

Unit 12

World War I

Section 1: Introduction

World War I- Introduction

- World War I (WWI) was a military conflict from 1914 to 1918
 - Began as a local European war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia
 - The immediate cause/first incident of WWI was the assassination on June 28, 1914, of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in the city of Sarajevo
- Eventually became a global war involving 32 nations

Nations Involved

- Allies and Associated Powers
 - Included: Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States (Twenty-eight nations total)
- Central Powers
 - Included: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria

Underlying Causes of World War I

- M-A-I-N= militarism, alliances, imperialism, nationalism
 - Nationalism= led not to cooperation but to competition; rivalries over colonies and trade intensified during imperialistic expansion
 - Imperialism= in the last one-third of the 19th c. Europe began to take control of large parts of the world
 - Militarism= between 1871 and 1914 the nations of Europe were convinced that their interests were threatened, so they maintained large standing armies; constantly replenished these armies through peacetime conscription
 - Link between militarism and imperialism= as a country gained colonies, its military grows to protect them

Alliances

- A system of alliances that included all of the major powers of Europe was a major factor leading to WWI
- Prior to 1914 the major powers of Europe formed alliances with one another
 - Triple Entente= Britain, France, and Russia
 - Triple Alliance= Germany, Austria-Hungary, (and later) Turkey (the Ottoman Empire), Italy
 - A dispute between any two powers of these rival groups could draw all the major nations of Europe into war

Section 2: The Great War Begins

First Incident of World War I

- Background: Bosnia and Herzegovina had been annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908; Serbian nationalists believed these areas should become part of the newly independent Serbian nation
- Archduke Franz Ferdinand was the nephew of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Josef and the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire
- On June 28, 1914 the Archduke and his wife were in the Bosnian city of Sarajevo to inspect the imperial armed forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ferdinand's Assassination

- Ferdinand and Sophie were touring Sarajevo in an open car when a Serbian nationalist threw a bomb at their car; the Archduke was not injured, but one of his officers + members of the crowd were hurt
- On the way to visit the injured officer, the archduke and his wife were shot and killed in their open car by 19-year-old Gavrilo Princip
- Princip was a member of a Serbian nationalist group called the Black Hand
 - The direct participation of the Serbian government was not proven but was highly likely

Impact of the Assassination

- Count Leopold von Berchtold, the foreign minister of Austria, believed that Ferdinand's assassination justified crushing the anti-Austrian propaganda and terrorism coming from the Serbs
- Emperor William II of Germany assured the Austrians of his nation's full support
- July 23= Austro-Hungarian foreign ministry presented an ultimatum to the Serbs
- July 25= Austro-Hungarian government announced that Serbia's reply was not satisfactory
 - The Austrian authorities immediately mobilized their armed forces

War is Declared

- July 28= Austria declared war on Serbia
- July 29= Russia mobilized its army; Russia supported the Serbs so Austria would not dominate the Balkans
- August 1= Germany declared war on Russia
 - The Russian mobilization threatened Germany, because in the event of war on the eastern front, there would also be war on the western front (with France)
 - France began full mobilization of its military
- August 3= Germany declared war on France

War Spreads

- Schlieffen Plan= Germany planned a quick attack and defeat of France, which could mobilize faster than Russia, then a movement of troops to the Eastern front in order to fight against Russia which Germany believed would be slower to mobilize for war
- August 4= To invade France at an advantageous position, Germany had to march through Belgium which had declared itself a neutral country in the war; Great Britain declared war on Germany officially over the violation of Belgian neutrality
- By August 4, 1914 all of the major powers of Europe were at war

Section 3: Western and Eastern Fronts

“The Great War”

- World War I was at heart about the balance of power on the European continent
 - Germany and its allies were threatening the balance of power by arming themselves and threatening the borders of Europe
- The general attitude toward the prospect of a Europe-wide war among the people of Europe in the summer of 1914 was one of naïve enthusiasm for the adventure of war
 - Most people believed the war would be over quickly; every European war since 1815 had ended in a matter of weeks

First Battle of the Marne (Sept. 6-10)

- Schlieffen Plan= called for the German army to quickly sweep through Belgium into northern France overtaking Paris and encircling most of the French Army
 - German soldiers would then rush to the east to defeat the Russians
- While attempting to execute the Schlieffen Plan the German army was halted just 20 miles from Paris at the First Battle of the Marne
- After four days of fighting, the German generals gave the order to retreat
- The battle was a decisive event in WWI- the defeat of the Germans left the Schlieffen Plan in ruins
- Germany was forced to fight a two-front war

Trench Warfare

- After the First Battle of the Marne the war on the Western Front settled into a stalemate with the use of trench warfare
- Trench warfare= soldiers fought each other from an extensive system of trenches; armies traded huge losses of human life for small land gains
 - Intended purpose of trench warfare was to protect soldiers from enemy gun fire on the front lines
- Most military leaders were under the illusion that larger numbers of troops would allow them to get their troops beyond the enemy trenches and gain a quick victory

Trench Warfare (cont.)

- Trenches swarmed with rats and lice
- Fresh food was nonexistent
- Sleep was nearly impossible
- Space between the trenches was called “no man’s land”

Western Front

- The Western Front (from the Swiss border to the North Sea) became a “terrain of death”
- The death toll reached a peak in 1916
 - February= Verdun- over 300,000 losses on each side; Germans advance only four miles
 - July-November= Battle of the Somme- British attempt to relieve the French army; more than 21,000 British soldiers killed in a single day; British gain only five miles

Eastern Front

- Eastern Front= Battlefield along the German and Russian border
 - War in the East was more mobile than in the West
- Russians and Serbs vs. Germans and Austro-Hungarians= Eastern front fighting
- By 1916, Russia’s war effort was near collapse
 - Russia was not extensively industrialized= shortages of food, guns, ammunition, clothes, boots, blankets etc. for military use
 - However, the Russian army had one asset= its numbers
 - August, 1914= Battle of Tannenberg; Russians are crushed and are forced into retreat

Section 4: The War Widens

American Neutrality

- U.S. official policy was to remain neutral at the outset of WWI
- Germany uses unrestricted submarine warfare- policy to sink any ship in British waters without warning
- Germany halts the policy in 1915, after the sinking of the *Lusitania* angers the U.S.
 - More than 100 Americans were aboard the passenger liner

America Enters WWI

- Germany renews unrestricted submarine warfare policy in 1917 hoping to keep cargo ships from reaching Great Britain
- Zimmerman Telegram- exposed the German plan to help Mexico regain U.S. territory
 - Officials intercepted a telegram written by Germany's foreign secretary, Arthur Zimmermann, stating that Germany would help Mexico "reconquer" the land it had lost to the United States if Mexico would ally itself with Germany
- Renewal of unrestricted sub-warfare and the effort to enlist Mexico angers the U.S.
- U.S. declares war against Germany in April 1917 and joins the Allies (Woodrow Wilson is the President); by 1918 U.S. troops had turned the tide of war

Home Front: The Impact of Total War

- The prolongation of WWI made it a total war that affected the lives of all citizens
 - Total war= the nations involved in WWI devoted all their resources to the war
- Propaganda (one-sided information that emphasizes emotionalism) is used by governments to build/maintain support for the war
- Wartime gov'ts expanded their powers over economies
 - Free market capitalism limited as governments controlled: prices, wages, rent control, rationing of food supplies/materials, regulation of imports/exports

Conscription

- Most nations were forced to rely on conscription (forced military service) to raise the number of soldiers needed to continue to fight WWI
 - Britain had the largest volunteer army in history but was still forced to resort to conscription by 1916
- During WWI thousands of women fill jobs previously held by men as volunteers and conscripts were sent into war
 - At the end of the war, governments moved quickly to remove women from the jobs they had encouraged them to take earlier

Unrest at Home

- As the war dragged on people at home became restless about the war and began to voice opposition
- Defence of the Realm Act (DORA)- passed in G.B.; allowed public authorities to arrest dissenters as traitors; allowed censorship
- France- Georges Clemenceau suspends basic liberties in 1917

Section 5: The Russian Revolution

Background to the Russian Revolution

- 1881= Alexander III becomes czar, ends reforms which benefitted peasants
 - Institutes autocratic rule, suppressing all opposition or dissent
- Successive czars continued this autocratic rule
 - Government censors written criticism; secret police monitor schools
 - Non-Russians living in Russia are treated harshly
 - Jews become target of government-backed pogroms (mob violence)
- 1894= Nicholas II becomes czar, continues autocratic ways

Russian Industrialization

- Russia lagged far behind the industrial nations of western Europe
- 1863-1900= An effort is made at rapid industrialization; Number of factories doubles between 1863 and 1900; Russia still lags
 - Late 1800s= new plan boosts steel production; major railway begins
- However, living and working conditions were horrendous and workers began to organize

Vladimir Lenin

- There was a growing popularity of Marxist ideas that the proletariat (workers) should rule and control the economy
- Bolsheviks= Marxists who favor revolution by a small committed group
- Vladimir Lenin becomes the Bolshevik leader and agitates for revolution and overthrow of the czar
- Early 1900s, Lenin fled to western Europe to avoid arrest by the czarist regime
 - From there he maintained contact with other Bolsheviks

The 1905 Revolution

- 1904/05= Russia and Japan fought for control of Korea and Manchuria; Russia was defeated and humiliated
 - Tsar Nicholas II became even more unpopular
- Government is seen to be weak and incompetent; food shortages and unemployment were a major problem
- “Bloody Sunday,” 1905= Thousands of workers march on the czar’s palace to demand reform; Army open fires into the crowd, killing many
- Massacre leads to widespread unrest; Nicholas is forced to make reforms
 - The Duma, Russia’s first parliament, meets in 1906; Czar is unwilling to share power, and dissolves the Duma after only 10 weeks

Russia in WWI

- Heavy losses in World War I reveal the Russian government’s weakness
 - Over 15 million men joined the army; not enough workers in factories and farms caused shortages of food and materials
- Nicholas goes to the war front; Czarina Alexandra runs the government
 - Czarina falls under the influence of Rasputin- corrupt “holy man”; nobles fear Rasputin’s influence, murder him
- Army losing effectiveness; people begin to organize and strike

Revolution (1917)

- Feb 22- 20,000 steelworkers go on strike
- Feb 26- Tsar orders troops to fire on crowds- 40 killed + closes the *Duma* (legislative body)
- Feb 27- Soldiers mutiny and establish the Petrograd Soviet with workers and soldiers (refuse to disperse the crowds any longer)
- March 15- Tsar Nicholas II abdicates his throne (as a result of the working class women staging a massive food march in Petrograd)

Aftermath of the Revolution

- The Provisional Government that took power after the tsar abdicated his throne was headed by Alexander Kerensky
- However, the P.G. faced a challenge to its authority in the form of the soviets (councils of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies)
 - soviets represented the more radical interests of the lower classes- largely composed of socialists

Bolsheviks Seize Power

- Lenin had been living in Switzerland since 1900; the Germans arranged to have Lenin transported by train back to Russia in April, 1917
- Once back in Russia, Lenin leads the Bolshevik resistance to the Provisional Government
- Bolshevik promises:
 - an end to the war; redistribution of all land to the peasants; the transfer of factories and industries from capitalists to committees of workers; take gov't power from the Provisional Gov't and give it to the soviets
 - Slogans: "Peace, Land, Bread," "Worker Control of Production," and "All Power to the Soviets"

Bolsheviks Seize Power (cont.)

- Peasants angry with the P.G. started to seize land
- Workers/soviets joined the Bolsheviks
- Lenin's Bolsheviks took control of the provisional government in an almost bloodless coup on the night of November 6, 1917
- The Bolsheviks were renamed the Communists with Lenin as the leader
- Lenin signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which made peace with Germany

Section 6: End of the War

End of Fighting

- The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk allowed Germany to focus all their efforts on the Western Front
- The final German offensive of WWI was stopped on July 18, 1918 at the Second Battle of the Marne
- At the very end of the war, the allies used tanks to smash through the trenches
- The arrival of tanks and fresh American troops to the western front turned the tide
- On September 29, 1918 General Ludendorff of Germany demanded that the gov't sue for peace

Germany Surrenders

- Woodrow Wilson (U.S. President) insisted that the Kaiser William II would have to be removed from power, so the Weimar Republic was established when the Kaiser abdicated
- WWI war came to an end at the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month in 1918 (November 11, 1918)
 - Armistice was signed near Paris bringing an end to WWI
- WWI killed between 10 and 13 million people, one third of whom were civilians
- World War I drained the treasuries of many European countries

Peace Negotiations

- In January 1919, the delegations of twenty-seven victorious Allied nations gathered in Paris to conclude the settlement of WWI- the Treaty of Versailles will be produced which was the major treaty ending WWI
- In theory, the Treaty of Versailles was to be based on the Fourteen Points President Wilson put forward in January, 1918, before World War I was actually over
 - Wilson's Fourteen Points were a plan for the post-WWI world
- Major Provisions of the Fourteen Points:
 - "Open covenants openly arrived at"
 - Popular determinism meant letting the people decide what form of government they wanted, where they wanted borders drawn, etc.
 - League of Nations would be created to enforce this peace

Key Leaders at Versailles Negotiations

- Group of leaders known as the Big Four dominate peace talks:
 - U.S. president Woodrow Wilson
 - French ruler Georges Clemenceau
 - David Lloyd George of Great Britain
 - Vittorio Orlando of Italy (much less important role than the others)
- Germany not invited; Russia does not attend due to civil war

Versailles Negotiations

Leader	Position
David Lloyd-George (Great Britain)	The British Prime minister himself was a moderate, but Lloyd-George had just won election by making a commitment to the British people to make the Germans pay for the war; determined to destroy the merchant and naval power of Germany
Georges Clemenceau (France)	Wanted revenge on Germany as well as for greater security for France; wanted a defensive border on the Rhine River and a weak Germany
Woodrow Wilson (U.S.)	Wilson was idealistic and had trouble dealing with seasoned veterans of European politics; did not have the support of the American Congress which had gone Republican in the November 1918, elections

Treaty of Versailles

- Allies + Germany sign a peace accord called the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919
 - Germany was forced to assume sole responsibility for the war under the Treaty of Versailles
 - created League of Nations —international organization to keep peace (desired by President Wilson)
- Penalties Imposed on Germany:
 - a reduction in its army to 100,000 men
 - a reduction in its navy
 - the demilitarization of all lands along the Rhine
 - Germany is forced to pay damages to allied nations (Article 231- “War Guilt Clause”)
 - League to rule German colonies until deemed ready for independence
- United States never signs the Treaty of Versailles or joins the League Nations due to domestic concerns; U.S. signs a separate peace with Germany

Impact of Treaty of Versailles

- Germany and Russia lose extensive land
- Austro-Hungarian Empire ceases to exist; Ottoman Empire dismembered
- Impact on Germany
 - War reparations totaled approximately \$33 billion which Germany could never repay; further devastated an already destroyed German economy
 - Reduction in the German military to 100,000 soldiers put thousands of German men out of work
 - Versailles left a legacy of bitterness and hatred in the hearts of the German people