

# **HISTORY 208—Europe in the Age of Total War**

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## **EXAM #1 STUDY GUIDE**

### **Key Questions, Terms, Names, Dates, Sources**

rev 9/10/24

*Big Questions for the Mini-Essay. I will adapt two of these questions for the exam.*

When does the 20<sup>th</sup> century begin? Why? What difference does this question make?

What were the most significant forces of instability in Europe before 1914?

How did Europe go to war in July, August of 1914? Sleepwalking, slithering, or something else?  
Who was responsible?

How was World War I experienced on the home front? Discuss Dzików (Austria-Hungary, then Poland), among other examples.

How shall we understand the immediate “postwar” (1918-1920) era in eastern Europe?

How shall we periodize the 1920s? What can we learn from this periodization?

Why did fascists succeed at taking power in Italy?

Why did democracy hold in the early 1920s in Germany?

What did the Soviet alternative look like in the 1920s?

How stable was the peace and security of the late 1920s?

### *Tools of Historical Analysis*

History = “Inquiry”

Historiography

Primary Sources

Secondary Sources

Change, Continuity, Context, Contingency

### *Intro to Our Period*

Big question: what were the forces that led Europe to self-destruction in the era of total war?

How did well-to-do Europeans imagine the future in 1900?

Filippo Marinetti, “The Futurist Manifesto” (1909). Critical view of European civilization, embrace of modernity (such as automobiles), misogyny, celebration of violence, proto-fascism

Norman Angell, “The Great Illusion” (orig. 1909). Recognizes arms race in 1909, war for national enlargement a “great illusion,” interconnected economies, war would lead to destruction for all

### *How does Kershaw explain the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.?*

A story in two parts – the destruction of the first half, the recovery of the second

Where does the century begin? In 1914. The First World War created seeds for future conflict

Four essential forces: ethnic-racist nationalism, bitter demands for territorial revision, class conflict, crisis of capitalism. But note: Kershaw sees these as the product of WW1 and the interwar period, not the cause of WW1

How else might historians periodize the 20<sup>th</sup> c.? Starting in 1870 w/ German unification & French republic, in 1880s with second industrial revolution and new imperialism. Ending in 1989 with fall of communism, or c. 2000 with globalization.

What are some other ways that historians have told the history of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> c.? (For example, Eric Hobsbawm, a crisis of capitalism)

*What were the defining features of Europe in 1900?*

Second industrial revolution

Demographic transition

Urbanization. World Cities – London, Paris, Berlin. New industrial cities – Ex. Essen

Class Society. Peasants, industrial workers, lower middle class, upper middle class, elites, aristocracy

Constitutional Monarchy

Political Sovereignty (from kings to people)

Conservatism

Liberalism

Socialism

The New Right

*Pre War Europe*

Belle-Epoque, Wilhelmine era

Was it a golden age? Kershaw: yes and no

Massive emigration (esp. to US)

Immense poverty, esp. among peasantry, esp. in south and east of continent. (East of the Elbe, Spain, Italy, Balkans)

Limited political rights in many countries. Women without vote in natl elections. – but a rising feminist movement for the vote. (Finland, 1906, English municipal elections, 1895)

Rise of working class parties and unions. The Second International. The Socialist movement

Rise of ethnic definitions of the nation

Antisemitism in Europe. Rise of racial explanations. Pogroms in eastern Europe

Eugenics and Social Darwinism

Europe “exported its violence” in brutal colonial conflicts – papered over by the “civilizing mission”

Hague Conference 1899. Effort to preserve peace and limit armaments

*Europe in 1900*

Paris Exposition of 1900. Palace of Electricity. 50 m visitors

The Ruhr Valley. Massive German industrialization. New steel mills, new cities, new weapons for army, and new wealth. Krupps, for example, in the city of Essen. Essen: 55k in 1875, 295k in 1910. Generating new ambitions (for empire, for example) and spurred socialist organization. Created: enormous wealth, social dislocation, and new politics.

Also an era of: expanding imperialism, mass culture, mass politics, popular education, new artistic culture of modernism, new advances in science, rising socialism, rising nationalism

*What kinds of regimes and governments and societies were there?*

*Great Britain*

Constitutional monarchy

Victoria (d. 1901). Edward VII (1901-1910)

Parliamentary system - House of Commons – House of Lords

Two party system (Conservatives or Tories and Liberals) threatened by rise of Labour Party

Industrial pioneer. Center of global economy. London banking.

Empire in India

Dream of empire from Cape to Cairo

Boer War (1899-1902). Spawned jingoism and reflection

Women's Suffrage movement – on the verge of winning the vote?

Irish Question – Ireland and “Home Rule” – on the verge of winning autonomy?

George Dangerfield, “Strange Death of Liberal England” (1935). Death of liberal England c. 1910. Three issues: Irish question, labor movement, and feminist movement)

*France*

French Third Republic

Old republican tradition (from the Revolution of 1789, but followed by Napoleon, monarchy, instability in 19<sup>th</sup> c.) – parliamentary democracy since 1870

Franco-Prussian War 1870

Paris Commune of 1871

Loss of Alsace-Lorraine

Immense empire in Africa, Asia, Caribbean

Primary education free, secular, and obligatory

Nationalist revival in years after 1900

*Imperial Germany*

German Empire (founded 1871) – Unified under Prussia

Imperial Constitution – Federal Structure of states

Kaiser (Emperor) – Chancellor & Ministers (responsible to Kaiser) – Army – Reichstag

Wilhelm II (ruled 1888-1918)

SPD – Social Democratic Party – largest socialist party in the world

Growing population, growing economy (see industrial boom in Ruhr Valley)

Dreams of empire. “Place in the Sun”

Nationalist organizations

Herero & Namaqua genocide in German Southwest Africa (1904–8) “first genocide of 20<sup>th</sup> c.”

*Austro-Hungarian Empire (Habsburg Empire)*

Franz Joseph (ruled since 1848!)

Dual Monarchy since 1867. Austria and Hungary each with own parliament. Emperor above both.

Also included: Czechs, Poles, Slovenes, Serbs, etc.

Nationalities problem – Multinational empire

In 1914, A-H had two speeds: “slow and dead-stop”

### *Imperial Russia*

Romanov Dynasty. Tsar Nicholas II (ruled 1894-1917)

Long history of serfdom (abolished 1861) – enormous peasantry with limited education

Strategic alliance with France after 1894

Challenges – Russo-Japanese War (1905) – Revolution of 1905

Efforts at Reform – Political & Economic – Duma – Constitution of 1906

Revolutionary threats from socialists and others

New industrialization

### *Ottoman Empire*

Ruled by Sultan, Caliphate in Constantinople

Centered on Asia Minor. Stretched from North Africa to Southeast Europe

Challenges of an enormous, multi-national empire

Efforts at political and military reform in 19<sup>th</sup> c.

Young Turk Revolution of 1908. Puts in place a constitutional framework

Nonetheless it remained “The Sick Man of Europe”

Influence of other European powers – Germany, Britain, France – jostling for influence

Armenian Question

Balkan Wars took away territory in SE Europe

### *Italy*

Constitutional Monarchy

Italian Unification (1861)

North-South Divide

Efforts (mixed) at creating colonial empire in North Africa. Adwa 1896.

Corrupt and shallow democracy

Dominated by Liberal Party – and a narrow circle of elites

### *Why does Europe go to war in 1914?*

Sarajevo, June 28, 1914. Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip, Bosnian Serb student, part of the secret Serb nationalist organization, the Black Hand, with backing from Serb military intelligence, diplomatic crisis follows

Shaya: There is a vast historical debate on the causes of the war

Kershaw: Europe did not slither or sleepwalk into war. It was the product of calculation, prepared over many years.

Kershaw: Three countries hold major responsibility. Germany. Blank check to Austria, territorial ambitions in the east, fear of Russia, fear of encirclement by Triple Entente, decision making to military leaders

Austria-Hungary. Ultimatum to Serbia. Effort to put Serbia in its place and reassert imperial strength. But slow response risked bringing in outside parties. Fear of its own future.

Russia. Support of Serbs as fellow Slavs. Imperial ambitions of their own in SE Europe. Mobilization of army in response to Austria-Hungary.

By last days of July, military considerations overrode all others

Outbreak of war. Widespread support. Jubilation in some corners (youth, urban middle class). Resignation in others (working class, peasants)

In France, "Sacred Union," Germany "Spirit of 1914"

Most Socialist parties supported war despite internationalist rhetoric (Workers of the world unite!) of previous years.

### *The Course of the War*

#### *What did the military conflict look like?*

Industrialized mass slaughter. 75% of human destruction from artillery. Also: machine guns, poison gas, aerial bombardment

#### *What is "Total War"?*

Military front and the homeland "bound together in the war effort"

#### *How did it differ in the east and the west?*

In the west, a stalemate involving millions of soldiers, trench warfare across eastern France and Belgium. In the east, a war of movement, over longer and less densely populated front with scorched earth tactics that often targeted civilians

#### *How did German military strategy change over time?*

1914 – Schlieffen Plan – "road to St. Petersburg leads through Paris" – The "Miracle of the Marne"

1915 - Turn to East, effort to knock out Russia - unsuccessful

1916 - Turn to West, under Gen. Falkenhayn (attack on Verdun) – unsuccessful - Paul Von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff take over Supreme Command – era of "military dictatorship"

1917 – unrestricted submarine warfare to knock Britain out of war – brings US into war

1918 – offensive on Western front - unsuccessful

#### *Some examples to know about*

Verdun. 1916, The Somme 1916, The Hindenburg Line 1917

#### *What role did colonies play?*

Huge role for colonial subjects

1 m. Indians, over 2 m. Africans served

#### *What was the impact of war in Russia?*

Led to revolution. March 1917 Revolution (because of the Gregorian calendar it was the "February Revolution") installs Provisional Govt

Socialist leader Alexander Kerensky. Continuation of war. Soviets (councils of workers and soldiers) in factories and army. Lenin. Calls for "Peace Land and Bread"

November 1917 Bolshevik Revolution (the "October Revolution")

Bolsheviks called off the war effort. Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 1918). Harsh peace for Russia

*And in Germany?*

Collapse of German military in late September, early October of 1918

H&L hand over power to civilians. Origins of “Stabbed in the Back” theory – idea that Socialists and Jews on the home front had betrayed the German Army

*How was war experienced?*

On the home front in Britain and France. Women into workforce, mobilization of industrial economy, censorship, challenges to public morale

After years of struggle, new leadership committed to prosecuting war to the end: David Lloyd George, George Clemenceau

In Germany, the military dictatorship of Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Extreme hunger, the turnip winter of 1917-18

In Poland, describe the experience of the south east village of Dzików – a product of the war of movement and scorched-earthed policies in the east

*How did women experience the war in Great Britain?*

No simple answer will do, acc. to Susan Grayzel. She argues that we need to understand the complexity of women’s experiences during and after the war. Women did have new opportunities to work, to earn money, to be independent. But these were accompanied by new oversight of the state. The state watched over women’s actions – alcohol, prostitution, sexuality. Did the war liberate women? They received the vote in Britain in 1918 (at least women over 30 did). But a strong argument can be made that the war slowed the victory of women’s political rights in Britain. And the aftermath of the war often saw a backlash against women’s participation in jobs seen as “male jobs.”

*Outcome of the war*

US ideals helped shape outcome. Woodrow Wilson “Fourteen Points” (January 1918). Wilsonian ideals. World safe for democracy. Free trade. Self-determination of nations...

Collapse of: Russian Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Empire.

Revolution in Russia, Revolution in Germany

Chaos in Eastern Europe

Changing world order. Rise of the United States as a world power

Remarkable death toll. More than 9.3m soldiers dead, some 6m civilians. And then followed in 1918 by a global flu pandemic

Economic crisis everywhere in immediate postwar years

*What was outcome in Germany?*

Abdication of Kaiser and Declaration of Republic. New democratic constitution. Would be known as Weimar Republic

Revolutionary situation in late 1918 and early 1919. Independent Socialists – also known as Communists – organizing revolution. Soviets (workers councils) organizing on Russian model. Socialist Republic of Bavaria. Spartacist Uprising in Berlin. (Example of Revolution)

Friedrich Ebert, Socialist leader, its first Chancellor

In unholy alliance with old elites in the army, such as Gen. Groener.

Ebert-Groener Pact (1918). Army works to put down revolutionaries – in exchange for control of its own affairs

Revolution and counter-revolution. Support for paramilitary organizations - *freikorps* – right-wing paramilitary militias funded by army and fighting against revolutionary movements such as the Spartacists

### *How to periodize the immediate postwar era?*

Contemporaries saw it as a postwar era – not the interwar era

1918-1923 – economic and political instability. 1924 – recovery. 1924-29 – boom years

First period was the time of Mussolini's success, of the *freikorps*, hyperinflation, the Beer Hall putsch. Later years were time of economic boom and relative political stability

### *What did "postwar" Europe look like in these first years?*

Reckoning of immense destruction. Human losses, physical destruction.

Disillusionment. W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming" 1919

Economic challenges in Britain – see miner's strike, General Strike of 1926

Hyperinflation in Germany and Poland

New pacifist movements – note the lessons that Vera Brittain took from the war (after watching her fiancé, her husband, and her best friend die on the western front) – or Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1928)

And others who glorified war – who celebrated the "trench community" – such as Ernst Jünger's *Storm of Steel* (1920) or *freikorps* propaganda

Left-wing revolution and right-wing counter-revolution

Paramilitary mobilization in Germany, Italy, eastern Europe

Freikorps, for example, celebrated "spirit of 1914" and "trench community"

### *What did "postwar" era look like in Eastern Europe?*

The years after 1918 weren't postwar at all, as Russian Civil War raged. Whites vs. Reds. Red terror. White terror.

Anti-Semitism and pogroms in Poland, Ukraine, Baltics

Hungarian Socialist Republic under Béla Kun

Authoritarianism in Hungary, Poland, elsewhere

Fear of Bolshevism, political instability

### *What was settled at Paris?*

Paris Peace Conference 1919

Included dozens of countries but dominated by Big Four... Germany and Bolshevik Russia left out

Produced several peace treaties and the creation of the League of Nations

Ideal of national self-determination – a problematic ideal given the mingling of populations

New borders of Europe. New countries: Austria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Baltic Countries, Yugoslavia. Adjusted borders – esp. for Germany

What were the challenges for democracy in these new countries?

What were provisions of Versailles treaty for Germany?

Acc. to Kershaw, did it make future war inevitable? Or more likely? Or less likely?

What was John Maynard Keynes' critique of the economic provisions of the Versailles Treaty?

*How did fascism take root in Italy?*

Fasces – Roman symbol for strength in unity

*Fasci* – paramilitary groups in postwar Italy – ultranationalist, anti-socialist, anti-parliament, glorified war

Benito Mussolini, the leader of one of these groups, the *Fasci di Combattimento* reorganized as political party

For many Italian nationalists - the “mutilated victory” - occupation of Fiume in 1919

Biennio Rosso (two red years), 1919-1920

Weakness of Italian democracy

Mussolini's Fascist “March on Rome” 1922. Appointed by King as Prime Minister. Support of conservatives and middle class who saw him as bulwark against socialism – Fascism came to power in Italy with support of the elites

Instability continued, with assassinations. Allowed Mussolini to extend his appeal – and his power. In 1925, suppression of opposition parties, arrest of opponents, end of freedom of the press.

*How did democracy survive in Germany?*

In midst of postwar crisis, the specter (and reality) of red revolution, right-wing paramilitary action, hyperinflation, French occupation of the Ruhr...

Adolf Hitler and NSDAP, National Socialist Workers Party or Nazis, organized after war. Appeal especially in Bavaria. But a small fringe party

Freikorps, Kapp Putsch of 1920, Hitler and Ludendorff's Beer Hall Putsch of 1923

But the army and the civil service don't go over to the side of right-wing revolution. They were weak supporters of the government, but supported it nonetheless in 1920 and 1923.

Still there were forces of instability. Gen. Paul von Hindenburg, hero of WWI, came out of retirement, elected as President in 1925. Skeptical of democracy and liberalism.

Germany a “democracy without democrats” – Weimar Coalition – parties that supported the new regime – the SPD, Catholic Center party, and the liberal German Democratic Party. This coalition of parties supporting Weimar didn't hold a majority of seats in the Reichstag at any point after elections of 1920

*What else should we know about this era?*

It was an era that saw the extension of imperialism

The French & British coordinated to carve up the Arab Middle East between them, in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916. And then with post-war “Mandates” from the League of Nations

And of nationalism. The conflict in Ireland culminated in the establishment of the Irish Free State in most of Ireland (with Northern Ireland remaining part of the UK) established 1922

The Balfour Declaration of 1917. British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.



### *The Roaring Twenties*

Early period, 1918-1923 – unstable. Hyperinflation in Germany, esp.

Who loses? Who wins? Those who have savings (the middle class) lose. Those who borrow money win (such as industrialists, or the govt that financed the war through bonds)

Stability after 1924, Dawes Plan, US loans pumping money into European economy, classic Keynesian policy

Would come crashing down in the winter of 1929-1930

What were the signs of economic success in the 1920s – after 1924?

Spread of new technologies such as auto, telephone, cinema, new housing efforts such as the Karl-Marx-Hof in Vienna, better employment for urban workers

According to Kershaw, how durable was this success? Was it a strong foundation for future stability?

In brief, no. See the vast inequalities bw rich and poor, between city and country, terrible conditions for industrial employees in era of Taylorism and Fordism, crisis in old industries of coal and steel, crisis in agriculture where oversupply produced depression in prices

Gustav Streseman, German Foreign Minister, put it this way in 1928: Germany was “dancing on a volcano”

Some signs: General Strike of 1926 in Britain, peasants on small holdings in eastern and southern Europe, decline of agricultural prices 1925-29 by 33%

### *What did the Soviet alternative look like?*

Understand the simple chronology of Soviet Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution, led by Lenin in 1917. Civil War to 1921. Lenin’s death in 1924 and the rise of Stalin (Zughashvili, the Georgian “Man of Steel”)

From War Communism to New Economic Policy (NEP) to Socialism in One Country – and the planning of the economy with Five Year Plans

Rapid industrialization. Creation of new industries overnight. Collectivization of agriculture

Collectivized agriculture. A brutal system enforced by secret police, orig. called the Cheka, and by campaigns against wealthy peasants, known as *kulaks*, and the murder of millions by famine imposed by the state.

Holodomor. Great Famine of 1932-33 killed some 3.3m in the Ukraine. Foundational historical memory for contemporary Ukraine. Death by famine - perhaps twice as many across Russia

To many (Communists) in the west, who didn’t see the horrors, this was a thriving alternative to capitalism

### *How did democracy fare in the 1920s in the new countries created in Paris 1919?*

In a word, not so well. Fear of Communist revolution in 1918-21 gave way to authoritarianism.

Czechoslovakia a rare success. Austria – serious internal conflicts, Hungary – democracy just a façade under Admiral Horthy. Poland – an authoritarian govt. under Gen Pilsudski.

Elsewhere – esp. Lithuania, Balkan countries, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania – instability and authoritarianism.

### *Were there any positive signs in international affairs?*

Yes! Esp. in the calming of international relations.

“The Spirit of Locarno” Intl agreement – Locarno Treaty in 1925. Understanding between France and Germany. Guarantee of Germany’s western borders, and demilitarization of the Rhineland.  
Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928: Negotiated between French and US ministers, made offensive war illegal, Nazi leaders were later prosecuted under it at Nuremburg

*What else to know about the 20s?*

Thriving mass culture, with large influence from the U.S. Movies, jazz

Radio, a new form of mass communication which would shape mass politics

Modernism in art, literature, theater, music, architecture...

Cultural pessimism – Oswald Spengler, “the decline of the west” (first volume 1918)

Changing roles – and rights – for women. Voting rights – prominently in Britain and Germany.  
New work opportunities and more. The ideal of the “new woman,” liberated from pre-war expectations.