

8a: World War I

Spielvogel p 769 – 797 (stop at "War and Revolution"), 803 – 809,
Kagan p 838 – 854 (stop at "The Russian Revolution", 858 – 868

I. Long-term causes of World War I

A. **ALLIANCES:** Dev. of rival alliances: Triple Alliance vs. Triple Entente

1. 1871: European balance of power upset by the Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War and creation of the German Empire.
 - a. Bismarck thereafter feared French revenge and negotiated treaties to **isolate France** (his main goal)
 - b. **Congress of Berlin (1878)** throwback to Concert of Europe
 - Russia having won the Russo-Turkish War of 1877 -78, had been granted concessions which incr. their power in the Balkans in the Treaty of San Stefano with the Turks
 - Bismarck is alarmed by this and calls the Congress of Berlin to rewrite the treaty in order to maintain a balance of power. The Congress protected:
 - British naval interests in the Eastern Mediterranean
 - Austrian interests in the Balkans
 - Austria protectorate over Bosnia-Herzegovina
 - Russia is angered by German intervention withdraws from Three Emperor's League (Germany, Austria, Russia)
2. In 1879, the Dual Alliance emerged: Germany and Austria
 - a. Bismarck sought to thwart Russian expansion.
 - b. German supported Austria in rivalry with Russia over Balkans.
 - c. major feature of European diplomacy until the end of WWI.
 - **Triple Alliance**, 1881: Italy joins Germany and Austria
 - Italy wants support for its imperialistic ambitions.
4. **Russian-German Reinsurance Treaty**, 1887
 - a. "Bismarckian realpolitik", tries to make nice w/Russia
 - b. promised the neutrality of both Germany and Russia if either country went to war with another country.
 - c. **Kaiser Wilhelm II** refused to renew the reinsurance treaty **after removing Bismarck in 1890.**
 - wants to chart own course, jealous of Bismarck?
 - huge diplomatic blunder; Russia wanted renewal but now had no assurances it was safe from a German invasion.
 - France courted Russia; the two became allies.
 - Bismarck's worst fear (encirclement) has come true!
5. **"Splendid Isolation"**: Britain is non-aligned power and enjoyed security as the world's largest navy and protection by the sea.
7. **Entente Cordiale (1904)**: Britain and France settled all outstanding colonial disputes in Africa.
 - a. **Fashoda Incident** shows rising tensions due to imperialism
 - France now accepts British rule of the Sudan.
 - Britain recognized French control of Morocco.
 - b. Both countries are approaching full democracies
 - c. Both are alarmed by growing German power
 - Anglo-German naval arms race
 - d. Ends 1,000 years of rivalry
 - e. Germany challenges French control over Morocco, hoping to split new Anglo-French alliance (Moroccan Crises 1905/1911)
 - backfires as UK and France start to coordinate militarily
8. **Triple Entente**, 1907: Britain, France and Russia
 - a. Purpose was to check the power of the Triple Alliance
 - b. Not formal but based on shared "principles"

Use space below for notes

B. MILITARISM

1. The **Anglo-German arms race**

- a. Militarism held that a general European war was inevitable.
- b. British policy was to have its fleet larger than the combined fleets of any two rival nations.
- c. In 1898, Kaiser Wilhelm II began the expansion of German navy to protect its growing int'l trade and colonialism.
 - Germany overtook Britain industrially in the 1890s.
 - The Kaiser is also Queen Victoria's grandson, so there is an element of a family rivalry here.
- d. By WWI, Britain and Germany possessed **Dreadnoughts**—new super battleships with awesome firing range and power.

2. Many European leaders and "opinion setters" viewed war as a noble pursuit and legitimate tool of national strategy.

- a. Fits with the Darwinian "survival of the fittest"
- b. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*
 - "It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country"
- c. Many young men see war as a means to find glory
- d. But, European society had yet to experience a fully mechanized, industrial war like what was about to occur.

C. **IMPERIALISM** in Africa led to increased tensions

1. Berlin Conference, 1885: Germany's late entry into imperialism led Bismarck to establish rules for carving up Africa.
 - Germany aggressively set out to acquire colonies, sometimes coming into conflict with rival European powers.
 - Moroccan Crises (see above)
2. Imperialistic competition incr. rivalries and tensions.

D. **NATIONALISM** created a "powder keg" in the Balkans.

1. The Ottoman Empire ("**the sick man of Europe**") receded from the Balkans leaving a power vacuum.
 - This was the so-called Eastern Question.
2. **Pan-Slavism**, a nationalist movement to unite all Slavic peoples, encouraged the Serbs, Bosnians, Slovenes, and Croats to seek a single political entity in the Balkans.
 - As "big brother" to the Balkan Slavs, Russia focused on the area after its loss in the Russo-Japanese War.
3. In the decade before WWI, the Balkans went through a series of crisis and wars based on competing nationalistic ambitions
 - By 1913, independent Serbia, Greece, Romania, Albania and Bulgaria had replaced Ottoman Turk presence in the Balkans.
 - Russia consistently backed its Slavic client state, Serbia.
 - Austria (backed by Germany) wanted to limit Russian influence by containing Serbian expansion.
 - Formally annexes Bosnia-Herzegovina

II. Immediate causes of World War I

A. June 28, 1914: **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**, heir to Austrian throne, was assassinated by Serbian nationalist **Princip Gavrilo** (member of the ultra-nationalist Serbian "**Black Hand**") while visiting Bosnia-Herzegovina.

B. **Kaiser Wilhelm II** pledged unwavering support of Austria to punish Serbia: "**the blank check.**"

1. some evidence of Serbian govt support for the Black Hand
2. Austria made purposely harsh demands on Serbia by requiring Serbia to punish all forms of anti-Austrian sentiment within Serbia. It was aware that Serbia couldn't meet these demands.
3. Serbia agreed to most of Austria's terms except joint judicial proceedings which would mean sacrificing its sovereignty.
 - a. This gave Austria "cause" to declare war.

C. July 28, Austria declared wars and attacks Serbia.

1. Russia mobilized (moves armies to readiness for invasion).
2. France, in response, mobilized on Germany's western border.

D. August 1, Germany declared war on France.

1. August 3, Germany invaded Belgium (on its way to France).
 - a. In effect, Germany turned the little localized war in the Balkans into a world war by attacking Belgium and France.

b. The Schlieffen Plan

- Germany's 42-day plan was defeat France quickly by going through Belgium and then redeploy to the east to defeat Russia before it fully mobilized.
 - plan was necessitated by Kaiser's alienation of Russia by not renewing the Reinsurance Treaty and by France's alliance with Russia (Bismarck's biggest fear)
 - When Russia began to mobilize on July 28, the 42-day timetable had begun. Germany believed she had to attack OR else it would be saddled with a **two-front war** against Russia and France.
 - Ex: the dominance of militarist over diplomatic thinking
2. In response, France declared war on Germany.
 3. August 4, Britain declared war on Germany (justified by defending Belgian "neutrality").
 - a. This reflects the snowballing effect of the alliance system

E. Two opposing alliances emerged:

1. **Central Powers** (Triple Alliance): Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire, (also Bulgaria)
2. **Allies (Triple Entente)**: Britain, France, and Russia (later, Japan, Italy, Romania, and the U.S.)
 - a. Italy resists fulfilling its obligation to the Central Powers and later sees more opportunity in joining the Allies

III. The Western Front

A. Battle of the Marne (September 1914)

1. After the Germans came within sight of Paris, French and British forces pushed the German forces back.
2. represented the end of mobility on the Western Front.
3. Why did the Schlieffen Plan fail?
 - a. Belgium's surprising resistance to Germany's invasion slowed down the German offensive into France.
 - b. Russia mobilized more quickly than expected in the east requiring German divisions to be sent there instead.

B. Trench warfare resulted in stalemate and lasted 4 bloody years.

1. line of trenches stretched from North Sea to Swiss border.
2. neither side could break through
 - a. 1916: Massive casualties but **Battle of Verdun**
 - Germany sought a battle of attrition that would "bleed France white" and force it to sue for peace.
 - France lost 540k men; Germany lost 430k.
 - b. **Battle of the Somme**
 - British/French offensive aimed to break through lines.
 - Bloodiest battle of the war
 - Losses: Britain 420k, France 200k; Germany 650k
2. Despite massive casualties on both sides, few gains were made in terms of gaining ground.
- 3. Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*** (1929) later illustrated the horrors of trench warfare.

IV. Technological advancements in war increased casualties.

A. WWI represented the industrial revolution applied to warfare.

1. **Machine gun** (improved from Maxim gun – imperialism)

- a. most important reason for the frightful casualties
- b. it was eventually employed by both sides.
 - One gun equaled the effectiveness of 40 men with rifles

2. **Tanks**

- a. Artillery was now made mobile.
- b. Tanks could navigate treacherous terrain but initially suffered numerous mechanical problems.
- c. They were not really effective until the last year of the war, especially for the Entente.

3. **Airplane**

- a. Initial air fights consisted of weapons fired from planes.
- b. Germany developed the first fighter plane (the Fokker) that synchronized machine guns and propellers.
- c. Britain used planes to bomb Zeppelin bases in Germany.

4. **Poison gas**

- a. Chlorine gas was used by the Germans early in the war.
- b. The impact of mustard gas was somewhat negated by the use of gas masks by the Allies.

5. **Submarines (U-boats)**

- a. Submarines, initially used by Germany, had devastating effects on Allied shipping throughout the war.
 - Britain and France also used submarines.
- b. The German use of U-boats was the most important reason for why the U.S. eventually entered the war.

6. **Zeppelins** (blimps)

- a. They were used by Germany to bomb London and other civilian targets as a weapon of terror.
- b. Eventually, exploding shells would destroy Zeppelins in the air.

7. **Radio**

- a. Wireless technology made communication more effective on the battlefield.
- b. The Germans took advantage of Russia's lack of radio capability and tapped into Russian phone lines to discover Russian battle plans.

V. Other major theaters of the war

A. **Eastern Front**

1. The war was more mobile in eastern Europe.
2. Germany d. invading Russian armies at **Tannenburg** in 1914.
 - a. Turned the tide of the war in the east
 - b. Though numerically superior, the Russians were poorly organized and suffered horrific casualties at the hands of the industrialized Germans.
3. **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** (Dec. 1917): Vladimir Lenin, after the Bolshevik Revolution, took Russia out of the war but was forced to give Germans 1/4 of Russia's European territory.

B. **Gallipoli Campaign** (1915)

1. British, Australian, and New Zealand forces failed to take the Dardanelles as a step toward taking Constantinople and defeating the Turks.
 - a. control of the Dardanelles would have allowed Russia to receive supplies from the Allies and play a larger naval role in the war
2. 200k British casualties; about 500k total.
3. Gallipoli represents one of the great Ottoman victories of the war and a huge defeat for the Allies.

C. Middle East

1. Britain took great steps to protect the Suez Canal in Egypt.
2. Britain won support from Arabs who hated Ottoman domination.
3. **Arab revolts** against the Turks throughout the war ended the Ottoman Empire's grip on the Middle East.
 - a. Lawrence of Arabia (British soldier) led Arab forces
4. The **Armenian genocide** by the Turks resulted from Ottoman claims that Armenians were cooperating with the Allies.
 - a. Perhaps a million Armenians died in what became the first of several genocides in the 20th century.

D. **British** and Allied **Naval Blockade**

1. Britain's goal was to strangle the Central Powers.
2. Starting in 1914, the Allies used its superior fleet and sea mines to cut the Central Powers off from overseas trade and caused Germany to lose control of its colonial empire.
3. Germany responded by sinking Allied vessels with U-boats.
4. **Lusitania**, 1915: U-boats sank a British passenger liner killing 1,200 (including 128 Americans)
 - a. turned American public opinion squarely against Germany.
5. Germany in 1917 began **unrestricted submarine warfare**, sinking all ships with its U-boats.
 - a. most important reason for U.S. entry into the war.
6. By war's end, the blockade succeeded in strangling Germany, resulting in thousands of German deaths due to starvation.

VI. **"Total war"**: involved mass civilian populations in the war effort

- A. Massive conscription drafted most able-bodied men in their youth.
- B. In some cases, civilian populations became targets.
 1. Early in the war, Germany used Zeppelins to bomb London.
 2. British blockade resulted in significant starvation in Germany.
- C. News was censored; propaganda dehumanized the enemy.
 1. Intense nationalism demands support from entire population.
 2. Some contend, Germany increased its belligerency in the 1890s to rally masses behind the govt and slow down growth of SPD.
 - a. In 1914, the SPD (largest party in the *Reichstag*) agreed to support the war as part of the "civil peace" with the Kaiser.
 3. British propaganda demonized Germany as the "Hun."
- D. Economic production focused on the war effort.
 1. Free-market capitalism abandoned in favor of strong central planning of the economy (price/wage/rent controls)
 2. Women replaced male factory workers fighting in the war.
 - a. Women accounted for 43% of the labor force in Russia.
 - b. Changing attitudes about women resulted in increased rights after the war (Britain, Germany, Austria and the U.S.)
 3. Labor unions supported the war effort and saw increased influence and prestige due to increased demand for labor.
 4. Rationing of food and scarce commodities was instituted.
 5. Civilians financed the war by buying war bonds.
- E. Each side aimed at "starving out" the enemy by cutting off vital supplies to the civilian population.
- F. Increase in centralized control by warring regimes
 1. Wartime France, **Georges Clemenceau** created a dictatorship
 2. In Germany, the impact of the British blockade resulted in an increasingly repressive gov't in Germany.
 3. The British economy was largely planned and regulated.
- G. War promoted greater social equality, thus blurring class distinctions and lessening the gap between rich and poor.
- H. Total war could also include the use of more destructive weapons and genocide

VII. Diplomacy during the war

- A. 1915: neutral Italy entered the war against the Central Powers (its former allies) with the promise of some Austrian and Balkan territory—(they would come out short on this)
- B. **Zimmerman Note**: Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico against the U.S.
 - 1. Mexico would receive much of the southwestern U.S. (Texas, Arizona, New Mexico) if the Central Powers won.
 - 2. Mexico refused.
- C. **Balfour Note** (1917): Arabs and Jews in Palestine were promised autonomy if they joined the Allies.
 - 1. Britain declared sympathy for Zionism—the idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
 - 2. The new policy seemed to contradict British support for Arab nationalism as a new Jewish state would require Arab lands to be given up in Palestine.
- D. Wilsonian Idealism: **Fourteen Points** (January 1918)
 - 1. U.S. plan to end the war along liberal, democratic lines
 - 2. Provisions:
 - a. Abolish secret treaties
 - b. Freedom of the seas
 - c. Remove economic barriers (e.g., tariffs)
 - d. Reduce armament burdens
 - e. **"Self-determination"**: Promise of independence to ethnic groups (e.g., Poles and Czechs), millions of which lived in Germany and Austria-Hungary.
 - f. Adjustment of colonial claims in interests of both native people and colonizers (this really doesn't happen)
 - g. creation of an int'l org. to provide collective security
 - the League of Nations that was created after the war

VIII. End of the War

- A. Meuse-Argonne offensive (spring 1918)
 - 1. Germany transferred divisions from the east (after defeating Russia and the subsequent Brest-Litovsk Treaty) to the Western Front and mounted a massive offensive.
 - 2. The U.S. entered the war in time to assist Britain and France in stopping the German offensive.
- B. The Central Powers sought peace based on the Fourteen Points (believing they would get fair treatment).
 - 1. Germany and Austria-Hungary were wracked with revolution.
 - 2. Austria-Hungary surrendered on November 3, 1918.
 - 3. Germany agreed to an armistice which began on November 11.
 - a. "eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month"
 - b. Wilhelm II was forced to abdicate and fled to Holland.
- C. Stab-in-the-back myth
 - 1. Germany had not been invaded although many were hungry
 - 2. Germany had won in the East
 - 3. Many Germans were confused by the surrender and the later harshness of peace settlement.
 - a. Some believed that socialist/Jewish forces had "sold out" Germany by surrendering prematurely and hampering war effort through strikes, etc. (The "big lie")
 - b. "stab-in-the-back myth" when combined with anti-Semitism are Hitler's main arguments during rise to power.
 - 4. **In actuality**, the arrival of fresh American troops and supplies had made the war unwinnable and top German military leaders recognized this, leading to surrender.

IX. Paris Peace Conference, 1919

- A. **Big Four:** David Lloyd George (Br.), Georges Clemenceau (Fr.), Woodrow Wilson (U.S.), Vittorio Orlando (It.)
 1. The Central Powers were excluded from negotiations as France was concerned with its future security.
 2. Italy left the conference, angry it would not get some Austrian and Balkans territories it had been promised in 1915.
 - a. This grievance will aid in Mussolini's rise to power.
- B. **Versailles Treaty, 1919**
 1. Final ideas reflected more of the interests of France (security) and Britain (reparations \$) than Wilsonian idealism
 2. **Mandates** were created for former colonies and territories of the defeated Central Powers.
 - a. No colonies were given independence!
 - b. Much of Middle East was now controlled by UK and France.
 - o Syria/Lebanon (France), Iraq, Palestine (UK)
 3. **Article 231** placed sole blame for the war on Germany that resulted in its severe punishment.
 - a. Germany was forced to pay UK/France huge reparations.
 - b. Germany's army and navy were severely reduced.
 - c. The Rhineland was demilitarized; the Saar coal mines were taken over by France.
 - d. Germany lost all its colonies.
 - e. German territory was given to Poland and France (Alsace and Lorraine)
 4. **League of Nations** created
 - a. Germany and Russia (USSR) were not included which weakened the League from the outset.
 - b. The U.S. Senate failed to ratify the Versailles Treaty and the US didn't join the League resulting in U.S. isolationism.
 - c. The League thus was born as a mere shadow of what it had originally been intended to achieve
- C. **Impact of World War I on European Society**
 1. Massive casualties: 10 million soldiers dead; 10 million civilians dead, many also died from the 1918 influenza epidemic; perhaps 15 million died in the Russian Revolution and subsequent Russian Civil War.
 - a. the birthrate fell significantly after the war (although illegitimate births increased).
 2. The war promoted greater social equality, thus blurring class distinctions and lessening the gap between rich and poor.
 - a. The Russian Revolution abolished the nobility and gave women more rights than any other country in Europe.
 - b. Women received the right to vote in Britain the same year that the war ended; Germany soon followed.
 - c. The nobility in Germany, Austria and Russia lost much of its influence and prestige.
 - d. During the war, women took over the jobs of men who were fighting the war (but were paid lower wages).
 3. Dissent had increased during the war.
 - a. Tsar Nicholas II was overthrown by the Provisional gov't in February 1917, who was then overthrown by the Bolsheviks in November due to mounting war casualties.
 - b. Irish Republicans staged an insurrection—the **Easter Rebellion**—in England in 1916.
 - Reaction to British draft of soldiers beginning in 1916.

- c. In Germany, militant socialists and anti-war activists Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin were imprisoned for trying to convince fellow socialists not to support the war effort.
 - d. Large crowds of women in France, Austria and Italy protested working conditions or high prices.
 - e. Government censorship existed in virtually every country and people increasingly grew dissatisfied with the integrity of their governments.
4. End to long-standing royal dynasties
 - a. Habsburg dynasty in Austria (had lasted 500 years)
 - b. Romanov dynasty in Russia (had lasted 300 years)
 - c. Hohenzollern dynasty in Germany (had lasted 300 years)
 - d. Ottoman Empire destroyed (had lasted 500 years)
 5. The political map of Europe was redrawn.
 - a. Creation of new states (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Yugoslavia)
 6. The Russian Revolution resulted in the creation of the world's first communist country (USSR).
 7. German nationalist resentment of the harsh Versailles Treaty doomed the new **Weimar Republic** in Germany.
 - a. John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919): Predicted the harsh terms of the treaty would hurt Germany's economy, thus the economy of the rest of Europe, and lead to significant future political unrest.
 - b. German anger with the treaty was partially responsible for the rise of Hitler and the Nazis in the early 1930s (although the Great Depression was the immediate reason).
 - Stab-in-the-back theory
 - c. When Hitler took control of Germany in 1933 and began its aggressive policies, Keynes' predictions seemed prophetic.
 8. Shift in financial power to the United States
 - a. Europe lost its preeminent position economically that it had enjoyed for 500 years.
 - b. The U.S. became world's leading creditor and greatest producer due to the damage done to Europe during the war.