

AP World History Class Notes

Ch 35 The Great War (World War I)

December 29, 2011

The Great War of 1914-1919 was a nearly global conflagration that included all the major powers of Europe, their colonies, and overseas allies. The immediate provocation was a relatively minor incident—the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire—but the causes were long-standing and much more complex. Pressure to seek war and resist compromise had been mounting in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fed by aggressive nationalism, ambitious militarism, and complex national alliances. The war, when it came, was not what anyone expected.

- New kind of warfare. New technologies transformed the experience of war. Offensive battle plans stalled in the trenches, where soldiers were pounded by heavy artillery, trapped by machine-gun fire, and vulnerable to poisonous gas. Casualties were counted in the hundreds of thousands, & victory was measured in *yards* gained.
- Total war. World War I engaged civilian populations to an unprecedented degree. On the home front, women took up the work abandoned by recruits. Governments took control of wartime production, and propaganda campaigns demonized the enemy and glorified the war effort. Civilians were also targets of war through aerial bombing and naval blockades.
- The Russian Revolution. The revolution was triggered by the war but sprang from the long-standing failure of the tsarist gov't to meet the needs of the Russian people. For a while it seemed that a liberal democracy might emerge, but w/in months the Bolshevik Party under Vladimir Lenin overthrew the provisional gov't.
- Peace and unresolved questions. Armistice came Nov. 11, 1918, shortly after the U.S. entered the war. At the Paris Peace Conference, the victors, especially Britain and France, dictated harsh terms to the defeated Central Powers, dismantled their colonial empires, and imposed economic penalties. The bitterness engendered by the peace settlement virtually ensured that another conflict would follow.

1. The Drift Toward War

A. Nationalist Aspirations

- 1) Nationalism spread by the French Revolution/Napoleonic Wars
 - a. Self-determination suggested that each ethnic group had a right to a sovereign state
 - b. Concept was ignored or opposed by dynastic powers
 - c. Considerable nationalistic tensions in Ottoman, Hapsburg (Austro-Hungarian) and Russian empires
- 2) Slavic nationalism: stressed kinship of all Slavic peoples
 - a. Ottoman empire shrank as first Greece, then others, gained independence
 - b. Serbs of A-H sought unification w/ independent Serbia
 - c. Russians promoted Pan-Slavism in Austria-Hungarian empire
 - d. Germany backed Austria-Hungary to fight ethnic nationalism

What ideologies motivated the World War conflicts?

B. National Rivalries

- 1) The naval race between Germany and Britain increased tensions
 - a. Germany's rapid industrialization threatened Britain's economy
 - b. Both states built huge iron battleships, called dreadnoughts
- 2) Colonial disputes of the late 19th century
 - a. Germany unified in 1871; came late to the colonial race
 - b. German resentment & antagonism toward both France & Britain
 - c. France and Germany nearly fought over Morocco in 1905
 - d. Balkan wars (1912-13) further strained diplomatic relations
- 3) Public opinion supported national rivalries
 - a. Attitudes of aggressive patriotism among European citizens
 - b. Leaders under pressure to be aggressive, to take risks

C. Understandings and Alliances

- 1) Rival alliance systems obligated to come to one another's defense
- 2) The Central Powers
 - a. Germany and Austria-Hungary formed a Dual Alliance 1879
 - b. Italy joined Dual Alliance, 1882, which became Triple Alliance
 - c. Ottoman empire loosely affiliated w/ Germany
- 3) The Allies
 - a. Britain, France, & Russia formed the Triple Entente
 - b. Shifting series of treaties ended w/ a military pact, 1914
- 4) War plans: each power poised and prepared for war
 - a. Military leaders devised inflexible military plans and timetables
 - b. France's "Plan XVII" focused on offensive maneuvers, attacks, emotional intensity & willpower (didn't work!)
 - c. Schlieffen Plan: swift attack → France, then defense vs. Russia

2. Global War

A. The Guns of August: Triggered a Chain Reaction

- 1) June 28, 1914, Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand assassinated by Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip
- 2) Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, July 28
- 3) Russia mobilized to defend its Serbian ally against Central Powers
- 4) July 31, Germany sent ultimatums to Russia & France
- 5) Aug 1, Germany declared war on Russia/France, invaded Belgium
- 6) Aug 4: to protect Belgium, Britain declared war on Germany

B. Mutual Butchery

- 1) War greeted w/ enthusiasm on all sides; (expected brief, glorious)
- 2) The western front
 - a. German invasion of France halted (Battle of Marne)
 - b. Trenches on W. front ran from English Channel to Switz.
 - c. 1915 Italy entered war w/ Allies, maintained defense vs. A-H
- 3) Stalemate and new weapons
 - a. New technologies favored defensive tactics over offensive tactics
 - (1) Poisonous gas: introduced by Germans, used by both sides
 - (2) 800,000 casualties from mustard gas
 - b. Armored tanks used to break down trenches toward end of war
 - c. Airplanes used mainly for reconnaissance
 - d. Submarines (U-boats) used especially by Germans
- 4) No-man's-land littered w/ dead, the grim reality of trench warfare
- 5) On the eastern front, battle lines more fluid
 - a. Austrian-German forces overran Serbia, Albania, and Romania
 - b. Russia invaded Prussia, but was soon driven out (Battle of Tannenberg, Aug-Sept. 1914)
 - c. Russians' counterattacks in 1916-1917 collapsed
- 6) Bloodletting: long, costly battles
 - a. At Verdun: French "victory" w/ 315,000 dead, defeated Germans lost 280,000, front line changed <2 miles
 - b. At the Somme, Britain & Germany saw losses of 420,000 each
- 7) New rules of engagement
 - a. Civilians became targets of enemy military operations
 - b. Air raids against civilians; naval blockades common

How did new military technology affect wartime casualties?

What new technologies and discoveries affected communication, transportation, and conceptions of the world?

C. Total War: The Home Front

- 1) On the home front: the economy mobilized to the war effort
 - a. Governments militarized civilian war production
 - b. Imposed wage and price controls
 - c. Extended military draft in Germany from ages 16 to 60
- 2) Women served the war by entering the workforce
 - a. Took over jobs vacated by soldiers
 - b. Did hazardous work w/ explosives, shells, TNT
 - c. A liberating experience, especially for middle-/upper-class women
 - d. Women granted the vote in western nations (after the war)
- 3) Propaganda campaigns to maintain national support for the war
 - a. Included censorship and restrictions on civil liberties
 - b. Criticism of the war regarded as treasonous
 - c. Propaganda designed to dehumanize the enemy

How did World War I affect the nature of war and the relationship of the government to their populations?

D. Conflict in East Asia and the Pacific

- 1) Expansion of the war beyond Europe
 - a. European animosities extended to the colonies
 - b. British and French forces recruited colonials into their armies
 - c. Eventually, Japan, U.S., Ottoman Empire entered the war
- 2) Japan entered war w/ the Allies, 1915
 - a. Seized German-leased territory in China
 - b. New Zealand & Australia seized German-held lands in the Pacific
- 3) The Twenty-One Demands
 - a. Japan advanced its imperial interests in China
 - b. designed to reduce China to Japanese protectorate
 - c. Britain intervened, prevented total capitulation of China to Japan

E. Battles in Africa and Southwest Asia (Middle East)

- 1) The war in sub-Saharan Africa
 - a. Allies targeted the four German colonies in Africa
 - b. Many Allied soldiers and workers died from tropical diseases
- 2) Battle of Gallipoli, 1915, in Ottoman Turkey
 - a. a disaster, w/ 250,000 casualties on each side
 - b. Weakened the loyalty tying Canada, Australia, & New Zealand to Great Britain
- 3) The Ottoman Empire lost ground after Gallipoli
 - a. Lost Caucasus to Russians
 - b. Successful Arab revolt aided by British

3. The End of the War

A. Revolution in Russia

- 1) February Rev, 1917: uprising against shortages, mounting war deaths
 - a. Facing mutinies, Nicholas II abdicated throne, March, 1917
 - b. Provisional [temporary] gov't established
- 2) Struggle for power between provisional gov't led by Alexander Kerensky vs. Petrograd soviet. Kerensky passed many liberal reforms, BUT ... did not:
 - (1) undertake land reform
 - (2) withdraw from the war (both extremely unpopular decisions)
- 3) Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) stepped into unstable situation
 - a. Revolutionary Marxist, exiled in Switzerland
 - b. Envisioned a well-organized, disciplined party to lead revolution
 - c. German authorities delivered Lenin to Russia, 1917, to take Russia out of war
 - d. Headed radical Bolshevik Party: demanded power to soviets, withdrawal from war

How did anti-war & non-violence movements respond to the century's many wars?

- 4) The October Revolution
 - a. Minority Bolsheviks gained control of Petrograd soviet
 - b. slogan “Peace, Land, and Bread” appealed to workers & peasants
 - c. Seized power from provisional gov’t in name of all soviets
- 5) Russia withdrew from war, made a separate peace w/ Germany, lost 1/3 of Ukraine (Treaty of Brest-Litovsk)

B. U.S. Intervention and Collapse of the Central Powers

- 1) 1914-1916, U.S. under President Woodrow Wilson officially neutral
 - a. American public opposed participation in a European war
 - b. U.S. companies sold supplies, gave loans to Allies
 - c. By 1917, Allied ability to repay loans depended on Allied victory
- 2) The submarine warfare helped sway American public opinion
 - a. German blockade sank merchant ships, meant to strangle Britain
 - b. 1915, Germans sank Lusitania, a British passenger liner, killing 1,198 passengers, including 128 Americans.
- 3) U.S. declared war on Germany, April 6th, 1917
- 4) Collapsing fronts after years of bloodletting
 - a. April 1916, Irish nationalists attempted to overthrow British rule (“Easter Rebellion”)
 - b. Central Powers: shortages, food riots, mutinies
 - c. 1917, mutiny of 50,000 French soldiers
 - d. Spring 1918, massive Germany offensive on western front failed
 - e. w/ fresh U.S. troops, Allies broke the front, pushed Germans back
 - f. Central Powers collapsed, accepted armistice November 1918

C. The Paris Peace Conference, aka Treaty of Versailles, 1919

- 1) Great War killed 15 million people, wounded another 20 million
- 2) The Paris settlement was dominated by Britain’s David Lloyd George, France’s Georges Clemenceau, U.S.’s Woodrow Wilson
 - a. 27 nations w/ conflicting aims participated
 - b. Leaders of Central Powers and Soviet Union not included
- 3) Wilson’s Fourteen Points: proposal for just & lasting peace
 - a. #1 No Secret Treaties
 - b. #2 Freedom of the Seas
 - c. #3 No economic barriers to free trade (quarantines)
 - d. #4 Reduction in the size of armies and navies (demilitarization)
 - e. #5 settle colonial claims in a way that favored the colonies vs. the mother countries.
 - f. #6-13, various specific land borders in Europe, designed to give each ethnic group self-determination
 - g. #14, the most important in Wilson’s view, a League of Nations, a kind of “world congress” that would keep peace by allowing/encouraging nations to negotiate before a war began.

What motivated the ideologies designed to prevent future world conflicts?

- 4) Most of Wilson's Fourteen Points rejected by Allies; Britain's Lloyd George and France's Clemenceau were bent on exacting maximum punishment from Germany. Central Powers felt betrayed
- 5) The Peace Treaties, 1919
 - a. French insisted on destroying German military
 - b. Central Powers forced to accept war guilt & pay reparations
 - c. Austria and Hungary were separated & reduced; several new states were added to E. Europe (see map on study guide)
 - d. Overall, the peace settlement was a failure; left a bitter legacy
- 6) Ataturk: Mustafa Kemal, father of modern Turkey
 - a. 1923, drove out occupying Allied forces, proclaimed Republic
 - b. Implemented reforms: emancipation of women, western dress, European law
 - c. Secular rule replaced Muslim authorities
 - d. Const. democracy, although Ataturk ruled as virtual dictator
- 7) The League of Nations created to maintain world peace
 - a. 42 members, 26 of them outside Europe
 - b. League had no power (military) to enforce its decisions
 - c. Security depended on major powers, but U.S. never joined
- 8) Self-determination for ethnic nationalities: urged by Wilson
 - a. Basis for redrawing map of E Europe: Poland, Czech, Yugoslavia
 - b. Difficult to draw lines: minorities often left in hostile areas
 - c. Yugoslavia: S Slavs, uneasy mix of Serbs, Croats, Slovenes
- 9) The mandate system
 - a. U.S. opposed direct colonization; Allies proposed "trusteeships"
 - b. Colonies of Central Powers divided into three classes of mandates
 - c. Allies divided up Germany's African colonies, Ottoman territories in SW Asia
 - d. Arabs outraged, felt ignored/betrayed by (British) allies who had promised Arab independence & nationalism after the war in exchange for Arab cooperation during the war.
 - (1) Balfour Declaration, 1917

D. Challenges to European Preeminence

- 1) WWI weakened Europe, set stage for decolonization after WWII
 - a. Economic crises: inflation, debt, loss of overseas investments, foreign markets
 - b. Economic relationship btwn Europe & U.S. reversed; U.S. now creditor to Europe
 - c. Loss of prestige weakened European grip on colonies overseas
- 2) Revolutionary ideas
 - a. The war helped spread concept of self-determination
 - b. Nationalist movements also sought inspiration from USSR