Chapter 34

The Great War: The World in Upheaval
Immediate Origins of World War I

- June 28, 1914 Assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand (1863-1914)
- Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina
  - occupied by Austro-Hungarian Empire 1878, annexed 1908
- Ferdinand in favor of greater Serbian autonomy
  - Not enough for Serbian extremists
Gavrilo Princip

- Bosnian Serb (1894-1918)
- One of seven assassins
  - First balked, second bungled, attempted suicide
- Princip shot Ferdinand, expectant wife Sophie as couple went to hospital to visit victims
- Princip swallows ineffective cyanide, captured by mob and tortured
- Too young to be executed, sentenced to 20 years in prison, dies of TB
Outcome of Princip’s Bullet

- First conflict of global proportions
- Conservative estimates of 15 million dead (5 million non-combatants), 20 million injured
- End of three empires, rise of nine new countries
- Massive global economic dislocations
- End of Europe’s domination of globe
Larger Causes of World War I

- Culmination of competing nationalisms
  - Especially in South, Eastern Europe
- Rivalry among Empires
  - Especially between Britain and Germany
- Inflexible diplomatic alliances
  - Germany, France, England, Russia
Competing Nationalisms

- Inevitable outcome of French Revolution
- Self-determination and independence movements
  - Belgium, 1830
  - Unification of Italy, 1861
  - Unification of Germany, 1871
Nationalism in Multi-National Empires

- **Austro-Hungarian Empire**
  - South Slavs

- **Russian Empire**
  - Poles, Ukrainians, Balts

- **Ottoman Empire**
  - Greeks, Serbians, Romanians, and Bulgarians
Rivalry among Empires

- Dominance of British Empire declining
  - 1870, 32% of world industrial output (Germany 13%)  
  - drops to 14% by 1914
- Imperial competition
  - Germany latecomer, but aggressive
  - Small-scale disputes around the globe, esp. in Balkans
Naval Competition

- Arms race between UK and Germany to control seas
- Decisive for control of trade routes in case of war
- Construction of dreadnoughts
Role of Public Opinion

- Beginning of media age
- Availability of cheap newspapers
- Little accountability
- Awkward pressure on politicians
  - Sacrifice diplomatic expediency for public support
Inflexible Diplomatic Alliances

- Agreements of mutual defense
- Chain reaction for Global War
- Triple Alliance
  - Germany-Austro-Hungarians (1879), joined by Italians 1882
- Triple Entente
  - Russia, France, and the UK
Concerns of the Entente

- Cultural similarities of German, Austro-Hungary
- Worries over two-front war
- Worries over English domination of the sea
- Worries over possibility of French attack, Russian interference over Austrian Balkan policies
Concerns of the Alliance

- Russia worried about strong German-Austro-Hungarian alliance
- UK concerned with maintaining balance of power
- France worried about hostilities with Germany
- Military pact signed summer 1914
  - Reciprocal treaty obligations
Mutually Threatening War Plans

- French “Plan XVII”
  - Heavy emphasis on rapid offensives
- German Schlieffen plan
  - Fear of encirclement
  - France to be defeated swiftly, then attention turned to Russia
- Conditional on mobilization of enemy forces
The Chain Reaction

- 23 July Austrians issue ultimatum to Serbs
- 28 July Austrians declare war
- 29 July Russia mobilizes to defend Serbia
- 31 July Germany issues ultimatums to Russia, France
- 1 August Germany declares war on Russia, France mobilizes
- 3 August Germans declare war on France, invade Belgium
- 4 August Britain comes to defense of Belgium
War of Attrition

- West: three years of stalemate
  - Trenches from English channel to Switzerland
- East: more movement, treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 places much in Entente control
New Military Technology

- Barbed wire, Gatling Gun
- Gas
  - First used by German troops, 1915
  - Mustard gas, 800,000 casualties
- Tanks
  - Initially effective but ground quickly lost to counterattacks
- Airplanes
  - Limited bombing, strafing, used primarily for reconnaissance
  - Dirigibles
- Submarines
Brutality of New Warfare

- Unprecedented causalities
- Verdun, 1916
  - 315,000 French killed
  - 280,000 German casualties
  - Less than 160,000 bodies recovered
- The Somme, British gain few thousand yards
  - 420,000 casualties
  - No significant strategic advantage
The Great War in Europe and Southwest Asia, 1914-1918
Total War: The Home Front

- Implications of modern industrial war: concept of a “home front”
- Government takes command of economies
- Women in the workforce
  - TNT poisoning: yellow skin, orange hair
- Bombing of civilian areas by Zeppelins
War Propaganda

- Maintenance of public support for war
- Untruths
- Irony: disbelief of WWI propaganda makes belief in WWII atrocities more difficult
Global Involvement

- Importation of troops from colonies
  - UK: Australia, New Zealand, Canada
  - Gallipoli
- Japanese designs on China with distraction of European powers
Collapse of the Russian Empire

- Russia: February Revolution, 1917
- Germany smuggles Lenin into Provisional Government Russia
- October Revolution, creation of the USSR
- Treaty of Brest-Litovsk cedes Poland, Baltic countries, Ukraine to central Powers
USA Enters the War

- US and the war economy
  - Sale of goods to the Allies
  - Debts to American banks
  - US neutrality a mirage

- German blockade of British overseas trade

- Submarine patrols

- Sinking of Lusitania, May 7, 1915
  - 1,198 lives lost (128 US)
  - Carried munitions

- US declares war April 1917
Defeat of the Central Powers

- Fall of 1918, exhaustion of Central Powers troops
- Bulgaria, Ottomans, Austro-Hungarians, Germans surrender
- Armistice: November 11, 1918
The Paris Peace Conference

- Dominated by France, Great Britain, and the United States
  - No Central Powers representation
  - A dictated peace
- Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points
- Peace treaties harsh on Central Powers
Territorial changes in Europe after the Great War
The End of the Ottoman Empire

- Treaty of Sèvres (1920) removes Balkan and Arab provinces, allows for European occupation of south and east Anatolia
- Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) leads uprising against Sultanate, creates Republic of Turkey
- Allies recognize republic in Treaty of Lausanne (1923)
- Intensely secular government, women’s rights
Territorial changes in Southwest Asia after the Great War
The League of Nations

- League of Nations created by diplomats in Paris
- 42 original member-states, 26 non-European
- Application of Wilson’s concept of “self-determination”
- Mandate system created to control formerly colonized areas