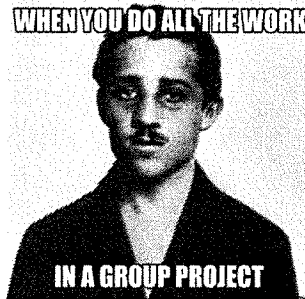
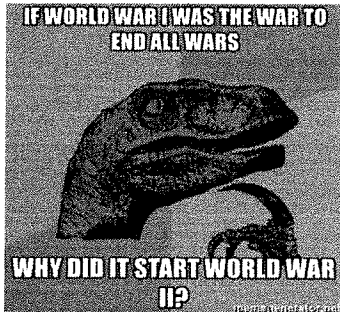


CHAPTER 25 READINGS WORLD WAR I AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

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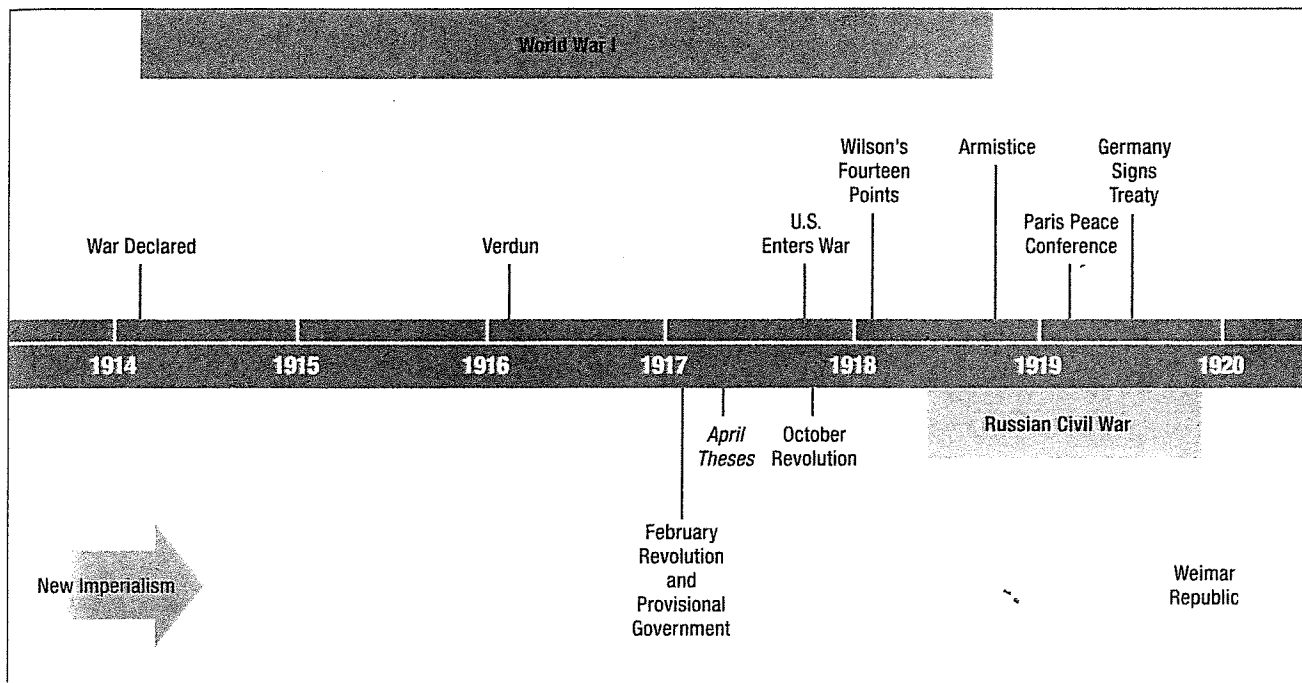
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Russian Revolution: There's nothing to celebrate about the 100th anniversary of Communism



That's where you're wrong kiddo



15 War and Revolution: 1914–1920

Historians usually mark the end of the nineteenth century not at the turn of the century but with the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Although a number of wars took place after 1815, none covered all of Europe, none was long, and none was very costly. Indeed, many Europeans optimistically believed that the Western nations had become too economically interdependent and culturally mature to become involved in massive wars ever again. At the outbreak of World War I no one expected it to be so widespread or long-lasting. In fact, the fighting continued for four years before the war was finally concluded. The destruction was so unprecedented and the fighting so brutal that many people questioned whether Western civilization had progressed at all. The war was such a strain that the most modernized nations, England, France, and Germany, for example, mobilized the total resources of their societies, while less modernized nations like Russia were unable to support the effort.

Revolutions occurred in a number of areas, most notably in Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Russia. The revolutions in Russia were the most significant. In March 1917 the tsarist government was swept from power by relatively moderate, liberal groups. In November of that year the new Provisional Government was toppled by the Bolsheviks, who initiated a Communist regime that proved surprisingly resilient. Under this government, the Soviet Union was to become a significant force in world politics.

In some ways the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 brought the period to a close, but the problems facing diplomats and heads of state meeting in Versailles were overwhelming. The Soviet Union was not invited to the conference, and the Germans were virtually ignored. Few left the conference satisfied, and many harbored resentments that would color domestic and international politics during the 1920s and 1930s.

(1)

This chapter focuses on World War I and the Russian Revolution. With World War I, the two major issues for historians are the cause and the settlement. What caused this apparently unwanted war to break out and who, if anyone, was most to blame? Was the Peace of Paris a success or a failure? Some of the selections also explore tactics used to fight the war, people's experiences during the war, and the results of the war. Other documents deal with the ways the war affected women. With the Russian Revolution, the question is not only why it occurred but also how and why the Bolsheviks—through most of 1917 only a small party—were ultimately able to gain and maintain power against extremely long odds. A number of documents illustrate

Lenin's strategy and Bolshevik policy as well as the variety of scholarly efforts to answer these questions.

Many feel that the events during this period of war constituted a fundamental break with the past. The significance of World War I and the Russian Revolution are shown in the developments in the two decades that followed. These will be covered in Chapters 27 and 28.

For Classroom Discussion

What caused World War I? Use the sources by Strachan and Strandmann.



Primary Sources

Reports from the Front: The Battle for Verdun, 1916

The widely anticipated short war typified by heroic offensive thrusts failed to materialize. Instead, it turned into a long, extraordinarily brutal struggle. On the Western front, opposing armies slaughtered each other from their trenches. There are numerous reports of life at the front, such as the following account by a French Army officer of the battle for Verdun in 1916.

CONSIDER: *Why the defense was at such an advantage; why there was a willingness to sacrifice so much for such small advances.*

The Germans attacked in massed formation, by big columns of five or six hundred men, preceded by two waves of sharpshooters. We had only our rifles and our machine guns, because the 75's could not get to work.

Fortunately the flank batteries succeeded in catching the Boches on the right. It is absolutely impossible to convey what losses the Germans must suffer in these attacks. Nothing can give the idea of it. Whole ranks are mowed down, and those that follow them suffered the same fate. Under the storm of machine gun, rifle and 75 fire, the German columns were plowed into furrows of death. Imagine if you can what it would be like to rake water. Those gaps filled up again at once. That is enough to show with what disdain of human life the German attacks are planned and carried out.

In these circumstances German advances are sure. They startle the public, but at the front nobody attaches any importance to them. As a matter of fact, our trenches are so

near those of the Germans that once the barbed wire is destroyed the distance between them can be covered in a few minutes. Thus, if one is willing to suffer a loss of life corresponding to the number of men necessary to cover the space between the lines, the other trench can always be reached. By sacrificing thousands of men, after a formidable bombardment, an enemy trench can always be taken.

There are slopes on Hill 304 where the level of the ground is raised several meters by mounds of German corpses. Sometimes it happens that the third German wave uses the dead of the second wave as ramparts and shelters. It was behind ramparts of the dead left by the first five attacks, on May 24th, that we saw the Boches take shelter while they organized their next rush.

We make prisoners among these dead during our counterattacks. They are men who have received no hurt, but have been knocked down by the falling of the human wall of their killed and wounded neighbors. They say very little. They are for the most part dazed with fear and alcohol, and it is several days before they recover.

Dulce et Decorum Est: Disillusionment

Wilfred Owen

The experience of World War I was profoundly disillusioning to those who believed in nineteenth-century ideals. After World War I, Europe was no longer characterized by the sense of optimism, progress, and glory that had typified Europe for most of the period between the eighteenth century and 1914. This is

SOURCE: From *Source Records of the Great War*, vol. IV, ed. Charles F. Horne (New York: National Alumni, 1923), pp. 222–223.

SOURCE: C. Day Lewis, *Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*. Reprinted by permission of New Directions and Chatto & Windus, p. 55. Copyright © Chatto & Windus, Ltd., 1946, 1963, and The Owen Estate.

evidenced in war poems that no longer glorified the struggle but instead conveyed a sense of the horror and futility about it. One of the best of these antiwar poets was Wilfred Owen, born in England in 1893 and killed in action in 1918, one week before the armistice. The following poem has the ironic ending, "It is sweet and proper to die for one's country."

CONSIDER: The psychological consequences of war for the soldiers; other ways this same disillusionment might be shown in novels, plays, paintings, or even historical analyses of the time.

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through
sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An Ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime . . .
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

The Home Front

Evelyn Blücher

As each year of the war dragged on, support from the home front became more crucial. For most people living away from the battle lines, conditions usually grew worse as the military drew resources and supplies for the armed forces. In the

following selection, Evelyn Blücher, an English wife of a German officer, describes the difficulties of life in Berlin during the winter of 1917.

CONSIDER: What seemed to bother people on the home front most; differences in the hardships faced by people in the countryside; what powers governments needed to manage the home fronts.

In a small town near here, a sad little ceremony took place the other day. The ancient church bell, which had rung the people from the cradle to the grave for 300 years and more, was requisitioned by the military authorities. The grief felt by the inhabitants was so great that they determined to do their ancient friend all the honor that they could; and after having performed the regular funeral service for the dead over it, a procession was formed, headed by the priest in his vestments, with his acolytes swinging their incense, and the inhabitants following the bell, which was covered with wreaths and flowers and handed over to the military authorities under tears and protestations.

As coffee and tea have entirely run out, all sorts of berries and leaves are being used as a surrogate. Chestnuts are used for feeding the deer, and it is interesting to see the children, who are not old enough to work otherwise, busy plucking and collecting the different things.

Nothing seems to be left unused—salad-oil being extracted from every kind of fruit-stone, and an excellent oil for greasing machinery is being pressed from the seeds of sunflowers. It is marvelous how much has been produced in this way, and it is only a pity we cannot use the latter for cooking and eating purposes too.

The difficulty of getting butter is increasing daily, and one has to use all one's power of persuasion to be able to entice a miserable quarter of a pound of it, after having begged in vain at quite a number of small peasants' houses. . . .

Lighting will prove a great problem this winter, as there is almost no petroleum or methylated spirits to be had; gas-light is next to impossible, on account of the small quantity allowed, and electric-light is also limited. . . .

This darkness is especially unpleasant for the people in the town who have to wait for the vegetables and fruit coming in from the country. Our gardener, who goes in daily, tells me that they stand for hours and hours patiently waiting to get but a pound of cabbage, onions, etc., which are all very scarce indeed. Luckily for the purchasers, maximum prices have been settled on all eatables, or it would be impossible for the poorer classes to get anything at all. . . .

The food question is always the most important topic of the day. The less there is of it, the more do we talk of it. The Austrians have already eaten up their stores, and are grumbling and turning to Germany for fresh supplies.



It is rather like turning from a sandy desert to a rocky mountain for nourishment. . . .

We ourselves have little to eat but smoked meat and dried peas and beans, but in the towns they are considerably worse off. The potatoes have come to a premature end, and in Berlin the population have now a portion of 1 lb. per head a week, and these even are bad. The cold winds of this wintry June have retarded the growth of vegetables, and there is almost nothing to be had. We are all waiting hungrily for the harvest and the prospect of at least more bread and flour.

Program of the Provisional Government in Russia

In the spring of 1917 a revolution finally toppled the disintegrating tsarist government in Russia. A relatively moderate, liberal Provisional Government was formed under the leadership of men like Prince Lvov and Paul Miliukov. While the Provisional Government had to share and even compete for power with the more radical workers' political organizations—the soviets—it initially acted with speed to make important changes. The following is the early program of the Provisional Government, issued on March 16, 1917.

CONSIDER: *The attitudes revealed by this document; the nature of the reforms initiated; what this implies about the problems under the tsarist government and the discontents that supported the revolution.*

Citizens, the Provisional Executive Committee of the members of the Duma, with the aid and support of the garrison of the capital and its inhabitants, has triumphed over the dark forces of the Old Régime to such an extent as to enable it to organize a more stable executive power. . . .

The Cabinet will be guided in its actions by the following principles:

1. An immediate general amnesty for all political and religious offenses, including terrorist acts, military revolts, agrarian offenses, etc.
2. Freedom of speech and press; freedom to form labor unions and to strike. These political liberties should be extended to the army in so far as war conditions permit.
3. The abolition of all social, religious and national restrictions.
4. Immediate preparation for the calling of a Constituent Assembly, elected by universal and secret vote, which shall determine the form of government and draw up the Constitution for the country.

SOURCE: Frank A. Golder, ed., *Documents of Russian History, 1914–1917*, trans. Emanuel Aronsberg (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1927).

5. In place of the police, to organize a national militia with elective officers, and subject to the local self-government body.
6. Elections to be carried out on the basis of universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage.
7. The troops that have taken part in the revolutionary movement shall not be disarmed or removed from Petrograd.
8. On duty and in war service, strict military discipline should be maintained, but when off duty, soldiers should have the same public rights as are enjoyed by other citizens.

The Provisional Government wishes to add that it has no intention of taking advantage of the existence of war conditions to delay the realization of the above-mentioned measures of reform.

April Theses: The Bolshevik Opposition

V. I. Lenin

Faced with a continuing war and deep discontent, the Provisional Government soon came under attack by people like Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924), who called for more radical changes. Lenin, who spent much of his life as a revolutionary—often in exile—had risen to the leadership of the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Marxists. He combined the skills of a superb Marxist theoretician and a revolutionary organizer. In April 1917 the Germans aided his return to Russia in an effort to weaken the new government there. On his arrival, Lenin presented his April Theses, at first criticized by Russian Marxists but eventually accepted by the Bolshevik Central Committee.

CONSIDER: *Why Lenin rejects support for the Provisional Government; to whom this program might be appealing and why; the ways in which this program is particularly Marxist.*

1. In our attitude towards the war, which under the new government of Lvov and Co. unquestionably remains on Russia's part a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government, not the slightest concession to a "revolutionary defencism" is permissible. . . .
2. The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat,

SOURCE: From V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. XXIV (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), pp. 21–24. Reprinted by permission of the Copyright Agency of the U.S.S.R

placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its second stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants. . . .

3. No support for the Provisional Government; . . .
5. Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom. Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy.

The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6. The weight of emphasis in the agrarian programme to be shifted to the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Confiscation of all landed estates.

Nationalisation of *all* lands in the country, the land to be disposed of by the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies. The organisation of separate Soviets of Deputies of Poor Peasants.

The setting up of a model farm on each of the large estates (ranging in size from 100 to 300 dessiatines, according to local and other conditions, and to the decisions of the local bodies) under the control of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and for the public account.

7. The immediate amalgamation of all banks in the country into a single national bank, and the institution of control over it by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.
8. It is not our *immediate* task to "introduce" socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

Speech to the Petrograd Soviet— November 8, 1917: The Bolsheviks in Power

V. I. Lenin

The Provisional Government fell in a revolution in November 1917. Under the leadership of Lenin and Leon Trotsky (1877-1940), the tightly organized Bolsheviks quickly took control. On November 8, 1917, Lenin made the following speech to a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet.

CONSIDER: *The policies Lenin supported and how they compare with the program in his April Theses; the ways in which Lenin was relying on forces outside of Russia to sustain the initial success of this revolution.*

Comrades, the workmen's and peasants' revolution, the need of which the Bolsheviks have emphasized many times, has come to pass.

What is the significance of this revolution? Its significance is, in the first place, that we shall have a soviet government, without the participation of bourgeoisie of any kind. The oppressed masses will of themselves form a government. The old state machinery will be smashed into bits and in its place will be created a new machinery of government by the soviet organizations. From now on there is a new page in the history of Russia, and the present, third Russian revolution shall in its final result lead to the victory of Socialism.

One of our immediate tasks is to put an end to the war at once. But in order to end the war, which is closely bound up with the present capitalistic system, it is necessary to overthrow capitalism itself. In this work we shall have the aid of the world labor movement, which has already begun to develop in Italy, England, and Germany.

A just and immediate offer of peace by us to the international democracy will find everywhere a warm response among the international proletariat masses. In order to secure the confidence of the proletariat, it is necessary to publish at once all secret treaties.

In the interior of Russia a very large part of the peasantry has said: Enough playing with the capitalists; we will go with the workers. We shall secure the confidence of the peasants by one decree, which will wipe out the private property of the landowners. The peasants will understand that their only salvation is in union with the workers.

We will establish a real labor control on production.

We have now learned to work together in a friendly manner, as is evident from this revolution. We have the force of mass organization which has conquered all and which will lead the proletariat to world revolution.

We should now occupy ourselves in Russia in building up a proletarian socialist state.

Long live the world-wide socialistic revolution.

The Fourteen Points

Woodrow Wilson

Each nation entered World War I for its own mixture of pragmatic and idealistic reasons. In considering their war aims and a possible peace settlement, governments did not

SOURCE: Frank A. Golder, ed., *Documents of Russian History, 1914-1917*, Emanuel Aronsberg, trans. Reprinted by permission of Prentice-Hall, Inc., pp. 618-619. Copyright © 1927 by Prentice-Hall, Inc.

SOURCE: Woodrow Wilson, "Fourteen Points," *Congressional Record*, vol. LVI, part I (1918), Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 680-681.

anticipate the changes that would occur in this unexpectedly long and costly war. By 1918 various governments had fallen and the United States had entered the conflict. On January 8, 1918, in an address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress, President Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) presented his Fourteen Points, a delineation of American war aims and proposals for a peace settlement. The Fourteen Points served as a basis for debate at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and represented the most idealistic statement of what might be gained in a final peace settlement.

CONSIDER: *The ideals that hold these points together; the grievances recognized and unrecognized in these points; the assumptions about what measures would preserve peace in the postwar world.*

We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once for all against their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program; and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this:

- I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.
- II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action. . . .
- III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
- IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
- V. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
- VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. . . .
- VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. . . .
- VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.
- IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.
- X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.
- XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.
- XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development. . . .
- XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations. . . .

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end. . . .

We have no jealousy of German greatness, and there is nothing in this program that impairs it. We grudge her no achievement or distinction of learning or of pacific enterprise such as have made her record very bright and very enviable. We do not wish to injure her or to block in any way her legitimate influence or power. . . .

Neither do we presume to suggest to her any alteration or modification of her institutions. But it is necessary. . . . that we should know whom her spokesmen speak for when they speak to us, whether for the Reichstag majority or for the military party and the men whose creed is imperial domination. . . .

An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak. . . . The people of the United States could act upon no other principle; and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor, and everything that they possess. The moral climax of this the culminating and final war for human liberty has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test.



Visual Sources

World War I: The Front Lines

The following figure (figure 15.1) displays the physical and psychological realities of life on the Western front during World War I. The war is being fought from trenches with soldiers at machine guns guarding land made barren by artillery barrages, throwing hand grenades at the often unseen enemy, and using poison gas (note the gas mask). It is difficult to find in such a scene a sense of a progressive civilization, of the dignity of the individual, or of reasoned interaction among nations—the ideals held by nineteenth-century Western civilization. Considering the use of such weapons, we can easily imagine the carnage and the sense of futility that resulted from the “heroic” offensive charges of the foot soldiers that were so common for most of the war.

CONSIDER: How this supports the description of life on the front lines during the Verdun battle.

The Paths of Glory

C. R. W. Nevinson

The brutality of World War I ended dreams of heroic battles and courageous military deeds. The 1917

painting (figure 15.2) by English artist C. R. W. Nevinson (1889–1946), with its ironic title, *The Paths of Glory*, spoke eloquently to this disturbing reality.

In this image, the bodies of two British soldiers—easily identified by their brown uniforms and flat helmets—lie in a desolate battlefield in northern France. This battle has ended, and it is unclear how their anonymous deaths contributed to the war or to any supposed glory. The only



FIGURE 15.1



CONSIDER: *The ways in which a modern war effort affects a nation's people and economy, even though the war is being fought on foreign soil; the potential significance for women of these changes in employment.*

Revolutionary Propaganda

This 1922 poster (figure 15.4) celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Russian revolution reflects some of the message and appeal of the Communists during the revolution of 1917 and the years that followed. Here Lenin, in a worker's suit, tie, and cap, stands on a globe as if leading a worldwide Communist revolution. He proclaims, "Let the ruling class tremble before the Communist revolution." Behind him the rising sun marks the glorious dawn of the communist era. To his left and right, together in alliance, are agricultural and industrial workers—*the revolutionary mainstays and beneficiaries of the new order*—carrying a banner proclaiming, "Proletariat of All Countries, Unite." Below are the tools of their trades and symbols of Russia's Communist revolution—the hammer and sickle.

CONSIDER: *What might be particularly appealing about this poster; what image of the Russian revolution it incorporates.*



FIGURE 15.4 (© Sovfoto/Eastfoto)



Secondary Sources

Germany and the Coming of War

Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann

In an attempt to understand the origins of World War I and why it lasted so long, many scholars focus on the role of Germany, but differ greatly on what the underpinnings of German involvement were. In the following selection Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann analyzes what made war acceptable to the German population and what sustained the war efforts for four years.

CONSIDER: *Ways in which forces for war within Germany were part of Europeanwide developments; why, according to the author, there was support for the war effort in Germany;*

SOURCE: From Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, "Germany and the Coming of War," in *The Coming of the First World War*, p. 123, eds. R. J. W. Evans and Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann. © 1988 Oxford University Press. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

how this analysis of Germany compares to Stromberg's analysis for the origins of the war.

However strongly the political and military leadership was influenced by the public and its political debates, the war was not started for domestic reasons nor to defend a social status quo. The concept of expansion based on a military victory found enough support to command a consensus among the military, political, and business leaders of Wilhelmine Germany. The drive to the east and to the west was underpinned by an imperialist culture which spread the virtues of Social Darwinism, the conquest of markets, the penetration of spheres of influence, competition between capitalist partners, the winning of living-space, and the rising power of the state. Buoyed up by an assumed military superiority, general economic strength and particular industrial vigour, widespread optimism and a mood of belligerence, the military and political leaders found, when they made the decision to push for war, that this

was an acceptable option to many Germans, possibly even to the majority. The notion of “cultural despair” is of limited value. There were no signs of panic and no indications that Wilhelmine Germany could not continue to muddle through politically for years to come. Confidence, determination, and the belief in victory were the ingredients of a willingness to fight an expansionist war, disguised as a defensive or preventive action, which was widely shared by political and military leaders, political groupings, as well as large sectors of the population. This consensus enabled Germany to sustain the war effort until the military defeats of August and September 1918.

The Outbreak of the First World War

Hew Strachan

How did people in countries throughout Europe react to the outbreak of World War I? While some perceptive observers dreaded the consequences of such a war, a wide range of people seemed to welcome it with great enthusiasm. In the following selection, Hew Strachan analyzes this enthusiastic acceptance of the war and its significance.

CONSIDER: *Why intellectuals might have welcomed the war; what Strachan means when he argues that “enthusiasm was the conspicuous froth, the surface element only”; the importance of this enthusiasm for our understanding of World War I.*

The enthusiasm with which Europe went to war was therefore composed of a wide range of differing responses. Its universality lay in their convergence and not in their component parts. Intellectuals welcomed war as an instrument with which to change pre-war society; many of those who joined up did so to defend it. For the latter, the foundations were as much psychological as ideological; community and conformity gave shape to lives disordered by the upheavals which the war caused.⁷² The common denominator may more accurately be described as passive acceptance, a willingness to do one’s duty; enthusiasm was the conspicuous froth, the surface element only.

The mood relied in large part on an ignorance of the conditions of modern war. The bulk of popular literature continued to portray war as a matter of individual courage and resource, to use imagery more appropriate to knights-errant and the days of chivalry. ‘Where then are horse and rider? Where is my sword?’, Wilhelm Lamszus

had asked ironically in *Das Menschenschlachthaus* (the slaughterhouse of mankind), published in 1912. Like H. G. Wells in Britain, Lamszus had recognized that the next war would represent the triumph of the machine over human flesh.⁷³ But the inherent optimism of the human condition, the belief that the best will occur rather than the worst, the intimations of immortality to which youth is subject, persuaded many that technical progress would make war less lethal, not more so. The *Breitagauer Zeitung* assured its readers on 1 August that their chances of coming back in one piece from this war were greater than in previous wars. The modern battlefield was much less bloody because of the extended distances at which fighting occurred. Moreover, high-velocity bullets were of smaller calibre and therefore passed through the body with less damage. Such wounds as were inflicted could be rapidly treated thanks to the advances of modern medicine.⁷⁴ British regular soldiers who had served in South Africa did not share the general exuberance; recent knowledge of war—in their case that with Japan in 1904—may also have contributed to the reluctance of Russian reservists.⁷⁵ But in France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary no such experience of combat could clutter their idealized views.

Popular enthusiasm played no part in causing the First World War. And yet without a popular willingness to go to war the world war could not have taken place. The statesmen had projected internal collapse as a consequence of prolonged fighting. Instead, the societies of all the belligerents remained integrated until at least 1917, and in large part into 1918. The underlying conviction of the war’s necessity, of the duty of patriotic defence, established in 1914, remained the bedrock of that continuing commitment.

The Revolution in War and Diplomacy

Gordon A. Craig

The technology and tactics used in World War I were strikingly different from those used in previous wars. This, combined with the war’s length and the waning distinction between civilian and military targets, made it difficult for people to perceive the enemy in terms other than extreme hatred. This was reflected in the demands for retribution made both

SOURCE: Gordon A. Craig, “The Revolution in War and Diplomacy,” Jack J. Roth, ed., *World War I: A Turning Point in Modern History*. Reprinted by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., pp. 12–14. Copyright © 1967 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

SOURCE: Hew Strachan, *The Outbreak of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 205–206.

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during and at the end of the war, inevitably affecting the peace settlements that followed. In the following selection Gordon Craig of Princeton and Stanford, a noted military and diplomatic historian who has done extensive work on German history, analyzes these attitudes and their causes while comparing World War I with previous wars.

CONSIDER: How the primary documents on the experience of World War I relate to this interpretation; why it was difficult for governments of belligerent nations to compromise; whether this description of what happened in World War I is likely to be true for almost any extended twentieth-century war.

The war of 1914 was the first total war in history, in the sense that very few people living in the belligerent countries were permitted to remain unaffected by it during its course. This had not been true in the past. Even during the great wars against Napoleon many people could go on living as if the world were at peace. . . .

This kind of detachment, which was true also of the wars in Central Europe in the 1860s, was wholly impossible during World War I. This was, for one thing, the first war in which the distinction between soldier and civilian broke down, a development that was partly due to the expansion of warfare made possible by . . . technological innovations. . . . When dirigibles began to drop bombs over London and submarines began to sink merchant ships, war had invaded the civilian sphere and the battle line was everywhere. . . .

Moreover . . . precisely because war became so total and was so prolonged, it also became ideological, taking on a religious cast that had not characterized warfare in the West since the Thirty Years' War. . . .

The civilian . . . could not look the enemy in the face and recognize him as another man; he knew only that it was "the enemy," an impersonal, generalized concept, that was depriving him of the pleasures of peace. As his own discomfort grew, his irritation hardened into a hatred that was often encouraged by government propagandists who believed that this was the best way of maintaining civilian morale. Before long, therefore, the enemy was considered to be capable of any enormity and, since this was true, any idea of compromise with him became intolerable. The foe must be beaten to his knees, no matter what this might cost in effort and blood; he must be made to surrender unconditionally; he must be punished with peace terms that would keep him in permanent subjection.

The result of this was . . . that rational calculation of risk versus gain, of compromise through negotiation . . . became virtually impossible for the belligerent governments.

Women, Work, and World War I

Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser

As men were drawn into the armed forces during World War I and there were new demands for arms and other goods to support the war effort, the demand for women workers grew. Women entered the work force in great numbers, often taking jobs previously offered only to men. Historians have pointed to this as a crucial change for women, but recently other historians question how much women, in the long run, benefited from their experiences as workers during World War I. In the following excerpt from *A History of Their Own*, Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser argue that the changes for women were fewer and less long-lasting than generally assumed.

CONSIDER: Why, according to Anderson and Zinsser, changes for women were more apparent than real, more short-term than long-lasting; how employers, governments, and the mass media undermined changes for women; how this document relates to the visual sources on the home front and women.

The improved standard of living, smaller family size, maternity benefits, protective legislation, unions, and new jobs comprised the most important changes in the lives of urban working-class women between the 1870s and the 1920s. Compared to these changes, the impact of World War I (1914–1918) on these women's lives was relatively minor. While middle- and upper-class women often reported that the war freed them from nineteenth-century attitudes limiting both work and personal life, working-class women's lives changed relatively little. Unlike more privileged women, working-class women were used to earning income outside the home, and their entry into war work was more likely to be exploitative than liberating. Unlike more privileged women, working-class women and girls had rarely been shielded by a "double standard" of sexual behavior for women and men; rather, working-class women made the maintenance of the double standard possible for men of property. For working-class women in the cities, the growth of the new white-collar job was the one new trend fostered by the war which was not reversed afterward. Otherwise, World War I brought only a temporary suspension of the normal conditions of work outside the home, and traditional patterns returned in the postwar era.

SOURCE: Excerpts from *A History of Their Own*, vol. II, by Bonnie Anderson and Judith Zinsser. Copyright © 1988 by Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., pp. 112–114. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.

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As soon as the war broke out, European governments moved to suspend protective legislation for women for the duration. Just as nations expected working-class men to serve in the military, so they exhorted working-class women to serve in the factories, taking the places of the men who had joined the armed forces. Drawn by high wages as well as patriotism, women thronged into these new, previously male jobs. . . .

Governments initially insisted that women receive equal pay for doing a job formerly done by a man, but this policy was largely ineffective: factories tended to divide up jobs into smaller operations and pay women at a lesser rate. Women's industrial wages rose during the war, both relative to men's and absolutely, but they still remained measurable as a percentage of male earnings. In Paris, women in metallurgy earned only 45 percent of what men earned before the war; by 1918, the women earned 84 percent of what men earned. In Germany, women's industrial earnings relative to men's rose by about 5 percent. Both women and men seemed to view the changes brought by the war as temporary. After the war, the men would return to their jobs, the women would leave men's work, and all would return to normal. . . .

As soon as the war was over, all belligerent governments acted quickly to remove women from "men's" jobs. In England, these women were made "redundant" and let go; in France, they were offered a bonus payment if they left factory work; and in Germany, the government issued regulations calling for women to be dismissed before men if necessary. These policies were effective: by 1921, fewer French and English women worked in industry than had before the war. Women's earnings decreased to return to lower percentages of men's, and the promise of "equal remunerations for work of equal value" made in the Versailles Treaty of 1919 remained a dead letter. Mass media concentrated on the relatively superficial changes in women's clothing, hair styles, and use of cosmetics and ignored the deeper continuities which structured most women's lives.

Peace and Diplomacy

Arthur Walworth

Historians have traditionally condemned the settlement of World War I worked out at Versailles. They usually argue that it compared poorly with the previous Vienna settlement ending the Napoleonic Wars. Yet some historians have challenged this

view, arguing that the circumstances of peacemaking were extraordinarily difficult at the end of World War I. In the following selection Arthur Walworth analyzes the pressures and obstacles facing the peacemakers.

CONSIDER: *The choices and compromises the diplomats would have to make; in these circumstances, what the diplomats might have done; how Walworth's interpretation compares to that of Craig.*

A belligerent spirit of nationalism, fortified by the patriotic sacrifices that war had called forth, ran strong and limited the freedom of the peacemakers to pursue the distant goals of idealists. The prevailing hatred toward the defeated enemy made it difficult for diplomats to make a rational peace without being denounced as "pro-German." The wisest of the statesmen realized, after the cessation of the fighting, that unless they were able to reverse the baneful psychology of wartime quickly, no enduring peace could be signed, much less dictated.

Furthermore, the European democracies during the war had set up obstacles that would embarrass the diplomats in the making of peace. Under the necessity of survival the governments of the Allied powers had made secret commitments to the satisfaction of national aspirations. The 1915 Treaty of London, concluded in order to bring Italy into the conflict on the side of the Allies, had promised that nation a frontier that would place hundreds of thousands of Austrians and Slavs under Italian rule. To persuade the Japanese to step up their naval activity, Japan had been offered concessions in China and a share of Germany's islands in the Pacific. Although agreements to which Russia was a party became invalid when the Soviet government made peace with Germany, nevertheless the interests of France, Great Britain, and Italy in the lands of the Ottoman Empire remained as they had been defined in understandings reached in 1916 and 1917. These secret understandings gained force from popular indignation against the violations of treaty obligations at the time of the outbreak of war in 1914.

The settlement at the war's end could not disregard the commitments and the national aspirations that existed in 1919 and that no one could expect to alter quickly. Compromises were inevitable. For one thing, there had to be an accommodation among various prescriptions for dealing with the German enemy. At the end of the war the European diplomats were of two minds about a policy to preserve the peace. One, the more appealing to the English-speaking authorities, would avoid peace terms that might incite violent reactions among the vanquished and also would provide for a continuing process of adjustment. The other, advocated by the French, would create alliances with a preponderance of

SOURCE: From Arthur Walworth, *Wilson and His Peacemakers*, pp. xii-xiii. Copyright 1986 W. W. Norton. Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.



military power that could put down any opposition. During the long war of attrition France's deficiency in manpower had worsened; it was clear that the French nation, fighting alone, could not hope to withstand another onset of German might.

The Russian Revolution

Robert Service

Historians often respond to the challenge of explaining the occurrence of a major revolution by constructing a complex set or theory of causes. For Marxist historians, the Russian Revolution was of extraordinary importance. These historians and others point to long-term economic and social factors as crucial in causing this revolution. Many historians, however, argue that the causes were more immediate and less complex. Robert Service, a respected author of several works on Russian history, takes a middle ground, focusing on a few circumstances as the key causes for the revolution. In the following selection, Service analyzes the revolution that toppled the tsar's government in February 1917, as well as the rise to power of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in October 1917.

CONSIDER: *The problems facing the Russian Empire; how Tsar Nicholas II placed himself in "double jeopardy"; why the Bolsheviks resorted to terror.*

Under the tsars, the Russian Empire faced many problems and approval of the state's demands and purposes was largely absent from society. The technological gap was widening between Russia and the other capitalist powers. Military security posed acute problems; administrative and educational co-ordination remained frail. Political parties had little impact on popular opinion, and the State Duma was to a large extent ignored. Furthermore, the traditional propertied classes made little effort to engender a sense of civic community among the poorer members of society. While most Russians lacked a strong sense of nationhood, several non-Russian nations had a sharp sense of national resentment. The Russian Empire was a restless, unintegrated society.

Nicholas II, the last tsar, had put himself in double jeopardy. He had seriously obstructed and annoyed the emergent elements of a civil society: the political parties, professional associations and trade unions. But he also

stopped trying to suppress them entirely. The result was a constant challenge to the tsarist regime. The social and economic transformation before the First World War merely added to the problems. Those groups in society which had undergone impoverishment were understandably hostile to the authorities. Other groups had enjoyed improvement in their material conditions; but several of these, too, posed a danger since they felt frustrated by the nature of the political order. It was in this situation that the Great War broke out and pulled down the remaining stays of the regime. The result was the February Revolution of 1917 in circumstances of economic collapse, administrative dislocation and military defeat. Vent was given to a surge of local efforts at popular self-rule; and workers, peasants and military conscripts across the empire asserted their demands without impediment.

These same circumstances made liberalism, conservatism and fascism impractical for a number of years ahead: some kind of socialist government was by far the likeliest outcome in those years. Yet it was not inevitable that the most extreme variant of socialism—Bolshevism—should take power. What was scarcely avoidable was that once the Bolsheviks made their revolution, they would not be able to survive without making their policies even more violent and regimentative than they already were. Lenin's party had much too little durable support to remain in government without resort to terror. This in turn placed limits on their ability to solve those many problems identified by nearly all the tsarist regime's enemies as needing to be solved. The Bolsheviks aspired to economic competitiveness, political integration, inter-ethnic co-operation, social tranquillity, administrative efficiency, cultural dynamism and universal education. But the means they employed inevitably vitiated their declared ends.

CHAPTER QUESTIONS

1. In what ways was World War I an outgrowth of the major trends of the late nineteenth century? Why is World War I nevertheless often considered a dividing line between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?
2. What role did World War I play in explaining the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviks' rise to power?
3. What was there about the causes and process of World War I that made the peace settlement at the end of the war so difficult?

SOURCE: Robert Service, *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 545–547.

12

They

The Bishop tells us: "when the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
New right to breed an honourable race,
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face."

Im Siegfried
-
Sachsen-
British
writer's
soldier

"We're none of us the same!" the boys reply.

"For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;

Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;

And Bert's gone syphilitic: you'll not find

A chap who's served that hasn't found *some* change."

And the Bishop said: "The ways of God are strange!"

Oct. 31, 1916

Isaac Rosenberg,
"Dead Man's Dump"

Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918) grew up first in Bristol, and then in London. At fourteen years old he became an apprentice in an engraving and art publishing firm. Working during the day, he attended art school in the evenings with the goal of becoming a painter. In this same period, he also began to write poetry. In 1912, he published the first his several short collections poetry *Night and Day*. After the war broke out, he enlisted in the army. In April of 1918, he died in battle. After his death, the poems he wrote about the war gained popular and critical acclaim with his clear, direct language and haunting imagery. His poem "Dead Man's Dump" depicts the carnage of a World War I battlefield.

Source: Isaac Rosenberg "Dead Man's Dump," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, ed. M. H. Abrams, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 1907.

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How does Rosenberg describe war and the affects of war? What is the significance of the title of the poem?
2. How did Rosenberg's view and portrayal of war differ from the previous authors (273 and 274)?
3. What does this poem tell us about World War I?

The plunging limbers¹ over the shattered track
Racketed with their rusty freight,
Stuck out like many crowns of thorns,
And the rusty stakes like scepters old
To stay the flood of brutish men
Upon our brothers dear.

5

The wheels lurched over sprawled dead
But pained them not, though their bones crunched,
Their shut mouths made no moan.
They lie there huddled, friend and foe man
Man born of man, and born of woman,
And shells go crying over them
From night till night and now.

10

Earth has waited for them,
All the time of their growth
Fretting for their decay:
Now she has them at last!
In the strength of their strength
Suspended-stopped and held.

15

What fierce imaginings their dark souls lit?
Earth! have they gone into you?
Somewhere they must have gone,
And flung on your hard back
Is their soul's sack.

20

Emptied of God-ancestral essences,
Who hurled them out? Who hurled?

25

None saw their spirits' shadow shake the grass,
Or stood aside for the half-used life to pass
Out of those doomed nostrils and the doomed mouth,
When the swift iron burning bee
Drained the wild honey of their youth.

30

What of us who, flung on the shrieking pyre,
Walk, our usual thoughts untouched,
Our lucky limbs as on ichor² fed,
Immortal seeming ever?

35

15

¹Two-wheeled vehicles for pulling guns or caissons.
²In Greek mythology, the ethereal fluid that flowed in the veins of the gods.

Perhaps when the flames beat loud on us,
A fear may choke in our veins
And the startled blood may stop.

The air is loud with death,
The dark air spurts with fire,
The explosions ceaseless are.

Timelessly now, some minutes past,
These dead strode time with vigorous life,
Till the shrapnel called "An end!"
But not to all. In bleeding pangs
Some borne on stretchers dreamed of home,
Dear things, war-blotted from their hearts.

A man's brains splattered on
A stretcher-bearer's face;
His shock shoulders slipped their load,
But when they bent to look again
The drowning soul was sunk too deep
For human tenderness.

They left this dead with the older dead,
Stretched at the crossroads.

Burnt black by strange decay
Their sinister faces like;
The lid over each eye,
The grass and coloured clay
More motion have than they,
Joined to the great sunk silences.

Here is one not long dead;
His dark hearing caught our far wheels,
And the choked soul stretched weak hands
To reach the living word the far wheels said,
The blood-dazed intelligence beating for light,
Crying through the suspense of the far torturing wheels
Swift for the end to break.

Or the wheels to break,
Cried as the tide of the world broke over his sight.
Will they come? Will they ever come?

Even as the mixed hoofs of the mules,
The quivering-bellied mules,
And the rushing wheels all mixed
With his tortured upturned sight,
So we crashed round the bend,
We heard his weak scream,
We heard his very last sound,
And our wheels grazed his dead face.
1917-1922

Woodrow Wilson, "Speech on the Fourteen Points," 1918

On January 8, 1918, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, speaking before a joint session of Congress, put forth his Fourteen Points proposal for ending the war. In this speech, he established the basis of a peace treaty and the foundation of a League of Nations.

Source: Fourteen Points Speech, by Woodrow Wilson, 1918 (National Archives and Records Administration).

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What was the political impact of the Fourteen Points on the peoples living under colonial rule? Was Wilson's idea of self-determination for colonial peoples to decide their own fate?
2. An underlying assumption of the Fourteen Points is that America should use its power to ensure that the world "be made fit and safe to live in." Is this the proper policy of the United States? Why? Why not?

We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once and for all against their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The pro-

(12) (12)

(12)

WWI Peace Treaties Reading Packet

96 THE GERMANS ARE INFORMED OF THE TERMS OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, was largely the work of the leaders of the three major Allied powers, Georges Clemenceau of France, David Lloyd George of Great Britain, and Woodrow Wilson of the United States. The Germans were not told of the terms of the treaty until it had been completed. In the excerpt below from Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace, diplomatic historian Thomas Bailey describes the reaction of the leader of the German delegation to the treaty. As you read the excerpt, consider what impact presenting the peace treaty as an ultimatum had on Germany.

The Treaty of Versailles was formally presented to the German representatives on May 7, 1919, by coincidence the fourth anniversary of the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

The scene was the Trianon Palace at Versailles. The day was one of surpassing loveliness, and brilliant spring sunlight flooded the room. Dr. Walter Simons, Commissioner-General of the German delegation, noted that "outside of the big window at my right there was a wonderful cherry tree in bloom, and it seemed to me the only reality when compared with the performance in the hall. This cherry tree and its kind will still be blooming when the states whose representatives gathered here exist no longer."

The crowd was small, for the room was small—merely the delegates of both sides, with their assistants, and a few carefully selected press representatives. The grim-visaged Clemenceau sat at the center of the main table: Wilson at his right, Lloyd George at his left.

The air was surcharged with electricity: German and Allied diplomats had not met face to face since the fateful summer of 1914. Would the Germans do something to offend proprieties?

When all were seated, the doors swung open. At the cry, ["*Gentlemen, the German plenipotentiaries!*"] the whole assembly rose and stood in silence while the German delegates filed in before their conquerors and sat at a table facing Clemenceau.

The Tiger [Clemenceau] rose to his feet, and, his voice vibrant with the venom of 1871, almost spat out his speech with staccato precision: "It is neither the time nor the place for superfluous words. . . . The time has come when we must settle our accounts. You have asked for peace. We are ready to give you peace."

Already a secretary had quietly walked over to the table at which the Germans sat, and laid before them the thick, two-hundred-odd-page treaty—"the book."

With Clemenceau still standing, the pale, black-clad Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, head of the German delegation, began reading his reply—*seated*.

An almost perceptible gasp swept the room, for the failure of the German to rise was taken as a studied discourtesy. Some felt that he was too nervous and shaken to stand. Others felt that he wanted to snub his "conquerors." The truth is he planned to sit, not wishing to stand like a culprit before a judge to receive sentence.

war had been more or less a stalemate; they had laid down their arms expecting to negotiate with a chivalrous foe. As equals, why should they rise like criminals before the Allied bar?

If Brockdorff-Rantzau's posture was unfortunate, his words and the intonation of his words were doubly so.

The Germans had not yet read the Treaty, but they had every reason to believe that it would be severe. They had not been allowed to participate in its negotiation; they would not be allowed to discuss its provisions *orally* with their conquerors. Brockdorff-Rantzau decided to make the most of this his only opportunity to meet his adversaries face to face and comment on the unread Treaty. Both his manner and his words were sullen, arrogant, unrepentant.

Speaking with great deliberation and without the usual courteous salutation to the presiding officer, he began by saying that the Germans were under "no illusions" as to the extent of their defeat and the degree of the "powerlessness." This was not true, for both he and his people were under great illusions.

Then he referred defiantly but inaccurately to the demand that the Germans acknowledge that "we alone are guilty of having caused the war. Such a confession in my mouth would be a lie." And the word "lie" fairly hissed from between his teeth.

Bitterly he mentioned the "hundreds of thousands" of German non-combatants who had perished since Armistice Day as a result of Allied insistence on continuing the blockade during the peace negotiations. This shaft struck home, especially to the heart of Lloyd George.

When the echo of Brockdorff-Rantzau's last tactless word had died away, Clemenceau spoke. His face had gone red during the harangue, but he had held himself in check with remarkable self-restraint. Harshly and peremptorily he steam-rolled the proceedings to an end: "Has anybody any more observations to offer? Does no one wish to speak? If not, the meeting is closed."

The German delegates marched out, facing a battery of clicking moving picture cameras. Brockdorff-Rantzau lighted a cigarette with trembling fingers.

Lloyd George, who had snapped an ivory paper knife in his hands, remarked angrily: "It is hard to have won the war and have to listen to that." . . .

Brockdorff-Rantzau's ill-timed tirade was followed with intense concentration by President Wilson. Dr. Simons noted that the German argument "obviously made its impression upon him, although not a favorable one."

This was absolutely correct. Wilson might have been deeply moved by a clear, dispassionate reference to concrete cases, but this blanket condemnation left him indignant and stubborn. To Lloyd George he turned and said, "Isn't it just like them!"

The German delegate undoubtedly made a grave error in judgment. A short, tactful speech would have kept the door open to compromise; his long, defiant diatribe forced the victors to defend what they had done.

READING REVIEW

1. What did Bailey mean by saying that Clemenceau was "vibrant with the venom of 1871"?
2. What explanations did the delegates have for Brockdorff-Rantzau reading his reply while remaining seated?
3. In your opinion, how did the presentation of the Treaty of Versailles as an ultimatum have on the German people? Explain your answer.

16

26-3 | An Analysis of the Versailles Treaty

JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1920)

Of all the observers at Versailles, British economist John Maynard Keynes was one of the most prescient. Upset that negotiators had given insufficient thought to the economic consequences of the treaty, Keynes warned Europe's leaders that their actions would lead to economic disaster, a prediction that seemed to come true in 1923, with the German economic collapse, and again in 1929 with the U.S. stock market crash and ensuing Great Depression. As you read Keynes's criticism of the treaty, pay particular attention to the connections he makes between economic policy and political stability.

The Treaty includes no provisions for the economic rehabilitation of Europe,—nothing to make the defeated Central Empires¹ into good neighbors, nothing to stabilize the new States of Europe,² nothing to reclaim Russia; nor does it promote in any way a compact of economic solidarity amongst the Allies themselves; no agreement was reached at Paris for restoring the disordered finances of France and Italy, or to adjust the systems of the Old World and the New.

The Council of Four³ paid no attention to these issues, being preoccupied with others,—Clemenceau to crush the economic life of his enemy, Lloyd George to do a deal and bring home something which would pass muster for a week, the President to do nothing that was not just and right. It is an extraordinary fact that the fundamental economic problems of a Europe starving and disintegrating before their eyes, was the one question in which it was impossible to arouse the interest of the Four. Reparation was their main excursion into the economic field, and they settled it as a problem of theology, of politics, of electoral chicanery, from every point of view except that of the economic future of the States whose destiny they were handling. . . .

For the immediate future events are taking charge, and the near destiny of Europe is no longer in the hands of any man. The events of the coming year will not be shaped by the deliberate acts of statesmen, but by the hidden currents, flowing continually beneath the surface of political history, of which no one can predict the outcome. In one way only can we influence these hidden currents,—by setting in motion those forces of instruction and imagination which

From John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), pp. 226–227, 296–297.

¹Central Empires: Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire—the losing alliance in the Great War.

²new States of Europe: The Treaty of Versailles dismembered the Austro-Hungarian and German Empires in the process creating newly independent states, including Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

³Council of Four: The leaders of the Allied nations at Versailles: Woodrow Wilson of the United States, Georges Clemenceau of France, David Lloyd George of Great Britain, and Vittorio Orlando of Italy.

change opinion. The assertion of truth, the unveiling of illusion, the dissipation of hate, the enlargement and instruction of men's hearts and minds, must be the means.

In this autumn of 1919, in which I write, we are at the dead season of our fortunes. The reaction from the exertions, the fears, and the sufferings of the past five years is at its height. Our power of feeling or caring beyond the immediate questions of our own material well-being is temporarily eclipsed. The greatest events outside our own direct experience and the most dreadful anticipations cannot move us.

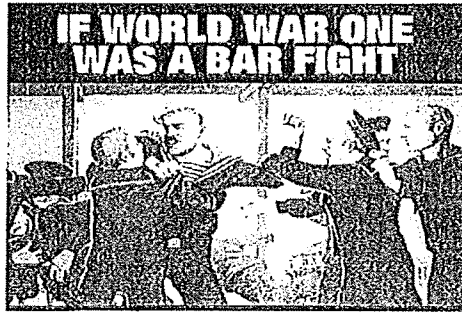
We have been moved already beyond endurance, and need rest. Never in the lifetime of men now living has the universal element in the soul of man burnt so dimly.

READING QUESTIONS

1. What motivations does Keynes believe shaped the treaty that emerged from the Versailles negotiations? Whose motivations were they? What does he think should have influenced the treaty instead?
2. In what ways does Keynes think Europeans have lost control of their lives? What, if any, ideas does he seem to offer to help them recover that control?
3. What about Keynes's document suggests that reason is not the driving force in international relations?
4. As Keynes portrays them, how have the citizens of the warring countries responded to the peace?

26-4 | Postwar Economic Crisis in Germany
Hyperinflation in Germany (1923)

The French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 set off a chain of events that had cataclysmic consequences for the German economy. In response to the occupation, the German government ordered the people of the Ruhr to stop working. As the cost of supporting the striking workers and their employers mounted, the government began printing money to meet its obligations. The result was runaway inflation that obliterated the value of the German mark. This German cartoon from 1923 dramatized the impact of inflation on German families. In it, a mother holds up her starving child above a rising sea of bank notes, crying out for bread as she struggles to keep herself from being drowned in the accumulating piles of worthless money.



Germany, Austria and Italy are standing together in the middle of a pub when Serbia bumps into Austria and spills Austria's pint.

Austria demands Serbia buy it a whole new suit because of the new beer stains on its trouser leg.

Germany expresses its support for Austria's point of view.

Britain recommends that everyone calm down a bit.

Serbia points out that it can't afford a whole suit, but offers to pay for the cleaning of Austria's trousers.

Russia and Serbia look at Austria.

Austria asks Serbia who it's looking at.

Russia suggests that Austria should leave its little brother alone.

Austria inquires as to whose army will assist Russia in doing so.

Germany appeals to Britain that France has been looking at it, and that it's sufficiently out of order, and that Britain not intervene.

Britain replies that France can look at who it wants to, that Britain is looking at Germany too, and what is Germany going to do about it?

Germany tells Russia to stop looking at Austria, or Germany will render Russia incapable of such action anymore.

Britain and France ask Germany whether it's looking at Belgium.

Turkey and Germany go off into a corner and whisper. When they come back, Turkey makes a show of not looking at anyone.

Germany rolls up its sleeves, looks at France, and punches Belgium.

France and Britain punch Germany. Austria punches Russia. Germany punches Britain and France with one hand and Russia with the other.

Russia throws a punch at Germany, but misses and nearly falls over. Japan calls over from the other side of the room that it's on Britain's side, but stays there. Italy surprises everyone by punching Austria.

Australia punches Turkey, and gets punched back. There are no hard feelings because Britain made Australia do it.

France gets thrown through a plate glass window, but gets back up and carries on fighting. Russia gets thrown through another one, gets knocked out, suffers brain damage, and wakes up with a complete personality change.

Italy throws a punch at Austria and misses, but Austria falls over anyway. Italy raises both fists in the air and runs round the room chanting.

America waits till Germany is about to fall over from sustained punching from Britain and France, then walks over and smashes it with a barstool, then pretends it won the fight all by itself.

By now all the chairs are broken and the big mirror over the bar is shattered. Britain, France and America agree that Germany threw the first punch, so the whole thing is Germany's fault. While Germany is still unconscious, they go through its pockets, steal its wallet, and buy drinks for all their friends.

The End.... (or is it?)

World War I to finally end for Germany this weekend

From CNN.com

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A French machine gun crew mans a Hotchkiss gun on August 1, 1915.

Germany and the Allies can call it even on World War I this weekend.

On Sunday - the 20th anniversary of East and West Germany unifying about a year after the Berlin Wall fell - Deutschland will make the last in a series of reparation payments that has spanned more than nine decades.

The final payment is £59.5 million, about \$93.8 million, reported London's Telegraph newspaper. Germany had to pay Belgium and France for material damages and the rest of the Allies the costs of fighting the war.

The initial tally in 1919, according to the German magazine Der Spiegel, was 96,000 tons of gold but was slashed by 40 to 60 percent (sources vary) a few years later. The debt was crippling, just as French Premier Georges Clemenceau intended. Germany went bankrupt in the 1920s, Der Spiegel explained, and issued bonds between 1924 and 1930 to pay off the towering debt laid on it by the Allied powers in 1919's Treaty of Versailles.

Under the treaties of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Trianon, other Central Powers, namely the Austro-Hungarian empire, were forced to cede significant territory to Poland, Italy, Romania, then-Czechoslovakia and various other Slavic nations.

Germany thought U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" would provide the foundation for a future peace treaty, but Great Britain, France and Italy were still bitter, according to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.



French run from an explosion during WWI.

France had been the most devastated by the war, and Clemenceau feared Germany might attack France again if it recovered, so he and other European leaders sought to stifle the nation's economic recovery, and in effect, its ability to rearm, the museum said. Restrictions were placed on its army and navy, and it was forbidden to have an air force.

The Treaty of Versailles not only forced Germany to give up territories to France, Belgium, Poland, the Czechs and the League of Nations, but it also included a "War Guilt Clause" forcing Germany to accept responsibility for the war, thereby making it liable for the damages.

Britain's John Maynard Keynes felt the treaty's demands were too steep and resigned in 1919 after warning, "Germany will not be able to formulate correct policy if it cannot finance itself."

As Keynes predicted, the plan backfired. While Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria all violated the terms of their accords, mainstream voters flocked to Germany's right-wing parties and Adolf Hitler's Nazis rode to power on a wave of resentment over the Treaty of Versailles' terms, according to the Holocaust museum.

World War I historian Gerd Krumeich told Der Spiegel that Hitler's message of tearing up the treaty and restoring Germany to greatness resonated with the country.

"There was tremendous frustration in Germany in the 1920s - this conflict that cost 2 million lives and left 4 or 5 million wounded is supposed to have been in vain, and it was all our fault?" Krumeich told the magazine. "The reparations payments compounded everything. Not only was Germany given the moral blame, it was also supposed to pay an outlandish sum that most people had never even heard of."

Germany discontinued reparations in 1931 because of the global financial crisis, and Hitler declined to resume them when he took the nation's helm in 1933, Der Spiegel reported.

After reaching an accord in London in 1953, West Germany paid off the principal on its bonds but was allowed to wait until Germany unified to pay about 125 million euros (\$171 million) in interest it accrued on its foreign debt between 1945 and 1952, the magazine said. In 1990, Germany began paying off that interest in annual installments, the last of which will be distributed Sunday, October 3, 2010.