# The Pacific islands and Japan (WWI)

Despite their minimal sizes and remoteness, the Pacific islands were engaged in WWI. According to studies, the Allied campaigns to reduce the size of the German colonial holdings and participation by Pacific Islanders in the European wars landed the region in the WWI. Therefore, the research analyses effects European politics in Pacific islands, the advantage taken by the Pacific islanders to advance their own agenda as well as the continued effects of the WWI on the region.

Arguably, the European politics of WWI had some effects on the Pacific islands. Firstly, it is observed that the war lead to emergence of Japan as a British ally, an opportunity that helped Japan gain economic mileage and prosperity. In other words, the European politics of WWI made Japan secure share of world market that made the country one of the most respectable and prosperous nations in the region (Miñambres-García, 2016).

Secondly, through the European politics, the fate of German Pacific Islands hanged on the balanced. With Germany’s loss of her Pacific colonies, vigorous lobbying on the parts of New Zealand, Australia and Japan ended with the preservation of status quo through the League of Nation Mandates. Here, German Samoa became a New Zealand mandate. On the other hand, Australia was awarded the former New Guinea, Nauru, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the northern half of the Solomon Islands. Besides, the politics is known to have influenced the transfer of Germany’s right of Zandong to Japan (Miñambres-García, 2016). Additionally, it ensured that Germany’s northerly Pacific islands were handed to the Japanese mandate, under the title known as the South Pacific Mandate.

Lastly, the politics of WWI helped Japan gained fame and become one of the undoubted great powers in the international politics. Such political achievement was a boost to the country in many ways. For instance, it helped Japan to have a representative who could sit with other world powers to negotiate world affairs. Indeed, studies show that the year 1919 brought change on Japan’s influence as one of her members-Saionji Kinmochi seized an opportunity to participate on the Versailles Peace Conference (The albuquerque meeting, 2016). Additionally, the European politics influenced chances of Tokyo gaining a permanent seat on the council of the League of Nations. By such achievements, Japan became powerful to the extent that the country could influence the outcome of the Paris peace conference that reworded her with mandates over the islands seized during the war.

Rather than concentrating on war issues, some nations took advantage of WWI to advance their own agenda. Indeed, studies show that the ability to seize German’s teritories prompted Japan’s participation in the WWI. Firstly, Japan used the opportunity to expand its sphere of influence in China. Based on the great distance and Germany’s preoccupation with the war in Europe, Japan’s military used the chance to seize German possessions in the Pacific and East Asia. In such instances, the Imperial Japanese Navy solely defeated the German Navy and captured Germany's Micronesian territories that they ruled from September 1914 to 1921. The Caroline, Mariana, and Marshall Islands are the Germanys possessions seized by Japan during the war (The albuquerque meeting, 2016).

Secondly, January 1915 marked another chapter on the history of WWI as Japan took advantage of the situation to gain some political mileages. Here, Japan presented the Twenty-One –Demands to the Chinese leader, Yuan Shikai. Eventhough the mission was never fully implemented, it aimed at reducing China to a Japanese Protectorate at the expense of advantages that the European powers had achieved through the sphere of influence.

Thirdly, the wartime helped Japan to make economic gains, leading to her emergence as a great world power in the post war geopolitics. Japan played her cards well and ensured filling of war orders for war materials to her allies in Europe, leading to her transformation from a known debtor to a creditor nation. Besides, Australian and New Zealand engaged their companies in economic exploitation (The albuquerque meeting, 2016). Here, the two countries took over the German business operations such as phosphate mining and copra production for their own gains.

Lastly, culture influence was never left out. For instance, the Japanese used the wartime session to instill their cultures on the people in the regions that they controlled. Notably, the Japanese subjected their subjects to a heavy policy of assimilation as a way of instilling their cultures (Dobrescu and Ciocea, 2016). All these were aimed at replacing the primitive cultures of the indigenous population with newly and wholly recorganized Japanese identity.

Even though WWI ended some time back in 1918, its effect can still be felt in the Pacific islands. Firstly, the fact that the war triggered the spirit of self-determination, leading to the emergence of various nations that exist to date is an issue that can still be felt. Based on analysis, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Lithuanian, Hungary and Estonia are some of the countries whose urge and achievement for independence arose from the WWI (Dobrescu and Ciocea, 2016).

Secondly, since the termination of the WWI, legacy of more than a Century rule has continued to exist in the Pacific Islands. Culture, politics and economy are some of the areas in Pacific Islands where imprints of WWI can still be felt. Besides, one finds nationalism and regionalism shown by the new countries that were annexed from Germany still existing in the region. Lastly, the effect of WWI can still be felt in the Pacific islands because of the vacuum created by weakening of the once feared powers of Germany. Here, the war reduced the powers of the once powerful nation by limiting the size of its military (Dobrescu and Ciocea, 2016).

In sum, despite their remoteness and small sizes, the Pacific Islands participated in the WWI. Having been invited to the war by Britain, Japan entered the war on condition of seizing the German teritories. Moreover, studies show that countries such as Australia and Japan took advantage of the war to advance their own missions. As observed, effects of WWI can still be felt in the Pacific islands and Japan despite the passage of many centuries.

## References

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