

TimeFrame AD 1900-1925

THE WORLD IN ARMS

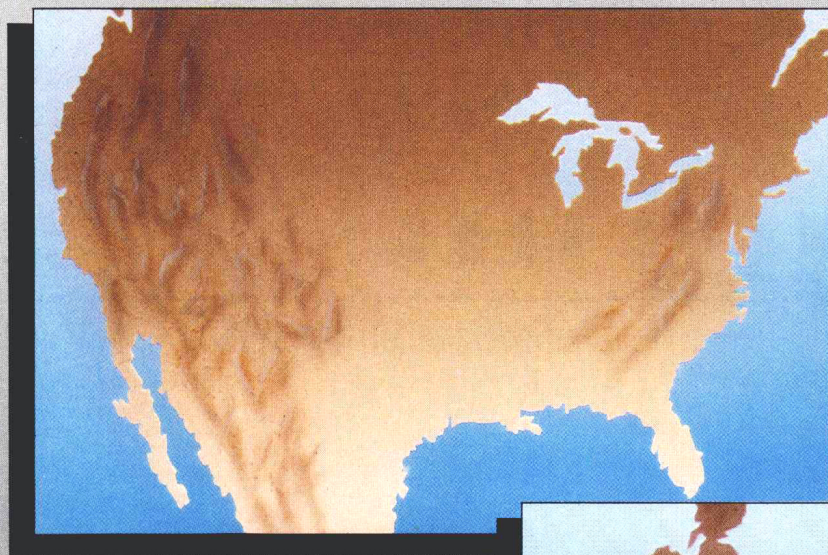
The Great War
The Russian Revolution
The Middle East Transformed
Japan's New Horizons
America Comes of Age



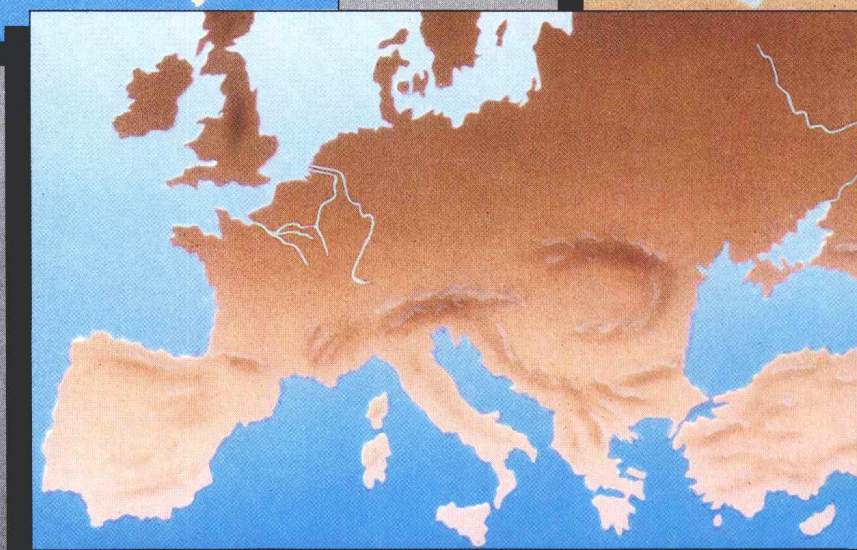
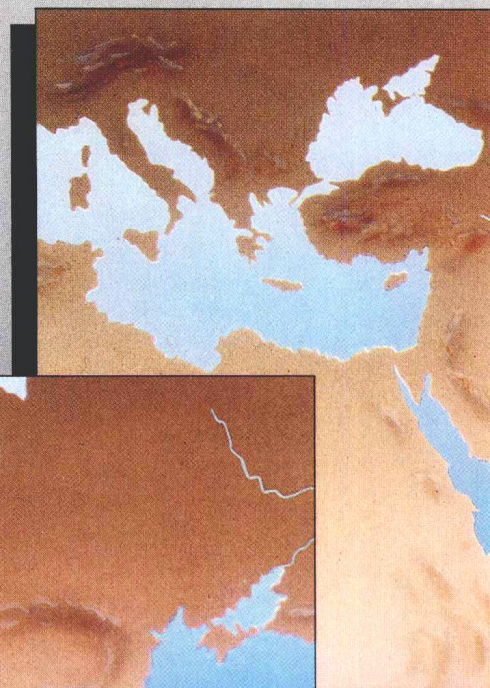
T H E W O R L D I N A R M S

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THE UNITED STATES



THE MIDDLE EAST

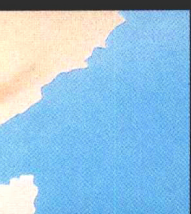


EUROPE

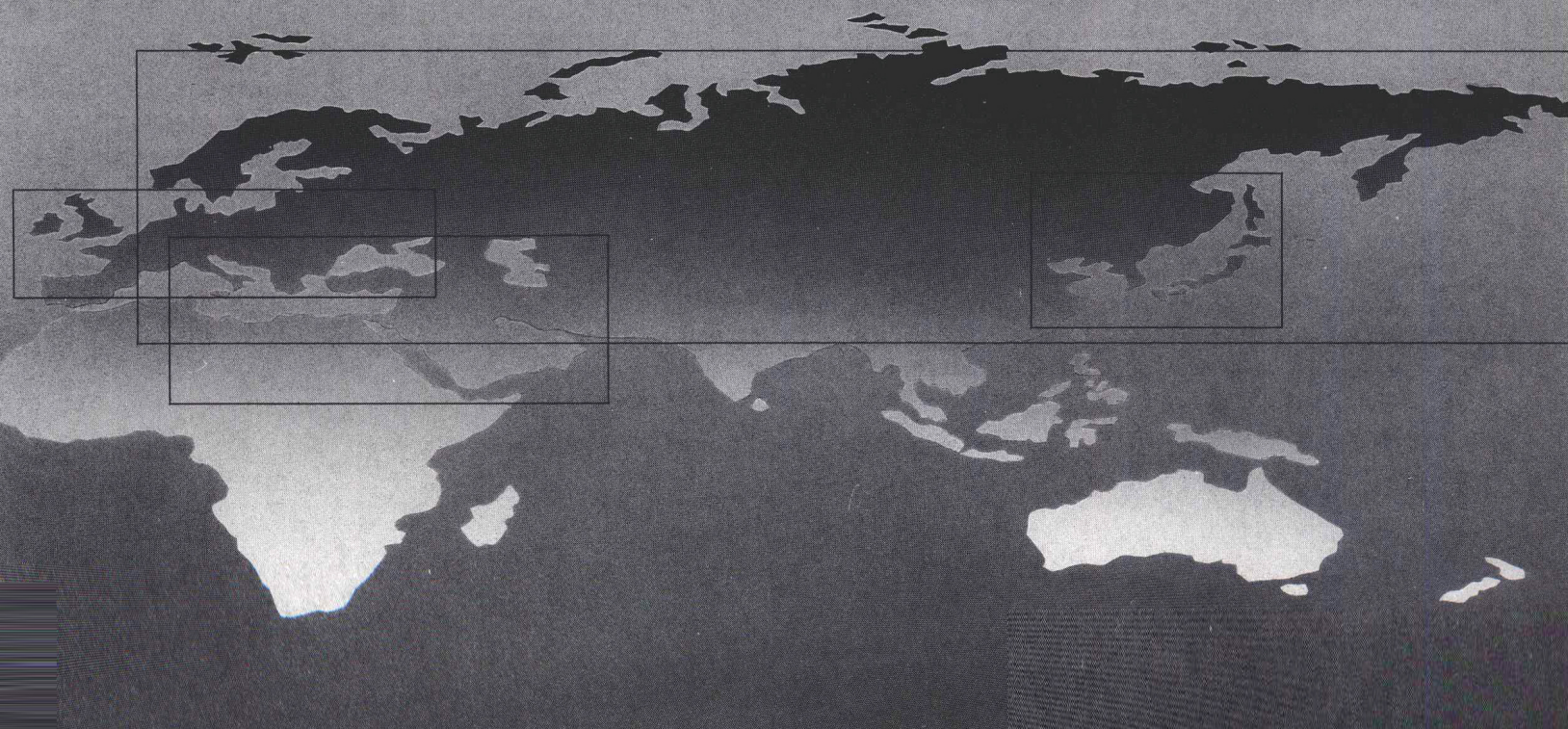


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THE FAR EAST





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THE WORLD IN ARMS

TimeFrame AD 1900-1925

BY THE EDITORS OF TIME-LIFE BOOKS
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RUSSIA'S ROMANOV CZARS



ECLIPSE OF THE OLD ORDER

As the world entered the twentieth century, it carried with it a host of dynasties who regarded their right to govern as a divine dispensation. The ruling classes believed that they were born to wield power, and political decision making, when not in the hands of autocrats, was delegated to administrations whose luminaries were still drawn mainly from the ranks of the hereditary landowning aristocracy.

In Europe especially, the status quo seemed well assured. Economies were booming as the result of rapid industrialization and colonial exploitation, and stability seemed guaranteed by a complex web of diplomatic alliances, reinforced in many cases by ties of blood or marriage: Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, Czar Nicholas II of Russia, and Britain's King George V, for example, were all cousins.

For the few, this peace and plenty allowed a life of extravagant leisure: Elegant gentry exchanged pleasantries and flaunted the latest fashions among the leafy surroundings of London's Hyde Park or Berlin's Unter den Linden; café society gossiped along the pavements of Vienna; revelers attended masked balls at the Paris Opera while duelists defended their honor in the Bois de Boulogne. And if the giddy whirl of the urban "season" began to pall, the country offered bracing alternatives: week-long house parties, race meetings, yachting regattas, hunting expeditions, and polo matches. The carefree prosperity of the time earned it—in later years—the name *La Belle Époque*.

Elsewhere, privilege reflected age-old tradition. For more than one-quarter of the

world's population, the center of the universe lay—as it had done for centuries—within the 250 secluded acres of Beijing's Forbidden City, where 3,000 eunuchs waited on the occupant of China's Dragon Throne. And in the ancient city of Constantinople, a harem of hundreds cosseted the Ottoman sultan as their predecessors had done since the sixteenth century.

Below the surface, however, bitterness was growing among those unable to share this gilded life. In Europe, anarchist terrorists, intent on the abolition of all political systems and laws, assassinated seven heads of state between 1894 and 1913. And labor movements, clamoring for better working conditions, expressed their disaffection in frequent strikes. Farther east, the resentments grew into forces that were powerful enough to topple the old order. In the Middle East, the despotism of the Ottoman sultan was replaced by a constitutional government in 1908. In China, four years later, reformers who were seeking to revitalize the nation brought an end to centuries of imperial rule.

But the greatest change was to come with the Great War. For Europe's elite, the long, hot days of August 1914 were to prove an Indian summer; times would never again be so good. By 1919, following the carnage of four years of warfare, the Hapsburgs of Austria-Hungary, Germany's Hohenzollerns, and Russia's Romanovs—dynasties that had shaped the destiny of Europe for centuries—had been dethroned. The survivors among the patriotic masses who had marched so obediently into battle now emerged to reshape the world.

Czar Nicholas II—shown here with his only son, Alexis—was the last of the 300-year-old Romanov dynasty to reign in Russia. His harsh, autocratic rule, coupled with Russia's horrific losses in the Great War, provided an impetus for the socialist revolution that overthrew him in 1917. A year later, he and his family were murdered in captivity.

AUSTRIA'S HAPSBURG EMPERORS



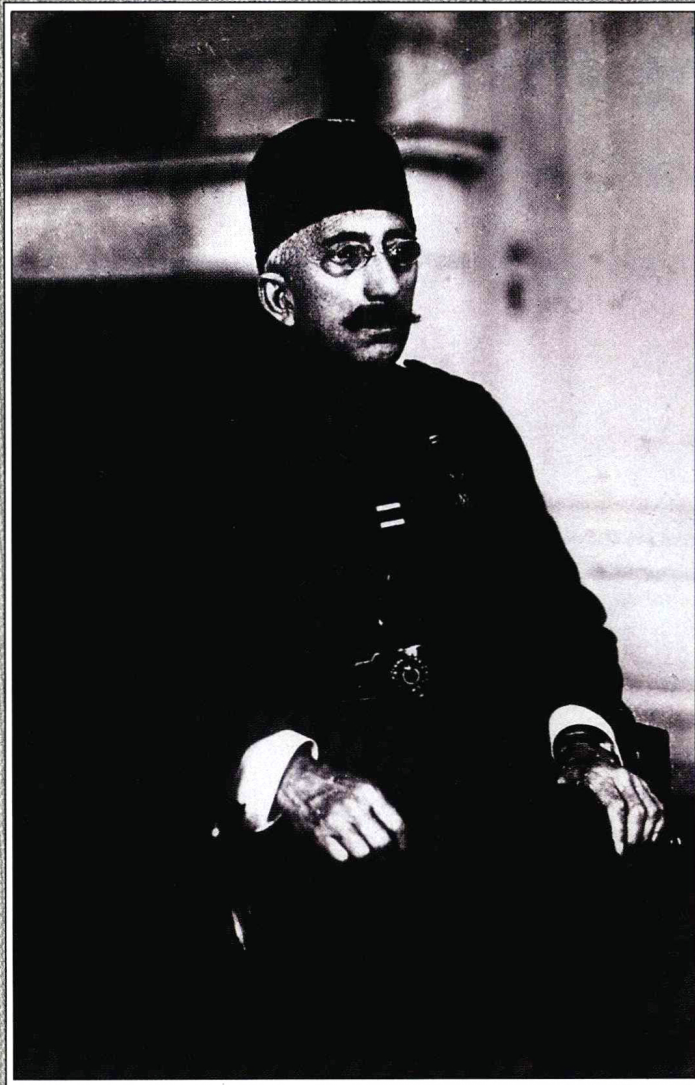
Franz Josef I, Hapsburg emperor of Austria and Hungary, was, at eighty-four, the oldest crowned head of Europe when he declared war on Serbia in 1914. The ensuing war saw Franz Josef's death, in 1916, and the downfall of his dynasty. Unable to hold on to the empire, his successor, Archduke Karl Franz Josef, abdicated in 1918. Archduke Karl died in exile four years later.

GERMANY'S HOHENZOLLERN KAISERS



Kaiser Wilhelm II took his place as the third Hohenzollern emperor of Germany in 1888. A withered left arm did not dampen the strident militarism with which he led Germany into the world war. But with Germany's defeat, Wilhelm was forced to abdicate and take asylum in the Netherlands, where he died at the age of eighty-two.

TURKEY'S OTTOMAN SULTANS



By the time Sultan Mehmed VI ascended the throne in 1918, the 600-year-old Ottoman Empire had become a constitutional monarchy and the sultanate had lost its autocratic powers. Mehmed was forced to abdicate in 1922, shortly after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. He died in exile at the Italian resort of San Remo four years later.

CHINA'S MANCHU EMPERORS



Puyi was just two years old when he became emperor of China, upon the death of his aunt, the empress dowager, in 1908. By 1912, a nationalist revolution backed by the army had led to his abdication. Imprisoned and forced to embrace Communist ideology after World War II, the last of China's Manchu emperors died at the age of sixty-one, tending the gardens of his erstwhile palace.



THE GREAT WAR

1 June 28, 1914, was for most of Europe like any other fine summer Sunday, a time for enjoying rest and sunshine. General peace and unprecedented economic prosperity had lasted for more than thirty years and seemed set to continue indefinitely. There were a few problems, of course: Peace had not produced entire contentment, and wealth, though widespread, was far from universal. There were even a few pessimists who thought that a major European war was increasingly possible, especially since the Great Powers were divided into rival camps: The Triple Alliance linked Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy; the Triple Entente included France, Russia, and, tacitly, Britain. Both camps were heavily armed, and each had plans for a potential war against the other. But this was the twentieth century, a time of progress, not conflict. Almost no one foresaw how quickly a war could erupt, or how tragic it would be.

That Sunday, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne and commander in chief of the Austrian army, was making an official visit to Sarajevo, the capital of his country's Balkan province of Bosnia. It was not a tactful gesture. Bosnia had recently been annexed by the Austrians, after decades of military occupation, and most of its Slav inhabitants felt some loyalty to the neighboring Slav state of Serbia. Bosnia seethed with embittered conspirators; that afternoon, one of them leaped onto the archduke's open car and shot both him and his wife.

Within weeks, these two deaths had led to hundreds of thousands more; within four years, to some 10 million. The action of a single Serbian was to unleash a horrific conflict that would touch almost every part of the globe, a war that was to enter the world's annals as the Great War. The victors would dub it the War of Civilization, an ironic title for four years of carnage in which the most advanced nations employed the full arsenal of technological progress to decimate one another's populations.

And with the slaughter came political change. Following a revolution in 1917, the vast expanses of imperial Russia emerged as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the world's first Communist state. Germany lost its emperor and became, briefly, a republic. Rent by internal dissent, the Austro-Hungarian empire dissolved into its component parts. And in the Middle East, the once-mighty Ottoman Empire lay in fragments, its last sultan deposed by Kemal Atatürk, president of modern Turkey.

By 1925, a new order prevailed. The states spawned from the wreckage of the Austrian, German, and Russian empires gave concrete expression to nationalistic aspirations in eastern Europe and the Baltic. The rising sun of a frenetically industrialized and land-hungry Japan dominated the Far East. And in North America, the United States flexed its industrial and economic muscles as the new global leader.

The shots fired at Sarajevo were well calculated to cause havoc. Austria-Hungary was not a cohesive state; it was a ramshackle agglomeration of nations and fragments of

Austrian gunners on the eastern front during the Great War check the elevation of a 12-inch howitzer. The stubby weapon—named from the Czech word for “catapult”—hurled its massive shell along a high, lobbing trajectory that gave it fearful penetrating power against even a deeply entrenched enemy. Throughout the four years of the war, heavy artillery proved the key to success both in attack and in defense.

In early 1914, the balance of power in Europe set the Triple Alliance of Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary against the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia. When Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28, it drew all of Europe into conflict. Italy initially remained neutral but joined the Entente in 1915. By August 1916, the Central Powers, as they became known (shaded orange), now comprising Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria, were locked in combat with the rest of Europe. Only Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Spain, and Albania (light brown) remained neutral. The Central Powers made gains in the east, but their advance became bogged down in northern France (inset), where the front line hardly moved until the months before Germany surrendered in November 1918.

nations, united only up to a point by dynastic loyalty to the Hapsburg emperors. In the lands that Francis Ferdinand would have inherited, power lay with two barely reconciled minorities, the Germans (mostly in Austria) and the Hungarians. But 47 percent of the population was made up of Slavs of various nationalities, and peripheral Italian- and Rumanian-speaking territories complicated matters still more. Vienna's rulers lived in constant fear that these subject peoples would break away from the empire, as the bulk of the Italian provinces had done in the previous century.

Therefore, when the Sarajevo conspirators were belatedly arrested and were found to possess Serbian army weapons, to have been trained in Serbia, and to have been smuggled across the border into Bosnia by Serbian officers, the outcry from Vienna was understandable. Not even Serbia's ally, Russia, could deny that the Austrians had a genuine grievance. It was the kind of crisis that European diplomacy should have

