World War I – The Front Lines and Home Front

Plans
- Schlieffen Plan
  - German Strategy
  - Assume that any war against Russia is also against France
  - Plan was to attack France first through neutral Belgium
    - Defeat the French and then redeploy against Russia
  - Germany demanded passage through Belgium on August 2\textsuperscript{nd}
    - Belgium declined
    - Would have been similar to act of war to say yes
    - Declared war on Aug 3\textsuperscript{rd}
    - Violated Belgian neutrality act
  - Britain declared war on Germany
    - In response to German violation of Belgian neutrality
    - To protect self-interests
    - Germany called the neutrality agreement a “scrap of paper”
    - Spielvogel suggests that fear of a powerful Austria-Germany motivated the British
    - Britain worried about balance of power
- French Plan
  - Attack towards Alsace-Lorraine and the Rhine
- Russian Plan
  - Russia assumed any war would be against both Germany and Austria
    - Planned to simultaneously attack East Prussia in the North and Galicia in the South
- All plans depended on rapid deployment and quick movement
  - Advantage to whoever was most “ready” to go
  - Most armies away in July getting ready for harvest
    - Race to recall soldiers

Reality 1914-15
- Germans seemed to be following plan
  - Crossed into Belgium Aug 4\textsuperscript{th}
  - By 1st week in September they were 20 miles from Paris
  - Germans underestimated the speed of British mobilization
    - Did not realize how quickly Britain would come to help the French
    - Counterattack by Gen Joffre
      - Stalemate
        - Both sides were stuck in the mud
- Trench war in west
  - “Immobilized...for four years”
    - They were basically in the same spot (trenches) for four years
  - Life in the trenches were horrible
    - Mice, mud, dust
- Eastern front
  - More movement by very heavy losses
  - Russian attack into eastern Germany defeated by German generals von Hindenburg and Ludendorff by Aug-Sept
Austrians were defeated by Russia in Galicia and thrown out of Serbia
   - Germans come to aid of Austrians
   - Push Russians 300 miles back into Russia
Italy switched sides and joined the Allies and attacked Austria
   - 1915
   - Sees Central Powers as weaker
   - Italy was promised certain territory for joining the Allies
   - Bulgaria joins the CP
   - Eliminates Serbia with the Austrians and Germans

The Great Slaughter 1916-17
- Naval battle anti-Climatic
  - **Battle of Jutland**
    - May 31st, 1916
    - Both Germans and British afraid of losing fleet
    - Tentatively attacking
      - Both sides claim victory and withdraw
  - Germany *unterseeboten*
    - Etiquette is to surface and allow crew to leave ship
    - British ships began opening fire
      - Germans switch to policy of unrestricted submarine warfare
- Trenches “work”
  - Provided good defensive cover
    - Heavy artillery and concrete based machine guns
  - Attempts to move trenches caused many deaths
    - Troops were not as enthusiastic anymore
    - Made unofficial truces
      - Christmas Truce of 1914
      - No attacking during breakfast
      - Major truces done by 1915
        - Everyone too afraid of sticking head up
          - Heavy casualties
  - New Technology
    - Machine Guns
    - Artillery
    - Sniper Rifles
    - Gas
    - Air Planes
    - Tanks
- **“Bleed White”**
  - Strategies of Western Front
  - Battle of Verdun
    - February to December 1916
      - 500,000 French casualties
      - 400,000 German casualties
        - Average of 70,000 a month
  - Battle of the Somme
    - July to November 1916
      - 620,000 French and British casualties
        - 50,000+ on the first day
      - 465,000 German casualties
- War goes global
  - British attack German African holdings
    - German South-West Africa
      - Under the command of Boer Jan Smuts
        - Quick moving
        - Capture German territory
          - By early 1915
    - German East Africa
      - Jan Smuts again
        - Guerilla style fighting on both sides
        - Germans formally surrender in November, 1918
  - Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers
    - Britain tried to open a Balkan front at Gallipoli
    - ANZAC
      - Australia and New Zealand Army Corps
    - Fails horribly
      - Attacking heavily fortified Turks
  - Arabian Peninsula
    - British send Thomas Edward Lawrence to encourage an Arab revolt against Ottomans
      - Promises Arab rule in the Middle East
    - Indian soldiers brought in to help
- United States neutrality
  - United States does not want to pick sides
    - Avoiding war that is “Europe’s problems”
    - Recent German immigrants pushing for Alliance with Germany
  - British blockade of Germany
    - Enforced by submarines
  - British ship Lusitania sunk by German submarines
    - 100 Americans died
    - British ammunition on board
      - Which is why the boat blew up so quickly
    - United Stats upset
    - Change in German policy
      - No longer using submarines
  - Germans return to unrestricted submarine warfare
    - British release Zimmerman Telegram
      - British cryptologists had deciphered it
        - Waited to show it to Americans to increase impact
      - Letter from German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmerman
        - Asking Mexico to join the war against the United States
    - United States declares war on Germany April 6th, 1917
- Russia Pulls out
  - Horribly outmatched
  - Germans smuggle Lenin back into Russia
    - Sparks revolution
  - Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
    - March 3, 1918
    - Give up a lot of land in return for peace
Home Front
- **Total War**
  - Everyone involved
    - No unemployment
  - Political Centralization
    - Government takes over economy
    - Imports and exports under control
    - Rationing
      - Famine in Germany and Russia
        - 750,000 starving in Germany
      - France has many problems
    - Controlled prices, wages, rent
    - **Bond drives**
    - Nationalized Resources and transportation
      - Problem – Frances coal and iron fields in German control
  - Media
    - Propaganda
      - Not needed at the beginning because most people were enthusiastic and supported the war
      - As the war goes on they need it more
    - Censorship
      - Journalists who wrote against war were put in war
  - Nationalized transportation
    - Priority for war goods
  - Mass Conscript
    - For war industries as well
    - Manufacturing conscription
- **Social changes**
  - Trade unions more accepted
    - Carries over into post-war culture
  - Women
    - New jobs opened for women
    - Banking and physical labor
    - Middle class women were shocked at the language and immorality of lower classes in the factories
      - Men sometimes watched their mouths
    - Women’s wages grow
      - Not equal to men’s but better
    - Little security in women’s jobs
    - Women stop doing jobs after the war
      - Fired after the war
      - Women’s wages cut
    - Long term effects for women
      - **Right to vote:** Britain, Germany, and Austria right after the war
        - US in 1919
        - Social emancipation of middle and upper class women
  - Social classes
    - Deaths hit junior officers
• Often aristocrats
  ▪ unskilled workers/peasants hit hardest
  ▪ Skilled workers often were exempt to train workers in war industries
  ▪ Economic impact was uneven
    • Large firms favored for war production
    • Inflation cut purchasing power
      ▪ British workers were the exception
        ▪ Wages increased more than prices
    • Middle class people often could not keep up
      ▪ Pensions and salaries did not keep up

- Germany
  o Walter Rathenau organized and controlled the War Raw Material Board
    ▪ Decided whether materials were used for war goods or personal goods
    ▪ Military dominated by von Hindenburg and Ludendorff
  o Auxiliary Service Law
    ▪ All males aged 16-60 not in army had to work in a job that helped the war effort

- Britain
  o Tried to limit government intervention
    ▪ Rationed food
    ▪ Rent controls
    ▪ Draft not instituted until 1916
  o Ministry of Munitions under David Lloyd George
    ▪ Encouraged the production of munitions and limited profits
  o Defense of the Realm Act
    ▪ A dissenter who spoke up against the war could be arrested as a traitor

- France
  o Conflict between military and civilian authorities
    ▪ Civilian control under Clemenceau
  o Major problems
    ▪ Germany occupied Northeast of France
      • Coal and steel producing areas
    ▪ Unorganized
      • Horrible at rationing
        ▪ Starvation in rural areas
    ▪ Animal conscription
      • Cows and horses
      • Wondered why agricultural production decreased
  o 1/3 of French male population killed or wounded in war

- Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Italy had many more problems
  o Not well organized
  o Backward economies
  o Did not have enough materials
  o Problems with minorities
    ▪ Minorities were nationalistic
      • But not to the empire
- Not enthusiastic to the war
  - Especially in Italy
- Problems of Public opinion
  - Opposition to war came from liberals and socialists
    - Liberals wanted peace
      - With no change to borders
      - Calls for peace generally ignored
        - Can be considered sedition
    - Mutinies
      - Especially dangerous
      - Hard to put down mutinies, but eventually suppressed
  - People were not as enthusiastic about not striking anymore
    - After 1916 strikes
  - Germany
    - Berlin arrest of Karl Liebknecht
      - Socialist
      - 50,000 workers went on strike
    - Cuts bread rations
      - 200,000 people go on strike
  - Ireland
    - Sinn Fein
      - Easter Sunday Uprising
      - Irish Republican Brotherhood and Citizens Army
        - Wanted Irish Independence
        - Took over government buildings
        - British put down rebellion and condemned the leaders
  - Austria
    - Czechs make push for independent Czech state