

The Year of Revolutions

By 1848, various groups of people in Europe had become unhappy with their rulers, and wanted more say in how their countries were run. In many places, there weren't enough jobs for everyone, and people were desperately short of food. They remembered the French Revolution of 1789, and thought they could solve their problems with more revolutions.

A year of chaos

In February 1848, a rebellion broke out in Paris and the rebels took control of France. When people in other countries heard about this, a wave of revolutions swept across Europe, and 1848 became known as the Year of Revolutions.

By the end of 1849, the revolutions had been crushed and most of the old rulers were back in power. However, rulers all over Europe realized that they would have to pay more attention to their people in the future.

New ideas

At the same time as the revolutions were spreading through Europe, some powerful new ideas were beginning to change the way people thought.

In 1848, a British group called the Chartists demanded that men of all classes should have the right to vote. In the same year, a German thinker named Karl Marx wrote a book called *The Communist Manifesto*.



Karl Marx and the title page of *The Communist Manifesto*

This said that workers everywhere should unite to gain more power for themselves.



The rebels used whatever they could find to build barriers, or barricades, in the streets. This is part of a poster showing French soldiers defending a barricade.

New Nations

At the start of the 19th century, the countries now known as Greece, Italy and Germany did not exist. Germany and Italy were made up of lots of small states, and some of these states were ruled by foreign countries. Greece was part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

The nation of Greece

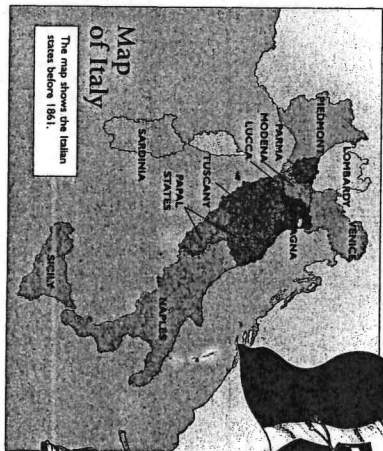
In 1827, the Greeks who lived in the Ottoman Empire decided to join together to fight against their Turkish rulers. The rebels defeated the Turks and formed the independent kingdom of Greece.



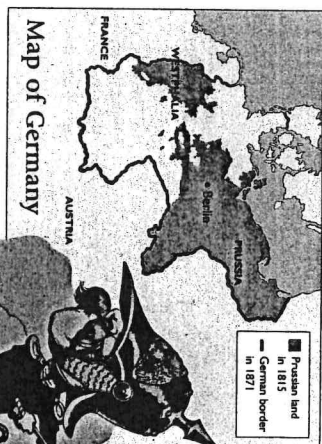
Greek soldiers fighting for independence

Italy unites

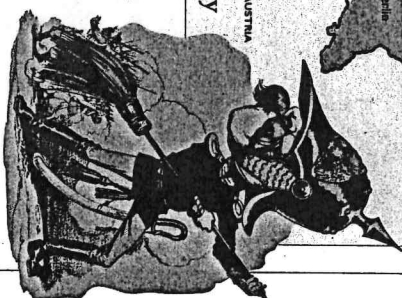
By 1859, the Italian states of Piedmont and Sardinia, led by Count Camillo Cavour, had taken control of most of northern Italy. At the same time, a soldier named Giuseppe Garibaldi led an army of rebels that conquered large areas of southern Italy. In 1860, Count Cavour and Garibaldi agreed to join the north and south of the country together, and a year later the new nation of Italy was created.



Giuseppe Garibaldi



The prime minister of Prussia, Otto von Bismarck, was a strong leader. This cartoon from the 1800s shows him sweeping away German rebels.



Germany unites

By 1815, the most powerful German state was Prussia, governed by King Wilhelm I and its prime minister, Otto von Bismarck. Prussia already ruled Westphalia, and gradually took control of many other German states. Prussia also won impressive victories against Austria and France, and in 1871 the rest of the states decided to join the growing nation. Germany was united and Wilhelm became its first emperor, or Kaiser.

Important dates

- 1827 Greece becomes an independent country.
- 1848 Revolutions in many parts of Europe
- 1861 The Italian states join together to form Italy.
- 1871 Germany is united under Wilhelm I.

The First World War

World War I, also known as the Great War, involved more countries and killed more people than any other war that had ever been fought before. But how did it all start?

Friends and enemies

By 1914, the five strongest countries in Europe had split into two rival groups: Britain, France and Russia (called the Allies) were on one side, with Germany and Austria-Hungary (called the Central Powers) on the other. The situation became very tense. If a war were to start between any two rival countries, all the others would probably join in.

Murder in Sarajevo

The event that actually sparked off the war took place on June 28, 1914. Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, was visiting the town of Sarajevo in Bosnia, when he was shot dead by a Serbian student.

On July 28, Austria backed up by Germany, declared war on Serbia. Russia stepped in to help the Serbs, and soon the Allies and the Central Powers were at war.

The Western Front

German soldiers moved quickly into northern France, but they were soon stopped by the Allies. The two sides faced each other along a line known as the Western Front. Both sides dug deep ditches, or trenches, to defend themselves. After this, neither side was able to advance very far, and the war dragged on for four years.

Soldiers lived in the trenches for weeks at a time. During a battle, they climbed out of the trench and charged at the enemy across an area known as No Man's Land. Millions of men died in these terrible battles that sometimes lasted for months.

This scene shows British soldiers in a trench on the Western Front.

A small explosion in No Man's Land.

A soldier called a senny, keeps watch.

Machine gun

Boxes of machine-gun bullets

Wooden work-worms, called duckboards, stop the soldiers from sinking into the mud.

The trenches were swarmed with rats, flies, fleas and lice.



Poppies that grew on the battlefields of the Western Front became a symbol for remembering the war.

The war spreads

Other countries soon became involved in the war. Turkey and Bulgaria joined the Central Powers, while Italy, Greece and Portugal supported the Allies. The two sides also fought in Africa and the far East, where Britain, Germany and other European countries had colonies.

Ships and submarines

Both sides tried to stop their enemies from getting food and raw materials to make weapons. German submarines, called U-boats, sank any ship going to a British port. Some of these ships were American, and this provoked the USA into joining the war, in April 1917, on the side of the Allies.

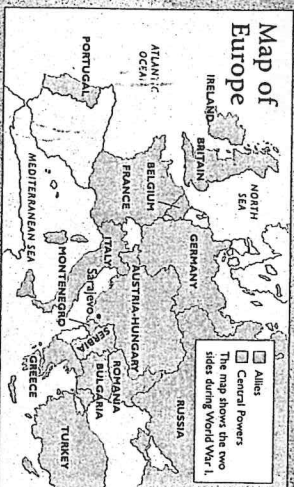
Water supported by wooden planks

Barbed wire

The men use their spade to dig some extra food for the family.

The men rest in holes dug into the sides of the trench.

The soldiers dig down, so one often get wet.

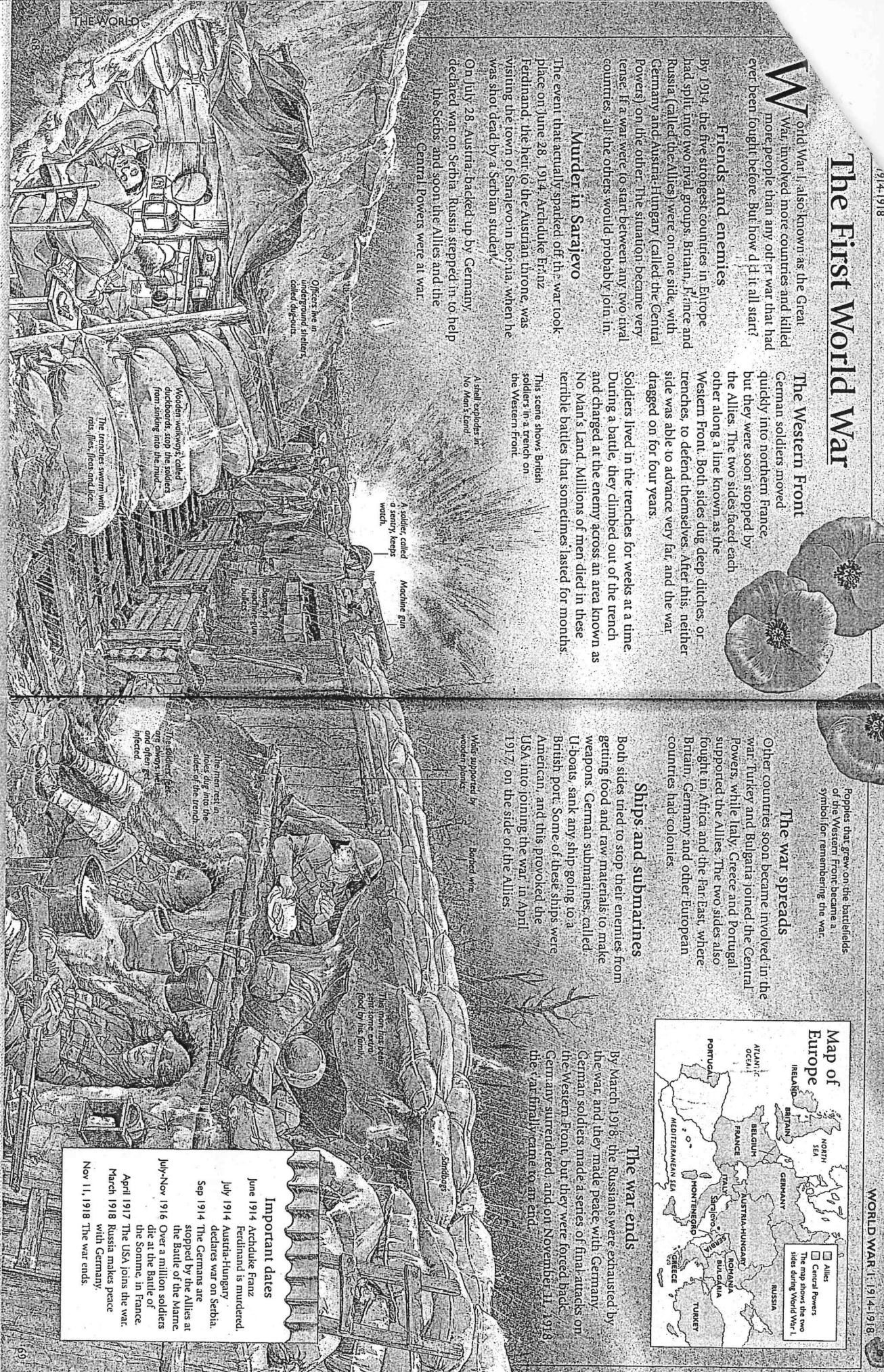


The war ends

By March 1918, the Russians were exhausted by the war, and they made peace with Germany. German soldiers made a series of final attacks on the Western Front, but they were forced back. Germany surrendered, and on November 11, 1918, the war finally came to an end.

Important dates

- June 1914 Archduke Franz Ferdinand is murdered.
- July 1914 Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia.
- Sep 1914 The Germans are stopped by the Allies at the Battle of the Marne.
- July-Nov 1916 Over a million soldiers die at the Battle of the Somme, in France.
- April 1917 The USA joins the war.
- March 1918 Russia makes peace with Germany.
- Nov 11, 1918 The war ends.



The Rise of Fascism

After the First World War, many countries in Europe faced huge problems. Governments had very little money because they had spent so much on weapons for the war. Lots of people were out of work, and there wasn't enough food for everyone. People began to think that these problems needed drastic new solutions.

The first fascist

In Italy, the problems were particularly bad. Many people turned to Benito Mussolini, the leader of the Fascist Party. Mussolini became prime minister of Italy in 1922. Soon, he banned all other political parties and took complete control of the country. This way of ruling is known as fascism.



Mussolini salutes the crowd at a huge public meeting.



Germany defeated

After World War I, the winning countries decided that Germany should pay for the damage caused by the war. The Germans were forced to reduce the size of their army and navy, and were not allowed to have an air force. Germany also had to give up large areas of land. Many Germans felt angry and humiliated by all of this, and they blamed their government for agreeing to it.

The Depression

In 1929, Germany was hit by the Great Depression (see page 77). Millions of Germans lost their jobs, but the government did nothing to help. People became desperate, and some turned to the National Socialist Workers' Party (the Nazi Party), led by Adolf Hitler.

New hope

Hitler persuaded people that their problems were caused by foreigners, especially Jews. He believed that the Germans were superior to other races, and said he would make Germany powerful again. He promised strong leadership, jobs for everyone and an end to poverty.

Total power

The Nazis held huge meetings, or rallies, all over Germany to persuade people to vote for them. By 1932, they were the biggest party in the German Reichstag (parliament), and in 1933 Hitler became chancellor (head of the government). He then persuaded the Reichstag to give him complete control of the country.



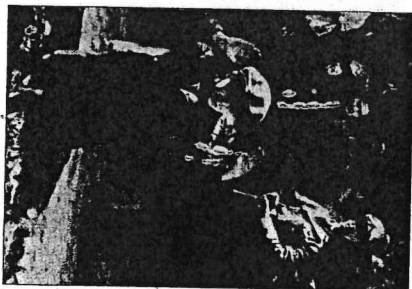
This is the badge of the Nazi Party. The symbol in the middle is called a swastika.

Nazi Germany

Once Hitler was in power, he banned all political parties except the Nazi Party. He took control of all newspapers and radio, and forced schools and universities to teach Nazi ideas. Children had to join Nazi youth groups, and anyone who disagreed with the Nazis was arrested by the secret police, which was called the Gestapo.

In this photograph, the German leader Adolf Hitler (in the middle of the picture) is inspecting members of a Nazi organization called the SA.

Persecuting Jews



A Jewish boy and his family being driven out of their home by Nazi soldiers

The Nazis made life impossible for Jews. They weren't allowed to marry Germans, own land, do certain jobs, or even go out at night. Gangs of Nazi thugs attacked Jewish people, vandalized Jewish shops and burned synagogues.

Important dates

- 1919 Mussolini sets up the Fascist Party in Italy.
- 1922 Mussolini comes to power.
- 1929 The Great Depression begins.
- 1933 Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.
- 1934 Hitler takes complete control as Führer (leader) of Germany.
- Nov 9, 1938 On Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass) Nazis attack thousands of Jewish homes, shops and synagogues.