

Ch 19 The First World War

Section 1 World War I Begins

Causes of World War I

Nationalism

- **Nationalism**—devotion to interests, culture of one's nation
- Nationalism leads to competition, antagonism between nations
- Many fear Germany's growing power in Europe
- Various ethnic groups resent domination, want independence
- Russia sees self as protector of all Slavic peoples

Imperialism

- Germany industrializes, competes with France, Britain for colonies

Militarism

- Cost of building, defending empires leads to more military spending
- **Militarism**—development of armed forces, their use in diplomacy
- By 1890, Germany has strongest army on European continent
 - competes with Britain for sea power
 - leads other powers to join naval arms race

Alliance System

- Triple Entente or **Allies**—France, Britain, Russia
- Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire are **Central Powers**
- Alliances give security; nations unwilling to tip balance of power

An Assassination Leads to War

Alliances Complicate Conflict

- Balkan Peninsula known as “the powder keg of Europe” because:
 - ethnic rivalries among Balkan peoples
 - leading powers have economic, political interests
- **Archduke Franz Ferdinand** of Austria shot by Serbian nationalist while in Bosnia
- Austria-Hungary declares war on Serbia, expects short war
- Alliance system pulls one nation after another into war

The Fighting Starts

Early Battles

- Germany's Schlieffen Plan: hold Russia, defeat France, then Russia.
- German troops sweep through Belgium, cause major refugee crisis
- It allowed Germany to drive quickly toward the French capital
- By spring 1915, 2 parallel systems of trenches cross France
- “**No man's land**”—barren expanse of mud between opposing trenches
- Scale of killing horrific, fighting inconclusive
- Armies fight to gain only yards of ground in bloody **trench warfare**

Americans Question Neutrality

Divided Loyalties

- Socialists, pacifists, many ordinary people against U.S. in war
- U.S. has stronger economic ties with Allies than with Central Powers

The War Hits Home

The U.S. Prepares

- By 1917, U.S. has mobilized for war against Central Powers to:

- ensure Allied repayment of debts
- prevent Germans threat to U.S. shipping

The British Blockade

- British blockade, mine North Sea, stop war supplies reaching Germany
 - also stop food, fertilizer
- U. S. merchant ships seldom reach Germany
- Germany has difficulty importing food, fertilizer; by 1917, famine

German U-Boat Response

- Germany sets up U-boat counterblockade of Britain
- U-boat sinks British liner *Lusitania*; 128 Americans among the dead
 - U.S. public opinion turns against Germany
- President Wilson protests, but Germany continues to sink ships
- Germany asks U.S. to get Britain to end food blockade
 - otherwise will renew unrestricted submarine war

The 1916 Election

- Democrat Wilson defeats Republican Charles Evans Hughes

The United States Declares War

German Provocation

- Wilson tries to mediate, calls for “a peace between equals”
- Kaiser announces U-boats will sink all ships in British waters
- **Zimmerman note**—proposes alliance of Germany, Mexico against U.S.
- Four unarmed American merchant ships sunk
- Russian monarchy replaced with representative government
 - war of democracies against monarchies

America Acts

- American citizens outraged over German submarine warfare is compelling reason for joining war
- Wilson calls for war to make world “safe for democracy”
 - Americans end their 3 year policy of neutrality