

Notes: WWI

Spielvogel Chapter 25

I. The Road to World War I

A. Nationalism

1. The early 19th century hope that the nation-state system would lead to international brotherhood backfired
 - a. Instead of cooperation it became competition
 - b. Rivalries over colonial and commercial interests grew
 - c. Alliances had formed
2. Sad reality – govts that exercised restraint to avoid war are humiliated – those who were willing to go to the brink of war for national honor were praised
3. Each state demanded its sovereignty
4. Nationalism left some ethnic groups behind
 - a. Slavs in Balkans and Austrian Empire
 - b. Irish in British Empire
 - c. Poles in Russian Empire
5. Internal state problems were covered up by focusing on external problems
 - a. Eg – socialist labor strikes and class divisions

B. Militarism

1. European state armies doubled between 1890-1914
 - a. Size of military is obvious measure of strength – brought on by Bismarck's creation of Germany
 - b. Russia largest but most poorly trained and equipped
2. Military leaders gain more political power and influence
 - a. Orientation toward war is inevitable

C. Outbreak of War

1. Second Balkan Crisis
 - a. Hatred between Serbia and Austria at a high
 - b. Russia and Austria at odds because of Serbia
2. Archduke Franz and Ferdinand and wife assassinated June 28, 1914 in Sarajevo, Bosnia by member of Black Hand terrorist organization – **immediate cause** of war
 - a. Austria makes harsh demands on Serbia that would end its sovereignty
 - b. International negotiations for peace continue for a month
 - c. Austria declares war on Serbia July 28
 - i. Serbia supported by Russia
 - ii. Russia mobilizes for War – July 30
 - d. Germany declares war on Russia – August 1st
 - i. Austria is supported by Germany
 - e. Germans convinced France would help Russia – the dreaded “war on two fronts” (Bismarck) would befall them
 - i. Germany puts the “Schlieffen Plan” into effect
 - a. Germany would invade France – knock her out of the war before Russia could fully mobilize
 - ii. Germany asks France what its intentions were – France replies – we’ll do what we want when the time comes

- iii. Germany declares war on France – Aug 3, 1914
 - f. British claim neutrality but Schlieffen Plan has the invasion of France going through Belgium
 - i. Britain will not allow Belgian territory invaded
 - ii. Aug 4 – Britain declares war on Germany
- 3. Europe is at war – everyone excited – would become a disaster
 - a. Central powers – Germany, Austria, Ottomans, Bulgaria (old Triple Alliance)
 - b. Allied powers – England, France, Russia, Italy, USA by 1917 (old Triple Entente)

II. The War

A. 1914-15: *Illusions and Stalemate*

- 1. Beliefs
 - a. Everyone believed their own nation had a just cause to fight (propaganda) – enthusiasm
 - b. All thought it would be short (Bismarck's had been) – home for Christmas
 - c. Hope of national patriotic rebirth
 - d. People were bored with a world grown "old, cold, and weary." Would be a glorious adventure
- 2. The western front
 - a. Germans drive through Belgium and Luxembourg into France
 - b. Plans to take France frustrated by tough resistance from Belgians, quick arrival of British, French resistance, dividing German army east and west
 - c. Schlieffen Plan fails to work (most important consequence – stalemate)
 - d. Germans stopped along Marne River (First Battle of the Marne – Sep. 6-12 – 1914) – changed character of the war – German retreated
 - e. Trench warfare from North Sea to Switzerland – 300 miles
 - f. Battle for weeks or months for a few yards or miles
- 3. The eastern front
 - a. Russia invades East Prussia – 1914 – some trenches – more territorial gains & losses - mobility
 - b. Germans and Austrians hold the line – Battle of Tannenberg (Aug. 1914)
 - i. Russians trounced by General Paul von Hindenburg
 - c. Russia too weak to be effective by 1915 – begin retreating – no guns, ammo, food
 - i. Continue to fight – Germany must keep some troops on eastern front
 - d. Russian revolution begins 1917
 - i. Russia pulls out of war early (1918)

B. 1916-17: *The Great Slaughter*

- 1. Success in east allow Germans to move more troops to western front
- 2. War bogs down to ugly war of attrition or total war (who would get tired and quit first?)
 - a. Required tremendous manpower – hand to hand – bayonets – after artillery softening – poison gas (1915)
- 3. Machine guns took heavy toll – Germans try to take French fortress at Verdun (Feb-July 1916)
 - a. Legendary for French resistance after 6 months – lost 350,000 men (450K Germans) – no victory
- 4. Commanders on both sides would try again and again – no one gaining decisive advantage

- a. Had lost touch with men in the field – were trying to satisfy political leaders who wanted victory at any cost
- b. Opposing soldiers develop their own survival agreements – live and let live idea (don't attack certain areas (latrines, mess tents))
- 5. Battle of the Somme – (July-Nov. 1916) no major gain (7-mile allied advance) – 500,000 Gers, 400,000 Brits, 200,000 Fr. – first use of tanks, Britain used to counter machine guns – 18 used – British army had drug feet on development

C. *The Widening War*

- 1. U.S. entry
 - a. Attempts at Neutrality
- 2. May 1916 – Battle of Jutland – British and German navies – Germany cannot advance against British – Germans return home and don't come back
- 3. Allies set up blockade of German coast – sea war more shipping and blockade rather than fighting
 - a. Ships are stopped and searched
 - b. Angers neutral countries – especially U.S.
 - c. Causes shortages in Germany
- 4. Submarine warfare is new weapon – 1915 – U-boats – developed by an American – U.S. didn't want to use it.
 - a. Germans declare English and French coasts a war zone
 - b. Sub thought barbaric – international law says ships to be evacuated before sinking – if subs surfaced they were shot and sunk
 - c. Several ships sunk including American
 - i. Most memorable – Lusitania May 1915 (1,000 die, 100+ Americans)
 - d. U.S. protest causes Germans to limit sub use
- 5. Blockade put up to starve Germany
- 6. 1917 – Germany starts unlimited sub warfare again – needed to starve out British before U.S. could mobilize – violation of freedom of the seas
- 7. U.S. enters war Apr. 1917 – turns the tide – gives allied powers a psychological boost

D. *The Impact of Total War*

- 1. Social
 - a. Brought an end to unemployment
 - b. Trade unions accepted as part of the production process – collective bargaining – govts. Trying to ensure no production disruptions
 - c. New roles for women
 - i. More clerical jobs
 - ii. Truck drivers, farm laborers, factory workers
 - iii. Male resistance continues – a threat
 - iv. Minimum wage laws help women
 - v. Women gain the right to vote right after the war
 - a. 1918 – Britain, Germany, Austria
 - b. 1920 – U.S.A.
 - vi. Women's gains short lived
 - a. Expected to return to normal at war's end
 - vii. Many women remained more independent – smoking in public, short dresses, boyish hairdos
- 2. War became the great equalizer – narrowed the gap between upper and lower classes

III. *The Russian Revolution*

- A. Russia totally unprepared for WWI
 - 1. 6-8M soldiers K-W-C between 1914-16
 - 2. Lost its will to fight
- B. Political parties challenging the tsar
 - 1. Social Revolutionaries
 - a. Most popular – believed in “land socialism”. Government gives to each peasant the amount of land he can cultivate
 - b. Equality of Russians and non-Russians
 - c. Their appeal was to poorer peasants and non-Russians – mostly non-violent but had some extremists who used terrorism
 - 2. Social Democrats (from Marx – 1875)
 - a. Marxist – believed Russia must be industrialized before a social revolution could take place
 - b. Industrialization – overthrow of tsar – bourgeois democracy – proletariat overthrow – communist state – must be dominated by an elite group
 - c. Key leader – Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov – Lenin
 - d. Lenin’s followers in SD party – Bolsheviks – Mensheviks were less radical
- C. Weakness of the Govt.
- D. Unrest in Russia caused by:
 - 1. Shortage of land – peasant inheritances subdivided generation after generation – individual holdings smaller
 - 2. Rapid industrialization – no leadership to bring about needed changes in lives of peasants and workers
 - 3. WWI showed inefficiency in military machine – poor transportation, no supplies, outmoded warfare techniques, soldier morale dropped so low it supported revolution
 - 4. Rasputin
 - a. Tsar Nicholas II weak and ineffective – influenced by wife determined to maintain autocratic govt. – gets help from Grigori Rasputin (Siberian monk, ignorant and evil; had empress under his spell – seemed to be healing her diseased son)
 - b. 1915 – Nicholas II goes to front lines to direct troops – mostly to get away from wife and Rasputin
 - c. Able ministers dismissed (Rasputin becomes unbearably despotic)
 - d. 1916 – group of high nobles assassinate Rasputin – faith in Tsar’s govt. cannot be reestablished
- E. The February (March) Revolution
 - 1. Late Feb.- early March (1917), revolution begins without any real plan or leadership – like 1905
 - 2. Petrograd bread lines, workers strike, demand food
 - a. Nicholas orders Duma home – refused – orders police to fire on strikers – like 1905 – didn’t work this time – soldiers defect to other side
 - b. Duma sets up committee to stay in session – and soldiers set up Soviets (councils) of workers and soldiers deputies
 - c. Ordinary people look to these two groups for leadership
 - d. Soldiers patrol streets, Duma tries to create govt.
 - e. March 15 – Nicholas abdicates – provisional govt. begins (300 years of Romanov rule is over)
 - 3. Provisional govt. weak due to difficult circumstances

4. Alexander Kerensky – leader – belonged to Social Revolutionary Party – conservative member – not in tune with the majority
 - a. Wanted orderly western style govt. – civil liberties and voting rights – too ideal
 - b. Peasants and workers wanted peace, worker control of factories, peasant control of land – listened more and more to Petrograd Soviet (Socialist)
 - c. New govt. can't win wide support – Kerensky kept Russia in war
5. April 1917 – Germans help smuggle Lenin into Russia (from exile in Switzerland) – he begins agitating for communism (Germans wanted Russia out of war)
 - a. Lenin's "April Theses" opposes the provisional government
 - i. A step backward from the revolutionary ideas
 - ii. Too much like governments of capitalist nations
- F. The Bolshevik (October) (communist) Revolution
 1. Kerensky govt. loses control of country
 2. Bolsheviks have gained control of Petrograd Soviet
 3. Leading Bolsheviks
 - a. Lenin – powerful personality, self assurance, knows way to success, intolerant of opposition – undisputed chief – Revisionist socialist
 - i. Wanted to seize power at once – not wait for bourgeois period espoused by Marx – Justified dictatorship as a transition to dictatorship of the Proletariat
 - ii. Promises "peace, land, and bread" and a quick withdrawal from the war – more appealing to masses than Kerensky's talk of civil rights and votes (also "Worker Control of production" and "all power to the Soviets")
 - b. Trotsky – the strategist who works out details of govt. seizure – highly disciplined
 4. (Oct. 24-25) factory militia (Red Guards) and army units of Bolsheviks seize Winter Palace in Petrograd (and other strong places)
 5. Next day Lenin declared master of new all-Russian Congress of Soviets
 6. Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries walk out in protest
 7. Nov. 7 – world's first communist govt. takes office – attempted since 1848 – France, Germany, Italy
 8. Within 3 weeks Bolsheviks get precarious grip on Russia
- G. Civil War
 1. Mar. 1918 – Russia withdraws from WWI – treaty of Brest-Litovsk
 - a. Lost much land and population (Poland, Finland, Baltic States, Ukraine, areas in Caucasus = 62M people)
 - b. Petrograd too close to foreign border – capital moved to Moscow (1918)
 2. Bolsheviks opposed within Russia – govt. seized – not country
 - a. White armies oppose Red Communists
 - b. Many Russians opposed to Bolsheviks – included non-Russians, aristocracy, army officers, clergy, factory owners, landlords, (truly a proletariat revolution)
 - c. Full scale civil war erupts
 - d. Tsar Nicholas and family killed – July 1918
 - e. Red terror made old Jacobin terror of Fr. Rev. look like a Sunday School party
 3. Cheka (secret police) formed to become KGB – reign of terror – many killed if not supportive of Bolsheviks

4. Trotsky organizes Red army – fires them with zeal – win or die by 1921 – white armies defeated
 - a. Too many different groups – poorly organized
5. Almost all people above peasants or workers had been killed, jailed, exiled, fled – no place for them in the new Russia – had been sacrificed to Bolshevik Revolution (war communism)
6. Did away with any institution they couldn't control (set standard for 20th century totalitarian state)
 - a. Constitutional convention
 - b. Abolished Zemstvos, destroyed tsarist army
 - c. Anti-religion
 - d. Put education in hands of govt.
7. Retained support of Marxist followers
 - a. Allowed peasants to seize large estates (like great fear) – land would eventually be taken away
 - b. Abolished class privileges (citizen – comrade)
 - c. Created a constitution for workers – peasant soviets – real power with leaders
8. Created the true Marxist Socialist state – communist becomes name of their political party

IV. *Last Year of the War - 1918*

- A. With Russia out, Germany makes one last attempt to win on western front
 1. Lose due to fresh American troops
- B. Germany suffers a mini revolution like Russia
 1. Force Kaiser Wilhelm II to abdicate – set up a republic
 2. Germans sue for peace – armistice – Nov. 11, 1918 (11th hour, etc.)

V. *Revolutionary changes in Germany and Austria*

- A. Germany
 1. Communists led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg attempt overthrow of German Republic
 - a. Fails – leaders brutally murdered
 2. Creates an overpowering fear of communism in Germany
 - a. The fear will be manipulated by Adolph Hitler
- B. Austria
 1. Empire dissolves – Franz Joseph abdicates
 - a. New nations appear – Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia
 - b. Other areas join
 - i. Italy, Poland, Romania

VI. *The Peace Settlement (Paris Peace Conference)*

- A. *The Treaty of Versailles*
 1. Key decision makers – “Big Four”
 - a. Woodrow Wilson – U.S.
 - b. Georges Clemenceau – France
 - c. Lloyd George – Britain
 - d. Vittorio Orlando - Italy
 2. Factors influencing the kind of peace to be made
 - a. Hope for better world based on Woodrow Wilson's 14 points
 - i. Denounced secret treaties, interference with freedom of the seas, high tariffs, large armaments – all these lead to war

- ii. Wanted self-determination for all nations – a war for democracy – rulers law vs. rule of law
 - iii. Wanted a league of nations to secure peace
 - a. hoped WWI would be the last war *ever*
 - b. Attitudes of European allies (France & Britain) toward Germany
 - i. People bitter – blamed Germany for causing all the terrible destruction
 - ii. Insist Germans must be punished
 - c. Earlier wartime agreements among allied govts.
 - i. Bound by secret promises written into wartime treaties with each other – winners had secretly plotted to split Europe between them – exposed by Lenin
 - d. 1918 Paris Peace Conference
 - i. Allies represented – no defeated nations represented – Germany and Russia
- 3. Terms of peace
 - a. Germany deprived of important territory
 - i. Alsace-Lorraine – France and coal-producing area of Saar Valley
 - ii. Polish Corridor and upper Silesia to Poland (split away E. Prussia)
 - iii. Lost all colonies to League of Nations. Administered by Allied countries
 - b. Heavy financial burden
 - i. Germany responsible for all war damage
 - ii. No exact amount – became known as “War Guilt Clause”
 - c. Germany forbidden to have military, navy, manufacture weapons, or maintain an army
- 4. Signed in Hall of Mirrors at Versailles Palace –
 - a. déjà vu – creation of the German Empire in 1871
- 5. Germans detest treaty provisions – can do nothing about it

VII. *Other Peace Treaties*

- A. Russia loses areas – Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania become independent – many new nation-states emerge in central and eastern Europe
- B. Ottoman Empire gone
 - 1. Lebanon, Syria controlled by France
 - 2. Iraq, Palestine controlled by Britain
- C. U.S. rejects entry into League of Nations – becomes isolationist
- D. No one happy – WWII breaks out within 20 years