

Chapter 27 Outline

The Great Break: War and Revolution, 1914-1920

Instructional Objectives

After reading and studying this chapter students should be able to discuss the causes and consequences of World War I. They should be able to assess the impact of total war on civilian populations. They should also be able to make the connection between World War I and the outbreak of revolution in Russia. Finally, they should be able to describe the post-war peace process and offer reasons for the eventual failure of the peace settlement.

Study Outline

Use this outline to preview the chapter before you read a particular section in your textbook and then as a self-check to test your reading comprehension after you have read the chapter section.

Chapter 27: The Great Break: War and Revolution

- I. The First World War (1914-1918)
 - A. The Bismarckian system of alliances
 1. Germany was the most powerful European country after 1871.
 2. Bismarck sought to guarantee European peace through alliances.
 3. 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.
 4. Because of tensions with France, Italy joined Germany and Austria in the Triple Alliance (1882).
 5. In 1887, the Russian-German Reinsurance Treaty promised neutrality by each state if the other were attacked.
 - B. The rival blocs
 1. William II dismissed Bismarck, and his termination of the German-Russian Reinsurance Treaty led to a new Russian-French alliance.
 2. Under William II, the British-German "natural alliance" deteriorated into a bitter rivalry.
 - a. The Boer War, German envy of British imperialism, and economic and military rivalry drove the British and the Germans apart.
 - b. Then Britain allied with Japan and turned to France and formed the Anglo-French Entente of 1904, which further alienated Germany.
 - c. Germany tested this entente in a diplomatic struggle over Morocco.
 - d. The Algeciras Conference (1906) left Germany empty-handed and isolated.
 3. As a result, Germany became increasingly distrustful, and other European countries began to see Germany as a threat.
 4. German naval buildup, under Tirpitz, led to an arms race with Britain and a cycle of paranoia.

- C. The outbreak of war
1. Nationalism in the Balkans threatened the Ottoman Empire and European peace.
 2. 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 got Bosnia and Herzegovina.
 3. 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.
 4. Austria's annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 greatly angered Serbia, which was forced to turn southward against the Ottomans in its nationalistic desire to expand--this was the First Balkan War (1912).
 5. Serbia's dispute with Bulgaria over the spoils of victory led to the Second Balkan War in 1913.
 6. The Balkan wars of 1912-1913 were a victory for Balkan nationalism.
 7. The assassination 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.
 8. Germany gave Austria unconditional support.
 9. Military considerations dictated policy, and an all-European war resulted.
 - a. Russia ordered full mobilization against Austria and Germany.
 - b. Germany invaded France via Belgium.
 - c. Great Britain joined France and declared war on Germany.
- D. Reflections on the origins of the war
1. Austria-Hungary deliberately started the war, goaded by Germany, which turned the little war into a great war.
 2. German aggression in 1914 reflected the failure of all European leaders to incorporate Bismarck's empire into the international system.
 3. 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.
 4. Nationalism contributed to war fever. All the European leaders underestimated the risk of war.
- E. The first Battle of the Marne (September 1914)
1. The original Schlieffen Plan--a German invasion of France through Belgium--had to be altered when British troops landed to help the Belgians.
 2. The Battle of the Marne turned the war into a long stalemate.
- F. Stalemate and slaughter
1. Trench warfare meant much horrible death but no end to the war.
 - a. The battles of Somme and Verdun cost thousands of lives but resulted in no significant gains in territory for either side.
 - b. The French army was almost destroyed at Champagne (1917), while the British lost many men at Passchendaele.
 2. The war's horrors caused a profound disillusionment with society and mankind.
 - a. The war shattered an entire generation of young men.
 - b. It created a gulf between veterans and civilians.

- G. The widening war
1. 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.
 2. Despite Austrian losses to Serbia, Austria and Germany defeated Russia and Serbia on the eastern front.
 3. Italy and Bulgaria entered the war (1915); Italy did so in return for promises of Austrian territory.
 4. With Arab help, Britain defeated the Ottoman Empire (1918); but Britain was defeated in the Dardenelles.
 5. The European war extended around the globe as Great Britain, France, and Japan seized Germany's colonies.
 6. The United States entered the war in 1917 because of German submarine warfare, anti-German propaganda, and the reality of war profits.

II. The home front

- A. Mobilizing for total war
1. Most people saw the war in nationalistic terms and believed their nation was defending itself against aggression.
 - a. German trade unions and the socialists in the Reichstag supported the war.
 2. Total war meant that economic planning was necessary.
 - a. Rationing, price and wage controls, and restrictions on workers' freedom of movement were imposed by government.
 - b. The economy of total war blurred the distinctions between soldiers and civilians--all were involved in the war effort.
 - c. The ability of governments to manage economies strengthened the cause of socialism.
 3. In Germany, food and raw materials were rationed and universal draft was initiated.
 - a. Walter Rathenau, the industrialist, directed the German economy--and important advances were made in the invention of synthetic materials.
 - b. The generals, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, became the real rulers of Germany.
 - c. Total war led to the establishment of a totalitarian society.
 4. Britain mobilized less rapidly, but by 1916, the British economy was largely a planned economy.
- B. The social impact
1. Labor shortages brought about benefits for organized labor.
 - a. Unions and socialists became partners in government.
 2. The role of women changed dramatically as many women entered the labor force.
 - a. Some European women gained the right to vote after the war.
 - b. Women displayed a growing spirit of independence.
 3. War brought about greater social equality.
 - a. Men from all classes died but less so were those from the *skilled* working class.

- C. Growing political tensions
 1. Wartime propaganda to maintain popular support of the war was widespread.
 2. But by 1916, people were growing weary of war; morale declined.
 - a. In France, Clemenceau established a virtual dictatorship to deal with strikes and those who wanted compromise to end the war.
 - b. In Germany, the social conflict of the prewar years emerged.
 - c. The German socialist leader Liebknecht called for an end of the war and the defeat of the German government.
 - d. In Austria, people were starving; a socialist assassinated the Austrian chief minister.
 3. By the winter of 1916-1917, Germany's military position was desperate, but she gambled by returning to unrestricted submarine warfare.
 - a. By July 1917, a coalition of socialists and Catholics in Germany called for an end to the war.

III. The Russian Revolution (1917)

- A. The Russian Revolution was one of history's most momentous events--for it presented a radically new prototype of state and society.
- B. The fall of imperial Russia
 1. Most Russians supported the war--including the liberals who thought alliance with Britain and France would bring democratic reform.
 2. However, huge war losses and mistakes pointed to the weak leadership of the tsar and the unresponsiveness of the Russian government.
 3. The influence of Rasputin on the royal family further weakened the government and created a national scandal.
 4. Food shortages led to revolution in March 1917.
 - a. A provisional government was proclaimed by the Duma.
 - b. The tsar abdicated.
- C. The provisional government (March 1917)
 1. After the March revolution, Russia became the freest country in the world.
 2. Yet the new revolutionary government, led by Kerensky, wanted to postpone land reform, fearing it would further weaken the peasant army; the continuation of the war was Kerensky's primary concern.
 3. The provisional government had to share power with the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.
 - a. The Petrograd Soviet's Army Order No. 1 placed military authority in the hands of ordinary soldiers.
 - b. Army discipline broke down completely, and massive desertions began.
 4. Liberty was rapidly turning into anarchy.
- D. Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution
 1. Lenin believed that revolution was necessary to destroy capitalism.
 2. He also believed that Marxist revolution could occur in Russia despite its absence of advanced capitalism if led by an intellectual elite.
 3. Russian Marxists became divided over Lenin's theories.
 - a. Lenin's Bolsheviks demanded a small, disciplined, elitist party.
 - b. The Mensheviks wanted a democratic party with mass membership.
 4. Lenin led an attack against the provisional government in July 1917, but it failed and he went into hiding.
 5. Kerensky's power was weakened by an attack on the provisional government by his commander in chief, Kornilov, and he lost favor with the army.

- E. Trotsky and the seizure of power
 1. A radical Marxist and supporter of Lenin, Trotsky centered his power in the Petrograd Soviet.
 - a. The Bolsheviks gained a majority in the Petrograd Soviet.
 - b. Bolsheviks controlled the military in the capital.
 2. Trotsky engineered a Soviet overthrow of the provisional government (November 1917).
 3. The Bolsheviks came to power because they were the answer to anarchy, they had superior leaders, and they appealed to many soldiers and urban workers exhausted by war.
- F. Dictatorship and civil war
 1. The key to Bolshevik success was in their ability to turn chaos into a dictatorial socialist society.
 2. Lenin gave approval to the peasants' seizure of land and the urban workers' takeover of the factories.
 3. Lenin arranged for an end of the war with Germany, but at a high price: the sacrifice of all of Russia's western territories (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 1918).
 4. Free elections produced a stunning loss for the Bolsheviks, and Lenin dissolved the Constituent Assembly.
 5. Opposition to the Bolsheviks led to civil war (1918-1921).
 - a. The officers of the old army (the Whites) organized the opposition to the Bolsheviks (the Reds).
 - b. The Whites came from many social groups and wanted self-rule, not Bolshevik dictatorship.
 6. The Bolshevik victory in the civil war was due to a number of factors: unity, a better army, a well-defined political program, mobilization of the home front, an effective secret police force (the Cheka), and an appeal to nationalism in the face of foreign aid to the Whites.
 7. World War I brought the conditions that led to the Russian Revolution and a radically new government based on socialism and one-party dictatorship.

IV. 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- World War Two.
- B. The end of the war
 1. 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).
 2. The Allies were strengthened by American intervention, and by September, the Allies were advancing on all fronts.
 3. The German military arranged for a new liberal German government to accept defeat.
 4. German soldiers and workers began to demonstrate for peace, and Germany surrendered in November 1918.
- C. Revolution in Germany
 1. Revolution in Austria-Hungary led to the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into new national states: Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.

2. Revolution in Germany (November 1918) led to a victory for the moderate socialists, the Social Democrats.
 - a. There was little popular support for a radical revolution.
 - b. The Social Democrats wanted the gradual elimination of capitalism.
 - c. They accepted defeat and used the army to crush a radical uprising led by Leibknecht and Luxemburg.
- D. The Treaty of Versailles
1. President Wilson was obsessed with creating a League of Nations to avert future wars.
 2. Clemenceau of France and Lloyd George of England were more interested in permanently weakening Germany and making it pay for the war.
 3. The conflicting desires of the Allies led to a deadlock and finally a compromise.
 - a. France gave up its demand for a protective buffer state in return for a defensive alliance with Britain and the United States.
 - b. The League of Nations was created.
 4. Germany lost her colonies and territory in Europe--largely Alsace-Lorraine, Danzig, and eastern land--to Poland.
 5. Germany had to limit its army, admit responsibility for the war, and pay enormous damages.
 6. Austria-Hungary and Turkey were the big losers in the separate peace treaties; the principle of self-determination still applied only to Europeans, and thus Western imperialism lived on.
- E. American rejection of the Versailles treaty
1. The Versailles settlement rested on the principle of national self-determination, the League of Nations, and fear that the Bolshevik Revolution might spread.
 2. Republican senators refused to ratify the treaty largely because of the issue of the League's power.
 - a. 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.
 - b. Wilson refused to compromise, and the Senate did not ratify the treaty.
 3. The Senate also refused to ratify the defensive alliance with Britain and France.
 - a. Britain also refused to ratify the defensive alliance.
 - b. France felt betrayed and isolated.
- V. Summary: World War One was *revolutionary* because it...
- A. Encouraged Europe-wide nationalism.
 - B. Brought on the concept of total war.
 - C. Swept away monarchs and empires.
 - D. Encouraged the idea of "national self-determination".
 - E. Brought on radical revolution in Russia.
 - F. Taught governments the lessons of government planning and government direction of economic and social life.
 - G. Brought on a greater degree of social equality.