World War I: “The Great War”

What Makes WWI a “World War”?

‘Local Impact and Post-War Politics’
Local Impact: the Colonies

**Africa:** [refer to Oct. 14 lecture]

- War itself fought in various parts of Africa (in/near German territories)

- Worst campaign was ‘East Africa’ that drew in White and Black South African troops, British East Africans, Africans from West Africa
Africa and Africans in WWI

German Colonies in Africa 1914

Togoland
Cameroon
South West Africa
German East Africa
Local Impact: the Colonies

Africa:

-South Africans: ‘whites’ who fought were mostly of British heritage (Afrikaners generally opposed to war or would have preferred to fight on side of Germans)

-South Africa had only become a Union 1910 following Afrikaner defeat (Boer War): British South Africans in political, economic control – black south Africans no rights at all

-Role in War affirmed (to South Africa) its right to demand more autonomy: accentuated Afrikaner and Black resentment
Local Impact: the Colonies

Africa:

- long-term destruction local economies where war fought, where recruitment of men was high

- Largest impact would occur when soldiers who fought elsewhere (whether Africa or Europe) returned home [video ‘Story of Africa’, add’l rdgs]

- Initiated new generation of ‘Nationalists’ who would succeed by the 1950s-1960s.
Local Impact: the Colonies

India:
-In spite of British ‘worries’, India major supporter of war: both in men (fought in Europe and Middle East) and as ‘base’ from which campaigns launched into Ottoman territories

-Huge losses on Western Front

-‘home front’ also felt war: because of concerns that those who did not support war might be tempted by religious ‘cause’ or simply resent British rule enough to use war as moment to ‘resist…. 
Local Impact: the Colonies

India:
- 1914-18: British government had put in place repressive ‘emergency laws’ (e.g. imprisonment without trial)

- Meant to ‘temporarily’ control potential subversive activities.

- Assumed locally that measures would be revoked by the end of the war

- Also expected more political autonomy as ‘reward’ for wartime sacrifices (at home and in the trenches)
Local Impact: the Colonies

India:

- Instead: Government passed the Rowlatt Acts 1919 which essentially extended repressive wartime measures

- Nothing was offered in terms of ‘political rights’
Local Impact: the Colonies

India:
- Response: widespread anger, discontent all regions

- April 1919: prominent leader ‘Gandhi’ (more next week) called for country-wide strike

- In Punjab: local arrests of leaders (in connection with strike) sparked massive public protest

- Buildings looted, burned; several foreign nationals killed, Christian missionary beaten

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Local Impact: the Colonies

**India:**
- Return to Order: a military ‘task’ – included complete ban on public gatherings

- Amritsar: protest against ban brought at least 10,000 people out [*video says 20,000]*

- Military fired on them: about 400 killed, at least 1200 wounded
Local Impact: the Colonies

**India:**
- Dead and wounded left in square
- Martial law declared: gave rights to public flogging, other ‘humiliating’ punishments
- As narrator says in video: ‘a turning point in India’s history’ – Amritsar marked point-of-no-return with respect to British-India relations
- Marked beginning of generation Indian Nationalism that would bring about ‘Independence’
Local Impact: Asia

**Japan:** [see lecture Oct. 16; 19th c. Industrialization, modernization, militarization – “Mejii Reforms” Text 800-6]

- Success of ‘Mejii Reforms’ seen in late 1890s victories in China; 1905 most important (in terms of regional/international profile) rapid victory over Russia

- WWI: Actively engaged in ousting Germany from China foothold

- Navy protecting Allies’ supply/troop ships: effectively targeting German submarines
Local Impact: Asia

China: [see lecture on Qing Dynasty 19th C.]

- late 1895: defeat by Japanese on heels humiliating treaties forced on Qing by European powers

- Led to strong reaction against traditional monarchy

- Emperor convinced to move towards Constitutional Monarchy but Empress Dowager determined to protect traditional position: imprisoned Emperor
Local Impact: Asia

**China:**
- violence swept across country: by 1900 secret society ‘Boxers’ emerged as leaders
- movement attributing country’s economic, political weaknesses on ‘Foreigners’
- Led to social, political chaos
- But generated huge domestic support: enough to enact siege of ‘Foreigner’s neighbourhood’ in Capital
Local Impact: Asia

China:
- created unprecedented ‘Foreign’ response (including Japanese who had ‘interests’ in Qing territory): united military forces to lift siege

- Qing forced to pay indemnity of 450 million oz silver

- Suspend civil service exams: hit at core of power/class structure of Qing Dynasty

- Ultimately more important than loss of territory per se
Local Impact: Asia

China: 1911: the ‘Last Emperor’ overthrown

- Late 19th-century class of ‘foreign educated’ (US, ironically Japan) intellectuals became active early 20th C.

- Sun Yatsen: US educated, continued education in (British) Hong Kong, politically active, acquired foreign funding

- Change, if it was to happen, had to be Revolutionary

The 1911 REVOLUTION overthrew not only the Qing Dynasty but China’s whole ‘history’ of political tradition
Local Impact: Asia

**China:**

- nationalist regime followed but failed under influence of ‘military man’ – similar to those in South America who did not wish to relinquish power but rather used it to build his own

- As WWI began, China was essentially under a ‘warlord’ dictatorship: following his death 1916 – decentralized system of warlords

- in turn “Their wars, taxes and corruption created terrible suffering” [Text p 902]
Local Impact: Asia

China:
- This is context in which we must see Japan’s expansion into China’s Shandong and southern Manchuria provinces (taking of German territory but pushing it further into Manchuria)

- Growing middle class, young Chinese ‘patriots’ increasingly enraged [Text 902-3]
Local Impact: Asia

China:

- May 4 1919: ‘5000 students in capital city exploded against decision of Paris Peace Conference (below) to leave Shandong Peninsula in Japanese hands” [Text 902]

- Beginning of ‘May Fourth Movement’: fighting both foreign control and local ‘warlordism’

- Looked to similarly anti-Imperialist movement from Russia – Bolshevik Revolution: but Post-War China would take different path
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:
- Impact of defeat in Russian-Japanese war 1904 significant: led to first ‘moderate’ revolution 1905

- Institution of a ‘duma’ (sort of limited representative assembly) but still under control Tsar [equivalent of Constitutional Monarchy in many ways]

- Industrialization recent but successful in creating working class; still most of the population (80%) peasant – seasonal urban labour increasingly common
Local Impact: Russia

**Russia:**


-Internal dissension between an elite --including landlords, royalty, intellectuals, new middle class, wealthy military officer; and ‘the rest’ –urban workers, rank-and-file military, peasants

-WWI: Tsar Nicholas II ‘embraced’ opportunity to protect Russia! Seen as opportunity to overcome domestic class differences, re-establish authority of Royal House
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:

- Turn to military nationalism was as disastrous in WWI as it had been in 1904 – only worse as WWI was of a totally different magnitude

- In spite of relatively rapid advances militarily: no match for Germany

- Also ‘lacked leadership’ [text 864,5]: Tsar attempted to use war to reinforce his own position – failed miserably
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:

- Fact that Tsarina was German born did not help

- Worse: she relied on council (almost ‘magical’) of the infamous Rasputin

- Failures on war front, combined with distasteful Tsarina/Rasputin . . .
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:
-In context of ongoing problems for peasants: landlords NOT willingly giving up land

-And workers: not being paid, literally lacking bread

-Led to demands for ‘PEACE, LAND and BREAD’

-1916-17: widespread, frequent strikes, demonstrations, protests, marches....
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:
- Petrograd, march 1917: women’s march for bread sparked riots that spread
- Soldiers/policemen ordered to restore peace joined the protesters
- Duma declared its own gov’t: Tsar abdicated
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:
- New ‘provisional government’ had only partial support

- Another group representing the ‘masses’ formed in St Petersburg “Petrograd Soviet” [Text p.867]

- Challenged what was now seen as ‘middle class’ government

- One key decision: Duma supported continuing Russia’s role in WWI
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:

- Socialist ideals, especially as developed by Marx and Engels [see ‘1848 Revolution’ lectures] had been embraced by young, educated Russians – like Vladmir Lenin (born into middle class, like counterparts in Europe and elsewhere)

- Tied into late 19th century politics: brother killed for plotting to kill Tsar 1887

- Spent many years in Western Europe ‘exile’: introduced to Marxism
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:

- As law student, studied Marxism: developed interpretation that seemed to ‘fit’ Russian situation
  - Capitalism would not destroy itself: revolution was needed
  - Full industrialization/proletariat (working class) not necessary: peasants in army, navy could be mobilized
  - Leadership could/should create revolution: ‘vanguard of the proletariat’

In other words: Revolution could be brought to Russia!
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:

- Terms treaty (seen as humiliating – peace, yes but not at ‘ANY price’)

- Bolsheviks had lost power in first elections following take-over: effectively Lenin ruled as dictator, constituent assembly (of soviets) disbanded

- led to military opposition from all sides (south, Ukraine, Siberia, west of Petrograd): ‘White Armies’

- country plunged into Civil War Nov 1917 to Oct 1922
Local Impact: Russia

**Russia:**

- As Allies met in Paris to ‘shape post-war world’, Russia at war with itself

- Bolsheviks applied ‘total war’ concept: no distinction between civilian, military – everyone was part of ‘army’ in some fashion

- seized grain stocks from peasants to feed army, nationalized banks, industry: total mobilization for war
Local Impact: Russia

Russia:
- Made use of Tsarist police to hunt down subversives:
  1918-20 executed some 250,000 ‘class enemies’

- Western governments began to support ‘White armies’: ineffective – but added to ‘patriotism’ bolstering Bolsheviks

- 1922: ‘Red Army’ victorious but 125,000 ‘Reds’ and 175,000 ‘Whites’ (and Poles) killed in battle
Post-War World: the Treaties

**Paris Peace Conference:**
- between January 1919 ad August 1920, series of ‘treaties’, agreements, principles that would reshape post-war world

- Most significant:
  - Treaty of Versailles
  - Treaty of Sevres (followed by Treaty Lausanne)
  - “Wilson’s Fourteen Points”
  - League of Nations Mandates
Post-War World: the Treaties

Treaty of Versailles: Controversial treaty dealing with Germany
- Stripped it of colonies (in Africa given to France, Britain, South Africa; in Asia to Japan)
- Industrial area of Alsace-Lorraine returned to France
- Germany prohibited from re-arming, building military
- Germany (and Austria) declared “Responsible” for the war and therefore responsible for its costs: reparation payments to be made (actual amount not yet decided)
Post-War World: the Treaties

**Treaty of Versailles:**
- Controversial: why?

- France wanted ‘more’, including buffer-zone to protect it from Germany: had to settle for defense agreement with US and Britain [US senate rejected it, as did Britain]

- Britain wanted some ‘revenge’ but agreed to go along with US: worried about revolution/war in Russia

- US wanted Germany to recover quickly; more concerned about ‘international’ issues: never ratified Versailles
Post-War World: the Treaties

**Treaty of Sevres/Lausanne (1923):**

- Broke up what was left of Ottoman Empire

- Parceled out in part to Greeks (who had been enticed into War in 1917 with promises of return territories with large Greek populations)

- In part (eastern) to Russia (Sykes-Picot Agreement 1917)

- created Modern Turkey 1923
Post-War World: the Treaties

**Treaty of Sévres/Lausanne (1923):**
- Remaining Turkish territory
- Possible Kurdish territory
- Territory ceded to
  - Armenia
  - Greece
  - France
  - Britain
- Zones of influence
- International control, demilitarized
- Turkish boundaries 1923/1939
Post-War World: the Treaties

Greece According to Treaty of Sevres
Post-War World: the Treaties

“Wilson’s Fourteen Points”:
-Suggested as basic principles of ‘new international order’

-most controversial and ultimately provocative article was...
Article 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 . . .”

-Understood by Arabs to include Middle East region
Post-War World: the Treaties

League of Nations:

- US President Wilson’s main ‘tool’ for re-ordering international scene

- based on idea of ‘graded mandates’: territories that were categorized according to how close they were to being able to govern themselves as independent nations

- given to European (in this case, South Africa included) powers under whose ‘tutelage’ they would move towards autonomy
Post-War World: the Treaties

Sykes-Picot Accord 1917 (Britain, France and Russia): secret agreement

- much of south-central Anatolia was to come under French administration

- Palestine divided up into areas of ‘Allied’ influence (Mandates)

- Fertile Crescent partitioned

- promised ‘Arab’ state not forthcoming: only Kingdom of Hejaz recognized
Post-War World: the Treaties

Sykes-Picot Accord 1917
Post-War World: the Treaties

League of Nations Mandates:

- all German colonies in Africa

- All Middle East (former Ottoman Territories)

- France: Lebanon, Syria

- Britain: Iraq, Palestine
Post-War World: the Treaties

Massive Arab objection: Syria (French Mandate)

“Considering the fact that the Arabs inhabiting the Syrian area are not naturally less gifted than other more advanced races and that they are by no means less developed than the Bulgarians, Serbians, Greeks and Rumanians at the beginning of their independence, we protest against Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations placing us among the nations in their middle stage of development which stand in need of a mandatory power.”

[See ‘Arab Opposition to Mandate’, Resources]
Post-War World: the Treaties

**Palestine:**
- also declared Mandated Territory but further complicated by another ‘secret’ correspondence

- In response to demands by Jewish Zionists who explicitly acted in British interests in ‘protecting Middle Eastern territories’ (Palestine) during the war, Lord Balfour wrote expressing a promise that the British Government would try to facilitate their goal of a ‘homeland’ in Palestine following the war

- This was not even an official document, but British used it to leverage ‘homeland’ for Jews from League of Nations
The Balfour Declaration
- ‘Declaration’ original part of informal correspondence
November 1917:

"His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object. It being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."
Post-War World: the Treaties

Mandate of Palestine (left)

Emirate of Transjordan
Post-War World: the Treaties

Consequences:

- Arabs felt betrayed

- Palestine: contradictory ‘promises’ of homeland did not satisfy Arabs or Jews

- Mandate System was rightly seen as ‘extension’ of Imperialism under another name!
Post-War World: the Treaties

The New Europe:
1920 - 1921