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HIS1103

WEEK1-4

What was the most important factor that led to the start of WWI? (make sure to consider both long and short term causes of the war) You may only use the readings and no other source. Using outside sources is prohibited in this class. These assignments are meant to assess your understandings of the readings and not your general knowledge.

During the years of the 19th-century European countries were amongst the most developed countries in the world, European countries had everything from railroads and steamboats to telephones and telegraphs. Among two of the top powerful European countries were Britain and France, both of these countries controlled most of the U.S colonies, parts of India, Asia and Africa. Both of these countries were great examples of how imperialism had a long term effect on the cause of WW1.

During the late 1800's is when one can see how both of these European nations began imperializing other smaller and weaker countries. In most cases Imperialism is frowned upon, even though it may do things like improve economy or agricultural on the other hand it may ultimately change the government along with that country's ways of living. There were many reasons for the causes of Imperialism by European countries, religion, labor, raw materials and much other things were reasons why European countries sought to take over places such as Africa and India. Besides the physical aspect there were also many mental and social aspects that Europeans believed gave them the power to take over other countries, one example of this is social darwinism, this is the theory that

europeans were more “fit for survival and adaptation” compared to others. All of these are reasons why most Europeans rushed to Africa(*Online. international Encyclopedia of the first world War. Introduction*).

Africa offers raw materials such as zinc, copper, gold , diamonds and so much more things that can be used to drastically advance a country. You can see the impact of one acquiring any of these materials simply by looking at Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes was a British businessman who founded the biggest diamond company in the world, Rhodes's De Beers(*The Age of Imperialism,2011*). Aside from diamonds another aspect that brought Europeans to the counties they imperliazed were politics and religion. Christoper columbes and his travels were the most recognized for trying to turn the imperelaized into christian, if not by choice then by force, Everytime European countries were on the road the imperialize another country thry lete nothing stop them. These aspects can be seen as short term affects for the war, once other countries heard the news of all the riches avallible in places such as African and India they scrambled to these countries aiming to take whatever they came for and more. Europeans were able to imperialize at such a fast rate due to newer technology they had such as guns and boats which helped them conquer.

With multiple European countries taking over control of other countries it was only a matter of time before these countries deciding one was more powerful than the other and began to fight for their land and power. Europeans had

acquired guns and other powerful weapons from their allies, in the countries where Europeans came to conquer they were not this advanced, some were even still using bows and arrows, These battles and wars didn't happen in Europe only even though that's where some started, they took place all over the world which is the reason for the name "World War". Every country involved in this war was fighting on grounds that was not "theirs", British, French, German and other European countries were fighting this war in places that were not their homeland such as the Boer War (*The Age of Imperialism, 2011*). Although some countries in Africa were fortunate enough to acquire guns and other advanced weaponry it still wasn't enough for the manpower that Europe had.

For almost 5 years every major nation and their allies fought against each other to acquire the most global power and domination. India against Britain, African against the French and so many other combinations of countries went head to head for the right to govern and own their land. While trading may have been one way for countries to advance, this war shows how excess trade without control or a system leads to chaos. After so many battles the one reason this big war came to an end was due to the treaty of Versailles, this treaty was an agreement of European countries mostly Germany and how their land will be split up and governed once the war completed ended (*The Age of Imperialism, 2011*).

Citations

1914-1918-Online. international Encyclopedia of the first world War. Introduction. New Articles RSS. (n.d.). Retrieved September 25, 2021, from https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/1914-1918-online_international_encyclopedia_of_the_first_world_war_introduction.

Magdoff, Harry. *The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of U.S. Foreign Policy.* Monthly Review Press, 2011.