nationalities of Europe struggled to establish independent states. In 1914 there were some small states, but Europe was dominated by the Great Powers. After 1919, there were considerably more small independent states.

Political maps of Eastern and Central Europe (a) in 1914 and (b) in 1925



### Questions

What major changes do these maps show? Do you think the territorial changes shown here were good for European stability?

## Winners and losers

Some countries had the support of the victorious powers and gained their dream of independence: a new Poland; a new Czech state in alliance with the Slovaks; the new states of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Finland, freed from Russian control. This was because the victors decided that the lands taken from Russia by Germany were available to redistribute.

The southern Slavs got a federation, dominated by Serbia, called Yugoslavia, which lasted until the 1990s.

Turkey became a modernised state but lost its lands in Arabia and the Middle East.

Italy gained some of the lands it had desired and had been promised – Istria, Trentino, Trieste and the South Tyrol – but not all. Italy had to seize Fiume by force and there were still Italians living under Austrian, German and Yugoslav rule.

Austria and Hungary became independent – but instead of dominating a great empire they were now small, weak states. In Austria's case, its great capital Vienna now ruled over only German-speaking rural areas and small towns and cities.

Russia had recovered some of its lost lands, but not the Baltic territories, or Bessarabia, or eastern Poland. It found itself isolated behind a number of small independent states, a so-called *cordon sanitaire* – a barrier against plague, in this case the political 'plague' of communism. Like Germany, Russia never accepted that its post-war situation of weakness and loss was permanent.

Germany lost considerable lands in the east and the contentious provinces of Alsace and Lorraine in the west (to France). It was physically divided in the east by a strip of Polish territory. It had lost lands to Denmark and Belgium and all its overseas colonies.

Japan, which had loyally supported its ally Germany, found itself only able to rule over new territories it had gained in China as a trustee, reporting to the new League of Nations. It did not win control of the Chinese Shandong province as it had wished, and had to give up the gains it made in the east of Russia after the Russian Revolution. After the war, Japan was forced by the USA to give up its alliance with Britain and to agree to a pact guaranteeing the territorial status quo in the Far East, thus restricting its ambitions in the region. It was also forced to keep its navy smaller than those of Britain and the USA.

Thus Russia, Germany, Italy and Japan saw themselves as losing powers. Other losers were the national minorities in the newly created independent states – the Poles and Ruthenes; Germans and Slovaks in a Czech-dominated Czechoslovakia; non-Magyars in Hungary; Ukrainians in eastern Poland; Germans in the Baltic States; minority groups in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The newly dominant nationalities often discriminated against **ethnic minorities**, and as the new states came into being there was frequently a great deal of violence.

**ethnic minorities** People who belong to different racial or language groups from those who predominantly populate and run a state. For example, in Czechoslovakia there were around 3 million German speakers in a country dominated by Czechs who were of Slav racial origin and whose language was closer to Russian.

## The balance of power

In a famous cartoon (below), the peacemakers of 1919 emerge to see ‘the 1940 class’ weeping, and a future war seems inevitable. The balance of power had been seriously altered by the war. With Austria-Hungary broken up, with Russia outcast, and Germany defeated and humiliated, there was a vacuum of power at the heart of Europe. Once Germany became strong again and Russia had recovered, there was bound to be a struggle to alter the new balance of power. The losers would want to take what they felt they had been denied – but would the winners be strong enough to hold on to their victory?

*This cartoon shows the Allied leaders leaving the Versailles peace conference and casts doubt on the permanence of their work*

### Activities

- 1 Who are the statesmen represented here, leaving the Versailles peace conference?
- 2 What does the weeping child represent?
- 3 Why is the cartoonist so pessimistic about the future?
- 4 Is this a fair representation of the Versailles Treaty?



## What economic and social changes arose?

### Economic effects

The trading networks of the pre-1914 world were dislocated by war, with its blockades and economic disruption. In Europe, the heavy spending of countries at war and currency manipulation by their governments resulted in severe **inflation**. This was particularly true in Germany and Russia. Direct war damage caused economic problems; overseas investments were sold to pay for the war; the economies of the Great Powers had been turned over to war production and producing food; marginal land was put into cultivation. The loss of so many men meant a shortage of labour, and more women entered the workforce.

**inflation** A rise in prices. Europe suffered severe inflation during the First World War.

In terms of relative power and wealth, what was most noticeable was a shift in economic advantage to the USA in the West and Japan in the East. These countries were able to take advantage of the war to increase profits and gain a greater share of world markets. Before 1914, British sterling had been the key international currency and Britain was the greatest financial lender, shipper, insurer and investor. After 1918, the USA began to gain economic dominance. The profits to the USA from the First World War were so huge that they came to dominate money markets. US production was the key to Allied victory and the US became the financier of the Allied powers.

### Agriculture

After the war, the world needed to get back to a peacetime economy, but agriculture had produced so much that the prices of raw materials and food could not recover. There was less demand, yet so much land had gone into cultivation worldwide that a large gap had arisen between the amounts produced and what could be sold. The depression in world agriculture was to be a major feature of the inter-war period and a source of considerable hardship and political instability.

### Industry

Heavy industries were at a peak during the war. By 1917, US steel was producing four times its pre-war output to meet the needs of war. In countries like Britain the war had reversed a pre-war fall in production in the great industries of the Industrial Revolution, such as iron, steel and coal. However, after the war there was reduced demand and heavy industry faced falling profits and sales. Problems were made worse as large numbers of people had worked in these industries during the war and now found themselves unemployed.

## Social changes

### Women

As the industrial countries mobilised their forces for total war, so they needed to bring more women into the workplace to keep up production levels as men went away to fight. With greater participation in the national effort, women gained confidence and it became harder to sustain the view that women were essentially part of home life and lacked the strength and abilities to play an equal role with men in the world of work. Without participation in the war it would have been more difficult for women to obtain the right to vote and greater social equality. The war brought freedom and mobility for women, who often moved away from home and lived as independent workers, enjoying a degree of social and sexual freedom that would have been difficult in the pre-war years. Much of this freedom did not carry on into peacetime, but it was hard to turn back the clock, and women's role had undeniably changed.

*Change in the status of women was not merely a European phenomenon. These women workers in Japan in the 1920s show that some had moved away from traditional dress to shorter hair and skirts and were working outside the home. Here they are distributing copies of a woman's journal*



**Mezzogiorno** The name for the agricultural south of Italy, which included many large estates where the peasants and agricultural workers were poor and often illiterate.

## The working classes

The same might also be said of the urban working classes. Their participation in major wartime industrial production was so vital that after the war they were able to exert more bargaining power as the workforce grew and changed. Migration to urban centres was common. In Russia, there was a big influx of peasants to the cities. In the USA, black workers from the South moved into northern factories and into a new world of attitudes and freedom, despite the prejudice and the race riots that they faced. In Britain, trade union membership doubled from 4 million to 8 million. In Italy, workers moved from the **Mezzogiorno** to the northern factories and, like their Russian, American, English, French, German and Austrian counterparts, learnt more about the radical social and political doctrines of socialism.

In Russia, the effects were apparent in the revolutionary situation in the large cities, but radical and socialist ideas had become common throughout Europe. Italy experienced a wave of strikes and the growth of the socialist movement after the war. In Germany, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) was already the largest party and the war caused the change that would bring it into government; ironically, the SPD also crushed the more extreme socialist groups in a brief but bloody civil war. In Britain large-scale strikes culminated in the first effective General Strike of 1926. In France, post-war society was polarised between right and left. The war increased the confidence and hopes for change of European workers and also introduced a new radicalism to the USA.

## The idea of a fairer society

The enormous sacrifice made by so many people in the war years led to hopes for a new society – often encouraged by wartime propaganda. There were dreams of a new society in which war would not be needed and justice would prevail.

The comradeship of the trenches had brought the classes together. In the face of extreme danger, class consciousness often disappeared. As so many young officers from the upper classes died, their places had to be taken by soldiers from lower down the social scale.

The growth of industries brought greater urbanisation, which eroded traditional class barriers and reduced the distinction between town and country. Russian communism, Chinese Marxism, Nazi nationalism and Italian fascism's belief in a corporate state in which all classes and sectors of the economy worked together, the British Labour Party's socialist programme of 1918, the Japanese belief in working together on behalf of the God-Emperor – all were part of the movement sometimes known as '1919-ism' in which the old capitalist, imperialist and class-ridden societies seemed outdated and a new, more idealistic world order was called for. **Prohibition** in the USA was part of this desire for social change and for new standards. On the other hand, violent **anarchism** and frantic pleasure-seeking were also reactions to the war. Both responses could also be seen as rejections of traditional values.

This was evidenced in the new morality in the 1920s, which was part of the effect of the war's dislocation of traditional values. In the USA there were the 'Roaring Twenties' and guilt-free consumption of alcohol and cigarettes. Women enjoyed the freedom of less restricting clothing. Music became more 'abandoned' – the new jazz and swing was thought by contemporaries to be 'wild'. Sexual freedom and experimentation were common. It was as though the war had shown that life was fragile and the post-war generation wanted to make the most of it while they could.

**Prohibition** A ban on the production and sale of alcoholic drinks. In the USA, national Prohibition came about in 1919 but some individual states had introduced it earlier than this.

**anarchism** A belief that government is oppressive and corrupt, and that the state exists only to oppress the ordinary people. This justified attacks on the state, its rulers, administrators and police.



## The arts

In the arts, the post-war era was more daring and experimental, though often developing the work of pioneering creative artists from before 1914. The violence of the war was expressed in futuristic art and by many musical scores that featured violent dissonance. The Russian Revolution led to daring and highly expressive art, music and literature, for example. Popular middle-class artists, writers and musicians of the pre-war era seemed to be part of the world that had led to war. Post-war audiences sought more novelty, less rigidity. Art could be frivolous but still highly regarded. There was no real 'norm' to rebel against and the arts, possibly mirroring the break-up of society and attitudes that the war had brought, became quite fragmented, with artists following their instincts. Some artists adopted neo-Classicism; some developed intense expressionism; others developed formalism and retreated from realism.

*Russian Revolutionary art looks forward – but note the military feeling in this portrayal of a peasant, The Reapers by Malevich Kazimir Severinovich (1878–1935)*



**Fact**

Carl Nielsen (1865–1931) was Denmark's most famous composer and his six symphonies are regarded as masterpieces. His fourth uses two sets of drums to create a warlike cacophony with which the orchestra battles.

**Fact**

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959) was one of the most influential artistic figures of the 20th century. This American architect and designer developed modern buildings in a variety of styles that reacted against traditional designs.

**Fact**

There had been much talk before 1914 of an international parliament of nations to keep peace. The proposal to form a League of Nations was made by US president Woodrow Wilson as part of his peace proposals in 1918. It was set up in 1920, but the USA never joined and other leading countries, like Russia, Germany and Italy, were not members throughout its existence.

## Spiritualism and mysticism

A new interest in spiritualism and mysticism seemed directly related to attempts to reach the millions that had died. Famous writers like Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, and J. M. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*, made quests to find fairies; while composers such as John Foulds and Gustav Holst sought solace in Indian mysticism to escape the realities of modern war. The anguish of so much of the music of the 1920s and 1930s on the one hand, especially that of Shostakovich in Russia, and the frivolous gaiety of composers such as 'Les Six' in France, led by Francis Poulenc, on the other, were different ways of coping with the experience of war.

Wartime memoirs became a major sub-branch of literature in all countries. Some showed a hostility to war, like Erich Marie Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, later a film; others, like Ernst Jünger's *Storm of Steel*, offered a grim celebration of trench life with its heightened spiritual awareness amidst the violence. Architecture moved away from plush and highly decorated building to simpler and more austere forms, as in the German Bauhaus movement and the work of the US architect Frank Lloyd Wright. This can be seen as a move away from the old pre-war world, which had brought such disaster, to a slimmed-down modernism reflecting the austerity and discipline of the wartime and post-war periods.

Many of the artistic and spiritual trends of the post-war period had been accelerated by war rather than created directly by it, but it is difficult to see how the war could have failed to influence the creative minds of the era.

## What were the immediate wider implications of the war for international relations?

### Peace and reconstruction

The war had forced men and women into greater communal life. Millions fought together in the armed forces and there were larger numbers working in factories. Wartime patriotic associations and total war encouraged a view of national activity. For example, greater numbers joined trade unions. More people became interested in political associations to achieve national aims after the war. In the post-war period, this communalism was extended to the international sphere as the first international peace organisation, the League of Nations, was formed in 1920 with a permanent headquarters in Geneva. It went some way to meeting the dream of idealists before the war for an international parliament. Members met to discuss international affairs and problems in an assembly, and there was a ruling body, the Council, and a permanent civil service. There was, however, no standing army and not all countries were members, notably the USA and communist Russia. Germany did not join until 1926.

The old alliance system was blamed for the war and the pressure was on post-war leaders to avoid bilateral treaties and to rely on international agreements and complete openness. Under US pressure, the Anglo-Japanese treaty was replaced by an international agreement – the Treaty of Washington – to maintain the existing state of affairs in the Far East. The Locarno Pact of 1925 between Britain, France, Italy and Germany guaranteed the existing western frontiers of Germany. The Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928, signed by 65 nations, outlawed war. The League of Nations brought the powers of the world together in a permanent organisation and led to international bodies on refugees and

world health. There were also international disarmament conferences. Though the USA was not a formal member of the League it was involved in its activities as an observer. Nations co-operated far more, and even when pacts were made – such as the French agreements with the countries of Eastern Europe – they were open and included a group of countries: the so-called ‘Little Entente’ of Eastern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia).

Many countries had peace organisations, like the League of Nations Association in Britain. Ex-servicemen’s associations were established, and the Russians revived the international conference of socialist parties – the Third International. There was an interest in pan-Africanism (a movement to unite Africans and encourage a sense of African identity) albeit limited, and in America the beginnings of what would become the civil rights movement emerged in the form of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP).

A popular idea in some Catholic countries was corporatism – the belief that social harmony could arise if all elements of economic life came together to plan progress and avoid conflict. This was put into operation in Italy when the state brought together representatives of employers and workers with the government to discuss economic matters.

Another less positive form of communal activity was the development of nationalist and racialist groups. Japan saw a new interest in traditional culture which stressed the special position of Japan, its emperor and its **Shinto** religion, and revived interest in its ancient warlike codes like **bushido**. Large Japanese business organisations – collectively known as *Zaibatsu* – also stressed communal economic activity and the needs of the state and large organisations above the needs of the individual. This was also the philosophy of fascism in Italy – the nation came before its inhabitants.

The most developed racial community theories emerged among the right-wing nationalist groups in Germany. They had ideas of a pure ‘Aryan’ race, binding together all Nordic peoples with hierarchies of race, placing the pure-bred Nordic types at the top and the supposedly inferior, ‘sub-human’ Jews at the bottom. The war did not create these ideas, but the discontent it brought gave them more popularity.

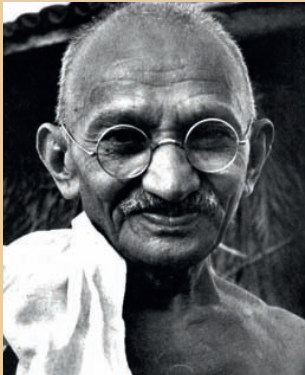
Similarly, by bringing about communist revolution in Russia, the war helped the spread of socialist, community-based ideas in China and other Asian countries, as well as in Europe. Left-wing ideas were particularly influential and attractive to the workers and peasants in Spain, in France, with its own revolutionary tradition, and even in Britain, which had a far less socialist and radical history.

In practice, reform and reconstruction were not implemented in such a way as to fulfil people’s hopes and dreams. Economic problems prevented large-scale reforms, and traditional attitudes reasserted themselves. Countries put their own interests before internationalism. Dictatorships were more common than democracies in the new countries of Eastern Europe and, by 1928, Russia was dominated by Joseph Stalin’s personal power rather than by a socialism that liberated and benefited the Russian people as a whole. Women did win more voting rights in some countries – Britain, Austria and Germany gave women the vote in 1918. In Russia, votes for women had been introduced in 1917 and the USA followed suit in 1920, but France did not give women the vote until 1944. However, the goal of complete equality (political, economic, social and sexual) remained, and possibly still remains, some way off.

**Shinto** Traditional Japanese spirit worship, which includes the concept that the emperor was descended from the sun goddess.

**bushido** The code of conduct of the samurais which, amongst other beliefs, held that the samurai’s obligation to his lord was more important than anything, even family and life itself.

**Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948)** Gandhi was an Indian lawyer who campaigned for the rights of Indians living in South Africa. He returned to India to campaign for Indian self-government and freedom from British rule. He adopted a policy of non-violent resistance and his simple lifestyle attracted wide support. He was imprisoned by the British, but took part in conferences in London which led to greater self-government for India. He continued to press for independence and was again imprisoned during the Second World War. India was granted independence in 1947, but Gandhi was horrified by the violence between Hindus and Muslims. He was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic in 1948.



**Zionist movement** A movement whose members believed that the Jews had a right to establish a new state in their Biblical homeland. The modern movement dates from the late 19th century and was founded by Austro-Hungarian journalist Theodore Herzl.

## Empires and nationalism

The Great Powers needed the subject peoples from their empires to fight in the war, and they were considered essential in maintaining and supporting their homeland. For many of these people, the experience of war meant increased travel and greater contact with the mother country. They were brought into contact with each other and given promises of a brighter future. In some cases the war weakened the ability of the dominant ruling power to maintain political control. The rulers of Austria-Hungary, for example, lost control of their subject peoples and had to accept the break-up of their empire.

Another example is Turkey, whose Middle-Eastern possessions gained independence with the support of the enemies of the Ottoman Empire. Russia too saw the loss of its western empire and had to accept a federation of its far-flung territories in the east. Initially, this took the form of autonomous national regimes and then, when communist authority was restored, a federation – a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). However, communism proved to be a means of controlling the nationalities and the ‘empire’ was reborn in a different form. By 1945, even the western lands of pre-1914 Russia had been regained, with the exception of Finland.

Britain and France faced unrest in their empires too. Most notable was the emergence of a strong movement for independence in India, Britain’s key imperial possession. Following a massacre of demonstrators in the holy city of Amritsar in 1919, the nationalist leader **Mohandas Gandhi** led a resistance campaign of non-violence which anticipated and inspired the later civil rights campaign in the USA.

Closer to home, the British faced armed resistance in Ireland. A semi-independent south emerged in 1922 – effectively leaving the empire – although it did not gain full independence as the country of Eire until 1949.

### Palestine

The greatest impact of the war on future international issues, which emerged out of changes in empires, took place in Palestine. This had been part of the Ottoman Empire, but in 1920 it was given to Britain to rule as a mandated territory nominally under the control of the League of Nations, together with Iraq and Transjordan. France gained Syria and the Lebanon in this division of the Middle East.

However, in 1917 Britain and the USA made a promise to establish a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. The Jews had been expelled from their Biblical homeland by the Romans in AD 79 and the **Zionist movement** had pressed the Allied powers to restore this land to them and to offer the Jews a chance to resettle their original ‘Promised Land’. In the Balfour Declaration (2 November 1917) the British offered this, partly with an eye to pleasing influential Jewish opinion in the USA at a time when Britain desperately needed American support and credit for vital war supplies. The delivery of this promise resulted in Jewish immigration to Palestine, and laid the basis for the independent state of Israel. Britain promised the Arab Palestinians that they would not be subject to Jewish rule. However, clashes between Jews and Arabs in the inter-war years

forced the British to intervene. After the Second World War, Britain was made to relinquish control and hand back its mandate to the United Nations. This led to the formation of an independent state of Israel in 1948. This created a huge problem of Palestinian refugees and provoked wars between Israel and its Arab neighbours. The problems in this region remain unresolved today.

## Europe and the US

The First World War increased the size of the empires of the victors. For some – Italy and Japan – the gains were insufficient and served only to increase their desire for expansion. For others, increased empire meant increased costs and responsibilities as well as greater resources – particularly Middle-Eastern oil supplies in the case of Britain. Thus the war both strengthened imperialism and weakened it. Ultimately, the losses by the European powers during the war opened the way for non-European powers to gain greater control and made the defence of overseas empires more difficult. This was later demonstrated dramatically in the Japanese attacks on European and US colonies in late 1941 and 1942.

Before the war, Europe had been the dominant global influence economically. After the war, however, the US became a much more significant economic influence. US pressure was one of the factors that led to the end of the European empires. Colonised peoples realised how much their controlling powers had relied on them in the war. This gave them a sense of empowerment and encouraged ideas of liberty. In the long term, this made it difficult for the colonial powers to maintain their overseas empires.

## A continuing cycle of violence

The so-called ‘war to end all wars’ did not live up to its name. It ushered in a new era of violence that continued after 1939, after what seems in retrospect more like an extended 20-year truce. The scale of the war was so massive that it had widespread consequences, but the obvious one – to shock the world into never fighting a world war again – was short-lived. The pacifist writings and organisations, the influential anti-war poems, books and films were less durable than the desire for revenge, the intense nationalism and militarism, and the belief that national power and racial utopias were worth risking war again.

An Austrian corporal heard the news of the 1918 armistice when he was in hospital. In 1925, he recorded his reaction in his political memoirs (Source A). The hatred expressed here – a feeling shared by so many – made a lasting peace unlikely.

### SOURCE A

In these nights (after Germany's surrender had been announced) hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed.

Adolf Hitler. 1925. *Mein Kampf*.



### Theory of knowledge

#### War, the arts and the historian

How significant is an activity like war on the development of the arts?

Was it war that brought about so many changes in the arts, or would artistic developments have occurred in the same way even without the war?

How greatly did historical events affect the arts, and should the historian try and relate changes in the arts to more general historical change, or see artistic change as autonomous?

## End of unit activities

- 1 In groups, prepare a poster on the different aspects of the effects of the First World War. This could be done in terms of broad themes – politics, diplomacy, the arts, warfare – or it could be done in terms of individual countries. The poster should include an image (not from this book) that sums up its content. Put the posters on the wall and discuss, if these were part of a museum exhibition, which poster should come first when the members of the public enter the exhibition.
- 2 Make cards of the major results of the First World War. Arrange the cards in order of importance and think about why you made your choice. This can be done in groups or individually.
- 3 Devise a TV programme in which each of the leaders of the Great Powers takes questions from the audience about their country's interests on the eve of war – say 29 July 1914. This needs research in advance: members of the audience should be allocated a particular country to give the spokesperson enough information. Then these members should change their role to be concerned members of the European public.
- 4 In groups, read and discuss a memoir of the fighting and explain in a brief presentation how the experience of war affected the writer.

# End of chapter activities

## Paper 1 exam practice

### Question

What reasons are suggested by Source A below for Germany's decision to go to war in 1914?

[2 marks]

### Skill

Comprehension of a source

#### SOURCE A

Germany was fearful of being encircled. Since Russia's defeat in 1905, the Franco–Russian alliance had not given cause for concern. But now Russia was recovering its military strength, drawing on huge manpower resources, and in March 1914 the Duma [Russian parliament] had voted massive credits for a three year military programme. This aimed to increase the standing army to almost two million men by 1917. A strategic railway network was being built to facilitate mobilisation.

The German Chief of Staff Moltke was for a pre-emptive strike against Russia.

Gildea, R. 1987. *Barricades and Borders, Europe 1800–1914*. Oxford, UK. Oxford University Press. p. 423.

### Discussion points

- Who was most to blame for the First World War?
- Why did the First World War last so long and bring about so many casualties?
- Why was there not more protest about and resistance to the war?
- Were the political or the social consequences of the First World War of greater importance?

### Examiner's tips

Comprehension questions are the most straightforward questions you will face in Paper 1. They simply require you to **understand** a source **and** extract two or three relevant points that relate to the particular question.

As only 2 marks are available for this question, make sure you don't waste valuable time that should be spent on the higher-scoring questions by writing a long answer here. All that's needed are a couple of short sentences, giving the necessary information to show you have understood the message of the source. Basically, try to give one piece of information for each of the marks indicated as being available for the question.

### Common mistakes

When asked to show your comprehension/understanding of a particular source, make sure you don't comment on the **wrong** source! Mistakes like this are made every year. Remember, every mark is important for your final grade.

### Simplified markscheme

For **each item of relevant/correct information** identified, award **1 mark** – up to a **maximum of 2 marks**.

### Student answer



Source A shows that Germany was afraid of Russia because it had been building up its military strength and its army was much bigger. Germany was worried about Russia organising its huge manpower resources and threatening Germany.

### Examiner’s comments

The candidate has selected **one** relevant and explicit piece of information from the source and has clearly understood the point being made in relation to German fears about the Russian army – this is enough to gain one mark.

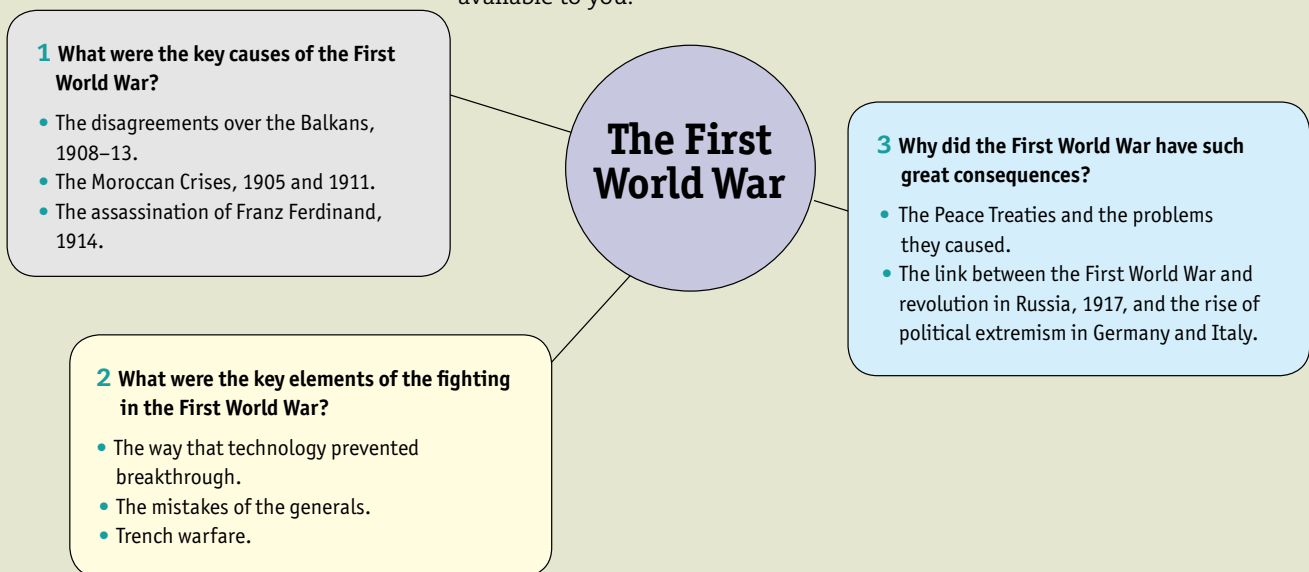
However, as there is no point/information relating to the encirclement, desire of the German military leader for a pre-emptive plan, or to the increase in railways, the candidate fails to gain the other mark available.

### Activity

Look again at the source, and the student answer above. Now try to identify **one** other piece of information from the source, and try to make an overall comment about the source’s message. This will allow you to obtain the other mark available for this question.

### Summary activity

Complete the spider diagram below by giving information on each of the events listed. Use the material you have read in this chapter and any other sources available to you.





## Paper 2 practice questions

- 1 Critically assess three causes of the First World War.
- 2 Assess the political consequences of the First World War.
- 3 Assess the social and economic causes of 20th-century wars.
- 4 In what ways and with what results did tactics change in 20th-century wars?
- 5 Assess the part played by any two powers (excluding Germany) in causing the First World War.

## Further reading

Try reading the relevant chapters/sections of the following books:

Ferguson, Niall. 2006. *The Pity of War*. London, UK. Penguin.

Gildea, Robert. 1987. *Barricades and Borders, Europe 1800–1914*. Oxford, UK. Oxford University Press.

Henig, Ruth. 1995. *Versailles and After*. Lancaster Pamphlet. London, UK. Routledge.

Joll, James and Martel, Gordon. 2006. *The Origins of the First World War*. London, UK. Longman.

Sheffield, Gary. 2005. *Forgotten Victory: The First World War, Myths and Realities*. London, UK. Headline.

Strachan, Hew. 2006. *The First World War: A New History*. New York, USA. Free Press.