



## CHAPTER PREVIEW

- What caused the outbreak of the First World War?
- How did the First World War differ from previous wars?
- In what ways did the war transform life on the home front?
- Why did world war lead to a successful Communist revolution in Russia?
- What were the benefits and costs of the postwar peace settlement?

### Life and Death in World War I

This painting by British artist Paul Nash portrays a supply road on the western front. Nash's somber palette, tiny figures, and Cubist-influenced landscape capture the devastation and anonymous violence of total war, as well as its environmental impact.  
*(The Menin Road, 1919/Imperial War Museum, London, UK/Bridgeman Images)*

## What caused the outbreak of the First World War?

Historians have long debated why Europeans so readily pursued a war that was long and costly and failed to resolve the problems faced by the combatant nations. There was no single most important cause. Growing competition over colonies and world markets, a belligerent arms race, and a series of diplomatic crises sharpened international tensions. On the home front, new forms of populist nationalism strengthened people's unquestioning belief in "my country right or wrong" while ongoing domestic conflicts encouraged governments to pursue aggressive foreign policies in attempts to bolster national unity. All helped pave the road to war.

### Growing International Conflict

The First World War began, in part, because European statesmen failed to resolve the diplomatic problems created by Germany's rise to Great Power status. The Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Germany opened a new era in international relations. By the war's end in 1871, France was defeated, and Bismarck had made Prussia-Germany the most powerful nation in Europe (see "The Franco-Prussian War and German Unification" in Chapter 23). After 1871 Bismarck declared that Germany was a "satisfied" power. Within Europe, he stated, Germany had no territorial ambitions and wanted only peace.

But how was peace to be preserved? Bismarck's first concern was to keep France—bitter over its defeat and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine—diplomatically isolated and without allies. His second concern was the threat to peace posed by the enormous multinational empires of Austria-Hungary and Russia, particularly in southeastern Europe, where the waning strength of the Ottoman Empire had created a threatening power vacuum in the disputed border territories of the Balkans.

Bismarck's accomplishments were effective, but only temporary. From 1871 to the late 1880s, he maintained German leadership in international affairs, and he signed a series of defensive alliances with Austria-Hungary and Russia designed to isolate France. Yet in 1890 the new emperor Wilhelm II dismissed Bismarck, in part because he disagreed with the chancellor's friendly policy toward Russia. Wilhelm II

was an impulsive and bombastic leader, given to making bold and tactless statements on sensitive international affairs, and under his leadership Bismarck's carefully planned alliance system began to unravel. Germany refused to renew a nonaggression pact with Russia, the centerpiece of Bismarck's system, in spite of Russian willingness to do so. This fateful move prompted long-isolated republican France to court absolutist Russia, offering loans, arms, and diplomatic support. In early 1894 France and Russia became military allies. As a result, continental Europe was divided into two rival blocs. The **Triple Alliance** of Austria, Germany, and Italy faced an increasingly hostile Dual Alliance of Russia and France, and the German general staff began secret preparations for a war on two fronts (Map 25.1).

As rivalries deepened on the continent, Great Britain's foreign policy became increasingly crucial. After 1891 Britain was the only uncommitted Great Power. Many Germans and some Britons felt that the industrially advanced, ethnically related Germanic and Anglo-Saxon peoples were natural allies. However, the good relations that had prevailed between Prussia and Great Britain since the mid-eighteenth century gave way to a bitter Anglo-German rivalry.

There were several reasons for this ill-fated development. Commercial competition in world markets between Germany and Great Britain increased sharply in the 1890s, as Germany became a great industrial power. Germany's ambitious pursuit of colonies further threatened British interests. Above all, Germany's decision in 1900 to expand its battle fleet posed a challenge to Britain's long-standing naval supremacy. In response to German expansion, British leaders prudently shored up their exposed global position with alliances and agreements. Britain improved its often-strained relations with the United States, concluded an alliance with Japan in 1902, and allied with France in the Anglo-French Entente of 1904, which settled all outstanding colonial disputes between the two countries.

Alarmed by Britain's closer ties to France, Germany's leaders decided to test the strength of their alliance. In 1905 Wilhelm II declared that Morocco—where France had colonial interests—was an independent, sovereign state and demanded that Germany receive the same trading rights as France. In March the German emperor paid a surprise visit to Tangier on the Moroccan coast, toured the city on a white stallion, and declared his support for Moroccan independence. This rather awkward proclamation initiated an international crisis that almost led

■ **Triple Alliance** The alliance of Austria, Germany, and Italy. Italy left the alliance when war broke out in 1914 on the grounds that Austria had launched a war of aggression.

■ **Triple Entente** The alliance of Great Britain, France, and Russia prior to and during the First World War.

# TIMELINE

1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920
<b>1914–1918</b> World War I	<b>1915</b> Italy joins the Triple Entente; German submarine sinks the <i>Lusitania</i> ; Germany halts unrestricted submarine warfare; Battle of Gallipoli <b>June 28, 1914</b> Serbian nationalist assassinates Archduke Franz Ferdinand <b>August 1914</b> War begins <b>September 1914</b> Battle of the Marne; German victories on the eastern front <b>October 1914</b> Ottoman Empire joins the Central Powers	<b>1916</b> <b>1917</b> Germany resumes unrestricted submarine warfare <b>March 1917</b> February Revolution in Russia <b>April 1916</b> Easter Rebellion in Ireland <b>November 1917</b> Bolshevik Revolution in Russia; Balfour Declaration on Jewish homeland in Palestine	<b>1918</b> <b>1919</b> Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed between Germany and Russia, taking Russia out of the war <b>March–July 1918</b> German Spring Offensive on the western front <b>1918–1920</b> Civil war in Russia <b>1919</b> Treaty of Versailles; Allies invade Turkey <b>November 11, 1918</b> End of First World War; revolution in Germany	<b>1923</b> Treaty of Lausanne recognizes Turkish independence		
<b>1915–1918</b> Armenian genocide; German armies occupy large parts of east-central Europe						

to war between Germany and France. Then Wilhelm II insisted on an international conference in hopes that his saber rattling would settle the Moroccan question to Germany's benefit. But his crude bullying only brought France and Britain closer together, and Germany left the conference empty-handed.

The result of the First Moroccan Crisis in 1905 was something of a diplomatic revolution. Britain, France, Russia, and even the United States began to see Germany as a potential threat. At the same time, German leaders began to see sinister plots to encircle Germany and block its development as a world power. In 1907 Russia, battered by its disastrous war with Japan and the revolution of 1905, agreed to settle its quarrels with Great Britain in Persia and Central Asia and signed the Anglo-Russian Agreement. This agreement laid the foundation of the **Triple Entente** (ahn-TAHNT), an alliance between Britain, Russia, and France.

Animosity between the German-led Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente sharpened in 1911, when French troops went into the Moroccan hinterland to put down an anticolonial rebellion and Germany sent a gunboat to a Moroccan port in response. International agreements to resolve this Second Moroccan Crisis allowed France to claim Morocco as a permanent protectorate and gave Germany some territorial concessions in the Congo, but the Triple Entente viewed Germany as a worrisome aggressor.

Germany's decision to expand its navy with a large, enormously expensive fleet of big-gun battleships, known as "dreadnoughts" because of their great size and power, heightened international tensions. German patriots saw a large navy as the legitimate right of a grand world power and as a source of national pride. But British leaders saw the German buildup as a military challenge that forced them to spend the "People's Budget" (see "Great Britain and Ireland" in Chapter 23) on battleships rather than social welfare. In 1909 the London *Daily Mail* hysterically informed its readers that "Germany is deliberately preparing to destroy the British Empire."<sup>1</sup> By then Britain had sided psychologically, if not officially, with France and Russia, and the leading nations of Europe were divided into two hostile camps, both ill-prepared to deal with growing international tensions (see Map 25.1).

## The Mood of 1914

Diplomatic rivalries and international crises played key roles in the rush to war, but a complete understanding of the war's origins requires an account of the "mood of 1914"—the attitudes and convictions of Europeans around 1914.<sup>2</sup> Widespread militarism and nationalism encouraged leaders and citizens alike to see international relations as an arena for the testing of national power, with war if necessary.



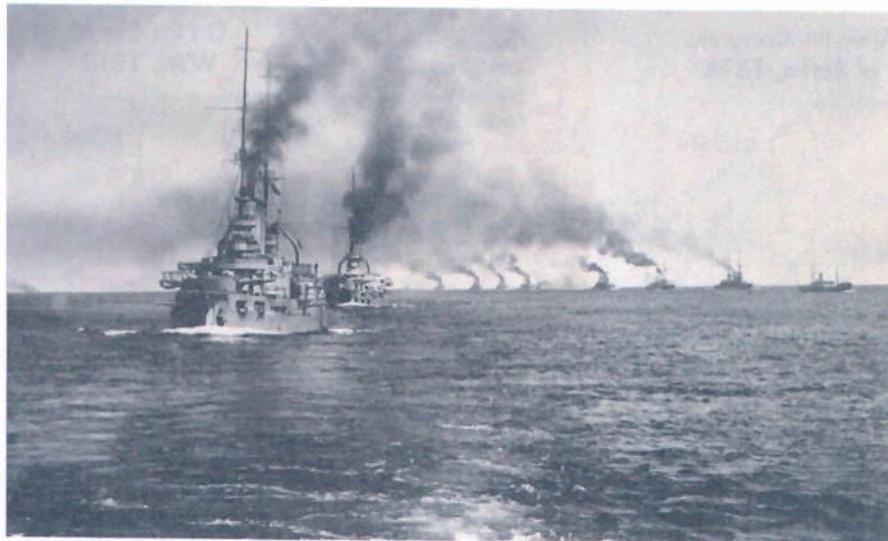
**MAP 25.1 European Alliances at the Outbreak of World War I, 1914** At the start of World War I, Europe was divided into two hostile alliances: the Triple Entente of Britain, France, and Russia, and the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. Italy never fought with the Triple Alliance but instead joined the Entente in 1915.

Germany was especially famous for its powerful and aggressive army, but military institutions played a prominent role in affairs of state and in the lives of ordinary people across Europe. In a period marked by diplomatic tensions, politicians relied on generals and military experts to help shape public policy. All the Great Powers built up their armed forces and designed mobilization plans to rush men and weapons to the field of battle. Universal conscription in Germany, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Russia—only Britain still relied on a volunteer army—exposed hundreds of thousands of young men each year to military culture and discipline.

The continent had not experienced a major conflict since the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), so Europeans vastly underestimated the destructive

potential of modern weapons. Encouraged by the patriotic national press, many believed that war was glorious, manly, and heroic. If they expected another conflict, they thought it would be over quickly. Leading politicians and intellectuals likewise portrayed war as a test of strength that would lead to national unity and renewal. Such ideas permeated European society. As one German volunteer wrote in his diary as he left for the front in 1914, “this war is a challenge for our time and for each individual, a test by fire, that we may ripen into manhood, become men able to cope with the coming stupendous years and events.”<sup>3</sup>

Support for military values was closely linked to a growing sense of popular nationalism, the notion that one’s country was superior to all others. Since the 1850s the spread of the idea that members of an



#### German Dreadnaughts on Patrol

Warships of the German navy on practice maneuvers around 1913. Germany's attempt to build a fleet that could challenge British hegemony on the high seas raised international tensions and expressed the aggressive European militarism that paved the road to war.

(© SZ Photo/Scherl/Bridgeman Images)

ethnic group should live together in a homogeneous, united nation-state had provoked all kinds of international conflicts over borders and citizenship rights. Nationalism drove the spiraling arms race and the struggle over colonies. Broad popular commitment to national interests above all else weakened groups that thought in terms of international communities and consequences. Expressions of antiwar sentiment by socialists, pacifists, and women's groups were seen as a betrayal of country in time of need. Inspired by nationalist beliefs, much of the population was ready for war.

Leading statesmen had practical reasons for promoting militarism and nationalism. Political leaders had long used foreign adventurism and diplomatic posturing to distract the people from domestic conflicts. In Great Britain, leaders faced civil war in Northern Ireland and a vocal and increasingly radical women's movement. In Russia, defeat in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) and the revolution of 1905 had greatly weakened support for the tsarist regime. In Germany, the victory of the Marxist Social Democratic Party in the parliamentary elections of 1912 led government authorities to worry that the country was falling apart. The French likewise faced domestic labor and budget problems.

Determined to hold on to power and frightened by rising popular movements, ruling classes across Europe were willing to gamble on diplomatic brinksmanship and even war to postpone dealing with intractable social and political conflicts. Victory promised to preserve the privileged positions of elites and rally the masses behind the national cause. The patriotic nationalism bolstered by the outbreak of war did bring unity in the short run, but the wealthy governing classes underestimated the risk

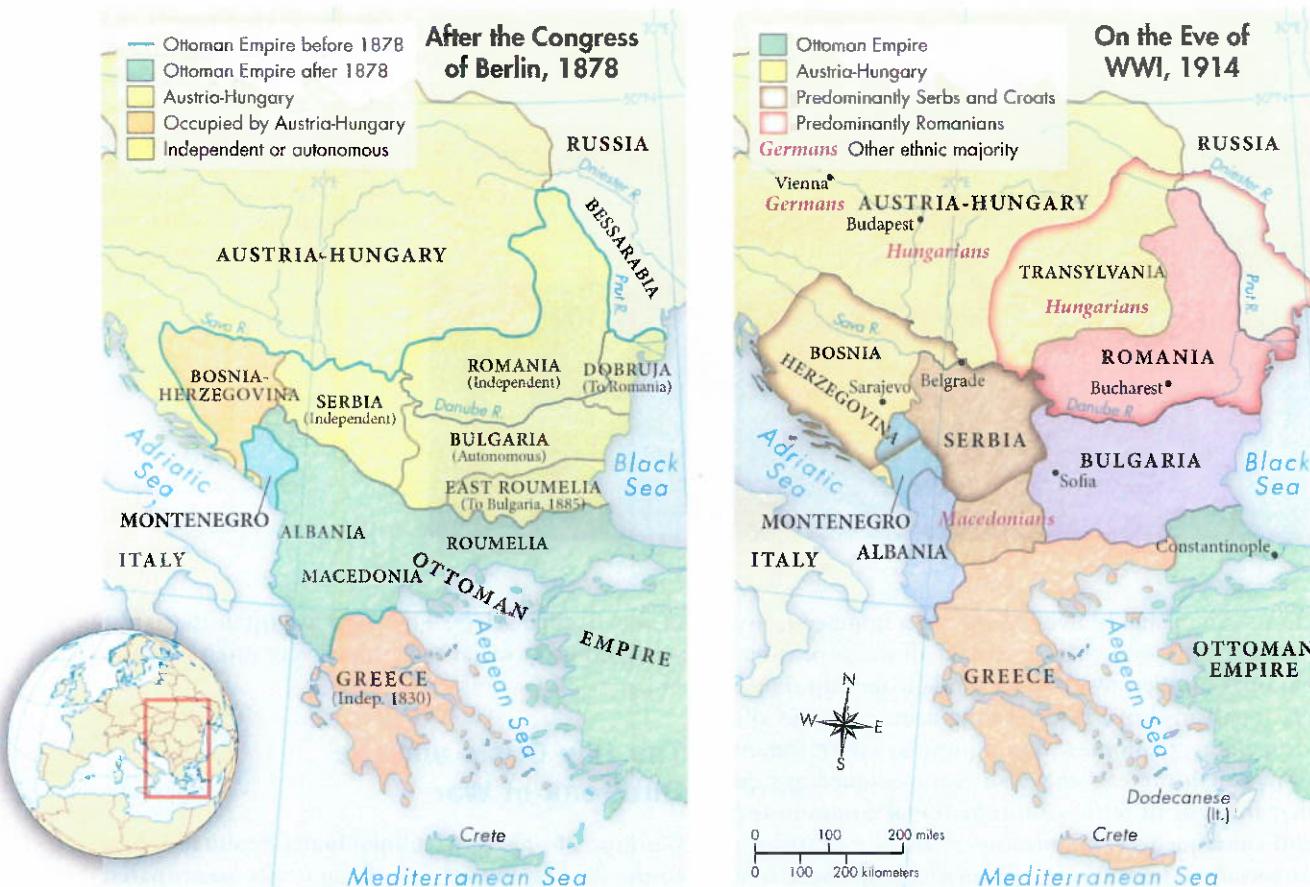
of war to themselves. They had forgotten that great wars and great social revolutions very often go hand in hand.

#### The July Crisis and the Outbreak of War

On June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was assassinated by a Serbian revolutionary during a state visit to the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo (sar-uh-YAY-voh). After failed attempts to bomb the archduke's motorcade, Gavrilo Princip, a fanatical member of the radical group the Black Hand, shot the archduke and his wife, Sophie, in their automobile. After his capture, Princip remained defiant: "I am a Yugoslav nationalist, aiming for the unification of all Yugoslavs, and I do not care what form of state, but it must be free from Austria."<sup>4</sup>

Princip's deed, in the crisis-ridden borderlands between the weakened Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires, led Europe into world war. In the early years of the twentieth century, war in the Balkans—"the powder keg of Europe"—seemed inevitable. Between 1900 and 1914 the Western powers had successfully forced the Ottoman rulers to give up their European territories. Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, and others now sought to consolidate their independent nation-states in the redrawn map of southeastern Europe, and the threat of wars loomed (Map 25.2).

Independent Serbia was eager to build a state that would include all ethnic Serbs and was thus openly hostile to Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, since both states included substantial Serbian minorities. To block Serbian expansion, Austria in 1908 annexed the territories of Bosnia



**MAP 25.2 The Balkans, 1878–1914** After the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Ottoman Empire suffered large territorial losses but remained a power in the Balkans. By 1914 Ottoman control had given way to ethnic population groups that flowed across political boundaries, and growing Serbian national aspirations threatened Austria-Hungary.

and Herzegovina (hehrt-suh-goh-VEE-nuh). The southern part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire now included an even larger Serbian population. Serb leaders expressed rage but could do nothing without support from Russia, their traditional ally.

The tensions in the Balkans soon erupted into regional warfare. In the First Balkan War (1912), Serbia joined Greece and Bulgaria to attack the Ottoman Empire and then quarreled with Bulgaria over the spoils of victory. In the Second Balkan War (1913), Bulgaria attacked its former allies. Austria intervened and forced Serbia to give up Albania. After centuries, nationalism had finally destroyed the Ottoman Empire in Europe. Encouraged by their success against the Ottomans, Balkan nationalists increased their demands for freedom from Austria-Hungary. The leaders of that multinational empire viewed such demands as a serious threat.

Within this complex context, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand instigated a five-week period of intense diplomatic activity known as the July Crisis. The leaders of Austria-Hungary

concluded that Serbia was implicated in the assassination and deserved severe punishment. On July 23 Austria-Hungary gave Serbia an unconditional ultimatum that would violate Serbian sovereignty. When Serbia replied moderately but evasively, Austria mobilized its armies and declared war on Serbia on July 28. In this way, multinational Austria-Hungary, desperate to save its empire, deliberately chose war to stem the rising tide of hostile nationalism within its borders.

Commitments made under the existing alliance system helped turn a little war into a world war. Bethmann-Hollweg, the German chancellor, promised Austria-Hungary that Germany would "faithfully stand by" its ally in case of war. This "blank check" of unconditional support encouraged the prowar faction in Vienna to take a hard line against the Serbs, at a time when moderation might still have limited the crisis. At the same time, Serbia's traditional ally Russia—backed by France—encouraged the Serbs to refuse Austrian demands. Such decisions made the outbreak of war almost inevitable.

The complicated diplomatic situation spiraled out of control as military plans and timetables began to dictate policy. Vast Russia required much more time to mobilize its armies than did Germany and Austria-Hungary. And since the complicated mobilization plans of the Russian general staff assumed a two-front war with both Austria and Germany, Russia could not mobilize against one without mobilizing against the other. Therefore, on July 29 Tsar Nicholas II ordered full mobilization, which in effect declared war on both Austria-Hungary and Germany; formal declarations of war among the combatant nations followed over the next few days.

The German general staff had long thought in terms of a two-front war. Their misguided **Schlieffen Plan** called for a quick victory



over France after a lightning attack through neutral Belgium—the quickest way to reach Paris—before turning on Russia. On August 3 German armies invaded Belgium. Great Britain, infuriated by the German violation of Belgian neutrality, declared war on Germany the following day.

The speed of the July Crisis created shock, panic, and excitement. In the final days of July and the first few days of August, massive crowds thronged the streets of Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna, seeking news and shouting prowar slogans. Events proceeded rapidly, and those who opposed the war could do little to prevent its arrival. In a little over a month, a limited Austrian-Serbian war had become a European-wide conflict, and the First World War had begun.

## How did the First World War differ from previous wars?

**W**hen the Germans invaded Belgium in August 1914, they and many others thought that the war would be short and relatively painless. Many sincerely believed that “the boys will be home by Christmas.” They were wrong. On the western front in France and the eastern front in Russia, and on the borders of the Ottoman Empire, the belligerent armies bogged down in a new and extremely costly kind of war, later labeled **total war** by German general Erich Ludendorff. Total war meant new roles for soldiers and civilians alike. At the front, it meant lengthy, deadly battles fought with all the destructive weapons a highly industrialized society could produce. At home, national economies were geared toward the war effort. Governments revoked civil liberties, and many civilians lost lives or livelihoods as occupying armies moved through their towns and cities. The struggle expanded outside Europe, and the Middle East, Africa, East Asia, and the United States were all brought into the maelstrom.

### Stalemate and Slaughter on the Western Front

In the face of the German invasion, the Belgian army defended its homeland and fell back in good order to join a rapidly landed British army corps near the Franco-Belgian border. At the same time, Russian armies attacked eastern Germany, forcing the

Germans to transfer much-needed troops to the east. Instead of quickly capturing Paris as per the Schlieffen Plan, by the end of August dead-tired German soldiers were advancing slowly along an enormous front in the scorching summer heat. Afraid that armed Belgian partisans (called *francs-tireurs*) were attacking German troops behind the lines, the German occupiers dealt harshly with local resistance. German soldiers executed civilians suspected of joining the partisans and, in an out-of-control tragedy, burned the medieval core of the Belgian city of Louvain. Entente propaganda made the most of the German “Rape of Belgium” and the atrocities committed by German troops.

On September 6 the French attacked a gap in the German line in the Battle of the Marne. For three days, France threw everything into the attack. At one point, the French government desperately requisitioned all the taxis of Paris to rush reserves to the front. Finally, the Germans fell back. France had been miraculously saved (Map 25.3).

With the armies stalled, both sides began to dig trenches to protect themselves from machine-gun fire.

■ **Schlieffen Plan** Failed German plan calling for a lightning attack through neutral Belgium and a quick defeat of France before turning on Russia.

■ **total war** A war in which distinctions between the soldiers on the battlefield and civilians at home are blurred, and where massive government intervention in society and the economy ensures support for the war effort.



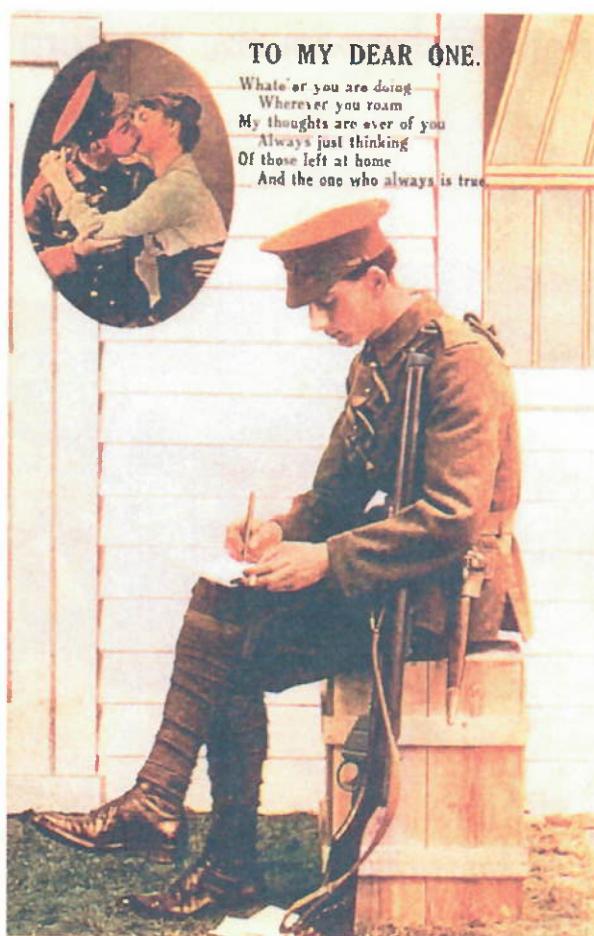
The Western Front



**MAP 25.3 World War I in Europe and the Middle East, 1914–1918** Trench warfare on the western front was concentrated in Belgium and northern France (inset), while the war in the east and the Ottoman Empire encompassed an enormous territory.



Ein Gruß aus dem Schützengraben.



**"Greetings from the trenches."** This German postcard (left) shows three soldiers writing letters to their loved ones at home; the card was probably produced on a small, frontline printing press, for quick use by soldiers in the field. The post was typically the only connection between soldiers and their relatives, and over 28 billion pieces of mail passed between home and front on all sides during the war. Patriotic, mass-produced postcards, such as the British example also pictured here (right), often played on the connections between absent loved ones and national duty. (German card: photo: Sammlung Sauer/picturealliance/ZB/akg-images; British card: Lordprice Collection/Alamy)

By November 1914 an unbroken line of four hundred miles of defensive positions extended along the western front, from the Belgian coast through northern France and on to the Swiss frontier. Armies on both sides dug in behind rows of trenches, mines, and barbed wire.

The cost in lives of **trench warfare** was staggering, the gains in territory minuscule. Conditions in the trenches were atrocious. Enlisted men rotated in and out of position, at best spending two weeks at base, two weeks in reserve positions, and two weeks in the trenches. They had little leave time to visit loved ones at home, though they exchanged billions of letters and postcards with friends and family. At the front, mud and vermin, bad food, damp and cold, and wretched living quarters were the norm. Soldiers spent most of their time repairing rough trenches and dugouts and standing watch for an enemy they rarely saw.

During combat, recently invented weapons, the products of the industrial age, made battle impersonal,

traumatic, and extremely deadly. The machine gun, hand grenades, poison gas, flamethrowers, long-range artillery, the airplane, and the tank were all used to murderous effect. Military units were often decimated in poorly planned frontal assaults, and comrades could rarely retrieve the wounded and dead from no-man's land between the lines. Bodies, mangled by high explosives, were ground into the mud and disappeared, or became part of the earthworks themselves. (See "Evaluating Visual Evidence: Trench Warfare on the Western Front," page 772.)

The leading generals of the combatant nations, who had learned military tactics and strategy in the nineteenth century, struggled to understand trench warfare. For four years they mostly repeated the same mistakes, mounting massive offensives designed

■ **trench warfare** A type of fighting used in World War I behind rows of trenches, mines, and barbed wire; the cost in lives was staggering and the gains in territory minimal.

### Trench Warfare on the Western Front



(Bettmann/Getty Images)

In this famous photograph apparently taken by an infantryman at the front, two German soldiers in a half-destroyed trench fight off an attack by four Frenchmen during the Battle of Verdun in October 1916. The French soldiers are trying to move around the Germans on their left flank, and one appears to be hit. Such candid photographs are quite rare, because conditions on the western front made it extremely dangerous to take pictures in a live combat situation.

#### EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE

1. What can viewing this photo and others like it tell us about conditions on the western front?
2. This is a private photo that was only published after the war was over. Why would military and government leaders try to prevent the circulation of such candid images? How does it compare to more "official" visions of the war, as portrayed in the posters in "Viewpoints: Wartime Propaganda Posters" (page 779)?

to achieve decisive breakthroughs. Brutal frontal assaults against highly fortified trenches might overrun the enemy's frontline, but because of the extent of the defensive trench system, attacking soldiers rarely captured any substantial territory. The French and British offensives of 1915 never gained more than three miles of territory. In 1916 the German campaign against Verdun left over 700,000 soldiers killed or wounded and ended with the combatants in their original positions. The results in 1917 were little better. In hard-fought battles on all fronts, millions of young men were wounded or died for no real gain.

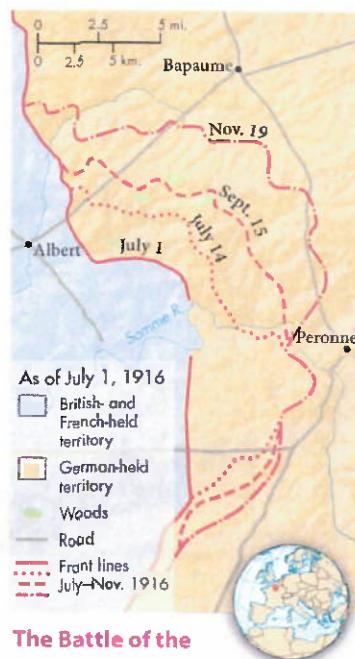
The Battle of the Somme, a great British offensive undertaken in the summer of 1916 in northern France, exemplified the horrors of trench warfare. The battle began with a weeklong heavy artillery bombardment on the German lines, intended to cut the barbed wire fortifications, decimate the enemy trenches, and prevent the Germans from making an effective defense. For seven days and nights, the British artillery fired nonstop on the German lines, delivering about 1.5 million shells. On July 1 the British went "over the top," climbing out of the trenches and moving into no-man's land toward the German lines, dug into a series of ridges about half a mile away.

During the bombardment, the Germans had fled to their dugouts—underground shelters dug deep into the trenches—where they suffered from lack of water, food, and sleep. But they survived. As the British soldiers neared the German lines and the shelling stopped, the Germans emerged from their bunkers, set up their machine guns, and mowed down the approaching troops. Traversing the gently sloping farmland of the Somme River district, the attackers made easy targets. About 20,000 British men were killed and 40,000 more were wounded on just the first day, a crushing loss that shook troop morale and public opinion at home. The battle lasted until November, and in the end the British did push the Germans back—a whole seven miles. Some 420,000 British, 200,000 French, and 600,000 Germans were killed or wounded fighting over an insignificant scrap of land.

### The Widening War

On the eastern front, the slaughter did not immediately degenerate into trench warfare, and the fighting was dominated by Germany. Repulsing the initial Russian attacks, the Germans won major victories at the Battles of Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes in August and September 1914. Russia put real pressure on the relatively weak Austro-Hungarian army, but by 1915 the eastern front had stabilized in Germany's favor. A staggering 2.5 million Russian soldiers had been killed, wounded, or captured. German armies occupied huge swaths of the Russian Empire in central Europe, including ethnic Polish, Belorussian, and Baltic territories (see Map 25.3). Yet Russia continued to fight, marking another wrong assumption of the Schlieffen Plan.

To govern these occupied territories, the Germans installed a vast military bureaucracy, with some 15,000 army administrators and professional specialists. Anti-Slavic prejudice dominated the mind-set of the occupiers, who viewed the local Slavs as savages and ethnic "mongrels." German military administrators used prisoners of war and refugees as forced labor. They



**The Battle of the Somme, 1916**

stole animals and crops from local farmers to supply the occupying army or send home to Germany. About one-third of the civilian population died or became refugees under this brutal occupation. In the long run, the German state hoped to turn these territories into German possessions, a chilling forerunner of Nazi policies in World War II.<sup>5</sup>

The changing tides of victory and hopes for territorial gains brought neutral countries into the war. Italy, a member of the Triple Alliance since 1882, had declared its neutrality in 1914 on the grounds that its ally Austria had violated the pact by launching a war of aggression. Then in May 1915 Italy switched sides to join the Triple Entente in return for promises of Austrian territory. The war along the Italian-

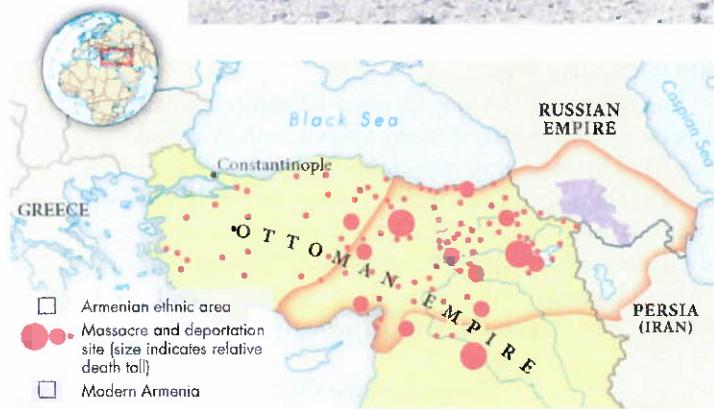
Austrian front was bitter and deadly and cost some 600,000 Italian lives.

In October 1914 the Ottoman Empire joined Austria and Germany, by then known as the Central Powers. The following September Bulgaria followed the Ottoman Empire's lead in order to settle old scores with Serbia. The Balkans, with the exception of Greece, were occupied by the Central Powers. The Austro-Hungarian invasion and occupation of Serbia, aided by the Bulgarians, was particularly vicious and deadly.



The entry of the Ottomans carried the war into the Middle East. Heavy fighting between the Ottomans and the Russians in the Caucasus enveloped the Armenians, who lived on both sides of the border and had experienced brutal repression by the Ottomans in 1909. When in 1915 some Armenians welcomed Russian armies as liberators, the Ottoman government ordered a mass deportation of its Armenian citizens from their homeland. In this early example of modern ethnic cleansing, often labeled genocide, about 1 million Armenians died from murder, starvation, and disease.

In 1915, at the Battle of Gallipoli, British forces tried and failed to take the Dardanelles and Constantinople from the Ottoman Turks. The invasion force was pinned down on the beaches, and the ten-month-long



The Armenian Genocide, 1915–1918

battle cost the Ottomans 300,000 and the British 265,000 men killed, wounded, or missing.

The British were more successful at inciting the Arabs to revolt against their Ottoman rulers. They opened negotiations with the foremost Arab leader, Hussein ibn-Ali (1856–1931). In the name of the Ottoman sultan, Hussein ruled much of the Ottoman Empire's territory along the Red Sea, an area known as the Hejaz that included Mecca, the holiest city in the Muslim world (see the map in “Thinking Like a Historian,” Source 4, page 793). In 1915, Hussein managed to win vague British commitments for an independent postwar Arab kingdom. Fulfilling his promise to the British, in 1916 Hussein rebelled against the Turks, proclaiming himself king of the Arabs. He was aided by the British liaison officer T. E. Lawrence, who in 1917 helped lead Arab soldiers in a guerrilla war against the Turks on the Arabian peninsula.

**Deportation of Ottoman Armenians** When some Armenians welcomed Russian armies as liberators after years of persecution, the Ottoman government ordered a mass deportation of its Armenian citizens from their homeland in the empire's eastern provinces. This photo shows Armenian refugees forced by Turkish militias to cross the Anatolian hinterland in 1915, under conditions designed to lead to their deaths. About 1 million civilians perished from murder, starvation, and disease during the Armenian genocide, the deliberate and systematic destruction of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire during World War I. (Pictures from History/Bridgeman Images)

The British, aided by colonial troops from India, enjoyed similar victories in the Ottoman province of Mesopotamia (today's Iraq). British troops quickly occupied the southern Iraqi city of Basra in 1914, securing access to the region's oil fields. After a series of setbacks at the hands of Ottoman troops, the British captured Baghdad in 1917. In September 1918 British armies and their Arab allies rolled into Syria, a large and diverse Ottoman territory that included the holy lands of Palestine and the present-day countries of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. This offensive culminated in the triumphal entry of Hussein's son Faisal into Damascus. Arab patriots in Syria and Iraq now expected a large, unified Arab nation-state to rise from the dust of the Ottoman collapse—though they would later be disappointed by the Western powers (see “The Peace Settlement in the Middle East” later in this chapter).

The war spread to East Asia and colonial Africa as well. Japan declared war on Germany in 1914, seized Germany's Pacific and East Asian colonies, and used the opportunity to expand its influence in China. In Africa, instead of rebelling as the Germans hoped, colonial subjects of the British and French generally supported the Allied powers and helped local British and French commanders take over German colonies.

As the European world war spilled out of European borders, it brought non-European peoples into the conflict. More than a million Africans and Asians served in the various armies of the warring powers; more than double that number served as porters to carry equipment and build defenses. The French, facing a shortage of young men, made especially heavy use of colonial troops from North Africa. Soldiers from India played a key role in Britain's campaigns against the Ottomans, though under the command of British officers. And large numbers of soldiers came from the British Commonwealth, a voluntary association of former British colonies. Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders fought with the British; those from Australia and New Zealand (the ANZAC Army Corps) fought with particular distinction in the failed Allied assault on Gallipoli.

After three years of refusing to play a fighting role, the United States was finally drawn into the expanding conflict. American intervention grew out of the war at sea and general sympathy for the Triple Entente. At the beginning of the war, Britain and France established a naval blockade to strangle the Central Powers. No neutral cargo ship was permitted to sail to Germany. In early 1915 Germany retaliated with attacks on the Entente's supply ships from a murderously effective new weapon, the submarine.

In May 1915 a German submarine sank the British passenger liner *Lusitania*, claiming 1,198 lives, among them 128 U.S. citizens. President Woodrow Wilson protested vigorously, using the tragedy to incite American public opinion against the Germans. To avoid almost-certain war with the United States, Germany halted its unrestricted submarine campaign for almost two years.

Early in 1917 the German military command—hoping that improved submarines could starve Britain into submission before the United States could come to its rescue—resumed unrestricted submarine warfare. Instead of weakening the British, however, the move tipped the balance against the Central Powers by prompting the United States to declare war on Germany. The first U.S. troops reached France in June 1917.

## In what ways did the war transform life on the home front?

The war's impact on civilians was no less massive than it was on the men crouched in the trenches. Total war encouraged the growth of state bureaucracies, transformed the lives of ordinary women and men, and by the end inspired mass antiwar protest movements.

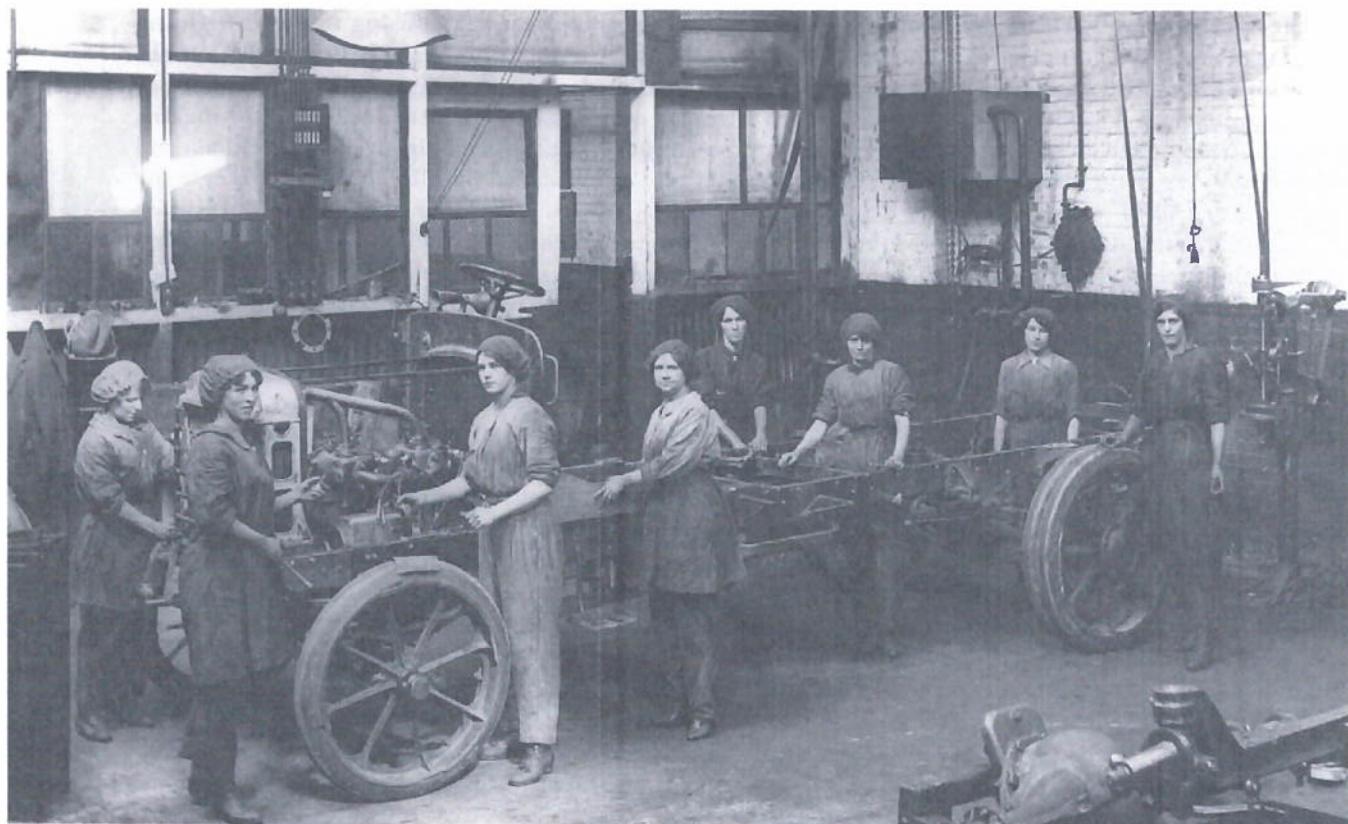
### Mobilizing for Total War

In August 1914 many people believed that their nation was right to defend itself from foreign aggression and so greeted the outbreak of hostilities enthusiastically. With the exception of those on the extreme left, even socialists supported the war. Yet by mid-October generals and politicians had begun to realize that they had underestimated the demands of total war. Heavy casualties and the stalemate meant that each combatant country experienced a desperate need for men and weapons. To keep the war machine moving, national leaders aggressively intervened in society and the economy.

By the late nineteenth century the responsive national state had already shown an eagerness to manage the welfare of its citizens (see "The Responsive National State" in Chapter 23). Now, confronted by the crisis of total war, the state intruded even further into

people's daily lives. New government ministries mobilized soldiers and armaments, established rationing programs, and provided care for war widows and wounded veterans. Censorship offices controlled news about the course of the war. Government planning boards temporarily abandoned free-market capitalism and set mandatory production goals and limits on wages and prices. Government management of highly productive industrial economies worked: it yielded an effective and immensely destructive war effort on all sides.

Germany went furthest in developing a planned economy to wage total war. As soon as war began, the industrialist Walter Rathenau convinced the government to set up the War Raw Materials Board to ration and distribute raw materials. Under Rathenau's direction, every useful material from foreign oil to barnyard manure was inventoried and rationed. Moreover, the board launched successful attempts to produce substitutes, such as synthetic rubber and nitrates, for scarce war supplies. Food was rationed in accordance with physical need. Germany failed to tax the war profits of private firms heavily enough, however. This failure contributed to massive deficit financing, inflation, the growth of a black market, and the eventual re-emergence of class conflict.



**Women Workers Building a Truck in a London Workshop, 1917** Millions of men on all sides were drafted to fight in the war, creating a serious labor shortage on the home front. When women began to fill jobs formerly reserved for men, they challenged middle-class gender roles. (Hulton Deutsch/Getty Images)

Following the terrible Battles of Verdun and the Somme in 1916, German military leaders forced the Reichstag to accept the Auxiliary Service Law, which required all males between seventeen and sixty to work only at jobs considered critical to the war effort. Women also worked in war factories, mines, and steel mills, where they labored, like men, at heavy and dangerous jobs. While war production increased, people lived on little more than one thousand calories a day—about half the normal average.

After 1917 Germany's leaders ruled by decree. Generals Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff—heroes of the Battle of Tannenberg—drove Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg from office. With the support of the newly formed ultraconservative Fatherland Party, the generals established a military dictatorship. Hindenburg called for the ultimate mobilization for total war. Germany could win, he said, only “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.”<sup>6</sup> Thus in Germany total war led to attempts to establish history’s first “totalitarian” society, a model for future National Socialists, or Nazis.

Although only Germany was directly ruled by a military government, leaders in all the belligerent nations took power from parliaments, suspended civil liberties, and ignored democratic procedures. After 1915 the British Ministry of Munitions organized private industry to produce for the war, allocated labor, set wage and price rates, and settled labor disputes. In France, a weakened parliament met without public oversight, and the courts jailed pacifists who dared criticize the state. Once the United States entered the war, new federal agencies such as the War Labor Board and the War Industries Board regulated industry, labor relations, and agricultural production, while the Espionage and Sedition Acts weakened civil liberties. The war may have been deadly for citizen armies, but it was certainly good for the growth of the bureaucratic nation-state.

### The Social Impact of Total War

The social changes wrought by total war were no less profound than the economic impact, though again there were important national variations. National conscription sent millions of men to the front,

# INDIVIDUALS IN SOCIETY



## Vera Brittain

Although the Great War upended millions of lives, it struck Europe's young people with the greatest force. Vera Brittain (1893–1970), who was in her twenties during the war years, captured this life-changing experience in her best-selling autobiography, *Testament of Youth* (1933).

Brittain grew up in a wealthy business family in northern England, bristling at small-town conventions and discrimination against women. Very close to her brother Edward, two years her junior, Brittain read voraciously and dreamed of being a successful writer. Finishing boarding school and overcoming her father's objections, she prepared for Oxford's rigorous entry exams and won a scholarship to its women's college. Brittain fell in love with her brother's best friend, Roland Leighton, who was also a brilliant student. All three, along with two other close friends, Victor Richardson and Geoffrey Thurlow, confidently prepared to enter Oxford in late 1914.

When war suddenly loomed in July 1914, Brittain shared with millions of Europeans a surge of patriotic support for her government, a prowar enthusiasm she later downplayed in her published writings. She wrote in her diary that her "great fear" was that England would declare its neutrality and commit the "grossest treachery" toward France.\* She supported Leighton's decision to enlist, agreeing with his glamorous view of war as "very ennobling and very beautiful." Later, exchanging anxious letters with Leighton in France in 1915, Brittain began to see the conflict in personal, human terms. She wondered if any victory could be worth her fiancé's life.

Struggling to quell her doubts, Brittain redoubled her commitment to England's cause and volunteered as an army nurse. For the next three years, she served with distinction in military hospitals in London, Malta, and northern France, repeatedly torn between the vision of noble sacrifice and the reality of human tragedy. Having lost sexual inhibitions while caring for mangled male bodies, she longed to consummate her love with Leighton. Awaiting his return on leave on Christmas Day in 1915, she was greeted instead with a telegram: he had been killed two days before.



Vera Brittain was marked forever by her wartime experiences. (Vera Brittain fonds, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library)

Leighton's death was the first of several devastating blows that eventually overwhelmed Brittain's idealistic patriotism. In 1917 Thurlow and then Richardson died from gruesome wounds. In early 1918, as the last great German offensive covered the floors of her war-zone hospital with maimed and dying German prisoners, the bone-weary Brittain felt a common humanity and saw only more victims. A few weeks later her brother Edward died in action. When the war ended, she was, she said, a "complete automaton," with her "deepest emotions paralyzed if not dead."

Returning to Oxford, Brittain gradually recovered. She formed a deep, restorative friendship with another talented woman writer, Winifred Holtby; published novels and articles; and became a leader in the feminist campaign for gender equality. She also married and had children. But her wartime memories were always with her. Finally, Brittain succeeded in coming to grips with them in *Testament of Youth*. The unflinching narrative spoke to the experiences of an entire generation and became a runaway bestseller. Above all, Brittain captured the contradictory character of the war, in which millions of young people found excitement, courage, and common purpose but succeeded only in destroying their lives with futile sacrifices. Increasingly committed to pacifism, Brittain opposed England's entry into World War II.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What were Brittain's initial feelings toward the war? How and why did they change as the conflict continued?
2. Why did Brittain volunteer as a nurse, as many women did? How might wartime nursing have influenced women of her generation?
3. In portraying the contradictory character of World War I for Europe's youth, was Brittain describing the character of all modern warfare?

\*Quotes from P. Berry and M. Bostridge, *Vera Brittain: A Life* (London: Virago Press, 2001), p. 59; additional quotations pp. 80 and 136.

exposing many to foreign lands for the first time in their lives. The insatiable needs of the military created a tremendous demand for workers, making jobs readily available. This situation — seldom, if ever, seen before 1914, when unemployment and poverty had been facts of urban life — brought momentous changes.

The need for workers meant greater power and prestige for labor unions. Unions cooperated with war governments on workplace rules, wages, and production schedules in return for real participation in important decisions. The entry of labor leaders and unions into policymaking councils paralleled the entry of socialist leaders into war governments. Both reflected a new government openness to the needs of those at the bottom of society.

The role of women changed dramatically. The production of vast amounts of arms and ammunition required huge numbers of laborers, and women moved into skilled industrial jobs long considered men's work. Women became highly visible in public—as munitions workers, bank tellers, and mail carriers, and even as police officers, firefighters, and farm laborers. Women also served as auxiliaries and nurses at the front. (See “Individuals in Society: Vera Brittain,” page 777.)

The war expanded the range of women's activities and helped change attitudes about proper gender roles, but the long-term results were mixed. Women gained experience in jobs previously reserved for men, but at war's end millions of demobilized soldiers demanded their jobs back, and governments forced women out of the workplace. Thus women's employment gains were mostly temporary, except in nursing and social work, already considered “women's work.”

The dislocations of war loosened sexual morality, and some women defied convention and expressed their new-found freedom by bobbing their hair, shortening their skirts, and smoking in public. Yet supposedly “loose” women were often criticized for betraying their soldier-husbands away at the front. As a result of women's many-sided war effort, the United States, Britain, Germany, Poland, and other countries granted women the right to vote immediately after the war. Yet women's rights movements faded in the 1920s and 1930s, in large part because feminist leaders found it difficult to regain momentum after the wartime crisis.

To some extent, the war promoted greater social equality, blurring class distinctions and lessening the gap between rich and poor. In Great Britain, the bottom third of the population generally lived better than they ever had, for the poorest gained most from the severe shortage of labor. Elsewhere, greater equality was reflected in full employment, distribution of scarce rations according to physical needs, and a sharing of hardships. In general, despite some war

profiteering, European society became more uniform and egalitarian.

Death itself had no respect for traditional social distinctions. It savagely decimated the young aristocratic officers who led the charge, and it fell heavily on the mass of drafted peasants and unskilled workers who followed, leading commentators to speak of a “lost generation.” Yet death often spared highly skilled workers and foremen. Their lives were too valuable to squander at the front, for they were needed to train the newly recruited women and older unskilled men laboring in war plants at home.

## Growing Political Tensions

During the first two years of war, many soldiers and civilians supported their governments. Patriotic nationalism and belief in a just cause united peoples behind their national leaders. Each government used rigorous censorship and crude propaganda to bolster popular support. (See “Viewpoints: Wartime Propaganda Posters,” page 779.) German propaganda falsely pictured black soldiers from France's African empire abusing German women, while the French and British ceaselessly recounted and exaggerated German atrocities in Belgium and elsewhere. Patriotic posters and slogans, slanted news, and biased editorials inflamed national hatreds, helped control public opinion, and encouraged soldiers to keep fighting.

Political and social tensions re-emerged, however, and by the spring of 1916 ordinary people were beginning to crack under the strain of total war. Strikes and protest marches over war-related burdens and shortages flared up on every home front. On May 1, 1916, several thousand demonstrators in Berlin heard the radical socialist leader Karl Liebknecht (1871–1919) attack the costs of the war effort. Liebknecht was arrested and imprisoned, but his daring action electrified Europe's far left. In France, Georges Clemenceau (zhorzh kleh-muhn-SOH) (1841–1929) established a virtual dictatorship, arrested strikers, and jailed without trial journalists and politicians who dared to suggest a compromise peace with Germany.

In April 1916 Irish republican nationalists took advantage of the tense wartime conditions to step up their rebellion against British rule. During the great Easter Rising, armed republican militias took over parts of Dublin and proclaimed an independent Irish Republic. After a week of bitter fighting, British troops crushed the rebels and executed their leaders. Though the republicans were defeated, the punitive aftermath fueled anti-British sentiment in Ireland. The Rising set the stage for the success of the nationalist Sinn Fein Party and a full-scale civil war for Irish independence in the early 1920s.

# VIEWPOINTS

## Wartime Propaganda Posters



"They Shall Not Pass!": French Propaganda Poster, 1918  
(Stapleton Collection/Private Collection/Bridgeman Images)

This famous French propaganda poster from 1918 (left) proclaims "They shall not pass!" and expresses the French determination to hold back the German invaders at any cost. The American recruitment poster from 1917 (right) encourages "fighting men" to "join the Navy." In an era before radio or television, such posters, prominently displayed in public places, were a common way for national governments to reach ordinary people with official news and messages.



American Propaganda Poster, 1917 (Private Collection/© Galerie Bilderwelt/Bridgeman Images)

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Describe the soldier and sailor pictured on these posters. How do the posters present the war?
2. The French poster was created after France had been at war for four years, while the U.S. naval recruitment poster came out before American troops were actively engaged overseas. How might the country of origin and the date of publication have affected the messages conveyed in the posters?

On all sides, soldiers' morale began to decline. Numerous French units mutinied and refused to fight after the disastrous French offensive of May 1917. Only tough military justice, including death sentences for mutiny leaders, and a tacit agreement with the troops that there would be no more grand offensives, enabled the new general-in-chief, Henri-Philippe Pétain (pay-TAN), to restore order. Facing defeat, wretched conditions at the front, and growing hopelessness, Russian soldiers deserted in droves, providing fuel for the Russian Revolution of 1917. After the murderous Battle of Caporetto in northern Italy, which lasted from October to November in 1917, the Italian army collapsed in despair. In the massive battles of 1916 and 1917, the British armies had been "bled dry." Only the promised arrival of fresh troops from the United States stiffened the resolve of the Allies.

The strains were even worse for the Central Powers. In October 1916 a young socialist assassinated the chief minister of Austria-Hungary. The following month, when the aging emperor Franz Joseph died, a symbol of unity disappeared. In spite of absolute censorship, political dissatisfaction and conflicts among nationalities grew. Both Czech and Balkan leaders demanded independent states for their peoples.

By April 1917 the Austro-Hungarian people and army were exhausted. Another winter of war would bring revolution and disintegration.

Germans likewise suffered immensely. The British naval blockade greatly limited food imports, and some 750,000 German civilians starved to death. The rest endured heavy rationing of everyday goods such as matches, bread, cooking oil, and meat. A growing minority of moderate socialists in the Reichstag gave voice to popular discontent when they called for a compromise "peace without annexations or reparations."

Such a peace was unthinkable for the Fatherland Party. Yet Germany's rulers faced growing unrest. When the bread ration was further reduced in April 1917, more than 200,000 workers and women struck and demonstrated for a week in Berlin, returning to work only under the threat of prison and military discipline. That same month, radicals left the Social Democratic Party to form the Independent Social Democratic Party; in 1918 they would found the German Communist Party. Thus Germany, like its ally Austria-Hungary (and its enemy France), was beginning to crack in 1917. Yet it was Russia that collapsed first and saved the Central Powers—for a time.

## Why did world war lead to a successful Communist revolution in Russia?

Growing out of the crisis of the First World War, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was one of modern history's most momentous events. For some, the revolution was Marx's socialist vision come true; for others, it was the triumph of a despised Communist dictatorship. To all, it presented a radically new prototype of state and society.

### The Fall of Imperial Russia

Like their allies and enemies, many Russians had embraced war with patriotic enthusiasm in 1914. At the Winter Palace, throngs of people knelt and sang "God Save the Tsar!" while Tsar Nicholas II (r. 1894–1917) repeated the oath Alexander I had sworn in 1812 during Napoleon's invasion of Russia, vowing never to make peace as long as the enemy stood on Russian soil. Russia's lower house of parliament, the Duma, voted to support the war. Conservatives anticipated expansion in the Balkans, while liberals and most socialists believed that alliance with Britain and France would bring democratic reforms. For a moment, Russia was united.

Enthusiasm for the war soon waned as better-equipped German armies inflicted terrible losses. By

1915 substantial numbers of Russian soldiers were being sent to the front without rifles; they were told to find their arms among the dead. Russia's battered peasant army nonetheless continued to fight, and Russia moved toward full mobilization on the home front. The government set up special committees to coordinate defense, industry, transportation, and agriculture. These efforts improved the military situation, but overall Russia mobilized less effectively than the other combatants.

One problem was weak leadership. Under the constitution resulting from the revolution of 1905 (see "The Russian Revolution of 1905" in Chapter 23), the tsar had retained complete control over the bureaucracy and the army, and he resisted popular involvement in government. Excluded from power, the Duma, the educated middle classes, and the masses became increasingly critical of the tsar's leadership. In September 1915 parties ranging from conservative to moderate socialists formed the Progressive bloc, which called for a completely new government responsible to the Duma instead of the tsar. In response, Nicholas temporarily adjourned the Duma. The tsar then announced that he was traveling to lead



**The Radicalization of the Russian Army** Russian soldiers inspired by the Bolshevik cause carry banners with Marxist slogans calling for revolution and democracy, around July 1917. One reads, "All Power to the Proletariat," a telling response to the provisional government's failure to pull Russia out of the war. Sick of defeat and wretched conditions at the front, the tsar's troops welcomed Lenin's promises of "Peace, Land, and Bread" and were enthusiastic participants in the Russian Revolution. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

and rally Russia's armies, leaving the government in the hands of his wife, the Tsarina Alexandra.

His departure was a fatal turning point. In his absence, Alexandra arbitrarily dismissed loyal political advisers. She turned to her court favorite, the disreputable and unpopular Rasputin, an uneducated Siberian preacher whose influence with the tsarina rested on his purported ability to heal Alexis—the royals' only son and heir to the throne—from his hemophilia. In a desperate attempt to right the situation, three members of the high aristocracy murdered Rasputin in December 1916. The ensuing scandal further undermined support for the tsarist government.

Imperial Russia had entered a terminal crisis that led to the **February Revolution** of 1917. (Though the events happened in March, the name of the revolution matches the traditional Russian calendar, which used a different dating system.) Tens of thousands of soldiers deserted, swelling the number of the disaffected at home. By early 1917 the cities were wracked by food shortages, heating fuel was in short supply, and the economy was breaking down. In March violent street demonstrations broke out in Petrograd (now named St. Petersburg), spread to the factories,

and then engulfed the city. From the front, the tsar ordered the army to open fire on the protesters, but the soldiers refused to shoot and joined the revolutionary crowd instead. The Duma declared a provisional government on March 12, 1917. Three days later, Nicholas abdicated.

### The Provisional Government

The February Revolution was the result of an unplanned uprising of hungry, angry people in the capital, but it was eagerly accepted throughout the country. The patriotic upper and middle classes embraced the prospect of a more determined war effort, while workers anticipated better wages and more food. After generations of autocracy, the provisional government established equality before the law, granting freedoms of religion, speech, and assembly, as well as the right of unions to organize and strike.

■ **February Revolution** Unplanned uprisings accompanied by violent street demonstrations begun in March 1917 (old calendar February) in Petrograd, Russia, that led to the abdication of the tsar and the establishment of a provisional government.

Yet the provisional government made a crucial mistake: though the Russian people were sick of fighting, the new leaders failed to take Russia out of the war. A government formed in May 1917 included the fiery agrarian socialist Alexander Kerensky, who became prime minister in July. For the patriotic Kerensky, as for other moderate socialists, the continuation of war was still a national duty. Kerensky refused to confiscate large landholdings and give them to peasants, fearing that such drastic action would complete the disintegration of Russia's peasant army. Human suffering and war-weariness grew, testing the limited strength of the provisional government.

From its first day, the provisional government had to share power with a formidable rival—the **Petrograd Soviet** (or council) of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Modeled on the revolutionary soviets of 1905, the Petrograd Soviet comprised two to three thousand workers, soldiers, and socialist intellectuals. Seeing itself as a true grassroots product of revolutionary democracy, the Soviet acted as a parallel government. It issued its own radical orders, weakening the authority of the provisional government.

The most famous edict of the Petrograd Soviet was Army Order No. 1, which stripped officers of their authority and placed power in the hands of elected committees of common soldiers. Designed to protect the revolution from resistance by the aristocratic officer corps, the order led to a collapse of army discipline.

In July 1917 the provisional government mounted a poorly considered summer offensive against the Germans. The campaign was a miserable failure, and peasant soldiers deserted in droves, returning home to help their families get a share of the land that peasants were seizing in a grassroots agrarian revolt. By the summer of 1917 Russia was descending into anarchy.

### Lenin and the Bolshevik Revolution

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924), one of Russia's many revolutionary leaders, rose to power as the provisional government faltered. Born into the middle class, Lenin turned against imperial Russia when his older brother was executed in 1887 for plotting to kill archconservative Tsar Alexander III. As a law student, Lenin eagerly studied Marxist socialism, which began to win converts among radical intellectuals during Russia's industrialization in the 1890s. A pragmatic and flexible thinker, Lenin updated Marx's revolutionary philosophy to address existing conditions in Russia.

Three interrelated concepts were central for Lenin. First, he stressed that only violent revolution could destroy capitalism. He tirelessly denounced all "revisionist" theories of a peaceful evolution to socialism (see "Marxist Revisionism" in Chapter 23) as a betrayal of Marx's message of violent class conflict. Second, Lenin argued that under certain conditions a Communist revolution was possible even in a predominantly agrarian country like Russia. Peasants, who were numerous, poor, and exploited, could take the place of Marx's traditional working class in the coming revolutionary conflict. Third, Lenin believed that the possibility of revolution was determined more by human leadership than by historical laws. He called for a highly disciplined workers' party strictly controlled by a small, dedicated elite of intellectuals and professional revolutionaries that would not stop until revolution brought it to power. Lenin's version of Marxism had a major impact on events in Russia and ultimately changed the way future revolutionaries engaged in radical revolt around the world.

Other Russian Marxists challenged Lenin's ideas. At meetings of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in London in 1903, matters came to a head. Lenin demanded a small, disciplined, elitist party dedicated to Communist revolution, while his more revisionist opponents wanted a democratic, reformist party with mass membership (like the German Social Democratic Party). The Russian Marxists split into two rival factions. Lenin called his camp the **Bolsheviks**, or "majority group"; his opponents were Mensheviks, or "minority group." The Bolsheviks had only a tenuous majority of a single vote, but Lenin kept the name for propaganda reasons and they became the revolutionary party he wanted: tough, disciplined, and led from above.

Unlike other socialists, Lenin had not rallied around the national flag in 1914. Observing events from neutral Switzerland, where he had moved that year to avoid persecution by the tsar's police, Lenin viewed the war as a product of imperialist rivalries and an opportunity for socialist revolution. After the February Revolution of 1917, the German government provided Lenin with safe passage in a sealed train across Germany and back into Russia. The Germans hoped Lenin would undermine the sagging war effort of the provisional government. They were not disappointed.

Arriving triumphantly at Petrograd's Finland Station on April 3, Lenin attacked at once. He rejected all cooperation with what he called the "bourgeois" provisional government. His slogans were radical in the extreme: "All power to the soviets"; "All land to the peasants"; "Stop the war now." Lenin was a superb tactician. His promises of "Peace, Land, and Bread" spoke to the expectations of suffering soldiers, peasants, and workers and earned the Bolsheviks substantial popular support. The moment for revolution was at hand.

■ **Petrograd Soviet** A huge, fluctuating mass meeting of two to three thousand workers, soldiers, and socialist intellectuals modeled on the revolutionary soviets (or councils) of 1905.

■ **Bolsheviks** Lenin's radical, revolutionary arm of the Russian party of Marxist socialism, which successfully installed a dictatorial socialist regime in Russia.

**Lenin Rallies the Masses**

Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin, known for his fiery speeches, addresses a crowd in Moscow's Red Square in October 1917.  
(Sovfoto/Getty Images)

Yet Lenin and the Bolsheviks almost lost the struggle for Russia. A premature attempt to seize power in July collapsed, and Lenin went into hiding. However, this temporary setback made little difference in the long run. The army's commander in chief, General Lavr Kornilov, led a feeble coup against the provisional Kerensky government in September. In the face of this rightist counter-revolutionary threat, the Bolsheviks reemerged. Kornilov's forces disintegrated, but Kerensky lost all credit with the army, the only force that might have saved democratic government in Russia.

### Trotsky and the Seizure of Power

Throughout the summer, the Bolsheviks greatly increased their popular support. Party membership soared from 50,000 to 240,000, and in October the Bolsheviks gained a fragile majority in the Petrograd Soviet. Now Lenin's supporter Leon Trotsky (1879–1940), a spellbinding revolutionary orator and radical Marxist, brilliantly executed the Bolshevik seizure of power.

Painting a vivid but untruthful picture of German and counter-revolutionary plots, Trotsky convinced the Petrograd Soviet to form a special military-revolutionary committee in October and make him its leader. Thus military power in the capital passed into Bolshevik hands.

On the night of November 6, militants from Trotsky's committee joined with trusted Bolshevik soldiers to seize government buildings in Petrograd and arrest members of the provisional government. Then they went on to the Congress of Soviets, where a Bolshevik majority—roughly 390 of 650 excited delegates—declared that all power had passed to the soviets and named Lenin head of the new government. John Reed, a sympathetic American journalist, described the enthusiasm that greeted Lenin at the congress:

Now Lenin, gripping the edge of the reading stand . . . stood there waiting, apparently oblivious to the long-rolling ovation, which lasted several minutes. When it finished, he said simply, "We shall now proceed to construct the Socialist order!" Again that overwhelming human roar.<sup>7</sup>

The Bolsheviks came to power for three key reasons. First, by late 1917 democracy had given way to anarchy: power was there for those who could take it. Second, in Lenin and Trotsky the Bolsheviks had an utterly determined and superior leadership, which both the tsarist and the provisional governments lacked. Third, as Reed's comment suggests, Bolshevik policies appealed to ordinary Russians. Exhausted by

## KEY EVENTS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

August 1914	Russia enters World War I
1916–1917	Tsarist government in crisis
March 1917	February Revolution; establishment of provisional government; tsar abdicates
April 1917	Lenin returns from exile
July 1917	Bolshevik attempt to seize power fails
October 1917	Bolsheviks gain a majority in the Petrograd Soviet
November 6–7, 1917	Bolsheviks seize power; Lenin named head of new Communist government
1918–1920	Civil war
March 1918	Treaty of Brest-Litovsk; Trotsky becomes head of the Red Army
1920	Civil war ends; Lenin and Bolshevik-Communists take control of Russia

war and weary of tsarist autocracy, they were eager for radical changes. (See “Evaluating Written Evidence: Peace, Land, and Bread for the Russian People,” page 785.) The Bolsheviks appealed to the hope for peace, better living conditions, and a more equitable society.

### Dictatorship and Civil War

The Bolsheviks’ truly monumental accomplishment was not taking power, but keeping it. Over the next four years, they conquered the chaos they had helped create and began to build a Communist society. How was this done?

Lenin made it seem that the Bolsheviks were directing events over which they actually had little control. Since summer, a peasant revolt had swept across Russia, as impoverished peasants had seized for themselves the estates of the landlords and the church. Thus when Lenin mandated land reform, he merely approved what peasants were already doing. Similarly, urban workers had established their own local soviets or committees and demanded direct control of individual factories. This, too, Lenin ratified with a decree in November 1917.

The Bolsheviks proclaimed their regime a “provisional workers’ and peasants’ government,” promising

that a freely elected Constituent Assembly would draw up a new constitution. But free elections in November produced a stunning setback: the Bolsheviks won only 23 percent of the elected delegates. The Socialist Revolutionary Party—the peasants’ party—had a clear plurality with about 40 percent of the vote. After the Constituent Assembly met for one day, however, Bolshevik soldiers acting under Lenin’s orders disbanded it. By January 1918 Lenin had moved to establish a one-party state.

Lenin acknowledged that Russia had effectively lost the war with Germany and that the only realistic goal was peace at any price. That price was very high. Germany demanded that the Soviet government give up all its western territories, areas inhabited primarily by Poles, Finns, Lithuanians, and other non-Russians—people who had been conquered by the tsars over three centuries and put into the “prisonhouse of nationalities,” as Lenin had earlier called the Russian Empire.

At first, Lenin’s fellow Bolsheviks refused to accept such great territorial losses. But when German armies resumed their unopposed march into Russia in February 1918, Lenin had his way in a very close vote. A third of old Russia’s population was sliced away by the **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk**, signed with Germany in March 1918. With peace, Lenin escaped the disaster of continued war and could pursue his goal of absolute power for the Bolsheviks—now also called Communists—within Russia.

The peace treaty and the abolition of the Constituent Assembly inspired armed opposition to the Bolshevik regime. People who had supported self-rule in November saw that once again they were getting dictatorship. The officers of the old army organized the so-called White opposition to the Bolsheviks in southern Russia, Ukraine, Siberia, and the area west of Petrograd. The Whites came from many social groups and were united only by their hatred of communism and the Bolsheviks—the Reds.

By the summer of 1918 Russia was in a full-fledged civil war. Eighteen self-proclaimed regional governments—several of which represented minority nationalities—challenged Lenin’s government in Moscow. By the end of the year White armies were on the attack. In October 1919 they closed in on central Russia from three sides, and it appeared they might triumph. They did not.

Lenin and the Red Army beat back the counter-revolutionary White armies for several reasons. Most important, the Bolsheviks had quickly developed a better army. Once again, Trotsky’s leadership was decisive. At first, the Bolsheviks had preached democracy in the military and had even elected officers in 1917. But beginning in March 1918, Trotsky became war commissar of the newly formed Red Army. He re-established strict discipline and the draft. Soldiers

■ **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk** Peace treaty signed in March 1918 between the Central Powers and Russia that ended Russian participation in World War I and ceded territories containing a third of the Russian Empire’s population to the Central Powers.

## EVALUATING WRITTEN EVIDENCE

### Peace, Land, and Bread for the Russian People

Lenin wrote this dramatic manifesto in the name of the Congress of Soviets in Petrograd, the day after Trotsky seized power in the city. The Bolsheviks boldly promised the Russian people a number of progressive reforms, including an immediate armistice, land reform, democracy in the army, and ample food for all. They also issued a call to arms. The final paragraphs warn of counter-revolutionary resistance and capture the looming descent into all-out civil war.



To Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants!

The . . . All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers and Soldiers' Deputies has opened. The vast majority of the Soviets are represented at the Congress. A number of delegates from the Peasants' Soviets are also present. . . . Backed by the will of the vast majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants, backed by the victorious uprising of the workers and the garrison which has taken place in Petrograd, the Congress takes power into its own hands.

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The majority of the members of the Provisional Government have already been arrested.

The Soviet government will propose an immediate democratic peace to all the nations and an immediate armistice on all fronts. It will secure the transfer of the land of the landed proprietors, the crown and the monasteries to the peasant committees without compensation; it will protect the rights of the soldiers by introducing complete democracy in the army; it will establish workers' control over production; it will ensure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the time appointed; it will see to it that bread is supplied to the cities and prime necessities to the villages; it will guarantee all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right to self-determination.

The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order.

deserting or disobeying an order were summarily shot. Moreover, Trotsky made effective use of former tsarist army officers, who were actively recruited and given unprecedented powers over their troops. Trotsky's disciplined and effective fighting force repeatedly defeated the Whites in the field.

Ironically, foreign military intervention helped the Bolsheviks. For a variety of reasons, but primarily to stop the spread of communism, the Western Allies (including the United States, Britain, France, and Japan) sent troops to support the White armies. Yet they never sent enough aid to tip the balance, and the

The Congress calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to be vigilant and firm. The Congress of Soviets is convinced that the revolutionary army will be able to defend the revolution against all attacks of imperialism until such time as the new government succeeds in concluding a democratic peace, which it will propose directly to all peoples. The new government will do everything to fully supply the revolutionary army by means of a determined policy of requisitions and taxation of the propertied classes, and also will improve the condition of the soldiers' families.

The Kornilov men—Kerensky, Kaledin and others—are attempting to bring troops against Petrograd. Several detachments, whom Kerensky had moved by deceiving them, have come over to the side of the insurgent people.

*Soldiers, actively resist Kerensky the Kornilovite! Be on your guard!*

*Railwaymen, hold up all troop trains dispatched by Kerensky against Petrograd!*

*Soldiers, workers in factory and office, the fate of the revolution and the fate of the democratic peace is in your hands!*

*Long live the revolution!*

November 7, 1917

The All-Russia Congress of Soviets  
Of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies  
The Delegates from the Peasants' Soviets

#### EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE

- How does Lenin's manifesto embody Bolshevik political goals? Why might it appeal to ordinary Russians in the crisis of war and revolution?
- What historical conditions made it difficult for the Bolsheviks to fulfill the ambitious promises made at the 1917 congress?

Source: Marxists Internet Archive Library, <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/oct/25-26/25b.htm>.

Bolsheviks used the specter of foreign intervention to attract former tsarist army officers to their side.

Other conditions favored a Bolshevik victory as well. Strategically, the Reds controlled central Russia and the crucial cities of Moscow and Petrograd. The Whites attacked from the fringes and lacked coordination. Moreover, the poorly defined political program of the Whites was a mishmash of liberal republicanism and monarchism incapable of uniting the Bolsheviks' enemies. And while the Bolsheviks promised ethnic minorities in Russian-controlled territories substantial autonomy, the nationalist Whites sought to preserve the tsarist empire.

**"The Deceiving Brothers Have Fallen upon Us!"**

This pro-Bolshevik propaganda poster from the Russian civil war is loaded with symbolism. It draws on the Greek myth of Hercules battling the Hydra to depict the enemies of the revolution as a many-headed snake. Ugly caricatures of Germany, France, Tsar Nicholas, Britain, and the church bleed from the blows of a powerful Russian worker, who embodies the revolutionary working class. At the bottom of the page, a lengthy poem calls on the Russian people to stand together to defeat the "deceiving brothers," and in the background a booming industrial landscape represents the economic development that will follow Bolshevik victory.

(The New York Public Library/Art Resource, NY)



The Bolsheviks mobilized the home front for the war by establishing a harsh system of centralized controls called **War Communism**. The leadership nationalized banks and industries and outlawed private enterprise. Bolshevik commissars introduced rationing, seized grain from peasants to feed the cities, and maintained strict

workplace discipline. Although normal economic activity broke down, these measures maintained labor discipline and kept the Red Army supplied with men and material.

Revolutionary terror also contributed to the Communist victory. Lenin and the Bolsheviks set up a fearsome secret police known as the Cheka, dedicated to suppressing counter-revolutionaries. During the civil war, the Cheka imprisoned and executed without trial tens of thousands of supposed "class enemies." Victims included clergymen, aristocrats, the wealthy Russian bourgeoisie, deserters from the Red Army,

**■ War Communism** The application of centralized state control during the Russian civil war, in which the Bolsheviks seized grain from peasants, introduced rationing, nationalized all banks and industry, and required strict workplace discipline.

and political opponents of all kinds. Even Nicholas, Alexandra, and their children were secretly executed, their bodies disfigured and hidden in a forest to avoid public outrage. The “Red Terror” of 1918 to 1920 helped establish the secret police as a central tool of the emerging Communist government.

By the spring of 1920 the White armies were almost completely defeated, and the Bolsheviks had retaken much of the territory ceded to Germany under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. The Red Army reconquered Belarus

and Ukraine, both of which had briefly gained independence. The Bolsheviks then moved westward into Polish territory, but they were halted on the outskirts of Warsaw in August 1920 by troops under the leadership of the Polish field marshal and chief of state Józef Piłsudski. This defeat halted Bolshevik attempts to spread communism farther into central Europe, though in 1921 the Red Army overran the independent national governments of the Caucasus. The Russian civil war was over, and the Bolsheviks had won an impressive victory.

## What were the benefits and costs of the postwar peace settlement?

Even as civil war raged in Russia and chaos engulfed much of central and eastern Europe, the war in the west came to an end in November 1918. Early in 1919 the victorious Western Allies came together in Paris, where they worked out terms for peace with Germany and created the peacekeeping League of Nations. Expectations were high; optimism was almost unlimited. Nevertheless, the peace settlement of 1919 turned out to be a disappointment for peoples and politicians alike. Rather than lasting peace, the immediate postwar years brought economic crisis and violent political conflict.

### The End of the War

In early 1918 the German leadership decided that the time was ripe for a last-ditch, all-out attack on France. The defeat of Russia had released men and materials for the western front. The looming arrival of the first U.S. troops and the growth of dissent at home quickened German leaders’ resolve. In the Spring Offensive of 1918, Ludendorff launched an extensive attack on the French lines. German armies came within thirty-five miles of Paris, but Ludendorff’s exhausted, overextended forces never broke through. They were stopped in July at the second Battle of the Marne, where 140,000 American soldiers saw action. The late but massive American intervention bolstered the Allied victory.

By September British, French, and American armies were advancing steadily on all fronts. Hindenburg and Ludendorff realized that Germany had lost the war. Not wanting to shoulder the blame, they insisted that moderate politicians should take responsibility for the defeat. On October 4 the German emperor formed a new, more liberal civilian government to sue for peace.

As negotiations over an armistice dragged on, frustrated Germans rose up in revolt. On November 3 sailors in Kiel mutinied, and throughout northern Germany soldiers and workers established revolutionary councils modeled on the Russian soviets. The same

day, Austria-Hungary surrendered to the Allies and began breaking apart. Revolution erupted in Germany, and masses of workers demonstrated for peace in Berlin. With army discipline collapsing, Wilhelm II abdicated and fled to Holland. Socialist leaders in Berlin proclaimed a German republic on November 9 and agreed to tough Allied terms of surrender. The armistice went into effect on November 11, 1918. The war was over.

### Revolution in Austria-Hungary and Germany

Military defeat brought turmoil and revolution to Austria-Hungary and Germany, as it had to Russia. Having started the war to preserve an imperial state, the Austro-Hungarian Empire perished in the attempt. The independent states of Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and a larger Romania, Italy, and Poland, were carved out of its territories (Map 25.4). For four months in 1919, until conservative nationalists seized power, Hungary became a Marxist republic along Bolshevik lines. The Serbs greatly expanded their territory by gaining control of the western Balkans; the enlarged state took the name Yugoslavia.

In late 1918 Germany experienced a dramatic revolution that resembled the Russian Revolution of March 1917. In both cases, a genuine popular uprising welled up from below, toppled an authoritarian monarchy, and created a liberal provisional republic. In both countries, liberals and moderate socialist politicians struggled with more radical workers’ and soldiers’ councils (or soviets) for political dominance. In Germany, however, moderates from the Social Democratic Party and their liberal allies held on to power and established the Weimar Republic—a democratic government that would lead Germany for the next fifteen years. Their success was a deep disappointment for Russia’s Bolsheviks, who had hoped that a more radical revolution in Germany would help spread communism across the European continent.



### MAPPING THE PAST

#### MAP 25.4 Territorial Changes After World War I

World War I brought tremendous changes to eastern Europe. New nations and new boundaries were established, and a dangerous power vacuum was created by the relatively weak states established between Germany and Soviet Russia.

**ANALYZING THE MAP** What territory did Germany lose, and to whom? Why was Austria referred to as a head without a body in the 1920s? What new independent states were formed from the old Russian Empire?

**CONNECTIONS** How were the principles of national self-determination applied to the redrawing of Europe after the war? Why didn't this theory work in practice? How would you evaluate the relative geopolitical strength of the new nations in central Europe, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic States?

There were several reasons for the German outcome. The great majority of the Marxist politicians in the Social Democratic Party were moderate revisionists, not revolutionaries. They wanted political democracy and civil liberties and favored the gradual elimination of capitalism. They were also German nationalists, appalled by the prospect of civil war and revolutionary terror. Of crucial importance was the fact that the moderate Social Democrats quickly came to terms with the army and big business, which helped prevent total national collapse.

Yet the triumph of the Social Democrats brought violent chaos to Germany in early 1919. The new republic was attacked from both sides of the political spectrum. Radical Communists led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg tried to seize control of the government in the Spartacist Uprising in Berlin in January 1919. The Social Democrats called in nationalist Free Corps militias, bands of demobilized soldiers who had kept their weapons, to crush the uprising. Liebknecht and Luxemburg were arrested and then brutally murdered by Free Corps soldiers. In Bavaria, a short-lived Bolshevik-style republic was violently overthrown on government orders by the Free Corps. Nationwide strikes by leftist workers and a short-lived, right-wing military takeover—the Kapp Putsch—were repressed by the central government.

By the summer of 1920 the situation in Germany had calmed down, but the new republican government faced deep discontent. Communists and radical socialists blamed the Social Democrats for the murders of Liebknecht and Luxemburg and the repression in Bavaria. Right-wing nationalists, including the new National Socialist German Workers (or Nazi) Party, founded in 1920, despised the government from the start. They spread the myth that the German army had never actually lost the war on the battlefield—instead, the nation had been “stabbed in the back” by socialists and pacifists at home. In Germany, the end of the war brought only a fragile sense of political stability.

## The Treaty of Versailles

In January 1919 over seventy delegates from twenty-seven nations met in Paris to hammer out a peace accord. The conference produced several treaties, including the **Treaty of Versailles**, which laid out the terms of the postwar settlement with Germany. The peace negotiations inspired great expectations. A young British diplomat later wrote that the victors “were journeying to Paris . . . to found a new order in Europe. We were preparing not Peace only, but Eternal Peace.”<sup>8</sup>

This idealism was greatly strengthened by U.S. president Wilson’s January 1918 peace proposal, the **Fourteen Points**. The plan called for open diplomacy, a reduction in armaments, freedom of commerce and trade, and the establishment of a **League of Nations**, an international body designed to provide a place for peaceful resolution of international problems. Perhaps most important, Wilson demanded that peace be based on the principle of **national self-determination**, meaning that peoples should be able to choose their own national governments through democratic majority-rule elections and live free from outside interference in territories with clearly defined, permanent borders. Despite the general optimism inspired by these ideas, the conference and the treaty itself quickly generated disagreement.

The “Big Three”—the United States, Great Britain, and France—controlled the conference. Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia were excluded, though their lands were placed on the negotiating table. Italy took part, but its role was quite limited. Representatives from the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia attended as well, but their concerns were largely ignored.

Almost immediately, the Big Three began to quarrel. Wilson, who was wildly cheered by European crowds as the champion of democratic international cooperation, insisted that the matter of the League of Nations should come first, for he passionately believed that only a permanent international organization could avert future wars. Wilson had his way—the delegates agreed to create the League, though the details would be worked out later and the final structure was too weak to achieve its grand purpose. Prime Ministers Lloyd George of Great Britain and Georges Clemenceau of France were unenthusiastic about the League. They were primarily concerned with punishing Germany.

The question of what to do with Germany in fact dominated discussions among the Big Three. Clemenceau wanted Germany to pay for its aggression. The war in the west had been fought largely on French soil, and like most French people, Clemenceau wanted revenge, economic retribution, and lasting security

■ **Treaty of Versailles** The 1919 peace settlement that ended war between Germany and the Allied powers.

■ **Fourteen Points** Wilson’s 1918 peace proposal calling for open diplomacy, a reduction in armaments, freedom of commerce and trade, the establishment of the League of Nations, and national self-determination.

■ **League of Nations** A permanent international organization, established during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, designed to protect member states from aggression and avert future wars.

■ **national self-determination** The notion that peoples should be able to choose their own national governments through democratic majority-rule elections and live free from outside interference in nation-states with clearly defined borders.

for France. This, he believed, required the creation of a buffer state between France and Germany, the permanent demilitarization of Germany, and vast reparation payments. Lloyd George supported Clemenceau, but was less harsh. Wilson disagreed. Clemenceau's demands seemed vindictive, and they violated Wilson's sense of Christian morality and the principle of national self-determination. By April the conference was deadlocked. Wilson packed his bags to go home.

In the end, Clemenceau agreed to a compromise. He gave up the French demand for a Rhineland buffer state in return for French military occupation of the region for fifteen years and a formal defensive alliance with the United States and Great Britain. Both Wilson and Lloyd George promised that their countries would come to France's aid in the event of a German attack. The Allies moved quickly to finish the settlement, believing that further adjustments would be possible within the dual framework of a strong Western alliance and the League of Nations.

The various agreements signed at Versailles redrew the map of Europe, and the war's losers paid the price. The new independent nations of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland, the Baltic States, and Yugoslavia were carved out of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires. The Ottoman Empire was also split apart, or "partitioned," its territories placed under the control of the victors.

The Treaty of Versailles, signed by the Allies and Germany, was key to the settlement. Germany's African and Asian colonies were given to France, Britain, and Japan as League of Nations mandates or administered territories, though Germany's losses within Europe were relatively minor, thanks to Wilson. Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France. Ethnic Polish territories seized by Prussia during the eighteenth-century partition of Poland (see "Catherine the Great of Russia" in Chapter 16) were returned to a new independent Polish state. Predominantly German Danzig was also placed within the Polish border but as a self-governing city under League of Nations protection. Germany had to limit its army to 100,000 men, agree to build no military fortifications in the Rhineland, and accept temporary French occupation of that region.

More harshly, in Article 231, the **war guilt clause**, the Allies declared that Germany (with Austria) was entirely responsible for the war and thus had to pay reparations equal to all civilian damages caused by the fighting. This much-criticized clause expressed French and to some extent British demands for revenge. For the Germans, reparations were a crippling financial burden and a cutting insult to German national pride. Many Germans believed wartime propaganda that had repeatedly claimed that Germany was an innocent victim, forced into war by a circle of barbaric enemies. When presented with these terms, the new German

government protested vigorously but to no avail. On June 28, 1919, representatives of the German Social Democrats signed the treaty in Louis XIV's Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, where Bismarck's empire had been joyously proclaimed almost fifty years before (see "The Franco-Prussian War and German Unification" in Chapter 23).

The rapidly concluded Versailles treaties were far from perfect, but within the context of war-shattered Europe they were a beginning. Germany had been punished but not dismembered. A new world organization complemented a traditional defensive alliance of satisfied powers: Britain, France, and the United States. The remaining serious problems, the Allies hoped, could be worked out in the future. Allied leaders had seen speed as essential because they feared that the Bolshevik Revolution might spread. The best answer to Lenin's unending calls for worldwide upheaval, they believed, was peace and tranquility.

Yet the great hopes of early 1919 had turned to ashes by the end of the year. The Western alliance had collapsed, and a grandiose plan for permanent peace had given way to a fragile truce, for several reasons. First, the U.S. Senate and, to a lesser extent, the American people rejected Wilson's handiwork. Republican senators led by Henry Cabot Lodge believed that the treaty gave away Congress's constitutional right to declare war and demanded changes in the articles. In failing health after extensive travel to drum up popular support for the treaty, Wilson rejected all compromise. In doing so, he ensured that the Senate would never ratify the treaty and that the United States would never join the League of Nations. Moreover, the Senate refused to ratify treaties forming a defensive alliance with France and Great Britain. America had turned its back on Europe; the new gospel of isolationism represented a tragic renunciation of international responsibility. Using U.S. actions as an excuse, Great Britain too refused to ratify its defensive alliance with France. Bitterly betrayed by its allies, France stood alone.

A second cause for the failure of the peace was that the principle of national self-determination, which had engendered such enthusiasm, was good in theory but flawed in practice. In Europe, the borders of new states such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia cut through a jumble of ethnic and religious groups that often despised each other. The new central European nations—relatively small and powerless countries trapped between a resurgent Germany and the Soviet Union—would prove to be economically weak and politically unstable, the source of conflict in the years to come. In the colonies, desires for self-determination were simply ignored, leading to problems particularly in the Middle East.

## The Peace Settlement in the Middle East

Although Allied leaders at Versailles focused mainly on European issues, they also imposed a political settlement on what had been the Ottoman Empire. Their decisions, made in Paris and at other international conferences, brought radical and controversial changes to the region. The Allies dismantled or partitioned the Ottoman Empire. Britain and France expanded their influence in the region; Jewish peoples were promised a “national homeland” in British-controlled Palestine, and Arab nationalists felt cheated and betrayed.

The British government had encouraged the wartime Arab revolt against the Ottoman Turks and had even made vague promises of an independent Arab kingdom, but when the fighting stopped, the British and the French chose instead to honor their own secret wartime agreements to divide and rule the Ottoman lands. Most important was the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, named after the British and French diplomats who negotiated the deal.

In the secret accord, Britain and France agreed that the lands of the Ottoman Empire would be administered by the European powers under what they called the **mandate system**. Under the terms of the mandates, granted to individual European powers by the League of Nations, former Ottoman territories (and former German colonies) would be placed under the “tutelage” of European authorities until they could “stand alone.” France would receive a mandate to govern modern-day Lebanon and Syria and much of southern Turkey, and Britain would control Palestine, Transjordan, and Iraq. Though the official goal of the mandate system was to eventually grant these regions national independence, it quickly became clear that the Allies hardly intended to do so. Critics labeled the system colonialism under another name, and when Britain and France set about implementing their agreements after the armistice, Arab nationalists reacted with understandable surprise and resentment.

British plans for the former Ottoman lands that would become Palestine (and later Israel) further angered Arab nationalists. The **Balfour Declaration** of November 1917, written by British foreign secretary Arthur Balfour, had announced that Britain favored a “National Home for the Jewish People” in Palestine, but without discriminating against the civil and religious rights of the non-Jewish communities already living in the region. Some members of the British cabinet believed the declaration would appeal to German, Austrian, and American Jews and thus help the British war effort. Others sincerely supported the Zionist vision of a Jewish homeland (see “Jewish Emancipation and Modern Anti-Semitism” in Chapter 23), which they hoped would also help Britain

maintain control of the Suez Canal. Whatever the motives, the declaration enraged the region’s Arabs.

In 1914 Jews accounted for about 11 percent of the population in the three Ottoman districts that the British would lump together to form Palestine; the rest of the population was predominantly Arab. Both groups understood that Balfour’s “National Home” implied the establishment of some kind of Jewish state that would violate majority rule. Moreover, a state founded on religious and ethnic exclusivity was out of keeping with Islamic and Ottoman tradition, which had historically been more tolerant of religious diversity and minorities than Christian Europe had been.

Though Arab leaders attended the Paris Peace Conference, their efforts to secure autonomy in the Middle East came to nothing. Only the kingdom of Hejaz—today part of Saudi Arabia—was granted independence. In response, Arab nationalists came together in Damascus as the General Syrian Congress in 1919 and unsuccessfully called again for political independence. The congress proclaimed Syria an independent kingdom; a similar congress declared Iraqi independence.

The Western reaction was swift and decisive. A French army stationed in Lebanon attacked Syria, taking Damascus in July 1920. The Arab government fled, and the French took over. Meanwhile, the British bloodily put down an uprising in Iraq and established control there. Brushing aside Arab opposition, the British mandate in Palestine formally incorporated the Balfour Declaration and its commitment to a Jewish national home. Western imperialism, in the form of the mandate system authorized by the League of Nations, appeared to have replaced Ottoman rule in the Middle East. In the following decades, deadly anti-imperial riots and violent conflicts between Arabs and Jews would repeatedly undermine the region’s stability. (See “Thinking Like a Historian: The Partition of the Ottoman Empire and the Mandate System,” page 792.)

The Allies sought to impose even harsher terms on the defeated Turks than on the “liberated” Arabs. A treaty forced on the Ottoman sultan dismembered the Turkish heartland. Great Britain and France occupied parts of modern-day Turkey, and Italy and Greece claimed shares. There was a sizable Greek minority in western Turkey, and Greek nationalists wanted to build a modern Greek

**■ war guilt clause** An article in the Treaty of Versailles that declared that Germany (with Austria) was solely responsible for the war and had to pay reparations equal to all civilian damages caused by the fighting.

**■ mandate system** The plan to allow Britain and France to administer former Ottoman territories, put into place after the end of the First World War.

**■ Balfour Declaration** A 1917 British statement that declared British support of a National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine.

# THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN

## The Partition of the Ottoman Empire and the Mandate System

During and after the First World War, representatives of the Entente governments made various agreements to carve up Ottoman territories into spheres of interest and "mandates," managed much like colonies by the European powers. Such agreements were subject to competing claims and criticism, including wartime strategic needs, Zionist desires for an independent state in Palestine, and Arab aspirations for national independence. The outcome satisfied no one. What were the mandate system's strengths and weaknesses?

### 1 Resolution of the General Syrian Congress at Damascus, July 2, 1919.

President Woodrow Wilson insisted at Versailles that the right of self-determination should be applied to the conquered Ottoman territories. In the selection below, a group of Arab nationalists from Syria offer their response to the King-Crane Commission, a group of Americans on a fact-finding mission to investigate the partition of the Ottoman Arab territories. The Arabs demand national independence and critique the League of Nations mandate system and the Balfour Declaration.

We the undersigned members of the General Syrian Congress . . . provided with credentials and authorizations by the inhabitants of our various districts, Moslems, Christians, and Jews, have agreed upon the following statement of the desires of the people of the country who have elected us to present them to the American Section of the International Commission. . . .

1. We ask absolutely complete political independence for Syria within these boundaries. [Request includes the present-day states of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan; the congress rejected any French rule or interference in the area and requested "complete independence" for present-day Iraq.]

2. We ask that the Government of this Syrian country should be a democratic civil constitutional Monarchy on broad decentralization principles, safeguarding the rights of minorities, and that the King be the Emir Faisal, who carried on a glorious struggle in the cause of our liberation and merited our full confidence and entire reliance.

3. Considering the fact that the Arabs inhabiting the Syrian area are not naturally less gifted than other more advanced races and that they are by no means less developed than the Bulgarians, Serbians, Greeks, and Romanians at the beginning of their independence, we protest against Article

22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, placing us among the nations in their middle stage of development which stand in need of a mandatory power. . . .

7. We oppose the pretensions of the Zionists to create a Jewish commonwealth in the southern part of Syria, known as Palestine, and oppose Zionist migration to any part of our country; for we do not acknowledge their title but consider them a grave peril to our people from the national, economical, and political points of view. Our Jewish compatriots shall enjoy our common rights and assume the common responsibilities. . . .

The noble principles enunciated by President Wilson strengthen our confidence that our desires emanating from the depths of our hearts, shall be the decisive factor in determining our future; and that President Wilson and the free American people will be our supporters for the realization of our hopes, thereby proving their sincerity and noble sympathy with the aspiration of the weaker nations in general and our Arab people in particular.

### 2 Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, ratified January 1920.

In one of its first acts, the League of Nations defined the terms of the mandate system, under which the victors in the First World War would govern territories disrupted by the war, primarily former lands of the Ottoman and German Empires.

To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for

## ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. Compare and contrast the maps in Sources 3 and 4. What are the key differences? What historical events account for these differences?
2. In Source 1, why do the representatives at the Syrian Congress appeal to the "noble principles" associated with U.S. president Wilson? How did the mandate system deal with demands for national self-determination?
3. The sources above present contradictions that proved difficult if not impossible for contemporary negotiators to resolve. What were the sticking points? In what ways did the partition of the Ottoman Empire leave unresolved problems for future generations?



**3 Entente proposals for the partition of the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1917.** In secret treaties and agreements negotiated during the war, Britain, France, Russia, and Italy planned to divide up the territories of the Ottoman Empire.

the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant. . . . [T]he tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League.

The character of the mandate must differ according to the stage of the development of the people, the geographical situation of the territory, its economic conditions and other similar circumstances. Certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone. The wishes of these communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory.



**4 The partition of the Ottoman Empire, 1914–1923.** The division of the Ottoman Arab states between Britain and France and the creation of a separate Palestinian state under British mandate would set the stage for decades of conflict.

**5 The British mandate for Palestine, July 24, 1922.** The League of Nations granted Britain the mandate for Palestine, a disputed territory that included significant Christian, Jewish, and Islamic holy lands and sites.

Whereas His Britannic Majesty has accepted the Mandate in respect of Palestine and undertaken to exercise it on behalf of the League of Nations in conformity with the following provisions. . . .

Article 1. The Mandatory shall have full powers of legislation and of administration [in Palestine].

Article 2. The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative, and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home . . . and the development of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding the civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion. . . .

Article 4. An appropriate Jewish Agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and co-operating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine. . . . The Zionist organization . . . shall be recognized as such agency. . . .

Article 6. The Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish Agency . . . close settlement by Jews on the land.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Notions of national self-determination, Western superiority, and strategic diplomacy inspired the European powers who dissolved the Ottoman Empire. Few could predict the intractable conflicts that followed. Using the sources above, along with what you have learned in class and in Chapters 24 and 25, write a short essay that evaluates the motivations of these actors. Was the mandate system a fair way to resolve their conflicting needs and interests?

Sources: (1) "Resolution of the General Syrian Congress at Damascus, 2 July 1919," from the King-Crane Commission Report, in *Foreign Relations of the United States: Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, 12,780–781; (2) The Covenant of the League of Nations, Yale Law School, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/leagcov.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp); (3) Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents*, 8th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013), pp. 100–102.



**The War in the Middle East** An Ottoman camel corps prepares for action in Beersheba, a settlement in the Negev Desert in southern Palestine (now Israel), in 1915. The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War helped shape the modern Middle East as we know it today. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C./LC-DIG-ppmsca-13709-00037)

empire modeled on long-dead Byzantium. In 1919 Greek armies carried by British ships landed on the Turkish coast at Smyrna (SMUHR-nuh; today's Izmir) and advanced unopposed into the interior, while French troops moved in from the south. Turkey seemed finished.

Yet Turkey survived the postwar invasions. A Turkish National Movement emerged, led by Mustafa Kemal (1881–1938), a prominent general in the successful Turkish defeat of the British at the Battle of Gallipoli. The leaders of the movement overthrew the sultan and refused to acknowledge the Allied dismemberment of their country. Under Kemal's direction, a revived Turkish army gradually mounted a forceful resistance, and despite staggering losses, his troops repulsed the invaders. The Greeks and British sued for peace. In 1923, after long negotiations, the resulting Treaty of Lausanne (loh-ZAN) recognized the territorial integrity of Turkey. The treaty abolished the hated capitulations that the European powers had imposed over the centuries to give their citizens special privileges in the Ottoman Empire.

The peace accords included an agreement for a shattering example of what we would now call "ethnic cleansing," under which Greeks were forced to leave Turkish-majority lands for Greece, while Turks

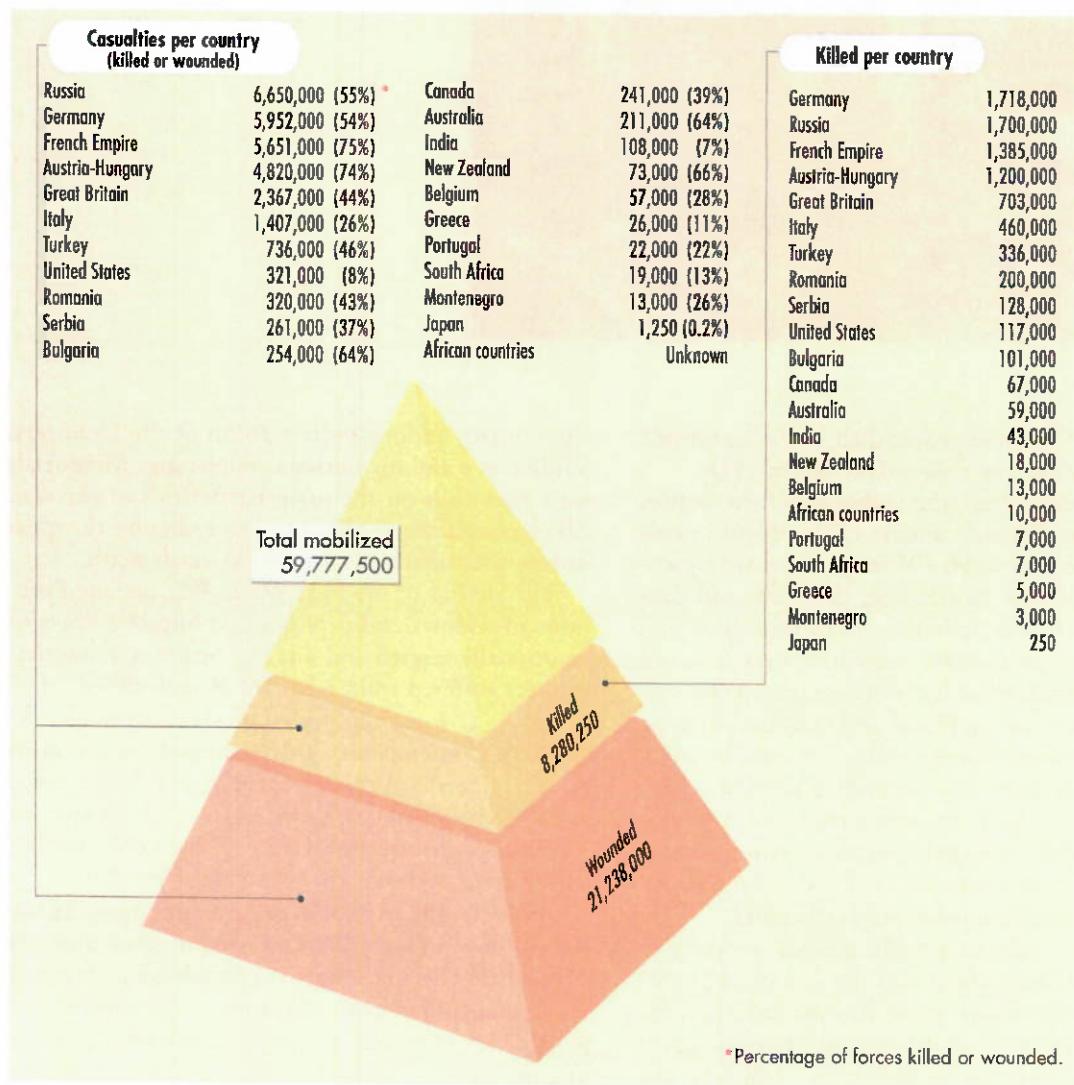
moved from Greece and former Balkan territories to the Turkish mainland. The result, driven by ideals of national self-determination and racial purity, was a humanitarian disaster. Ethnic Greeks constituted about 16 percent of the Turkish population, and now between 1.5 and 2 million people had to pick up and move west. At the same time, 500,000 to 600,000 ethnic Turks moved out of Greece and Bulgaria to the Anatolian peninsula (modern-day Turkey). Very few wanted to leave their homes, and though the authorities set up transit camps, refugees faced harsh conditions, rampant looting, and physical abuse. In this case, race trumped religion: Muslim Greeks were forced west, and Christian Turks forced east, and the population exchange destroyed a vital, multicultural ethnic patchwork. The agreements at Lausanne became a model for future examples of ethnic cleansing, most notably the exchange of Germans and Slavs in central Europe after the Second World War, as well as the exchange of Hindus and Muslims that followed Indian independence in 1947.

Kemal, a secular nationalist, believed that Turkey should modernize and secularize along Western lines. He established a republic, was elected president, and created a one-party system — partly inspired by the Bolshevik example — to transform his country. The

most radical reforms pertained to religion and culture. For centuries, Islamic religious authorities had regulated most of the intellectual, political, and social activities of Ottoman citizens. Profoundly influenced by the example of western Europe, Kemal set out to limit the place of religion and religious leaders in daily affairs. He decreed a controversial separation of church and state, promulgated law codes inspired by European models, and established a secular public school system. Women received rights that they never had before. By the time of his death in 1938, Kemal had implemented much of his revolutionary program and had moved the former Ottoman heartland much closer to Europe, foretelling later Turkish efforts to join the European Union as a full-fledged member.

### The Human Costs of the War

World War I broke empires, inspired revolutions, and changed national borders on a world scale. It also had immense human costs, and men and women in the combatant nations struggled to deal with its legacy in the years that followed. The raw numbers are astonishing: estimates vary, but total deaths on the battlefield numbered about 8 million soldiers. Russia had the highest number of military casualties, followed by Germany. France had the highest proportionate number of losses; about one out of every ten adult males died in the war. The other belligerents paid a high price as well (Figure 25.1). Between 7 and 10 million civilians died because of the war and war-related hardships,



**FIGURE 25.1** Casualties of World War I The losses of World War I were the highest ever for a war in Europe. These numbers are approximate because of problems with record keeping caused by the destructive nature of total war.



**The Human Costs of War** A disabled German veteran works as a carpenter around 1919. The war killed millions of soldiers and left many more permanently disabled, making the sight of men missing limbs or disfigured in other ways a common one in the 1920s. (FPG/Getty Images)

and another 20 million people died in the worldwide influenza epidemic that followed the war in 1918.

The number of dead, the violence of their deaths, and the nature of trench warfare made proper burials difficult, if not impossible. When remains were gathered after or during the fighting, the chaos and danger of the battlefield limited accurate identification. Soldiers were typically interred where they fell, and by 1918 thousands of ad hoc military cemeteries were scattered across northern France and Flanders. After the war, the bodies were moved to more formal cemeteries, but hundreds of thousands remained unidentified. British and German soldiers ultimately remained in foreign soil, in graveyards managed by national commissions. After some delay, the bodies of most of the French combatants were brought home to local cemeteries.

Millions of ordinary people grieved, turning to family, friends, neighbors, and the church for comfort. Towns and villages across Europe raised public memorials to honor the dead and held ceremonies on important anniversaries: on November 11, the day the war ended, and in Britain on July 1, to commemorate the Battle of the Somme. These were poignant and often tearful moments for participants. For the first

time, many nations built a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as a site for national mourning. Memorials were also built on the main battlefields of the war. All expressed the general need to recognize the great sorrow and suffering caused by so much death.

The victims of the First World War included millions of widows and orphans and huge numbers of emotionally scarred and disabled veterans. Countless soldiers suffered from what the British called “shell shock”—now termed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Contemporary physicians and policymakers poorly understood this complex mental health issue. Although some soldiers suffering from PTSD received medical treatment, others were accused of cowardice and shirking and were denied veterans’ benefits.

Some 10 million soldiers came home physically disfigured or mutilated. Governments tried to take care of the disabled and the survivor families, but there was rarely enough money to adequately fund pensions and job-training programs. Artificial limbs were expensive, uncomfortable, and awkward, and some employers refused to hire disabled workers. Crippled veterans were often forced to beg on the streets, a common sight for the next decade.

The German case is illustrative. Nearly 10 percent of German civilians were direct victims of the war in one way or another, and the new German government struggled to take care of them. Veterans' groups organized to lobby for state support, and fully one-third of the federal budget of the Weimar Republic was tied up in war-related pensions and benefits. With the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, benefits were cut, leaving bitter veterans vulnerable to Nazi propagandists who paid homage to the sacrifices of the war while calling for the overthrow of the republican government. The human cost of the war thus had another steep price. Across Europe, newly formed radical right-wing parties, including the German Nazis and the Italian Fascists, successfully manipulated popular feelings of loss and resentment to undermine fragile parliamentary governments.

## NOTES

1. Quoted in J. Remak, *The Origins of World War I* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967), p. 84.
2. On the mood of 1914, see J. Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 199–233.
3. Quoted in G. L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 64.
4. Quoted in N. Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 153.
5. V. G. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 54–89.
6. Quoted in F. P. Chambers, *The War Behind the War, 1914–1918* (London: Faber & Faber, 1939), p. 168.
7. J. Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 126.
8. Quoted in H. Nicolson, *Peacemaking 1919* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Universal Library, 1965), pp. 8, 31–32.
9. Quoted in C. Barnett, *The Swordbearers: Supreme Command in the First World War* (New York: Morrow, 1964), p. 40.



## LOOKING BACK LOOKING AHEAD

When chief of the German general staff Count Helmuth von Moltke imagined the war of the future in a letter to his wife in 1905, his comments were surprisingly accurate. “It will become a war between peoples which will not be concluded with a single battle,” the general wrote, “but which will be a long, weary struggle with a country that will not acknowledge defeat until the whole strength of its people is broken.”<sup>9</sup> As von Moltke predicted, World War I broke peoples and nations. The trials of total war increased the power of the centralized state and brought down the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian Empires. The brutal violence shocked and horrified observers across the world; ordinary citizens were left to mourn their losses.

Despite high hopes for Wilson’s Fourteen Points, the Treaty of Versailles hardly brought lasting peace. The war’s disruptions encouraged radical political conflict in the 1920s and 1930s and the rise of fascist and Communist totalitarian regimes across Europe, which led to the even more extreme violence of the Second World War. Indeed, some historians believe that the years from 1914 to 1945 might most accurately be labeled a modern Thirty Years’ War, since the problems unleashed in August 1914 were only really resolved in the 1950s. This strong assertion contains a great deal of truth. For all of Europe, World War I was a revolutionary conflict of gigantic proportions with lasting traumatic effects.

### Make Connections

Think about the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters.

1. While the war was being fought, peoples on all sides of the fighting often referred to the First World War as “the Great War.” Why would they find this label appropriate?
2. How did long-standing political rivalries and tensions among the European powers contribute to the outbreak of the First World War (Chapters 19, 23, and 24)?
3. In what ways are current conflicts in the Middle East related to the peace treaties of the First World War and the partition of the Ottoman Empire?

## 25 REVIEW & EXPLORE

### Identify Key Terms

Identify and explain the significance of each item below.

Triple Alliance (p. 764)  
Triple Entente (p. 765)  
Schlieffen Plan (p. 769)  
total war (p. 769)  
trench warfare (p. 771)  
February Revolution (p. 781)  
Petrograd Soviet (p. 782)  
Bolsheviks (p. 782)  
Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (p. 784)

War Communism (p. 786)  
Treaty of Versailles (p. 789)  
Fourteen Points (p. 789)  
League of Nations (p. 789)  
national self-determination (p. 789)  
war guilt clause (p. 790)  
mandate system (p. 791)  
Balfour Declaration (p. 791)

### Review the Main Ideas

Answer the section heading questions from the chapter.

1. What caused the outbreak of the First World War? (p. 764)
2. How did the First World War differ from previous wars? (p. 769)
3. In what ways did the war transform life on the home front? (p. 775)
4. Why did world war lead to a successful Communist revolution in Russia? (p. 780)
5. What were the benefits and costs of the postwar peace settlement? (p. 787)

### Suggested Resources

#### BOOKS

- Barthes, Louis. *Poilu: The World War I Notebooks of Corporal Louis Barthes, Barrelmaker, 1914–1918*. Trans. Edward M. Strauss. 2014. This French corporal's wartime diary offers a gritty yet humane description of daily life in the trenches.
- Clark, Christopher. *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*. 2013. This narrative-driven, comprehensive view of the political-diplomatic crises that led to the First World War suggests that all of Europe's Great Powers—not just Germany and Austria-Hungary—bore responsibility for the war's outbreak.
- Davis, Belinda J. *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in Berlin in World War I*. 2000. A moving account of women struggling to feed their families on the home front and their protests against the imperial German state.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1932*. 1982. An important interpretation that considers the long-term effects of the revolution.
- Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace*. 2001. A brilliant reconsideration of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and its division by the Allies.
- Grayzel, Susan R. *Women and the First World War*. 2002. A thorough overview of women's experience of war across Europe.
- Joll, James. *The Origins of the First World War*. 1992. A thorough review of the causes of the war that brings together military, diplomatic, economic, political, and cultural history.