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Course

Date

Why World War I Lasted Until November 1918?

World War I was expected to be short and quick; however, it lasted for four years. Although there were many factors contributing to the duration of the war, one of the prime reasons was the failure of the Schlieffen Plan. The mentioned plan was devised by Germans with the aim to quickly capture and conquer France on the western front in order to be able to regroup and strike Russians in the east.

The Schlieffen plan was a preplanned military operation with the help of which Germans wanted to win the war on both fronts with the element of surprise and speed. In practice, “the Schlieffen plan was worked out for war on the Western front only; for when drawn up, Russia was still very weak as a result of the Manchurian War. It also contemplated additions to the army that did not take place” (“The Schlieffen Plan” para. 6). In other words, the first half of the plan worked as planned since France was indeed conquered rather quickly. However, soon, the plan lost its relevance as pointed out by memo response, where it is stated, “the important thing is to keep our flexibility, not lock into a Schlieffen Plan at this particular point in time” (“Richard Nixon Presidential Library” 29). Several challenges emerged, which delayed the plan’s realization on the eastern front. The lagging of the plan implementation led to the downfall of Germany.

In conclusion, World War I was expected to keep on for a short period but lasted until November 1918 primarily due to the failure of the Schlieffen plan. Germans expected to win the war on both fronts by attacking France with quick succession and regrouping to face the

Russians. However, only the first part of the plan worked as expected, whereas the emergence of a series of delays and challenges led to the failure of the prepared arrangement.

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