

World War One (The "Outbreak" of World War One)

Overview

The method of presenting the topic in Polish school textbooks

Polish school textbooks present the issue of World War I in two contexts. Students learn above all about the reasons of the outbreak of that global conflict, as well as about the stages of increasing tension in international relations at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries caused by the global superpowers' colonial policy and growing economic, ideological and social gaps in Europe. They also analyse the formation of political blocs – the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. School textbooks briefly discuss the course of war, focusing on the character of military actions and the consequences of war for the development of technology, as well as economic situation and social changes in individual countries. On the other hand, in Polish textbooks the course of WWI is inseparably related to the issue of the Polish fight for independence and creation of a sovereign state as a result of the defeat suffered by all the partitioners: Russia, Austria and Prussia. Hence, in the context of the World War I, Polish textbooks discuss a broad range of topics, including: individual partitioners' attitude to the Polish cause, political orientations created in Polish society before 1914, armed efforts of the Poles on the war fronts and the evolution of the Polish cause in the international arena as influenced by the events of 1914-1918. Thus, in this case, the topic of war is closely connected to the issue of regaining independence by Poland, which, from the Polish perspective, is the most important result of that global armed conflict.