WW1

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**Introduction**

World War 1 was a catastrophic event as the entire world witnessed much devastation in that period. It was considered as one of the biggest man-made catastrophes of the 20th century. World War 1 was started after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The major reasons behind WWI included imperialism, militarism, alliances, and nationalism. In that period, countries wanted to dominate and control others to get more power. A critical examination of “Paths of Glory” indicated the concept of imperialism and power behind WWI. Central powers along with western alliances wanted to secure a dominant position as the world’s power so they practiced the idea of ‘abuse of power’. The main focus of this paper is to critically examine the causes of WWI and the life of the average soldier during the war.

**Discussion**

It is important to mention that WWI started as a European conflict and soon it transformed into a world war. The growing tension of war and imperialism compelled European countries to establish mutual defense alliances to combat any aggressive threats. Mutual defense arguments stated that allied countries should need to defend a country when it would experience an aggressive threat. It was considered as one of the major causes of WWI as a declaration of war by Austria-Hungry on Serbia compelled its allied nation Russia to defend Serbia (Van Evera, 2013). With the passage of time, all alliances in Europe declared war against each other due to their mutual defense agreement. Regardless of alliances, imperialism is also a reason behind WWI as countries wanted to enhance their power and dominance by controlling additional territories. British colonized many countries such as Asian nations to get raw materials. Increased competition in this regard pushed these countries to increase confrontation, which ultimately led to WWI.

In addition, industrialization had a huge role in the onset of WWI as it allowed many countries to build mass destructive weapons and larger ships (Goemans, 2000). The development of cheap steel helped nations to build larger and faster ships, which encouraged them to enhance their progress regarding imperialism. The “Paths of Glory” illustrated the lives of soldiers during WWI. During the WWI, soldiers were forced to live in long and narrow trenches, which often developed medical complications such as trench foot. The life as a soldier was hard on the front line as they had to stay in trenches for long period (Watson, 2004). The muddy and uncomfortable environment made it difficult for soldiers to maintain better health. Trenches became a fundamental part of the strategy for countries due to the introduction of modern weapons of war. In “Paths of Glory” it is demonstrated that artillery attack from the air and machine-gun fire were used at the great extent to dominate war. Due to which, the military used trenches to protect themselves from these advanced weapons of destruction. It is important to consider the actuality that trench warfare caused massive causalities during WWI. Forces mounted attacks from the trenches, which lead to mass causalities as it was rarely effective. With the passage of time, Germans improved the tactic of trench attacks, which can be seen in the battle of Somme in France, where they slaughtered more than 60,000 British troops.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, WWI was a catastrophic event that had a tragic impact on soldiers and civilians. Alliances, militarism, imperialism, and industrialization were major caused behind WWI that compelled many nations to start that war. A critical examination of WWI indicated that countries wanted to secure their position as world powers by capturing more lands and resources. Advanced technology had a devastating impact on front line soldiers due to which they had to suffer many causalities.

**References**

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