

THEME 1

India & the First World War (1914-1918)



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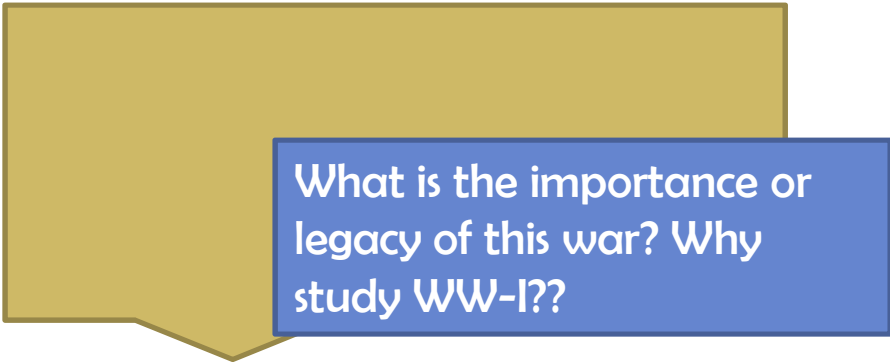
Key questions to be discussed



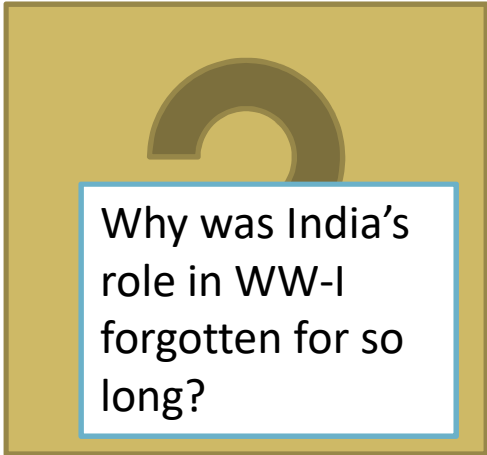
What is WW-I all about?



How did India get involved in WW-I?

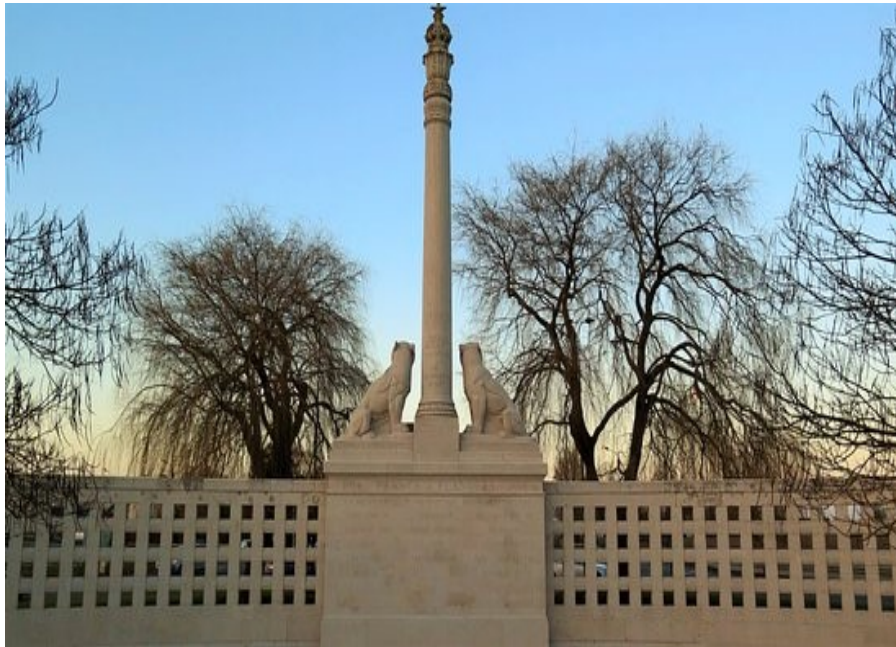


What is the importance or legacy of this war? Why study WW-I??



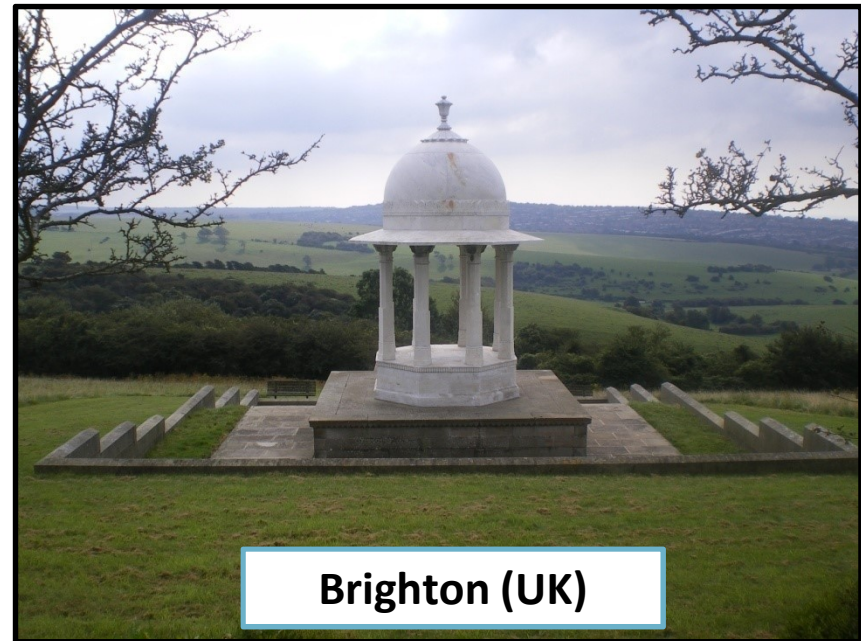
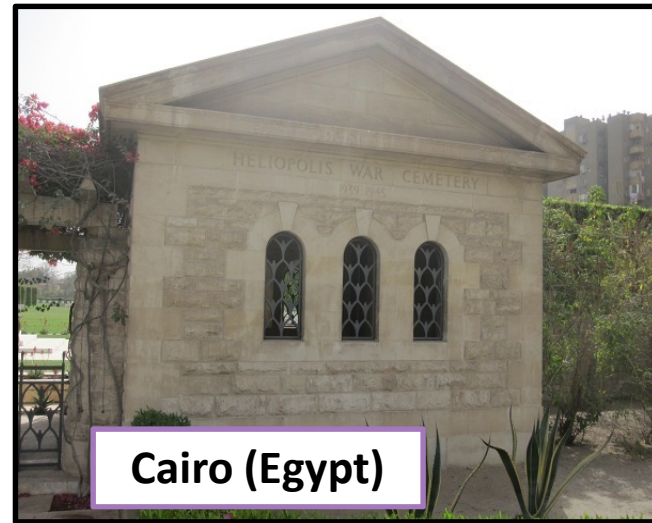
Why was India's role in WW-I forgotten for so long?

Indian War Memorial, Neuve Chapelle (France)



- Designed by **Sir Herbert Baker** (also designed Rashtrapati Bhawan, Delhi; Indian Parliament along with Sir Lutyens)
- Unveiled in 1927
- Carries the names of 4700 Indian soldiers and labourers who died on the “Western Front” , i.e. Western Europe.

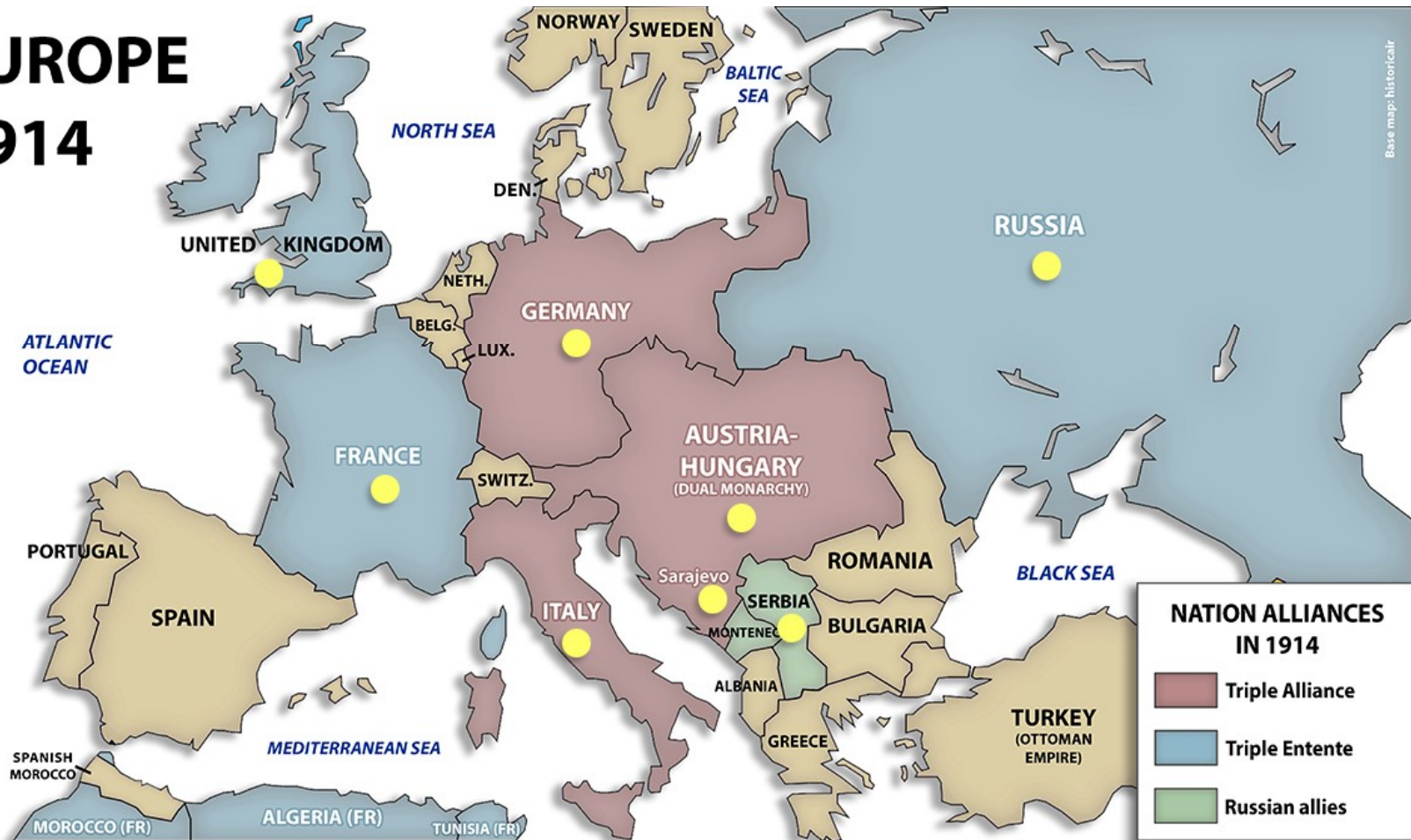
International Commemorations of Indian Soldiers



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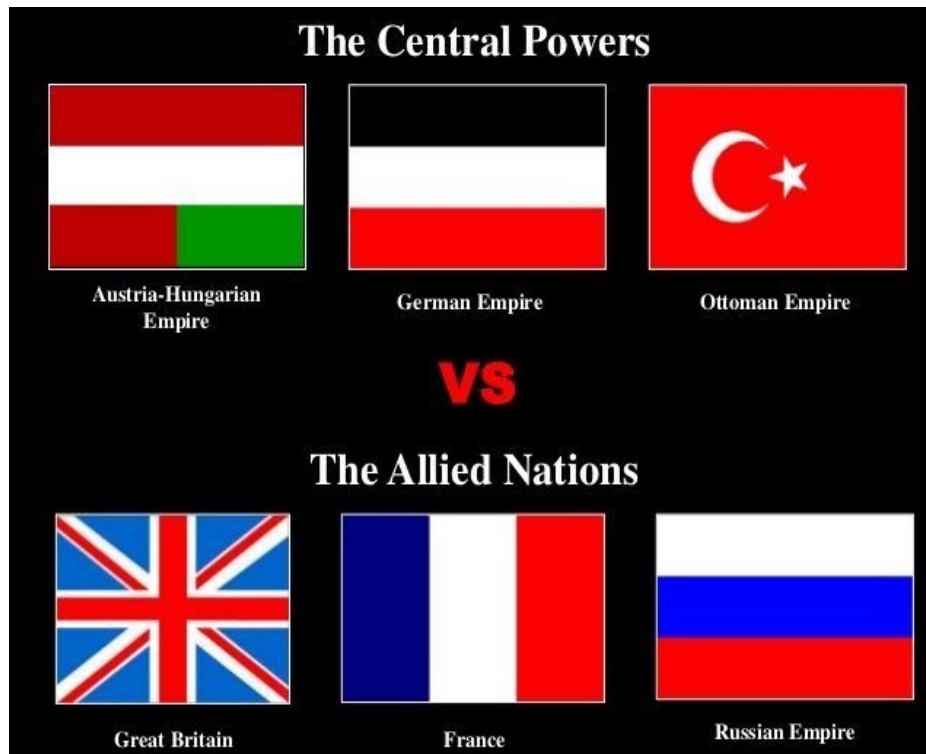
What was the First World War all about??

EUROPE 1914



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Europe in 1914 ≠ Europe in 2014



- 1914 Europe dominated by 5 “Great Powers” : Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary
- All 5 powerful, royally related, but deeply jealous and insecure about each other’s territorial expansion.
- Long-standing grievances against each other (territories, weapons, armies etc).
- 1914 = Boiling point for historical resentments.
- All 5 were Imperial Powers (except Russia after 1917 Revolution) = Amassed massive colonies in Asia and Africa to earn profits from trade & earn “prestige”.
- Rivalries in Europe = Rivalries in Asia/Africa

Trigger for War in 1914



- **28 June 1914:** Austrian Duke & Duchess (friends of the German King) Killed by Serbian assassins. Serbia = ally of **Russia** & resented Austrian dominance in the region.
- Because of the Alliance system in Europe, one country's defeat had to be avenged by the whole alliance against the other alliance. **"Domino Effect"**
- **Serbia + Russia + Britain + France**
VERSUS
Germany + Austria & Hungary + Ottomans (Turkey)
- Immediately, the Great Powers sprung into action & started preparing for war.
- WW-I = initially European in origin ; gradually becomes a "World War" as **colonies** are made to fight in it.

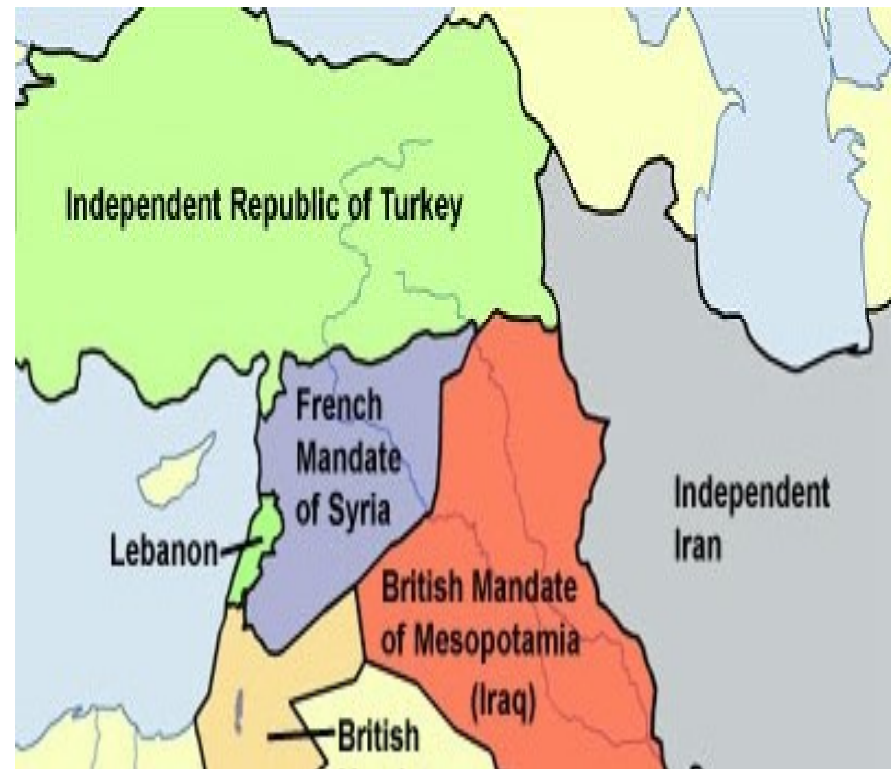
Why is WW-I so important in history?

- **Arrival of modern Technology:**
Tanks, Planes as opposed to Cavalry (Horses) and primitive hand weapons.
- **Chemical Warfare**
- **Conscription** (except India):
Universal Military Service



WW-I & Now

- WW-I led to the formation of several “Nation-states” that now face renewed conflict.
- **Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916:** Divided Ottoman Empire into British-French **Mandates** (spheres of influence)
- **New states in 1918:** Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait (separated from Iraq), Israel-Palestine
- Borders drawn recklessly: No concern for ethnic, sectarian differences. Kurds were displaced.



How did India get involved in WW-I?



- India was a colony of the British Empire since 1858.
- Britain's decision to go to War meant that India had to bow down to the Empire's wishes.
- BUT, Britain also made certain promises to India conditional upon India's unquestioning loyalty to the Empire during the War.
- These promises were political, economic & constitutional in nature.
- By 1914, the Indian National movement had become more demanding and political = demanded self-rule.
- Britain hinted self-rule if India committed to the War effort.

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Where did Indians fight? Total 7 Groups

- Indian Expeditionary Force **A** (France, Belgium)
- I E Force **B** (Tanzania, East Africa)
- I E Force **C** (Uganda, Kenya)
- I E Force **D** (Iraq , erstwhile Mesopotamia)
- I E Force **E** (Egypt)
- I E Force **F** (Sinai Peninsula, Palestine)
- I E Force **G** (Turkey, Greece)

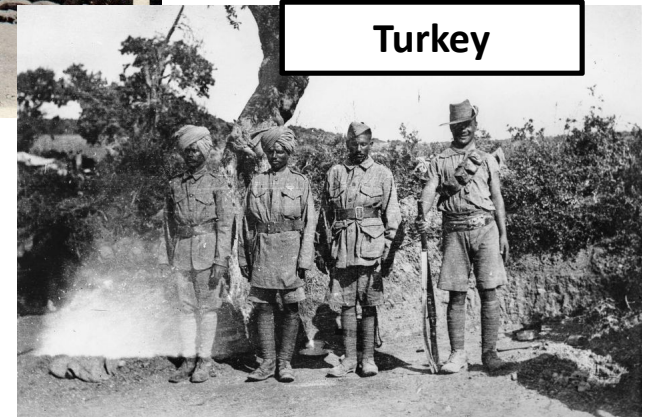


Cavalry in
Europe

Jerusalem



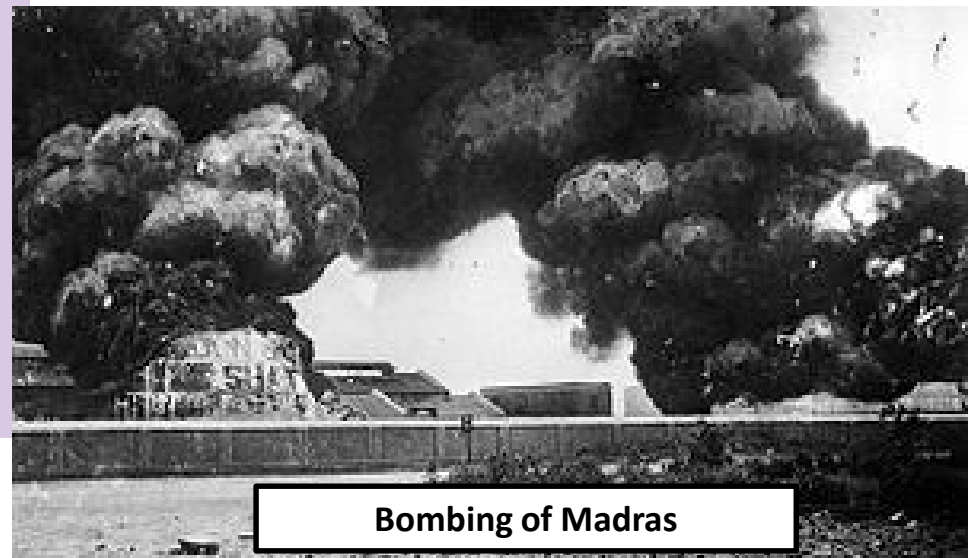
Iraq



Turkey

Conditions of War

- **Climatic Challenges** : Freezing Europe vs Scorching Middle-East
- **Resources**: Supply lines not safe ; Ships under attack from Germany
- **Tactics of War**: Trenches, Chemical Warfare
- **Slow pace of War**
- **Language differences**: Command & Control
- **INDIAN SOLDIERS' FUND**: 1914; Relief & Rehab



Bombing of Madras

Indian Faces of a Global War



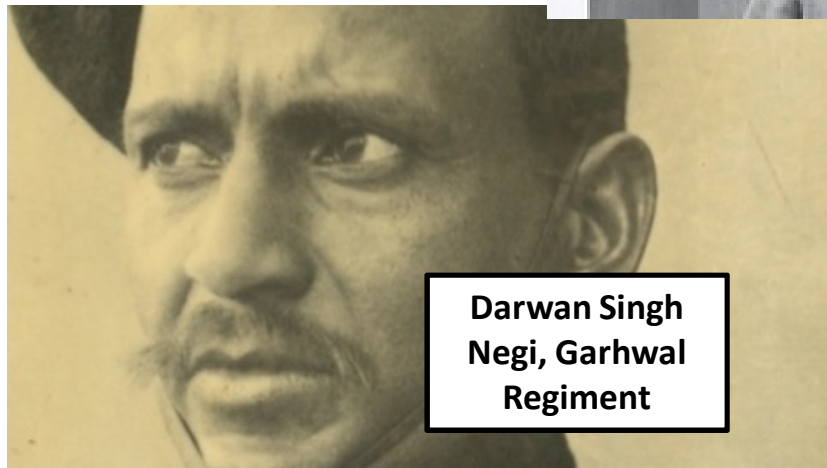
**Khudadad Khan,
Baluchi Regiment**



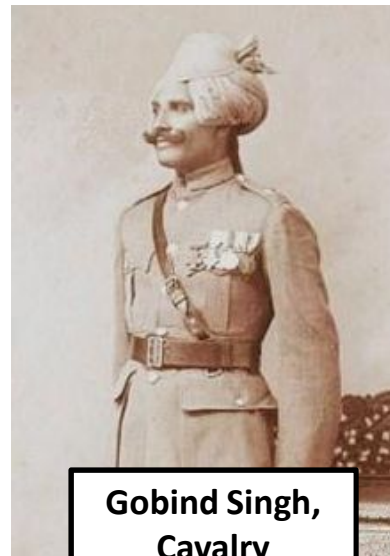
Mir Dast, Frontier Force



**Kulbir Thapa,
Gurkha Rifles**



**Darwan Singh
Negi, Garhwal
Regiment**



**Gobind Singh,
Cavalry**



Badlu Singh, (Scindia)

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War & Politics in India

- **Indian Loyalty during WW-I depended on many factors:**

Promise Political Reforms

Welfare Provisions

Support of Indian Royalty

Loyalty to The British Monarch

Loyalty towards Regiment

- **Political Reforms introduced in 1919 (Montague-Chelmsford Reforms)**

➤ Introduced Bicameral Legislatures in Provinces (2 houses in parliament)

➤ Classification of subjects for governance: Centre, state, reserved

➤ **Indians to be trained as 'Officers' in the Army in England.**

➤ Commitment to grant India Independence in due course

➤ Voting rights granted to tax payers.

War & Politics

- Khilafat Movement: 1919 (Gandhi + Ali Brothers)
- Peace Conference in Paris, 1919:
Treaty of Versailles ; Indian Reps:
Lord Sinha & Maharaja of Bikaner
- Emergence of the US as a major power.
- India: Movement for Independence intensifies. (**Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, 1919**)

