

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

I Balkan Wars

- 1 First Balkan War, 1912 Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria & Greece vs. Ottoman Empire
- 2 Second Balkan War, 1913 Bulgaria vs. Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Rumania & Ottoman Empire
- 3 A third Balkan war?
 - A. Assassination of Austrian Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand. 28 June 1914
 - B. Gavrilo Princip, the Black Hand, & Serbian nationalism

II The First World War

- A. Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, Turkey, et al.) vs. Triple Entente (Britain, France, Russia, Italy, US, Japan, et al.)
- B. Total war – mass mobilization of mass populations & economies
- C. Stalemated trench warfare (All Quiet clip)
- D. Technology of death
 - a. Poison gas
 - b. Unrestricted submarine warfare
- E. Casualties: 20 million killed, 21 million wounded
Plus massive physical devastation & population dislocation
- F. Fall of empires: Russia, Germany, Austria, Turkey
- G. Wilson vs. Lenin: liberal capitalist democracy vs. Marxist socialism
- H. Heritage of hatred & instability in Europe – “20 years truce”
- I. The “lost generation”
 - a. Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est”
 - b. William Butler Yeats, “The Second Coming”

III Why?

- 1 German unification and the European balance of power
- 2 Geopolitics: Halford Mackinder, Karl Haushofer, et al.
- 3 Kaiser Wilhelm II: Middle Europe & Middle Africa
- 4 HMS Dreadnaught (1906) & Germany’s “risk fleet”
- 5 The von Schlieffen Plan
- 6 The best laid plans go astray

READ MORE ABOUT IT:

Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History*
Fritz Fischer, *Germany’s Aims in the First World War*
Max Arthur, *Forgotten Voices of the Great War*
John Ellis, *Eye-Deep in Hell*
Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)

“Dulce et Decorum Est”

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the Clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And floundr’ing like a man in fire or lime...
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, --
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.

William Butler Yeats
THE SECOND COMING

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand.
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?