

Chapter 27: The Great Break: War and Revolution

1. The First World War (1914-1918)
 - a. The Bismarckian system of alliances
 - i. Germany was the most powerful European country after 1871.
 - ii. Unlike Napoleon or Hitler, Bismarck sought to guarantee European peace through alliances.
 - iii. The **Three Emperors' League** (Austria, Russia, and Germany) was created in 1873 to maintain the status quo; this was followed by an **Austrian-German Alliance of 1879** and the **Alliance of the Three Emperors** in 1881.
 1. He wanted to ease tensions between Austria and Russia, the two great Eastern powers.
 - iv. Encouraged France in Africa, but kept France isolated in Europe.
 - v. Because of tensions with France, Italy joined Germany and Austria in the Triple Alliance (1882).
 - vi. In 1887, the **Russian-German Reinsurance Treaty** promised neutrality by each state if the other were attacked.
 - b. The rival blocs
 - i. William II dismissed Bismarck, and his termination of the German-Russian Reinsurance Treaty led to a new Russian-French alliance.
 - ii. Under William II, the British-German "natural alliance" (racially related) deteriorated into a bitter rivalry.
 1. The Boer War, German envy of British imperialism, and economic and military rivalry drove the British and the Germans apart.
 - a. Germany's decision to build up its battle fleet coincided with the Boer War and widespread anti-British sentiment.
 2. Then Britain allied with Japan and turned to France and formed the **Anglo-French Entente** of 1904, which further alienated Germany and settled colonial disputes between Britain and France.
 - a. France's **Theophile Delcasse** extended the advances.
 3. Germany tested this entente in a diplomatic struggle over Morocco.
 - a. The **Algeciras Conference (1906)** left Germany empty-handed and isolated.
 - iii. As a result, Germany became increasingly distrustful, and other European countries began to see Germany as a threat.
 1. Russia joined with England after the Russo-Japanese War and the revolution of 1905.
 - iv. German naval buildup, under **Tirpitz**, led to an arms race with Britain and a cycle of paranoia.
 1. Britain was forced to spend the People's Budget on battleships instead of social welfare.
 - v. At this point, Europe is divided between:
 1. England, France and Russia
 2. Austria and Germany
 - c. The outbreak of war
 - i. Nationalism in the Balkans threatened the Ottoman Empire and European peace.
 1. Austria-Hungary and Russia each feared the other's domination of totally independent states in the area.
 - ii. The **1878 Congress of Berlin** resolved some of the Balkan problem by a partial

division of Turkish (Ottoman) possessions in Europe; this included independence for Serbia, Rumania, and part of Bulgaria, and Austria was given the right to “occupy and administer” Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- iii. Then by 1903 Balkan issues were once again at a crisis point, with Serbia looking to expand and Austria looking to solidify its hold in Bosnia.
 - iv. To block Serbian expansion, Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908
 - v. To expand, Serbia was forced to turn southward with Greece and Bulgaria against the Ottomans--this was the **First Balkan War (1912)**.
 - vi. Serbia's dispute with Bulgaria over the spoils of victory led to the **Second Balkan War in 1913**.
 - vii. The Balkan wars of 1912-1913 were a victory for Balkan nationalism.
 1. Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire seemed to foreshadow the collapse of the multinational Austria-Hungary, which was good and bad depending on who you were.
 - viii. The Serbian assassination (connected to the **Black Hand**) of the Austrian archduke **Francis Ferdinand** (1914) resulted in a war between Serbia and Austria as Austria tried to stem the rising tide of hostile nationalism.
 1. Austria-Hungary presented Serbia with an ultimatum: hand over your country or we invade.
 2. They invaded, starting the “Third Balkan War.”
 - ix. Germany gave Austria unconditional support.
 1. They knew that war between Austria and Russia(+Serbia) was probable, since Russia was the defender of the Slavs.
 2. However, they counted on Great Britain remaining neutral.
 - x. Military considerations dictated policy, and an all-European war resulted.
 1. Russia could not mobilize against Germany or Austria without mobilizing against the other.
 2. Russia ordered full mobilization against Austria and Germany.
 3. Germany, under **Schlieffen**, invaded France via Belgium, although neutral Belgium refused.
 4. Great Britain joined France and declared war on Germany.
- d. Reflections on the origins of the war
- i. Austria-Hungary deliberately started the war, goaded by Germany, which turned the little war into a great war.
 - ii. German aggression in 1914 reflected the failure of all European leaders to incorporate Bismarck's empire into the international system.
 - iii. Another theory is that Germany's belligerent foreign policy was the result of domestic conflicts and tensions--and that the ruling elite in Germany saw war as a way to rally the masses to its side and save its position of power.
 - iv. Nationalism contributed to war fever. All the European leaders underestimated the risk of war.
- e. The first Battle of the Marne (September 1914)
- i. The original **Schlieffen Plan**--a German invasion of France through Belgium--had to be altered when British troops landed to help the Belgians.
 - ii. The Battle of the Marne turned the war into a long stalemate.
- f. Stalemate and slaughter
- i. Trench warfare meant much horrible death but no end to the war.
 1. The **battles of Somme and Verdun** cost thousands of lives but resulted in no significant gains in territory for either side.

2. The French army was almost destroyed at **Champagne (1917)**, while the British lost many men at **Passchendaele**.
- ii. The war's horrors caused a profound disillusionment with society and mankind.
 1. **All Quiet on the Western Front- Erich Remarque**
 2. The war shattered an entire generation of young men.
 - a. "The first bombardment showed us our mistake, and under it the world as they had taught it to us broke in pieces."
 3. It created a gulf between veterans and civilians, making postwar reconstruction difficult.
- g. The widening war
 - i. No trench warfare on the Eastern front.
 - ii. Russia pushed into eastern Germany, but the battles of **Tannenberg and Masurian Lakes** led to German victories in the fall of 1914; Russia lost 2.5 million soldiers in 1915 alone.
 - iii. Despite Austrian losses to Serbia, Austria and Germany defeated Russia and Serbia on the eastern front.
 - iv. Italy and Bulgaria entered the war (1915); Italy did so in return for promises of Austrian territory and Bulgaria did so to settle old scores with Serbia.
 - v. With Arab help, Britain defeated the Ottoman Empire (1918); but Britain was defeated in the **Dardenelles**.
 - vi. The European war extended around the globe as Great Britain, France, and Japan seized Germany's colonies.
 - vii. The United States entered the war in 1917 because of German submarine warfare (sinking of the **Lusitania**), anti-German propaganda, and the reality of war profits.
2. The home front
 - a. Mobilizing for total war
 - i. Most people saw the war in nationalistic terms and believed their nation was defending itself against aggression.
 1. German trade unions and the socialists in the Reichstag supported the war.
 - a. Voted not to strike and socialists volunteered for the front.
 - ii. Total war meant that economic planning was necessary.
 1. Prewar Europe depended on foreign trade and international division of labor, so economic life and organization had to change fast to maintain war.
 2. Rationing, price and wage controls, and restrictions on workers' freedom of movement were imposed by government.
 3. The economy of total war blurred the distinctions between soldiers and civilians--all were involved in the war effort.
 4. The ability of governments to manage economies strengthened the cause of socialism.
 - iii. In Germany, food and raw materials were rationed and universal draft was initiated.
 1. **Walter Rathenau**, the industrialist, directed the German economy through the **War Raw Materials Board**--and important advances were made in the invention of synthetic materials.
 - a. Everything must be inventoried and rationed
 2. Failed to tax the war profits of private firms heavily enough, which contributed to massive deficit financing, inflation, the growth of a black market, and the eventual re-emergence of class conflict.
 3. The generals, **Hindenburg and Ludendorff**, became the real rulers of Germany.

- a. "If all the treasures of our soil that agriculture and industry can produce are used exclusively for the conduct of War. All other considerations must come second."
 - b. Passed the **Auxiliary Service Law**, which required all males between seventeen and sixty to work only at jobs considered critical to the war effort.
 - 4. Total war led to the establishment of a totalitarian society.
 - a. War production increased as some people starved to death.
 - iv. Britain mobilized less rapidly, but by 1916, the British economy was largely a planned economy.
 - 1. **David Lloyd George** created the **Ministry of Munitions**.
 - b. The social impact
 - i. Labor shortages brought about benefits for organized labor.
 - 1. Unions and socialists became partners in government.
 - ii. The role of women changed dramatically as many women entered the labor force.
 - 1. Some European women gained the right to vote after the war.
 - 2. Women displayed a growing spirit of independence, bobbing their hair, shortening their skirts and smoking in public.
 - iii. War brought about greater social equality.
 - 1. Because of rations and job availability, poorer people were able to buy more.
 - 2. Men from all classes died but fewer from the *skilled* working class, who needed to train people to work in war plants.
 - c. Growing political tensions
 - i. Wartime propaganda to maintain popular support of the war was widespread.
 - ii. But by 1916, people were growing weary of war; morale declined.
 - 1. In France, **Clemenceau** established a virtual dictatorship to deal with strikes and those who wanted compromise to end the war.
 - 2. In Germany, the social conflict of the prewar years emerged.
 - 3. The German socialist leader **Liebknecht** called for an end of the war and the defeat of the German government.
 - 4. In Austria, people were starving; a socialist assassinated the Austrian chief minister. Soon, Emperor Francis Joseph, a symbol of unity, died. "Down with Absolutism! We want peace!"
 - 5. Irish nationalists in Dublin rose up against British rule in their **Easter Rebellion**.
 - iii. By the winter of 1916-1917, Germany's military position was desperate, but she gambled by returning to unrestricted submarine warfare.
 - 1. By July 1917, a coalition of socialists and Catholics in Germany called for an end to the war, a "peace without annexations or reparations."
3. The peace settlement (1918-1919)
 - a. The war left 10 million dead, 20 million wounded, and cost \$332 billion; the peace treaty sowed the seeds for the next war.
 - b. The end of the war
 - i. By early 1917, the German populace was weary of war, and the German army was decisively defeated in the second **Battle of the Marne** (1918).
 - 1. Though, in March 1918, when Germany won on the Eastern front against Russia, they heavily exploited them in the **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk**.
 - ii. The Allies were strengthened by American intervention, and by September, the Allies were advancing on all fronts.

- iii. The German military arranged for a new liberal, socialist German government to accept defeat.
 - iv. German soldiers and workers began to demonstrate for peace, and Germany surrendered in November 1918.
 - c. Revolution in Germany
 - i. Revolution in AustriaHungary led to the breakup of the AustroHungarian Empire into new national states: Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.
 - ii. Revolution in Germany (November 1918) led to a victory for the moderate socialists, the Social Democrats, over the radical workers' and socialists'.
 - 1. There was little popular support for a radical revolution.
 - 2. The Social Democrats wanted the gradual elimination of capitalism.
 - 3. They accepted defeat and used the army to crush a radical uprising led by **Leibknecht and Luxemburg**.
 - d. The Treaty of Versailles
 - i. Overall, lots of optimism:
 - 1. "The victors were convinced that they would never commit the blunders and iniquities of the Congress of Vienna. We were preparing not Peace only, but Eternal Peace."
 - ii. President Wilson was obsessed with creating a League of Nations to avert future wars.
 - iii. **Clemenceau** of France and **Lloyd George** of England were more interested in permanently weakening Germany and making it pay for the war.
 - 1. The British wanted a total victory worthy of the sacrifices of total war against a totally deprived enemy.
 - 2. The French wanted revenge and lasting security for France, meaning a buffer state between France and Germany, the permanent demilitarization of Germany and huge German reparations.
 - iv. The conflicting desires of the Allies led to a deadlock and finally a compromise.
 - 1. France gave up its demand for a protective buffer state in return for a defensive alliance with Britain and the United States.
 - 2. The League of Nations was created.
 - v. Germany lost her colonies and territory in Europe--largely Alsace-Lorraine, Danzig, and eastern land--to Poland.
 - vi. Germany had to limit its army, admit responsibility for the war, and pay enormous damages.
 - vii. AustriaHungary and Turkey were the big losers in the separate peace treaties; the principle of selfdetermination still applied only to Europeans, and thus Western imperialism lived on.
 - 1. The League of Nations mandated that the losers' colonies be given away.
 - e. American rejection of the Versailles treaty
 - i. The Versailles settlement rested on the principle of national self-determination, the League of Nations, and fear that the Bolshevik Revolution might spread.
 - ii. Republican senators refused to ratify the treaty largely because of the issue of the League's power.
 - 1. **Henry Cabot Lodge** and others believed that requiring member states of the League of Nations to take collective action against aggression violated Congress's right to declare war.
 - 2. Wilson refused to compromise, and the Senate did not ratify the treaty.
 - iii. The Senate also refused to ratify the defensive alliance with Britain and France.

1. Britain also refused to ratify the defensive alliance.
2. France felt betrayed and isolated.

4. Summary

World War One was *revolutionary* because it encouraged Europe-wide nationalism, brought on the concept of total war, swept away monarchs and empires, encouraged the idea of "national self-determination," brought on radical revolution in Russia, and taught governments the lessons of government planning and government direction of economic and social life--and brought on a greater degree of social equality.