

Unit 22

Global War and Peace

Section 1

Unit Materials

Questions To Consider

Question 1.

How did global warfare in the twentieth century differ from previous conflicts?

Question 2.

What were some of the global consequences of the twentieth-century World Wars?

Question 3.

How did global capitalism and political changes in both Europe and Asia help give rise to global warfare in the twentieth century?

Question 4.

How did imperialism help to create the conditions for global war in the twentieth century, and what effects did those wars have on empires and colonies in both the short and long terms?

The Big Picture

How is this topic related to Increasing Integration?

The experience of war in the twentieth century integrated many parts of the world. People were brought together ideologically across vast spaces to fight for common causes; economically as a result of wartime needs for resources and products; and in battle as people from all over the world served as soldiers and laborers.

How is this topic related to Proliferating Difference?

Global warfare in the twentieth century was caused by—and led to a heightened awareness of—differences between peoples, whether those differences were racial, national, ethnic, or ideological.

Unit Purpose

- Twentieth-century conflicts were different from earlier conflicts because they were fought on a truly global scale.
- The conflicts of the twentieth century were rooted in European, U.S., and Japanese imperialism as well as in political and ideological changes in both Europe and Asia.

- Twentieth-century conflicts resulted in many unintended consequences, some of which included decolonization, the formation of new nationalisms, revolutions, and worldwide peace movements.

Unit Content Overview

World history is full of conflicts that pitted people against people, nation against nation, or region against region. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, wars of conquest or liberation pitted colonies against their colonial overlords, or they drew imperial powers into battle against one another for control of distant lands and peoples. In the twentieth century, however, the arrivals of modern technologies of transportation, power, and communication made such conflicts distinctive in size, scope, and conduct. They brought people, weapons, and interests from the furthest corners of the globe onto European soil; they pushed European conflicts to the edges of the earth. Battles and conflicts erupted in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas on an entirely new scale — with bigger ships, deadlier weapons, and the faster transportation of troops.

This unit examines the costs and consequences of twentieth-century global conflicts. In terms of human lives lost and resources spent, these conflicts remain unparalleled in the history of the world. Yet they also ultimately gave voice — and some new measure of control and self-definition — to peoples previously excluded from world politics. Indeed, by the end of the century, independent nations in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific that had once been colonies were—to a greater extent than ever before — independent actors on the world stage. Their voices were critical in arguing for the recognition of universal human rights on a global basis. At the same time, and partly as a result of the legacies of imperialism, these same new nations were also freer to emphasize distinctions of race, nation, religion and region in domestic and international relations. Even as post-war global governing bodies like the United Nations were founded to mediate disputes over these issues, nationalism, regionalism, and racism increasingly threatened to tear the fragile world peace apart again.

Unit References

Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (London: Verso, 1991).

John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

Leila Rupp, *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Global Historical Context

- Time Period: Twentieth century
- War was a recurring feature of the twentieth century, whether those wars were regional and spatially limited or global in scale. Humanity's two bloodiest and most costly wars occurred in this century — World War I and World War II — and in spite of international peace organizations, war continued to devastate human populations after 1945 as well. Some twentieth-century wars were exacerbated by the United States' and the Soviet Union's interventions between 1945 and 1989, as both nations vied for the allegiances of lesser powers during the Cold War. Other wars were triggered by independence movements in regions trying to break free of colonial domination after World War II. Many of these movements were ultimately successful, and during the 1950s and 1960s most of the world

was decolonized. Increasing integration and globalization during the twentieth century produced an atmosphere that lent itself to international and regional conflict, while it also provided unique opportunities for international cooperation in the search for peace.

AP Themes

- Examines interactions in economies and politics by exploring international war and peace in the twentieth century, and by looking at the ways both facilitated connections between the world's peoples.
- Explores technology, demography, and environment through a look at the ways twentieth-century war — the scale of which was made possible by technological advances in transport and weaponry — changed and often destroyed human populations and the natural environment.
- Discusses changing functions of states by focusing on how the post-World War II political climate dictated the needs for international and transnational organizations such as the United Nations.

Related Units

- Unit 17. Ideas Shape the World: How do ideas change the world? This unit traces the impacts of European Enlightenment ideals in the American and Haitian revolutions and in South America. It also examines the revitalization of Islam expressed in the Wahhabi movement as it spread from the Arabian Peninsula to Africa and Asia. It is related to Unit 22 because ideas, especially nationalism, also helped originate global conflicts in the twentieth century.
- Unit 19. Global Industrialization: How was the story of the Industrial Revolution a global process? Industrialization was and is a global process, not just a European or American story. This unit links Cuba, Uruguay, Europe, and Japan, examining the impacts of industry on trade, environment, culture, technology, and lives around the world. It is related to Unit 22 because industrialization was critical — through new methods of transport, weaponry, and production — in allowing the scale and scope of twentieth-century conflicts to reach unprecedented levels.
- Unit 20. Imperial Designs: What lasting impacts did modern imperialism have on the world? The profound consequences of imperialism are examined in the South African frontier and Brazil, where politics, culture, industrial capitalism, and the environment were shaped and re-shaped. This unit is related to Unit 22 because the rivalries created by imperialism were important factors in the outbreak of twentieth-century conflicts. In addition, twentieth-century conflicts resulted in the independence of most colonies.
- Unit 26. World History and Identity: How have global forces redefined both individual and group identities in the modern world? This unit examines the transnational identity that emerged from the Chinese diaspora and compares it to a newly re-defined national Chechen identity forged through war with Russia. It is related to Unit 22 because twentieth-century conflicts — and their consequences — helped to shape new nations and identities all over the world.

Section 2

Video-Related Materials

Video Segment 1: The Rise of Japan as a Military and Imperial Power

This segment examines the consequences of the particular way Japan rose as an imperial power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1910, Japan had become an industrial power on the Western model, had won wars with both China and Russia, and had taken control of Taiwan, Manchuria, and Korea. After World War I, Japan also won control over China's Shandong Peninsula in compensation for its alliance with Britain during the war. In spite of Japan's military and imperial powers, however, Western nations did not treat the country as a member of the "white men's club." Such humiliating treatment, when added to the extreme economic distress caused by the Great Depression in the 1930s, allowed right-wing militarists to gain power in Japan. They argued that Western restrictions on Japan were forcing it to expand its territories in order to survive. In 1931, Japanese forces invaded Manchuria, and in 1937, China. When World War II broke out in Europe, Japan used the opportunity to invade European colonial territories. Japan framed its invasions in terms of liberating fellow Asians from Western domination. In some cases, the Japanese were initially welcomed. When Japan invaded Singapore, for example, they convinced 25,000 Indian soldiers to turn against their British commanders and fight instead for Japan. However, Japanese rule in these areas turned out to be just as harsh as European rule had been. In fact, Japanese rhetoric about liberation disguised much more self-serving interests concerning access to resources and labor — a deception that still complicates easy distinctions between imperialism, exploitation, and liberation.

Video Segment 2: Post-Colonialism in the Belgian Congo

After World War II, many European colonies were able to gain independence. However, in the context of the Cold War, newly independent nations frequently became pawns in the contest between the United States and the Soviet Union. This segment looks at an example of this phenomenon in the Republic of the Congo. In 1960, the Republic of the Congo declared its independence from decades of Belgian rule. Patrice Lumumba, a popular Pan-Africanist, nationalist, and socialist who had fought for independence, became prime minister. One of his first moves was to remove Belgian advisors from the Congo. When the Belgian government sought to protect its interests by using military force, Lumumba called in the United Nations. The UN moved too slowly, however, which prompted Lumumba to ask the Soviet Union for aid. This move alarmed the United States, who assigned a CIA agent to kill Lumumba and install Joseph Mobutu as Congo's military leader. Lumumba was actually executed by Mobutu's forces in 1961, which prompted the Cuban government to send in fighters to aid Lumumba's supporters. By 1965, however, Mobutu seized control of the country and ruled as dictator until 1997. What began as a transfer of power from an imperial nation to an elected prime minister of an independent nation became a Cold War conflict that provoked an international response.

Video Segment 3: International Peace Movements

This segment examines the international peace movements that grew out of the devastation and human cost of twentieth-century conflicts. In the aftermath of World War I, at the urging of the United States' President Wilson, the signers of the Versailles Peace Treaty accepted the creation of the League of Nations — an organization designed to ensure world peace. The League of Nations was not successful in its mission because it had little power to enforce its will, especially if those hostile to its goals withdrew. However, it served as the model for the United Nations, which emerged as a new global peace organization in 1945. The appalling events of the Holocaust gave rise to the notion that there are certain "crimes against humanity" that deserve punishment. So too was born the idea of universal human rights; in 1948 the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sought to affirm the worth and dignity of every person in the world. From its beginnings until the present, the United Nations has been

involved in numerous peace-keeping missions in troubled areas. It has also sanctioned the use of military force in some places, such as Korea and the Persian Gulf. Although its missions have failed in some places, the United Nations aspires to be a truly global organization capable of both mediating and resolving conflicts in all parts of the world.

Perspectives on the Past: Legacy of Imperialism and Genocide

How can imperialism contribute to ethnic rivalries and even genocide? Historian Pat Manning argues that Belgian rule in Rwanda created an artificial hierarchy between the Hutu and Tutsis, who otherwise shared a common language, culture, and religion. Once the country became independent, the tensions created by this artificial hierarchy flared into violence — in 1994 a campaign of genocide erupted where half a million people were murdered. Unlike in areas of strategic concern like the former Yugoslavia, however, the United States and France prevented the United Nations from taking any action to stop the killings — revealing that “universal” human rights are only defended when it is in the interests of the powerful to do so.

Who Is Interviewed

- Ken Ruoff
- Patrick Manning
- Deborah Smith Johnston

Primary Source Materials Featured in the Video

- Hashimoto Kingoro, Japanese soldier
- Patrice Lumumba, African nationalist
- Eleanor Roosevelt, Human Rights activist

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