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The Crimean War 1854 – 1856, cause and effects

Questions to ponder

1. “The Crimean War of 1854-1856 was one of the most useless and wasteful wars ever fought.” Discuss
2. “The Crimean war was fought by European powers without strong reasons”. Discuss.
3. “The Crimean war was fought on neither clear Principles nor clear objectives.” Discuss.

(All these questions are similar)

Approach

Each question should have:

- a. A brief introduction of about the Crimean War.
- b. Assess the causes of the Crimean War. Indicate how they were not genuine or trivial and those that were genuine;
- c. Assess the effects of the Crimean war.
- d. The give a generalized conclusion

Summary of the Armed conflicts in the Crimean War 1854 – 1856

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) was a significant conflict fought between the Russian Empire and an alliance of the Ottoman Empire, France, the United Kingdom, and Sardinia-Piedmont. Here are some key points:

1. **Causes:** The war was sparked by religious tensions over the rights of Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in Palestine. Russia demanded protection rights for Orthodox Christians, while France supported Roman Catholics. The broader geopolitical context included the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the expansionist ambitions of Russia.
2. **Major Battles:** Notable battles included the **Battle of Alma**, the **Battle of Balaclava** (famous for the **Charge of the Light Brigade**), and the **Siege of Sevastopol**.

3. **Outcome:** The war ended with the **Treaty of Paris** in 1856, which required Russia to surrender southern Bessarabia and recognize the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The war also led to significant reforms in military medicine and nursing, largely due to the efforts of figures like **Florence Nightingale**.
4. **Casualties:** The war resulted in approximately **500,000 casualties**, with a significant number of deaths caused by disease rather than combat.

Causes of Crimean war 1854 – 1856

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) was caused by a combination of religious, geopolitical, and strategic factors:

Trivial causes

1. The desire by Napoleon III to revenge the 1812 Moscow campaign in which his Uncle Napoleon I was defeated.
2. The scramble the holy places of Jerusalem and Bethlehem by Russia and France was so trivial on the side of France since she had failed to play her role of guardianship. On the other hand, Russia had a point to defend since she had used a lot of resources to repair the holy places and had a bigger number of pilgrims than France.
3. The exaggeration made by men on the spot who mainly included Prince Menshikoff (Russian ambassador in turkey) and Stratford De-Radcliff (The British Ambassador to Constantinople-Turkey)
4. The ambition of Napoleon III to fight Nicholas I for the sake of title and recognition was trivial and uncalled for.
5. The shifting of the war from Walachia and Moldavia to the Crimean Island within the Russian peninsular was also trivial.
6. Russia's false confidence to win any war claiming that she had not experienced any revolution like other European powers like France and Austria was trivial cause for the Crimean war.

Genuine Causes

7. Turkey's desire to protect her independence and her territorial integrity against Russia crazy imperialism was genuine cause.
8. Russian desire to protect the Orthodox Christian minority from the persecution of Turkish Muslims.
9. British and France fought Russia for her imperialism and expansionism tendency that threatened their strategic and commercial interests in the Balkans.
10. The sinking of the Turkish warships (Squadron) at Sinope in the Black Sea, November 1853 by the Russia.
11. The Ottoman Empire's decline made it vulnerable to external threats and internal revolts, prompting European powers to intervene to maintain the balance of power.

Effects that indicate the Crimean war was wasteful

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) is often considered wasteful due to several negative effects:

1. **High Casualties:** The war resulted in approximately **500,000 casualties**, with a significant number of deaths caused by disease rather than combat.
2. **Economic Cost:** The conflict placed a heavy financial burden on the participating nations, draining resources that could have been used for other purposes.
3. **Military Mismanagement:** The war exposed significant issues in military logistics and leadership, including poor planning and coordination.
4. **Human Suffering:** The deplorable conditions faced by soldiers, particularly in terms of medical care, led to widespread suffering and highlighted the need for reforms in battlefield medicine.
5. **Limited Strategic Gain:** Despite the high cost, the war did not result in substantial territorial or strategic gains for the victors, making the human and economic costs seem disproportionate to the outcomes.
6. **Continued persecution Christian in Ottoman's Empire despite the 1856 Paris Treaty.**
7. Grant freedom to Moldavia, Walachia and Serbia promoted further decline of Ottoman's Empire.

Positive effects of Crimean War

The **Crimean War** (1854-1856) had several positive effects:

1. **Advancements in Medicine:** The war led to significant improvements in battlefield medicine and nursing practices, largely due to the efforts of **Florence Nightingale** and other medical professionals. Their work laid the foundation for modern nursing and medical care.
2. **Military Reforms:** The war exposed flaws in military logistics and leadership, prompting reforms in military organization and strategy.
3. **Napoleon III's popularity and credibility increased in Europe.** He managed to convince European diplomats to organize an international conference in France at Paris in 1856.
4. **Public Awareness:** The extensive coverage of the war in newspapers, particularly by correspondents like **William Howard Russell**, raised public awareness about the realities of war and the need for humanitarian reforms.
5. **Balance of Power:** The **Treaty of Paris (1856)** helped maintain the balance of power in Europe by limiting Russian expansion and recognizing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.
6. **Social Change:** The war catalyzed social changes, including shifts in public attitudes and national identity, as well as the emergence of new roles within society.
7. Free navigation on big waters like Black sea, Mediterranean seas were granted
8. Nicholas I of Russia was force to resort to fundamental reforms mainly in agriculture and industrial sectors.

9. The sultan of turkey was forced to promise fair treatment of the Orthodox Christians in Balkans.
10. Crimean was contributed to unification of Germany and Italy. Cavour used the opportunity of the Austrian absence and forwarded the Italian unification cause.

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