Chapter 26

Political Experiments of the 1920s
Entrenchment and Stalemate
Illustration 2
Political Experimentation

- Experimentation in politics and pursuit of normality in economic life marked the decade of the 1920s
  - Bolsheviks worked to build communist state
  - To achieve it, they built a vast authoritarian state government

- New political and economic conditions existed
  - The turn to liberal democracy resulted in Parliamentary governments across Europe
  - Often newly democratic nations lacked the will and political skill to make it work

- Still many survivors hoped & worked for a better world
Europe after World War I

- The League of Nations was established in 1919
- Goal was to mediate conflicts between individual nations to ensure peaceful resolution
- Members obligated to develop disarmament plans, respect territorial integrity and political sovereignty of other member nations.
- League could impose sanctions on nations guilty of military aggression
European Problems After the War

- Among both defeated and victors, there was much discontent with the Treaty of Versailles
- Calls for revision were heard everywhere

Demonstration against the Treaty in front of the Reichstag building
The Economic Costs of War

- Tremendous casualties meant loss of producers and consumers - more than 8.5 million people died; twice that number had been wounded.

- Famine threatened many regions and wages fell.

- Across the European continent, homes, farms, factories, roads, and churches had been shelled to rubble.

Cartoon predicting the aftermath of the war by Henry J. Glintenkamp, first published in The Masses in 1914
### World War I Casualties

**TABLE 26–1  Total Casualties in the First World War**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Dead</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
<th>Total Killed as a Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1,398,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>44,700</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>578,000</td>
<td>947,000</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Empire</td>
<td>921,000</td>
<td>2,090,000</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>278,000</td>
<td>133,000</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1,811,000</td>
<td>1,450,000</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>152,000</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Germany</strong></td>
<td>2,037,000</td>
<td>4,207,000</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria-Hungary</td>
<td>1,100,000</td>
<td>3,620,000</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>804,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>114,000</td>
<td>206,000</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic Conditions Shaken

- The great 1918 flu pandemic spread rapidly across Europe and the world, killing an est. 50 mill. worldwide.
- People everywhere were shaken and disillusioned.
- European market and trade conditions were damaged by the withdrawal of Bolshevik Russia, the mosaic of successor states, and American competition.
- Within nations, war increased economic power of government and labor unions.
France: The Search for Security

- After WWI, French voters elected a conservative Chamber of Deputies.
- The large number of military officers in blue uniforms elected to the Chamber gave rise to the nickname "Blue Horizon Chamber".
- In 1920, it defeated Georges Clemenceau’s bid for the presidency.
- Major complaints against Clemenceau:
  - "Leniency" of the Paris treaties
  - Clemenceau’s failure to establish a separate Rhineland state under French influence.

Clemenceau, “Le Tigre,” as Prime Minister of France.
New Alliances

- France was the leading European power
- Planned to strictly enforce the clauses of treaty meant to keep Germany weak.
- Wanted to build eastern alliances to replace prewar alliance with Russia.
  - France allied with Little Entente: Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia
- New alliance heightened sense of danger and isolation of Germany and Soviet Union
- In 1922, economic conferences:
  - European states held economic conference in Genoa
  - Russia & Germany met at Rapallo to sign treaty establishing diplomatic and economic relations
In early 1923, the Allies, and France in particular, declared Germany to be in technical default on payments of reparations.

Raymond Poincaré, France’s Prime Minister, in cooperation with Belgium, sent troops to occupy the Ruhr, Germany’s mining and manufacturing district in Rhineland.

The action alienated the British, who became more suspicious of French and sympathetic to Germans.
Entrenchment and Stalemate
Illustrations 3A & 3B
Why Did Lenin and the Bolsheviks Launch the November Revolution?

Lenin adapted Marxist ideas to fit Russian conditions. He called for an elite group to lead the revolution and set up a “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Conditions were ripe for Lenin and the Bolsheviks to make their move:

- The provisional government continued the war effort and failed to deal with land reform.
- In the summer of 1917, the government launched a disastrous offensive against Germany.
- The army was in terrible shape and growing numbers of troops mutinied.
- Peasants seized land and drove off fearful landlords.
How did the Communists defeat their opponents in Russia’s civil war?

- Lenin quickly made peace with Germany so that the Communists could focus all their energy on defeating enemies at home.

- The Communists adopted a policy called “war communism.” They took over banks, mines, factories, and railroads, took control of food produced by peasants, and drafted peasant laborers into military or factory work.

- Trotsky turned the Red Army into an effective fighting force.

- When the Allies intervened to support the Whites, the Communists appealed to nationalism and urged Russians to drive out the foreigners.
Trotsky with troops at the Polish front, 1919.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>August</td>
<td>World War I begins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Revolution forces the czar to abdicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A provisional government is formed run by Duma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Lenin returns to Russia.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Russians suffer more than 50,000 casualties in battle against German and Austro-Hungarian forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>A second revolution results in Bolshevik takeover of gov’t.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Bolshevik government seeks peace with Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Russia signs treaty of Brest-Litovsk, losing a large amount of territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July</td>
<td>Civil war between the Reds and Whites begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The czar and his family are executed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August</td>
<td>British, American, Japanese, and other foreign forces intervene in Russia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>Communist government is victorious. Only sporadic fighting continues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Communist State Under Lenin

The Communists produced a new constitution that:

- set up an elected legislature, later called the Supreme Soviet
- gave all citizens over 18 the right to vote
- placed all political power, resources, and means of production in the hands of the workers and peasants

The new government united much of the old Russian empire in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), or Soviet Union.

Lenin adopted the New Economic Policy, or NEP.

- It allowed some capitalist ventures.
- The state kept control of banks, foreign trade, and large industries. Small businesses were allowed to reopen for private profit.
Changes in Soviet Society

The Communists transformed Russian life.

- They created a society where a few elite groups emerged as a new ruling class.
- The state provided free education, free medical care, day care for children, inexpensive housing, and public recreation.
- Women were granted equality under the law.
Soviet Union, 1917–1938
Soviet Foreign Policy

Between 1917 and 1939, the Soviet Union pursued two very different goals in foreign policy.

As Communists, both Lenin and Stalin wanted to bring about the worldwide revolution that Marx had predicted.

- Lenin formed the Communist International, or Comintern, which aided revolutionary groups around the world.

As Russians, they wanted to guarantee their nation’s security by winning the support of other countries.

- The Soviet Union sought to join the League of Nations.

The Comintern’s propaganda against capitalism made western powers highly suspicious of the Soviet Union.
The Agony of Total War
Illustrations 1A, 1B & 1C
How Did Conditions in Italy Favor the Rise of Mussolini?

- In 1919, Italian nationalists were outraged by the Paris peace treaties since as one of the Allies, they had expected to gain the territory that became part of the new Yugoslavia.

- Inspired by the revolution in Russia, Italian peasants seized land, and workers went on strike or seized factories.

- Returning veterans faced unemployment.

- Trade declined and taxes rose.

- The government was split into feuding factions and seemed powerless to end the crisis.
Seizing Power

- In 1919, Benito Mussolini, the son of a socialist blacksmith and a teacher, organized veterans and discontented Italians into the Fascist Party.
- He rejected socialism in favor of intense nationalism.
- He organized his followers into black-shirted “combat squads” aimed at taking power through violence.
- He broke up socialists rallies, smashed leftists presses, attacked farmers’ cooperatives, and ousted elected officials through intimidation and terror.
Fascists in Italy

- In 1922 at a rally in Naples, the Fascists announced a “march on Rome” to demand the government make changes.

- Fearing civil war, King Victor Emmanuel III asked Mussolini to form a government as prime minister.

Mussolini and Fascist Blackshirts during the March on Rome in 1922.
**Mussolini’s Italy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLITICAL STRUCTURE</th>
<th>ECONOMIC POLICY</th>
<th>SOCIAL POLICIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By 1925, Mussolini had assumed the title Il Duce, “The Leader.”</td>
<td>Mussolini brought the economy under state control.</td>
<td>The individual was unimportant except as a member of the state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In theory, Italy remained a parliamentary monarchy. In fact, it became a dictatorship upheld by terror.</td>
<td>Unlike socialists, Mussolini preserved capitalism.</td>
<td>Men were urged to be ruthless warriors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fascists relied on secret police and propaganda.</td>
<td>Workers received poor wages and were forbidden to strike.</td>
<td>Women were called on to produce more children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fascist youth groups toughened children and taught them to obey strict military discipline.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Is Fascism?

In the 1920s and 1930s, fascism meant different things in different countries. All forms of fascism, however, shared some basic features:

- extreme nationalism
- glorification of action, violence, discipline, and, above all, blind loyalty to the state
- rejection of Enlightenment faith in reason and the concepts of equality and liberty
- rejection of democratic ideas
- pursuit of aggressive foreign expansion
- glorification of warfare as a necessary and noble struggle for survival
The Agony of Total War
Illustrations 2A & 2B
The Weimar Republic

- As World War I drew to a close and under threat of a socialist revolution the Kaiser abdicated.

- Moderate leaders signed the armistice and later, under protest, the Treaty of Versailles.

- In 1919, German leaders drafted a constitution in the city of Weimar, creating a democratic government.

- The constitution set up a parliamentary system lead by a chancellor, or prime minister.
  - It gave women the right to vote
  - Included a bill of rights.
Struggles of the Republic

The Weimar Republic faced severe problems from the start.

- The government was weak because Germany had many small parties.
- The government came under constant fire from both the left and the right.
- Germans of all classes blamed the Weimar Republic for the hated Versailles treaty.
- When Germany fell behind in reparations payments, France occupied the coal-rich Ruhr Valley.
- Runaway inflation spread misery and despair.
Adolf Hitler’s Rise to Power

- Hitler fought in the German army in World War I.
- In 1919, he joined a small group of right-wing extremists.
- Within a year, he was the leader of the National Socialist German Workers, or Nazi, party.
- In 1923, he made a failed attempt to seize power in Munich, imitating Mussolini, with his brown-shirted thugs. He was imprisoned for treason.
- In prison, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”). It would later become the basic book of Nazi goals and ideology.
- Nazi membership grew to almost a million.
- In 1933, Hitler was made chancellor of Germany.
- Within a year, Hitler was master of Germany. He made Germany a one-party state and purged his own party.
The Agony of Total War
Illustrations 3A & 3B

Avez vous place dans votre coeur pour nous?

“Have you room in your heart for us.”

Fatherless Children of France, Inc.
World War I dramatically changed British politics
- Expanded electorate
- Post-war coalition in Parliament becomes markedly more conservative

Except for first 3 post-war years, British economics were depressed throughout the 1920s.
- No genuine postwar recovery
- Unemployment remained over 10%, often hovering near 11%
- Government expanded insurance programs to include: unemployed workers, widows, and orphans
- No expansion of jobs available from 1922 onward
Shift from Liberal to Conservative

- In October 1922, Conservatives replaced Lloyd George with Conservative Andrew Bonar Law.
  - Law, who was dying of throat cancer, was then replaced by Stanley Baldwin
  - Conservatives attempt to cure economy by replacing free trade with protective tariffs.
The First Labour Government

- In 1923, Conservatives lost majority in lower house to a Liberal & Labour Coalition
  - Labour Ministry formed – first in British history
  - Ramsay MacDonald became prime minister
  - Socialistic platform, but democratic and non-revolutionary
- Mac Donald only served 9 months, but proved that the Labour party was both respectable and responsible.
  - Signaled permanent eclipse of Liberal Party (still remains, but only a minority)
Causes of the General Strike of 1926

- During WWI, the heavy domestic use of coal depleted rich seams
- Britain exported less coal – U.S., Poland, and Germany filled gap
- The 1925 **Dawes Plan** allowed Germany to re-enter coal market by exporting “free coal” to France and Italy
- Reintroduction of gold standard in 1925 made pound too strong for effective exporting and raised interest rates, hurting all businesses
- Mine owners announced intention to reduce miners’ wages & increase work hrs.

*The Subsidised Mineowner - Poor Beggar!* from the *Trade Union Unity Magazine* (1925)
The General Strike, May 1929

- Miners went on strike.

- Then the general council of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in a show of unity called a general strike.

- The strike lasted 9 days, from May 4th to May 13th.

- It was an unsuccessful attempt to force the British government to act to prevent wage reduction and worsening conditions for coal miners.

- In the end the strikers capitulated.

Tyldesley miners outside the Miners Hall during the strike
Ireland

- In 1914, the **Irish Home Rule Bill** passed Parliament, but implementation was postponed until after the war.

- As war dragged on, Irish nationalists grew impatient.

- On Easter Monday in April 1916, a nationalist uprising occurred in Dublin.

- The British suppressed it in less than a week.

- Irish nationalist leaders were executed, becoming martyrs.

1\textsuperscript{st} Irish Civil War

- In the 1918 election, the Sinn Fein Party all but 4 of Irish parliamentary seats, except Ulster.
- Instead of going to London, they formed own Irish Parliament and declared independence on January 21, 1919
  - Military wing was \textit{Irish Republican Army} (IRA)
  - 1\textsuperscript{st} president was \textit{Eamon De Valera}, who was born in U.S.
- Guerrilla war broke out between IRA and British army
2\textsuperscript{nd} Irish Civil War

- December 1921 treaty signed
  - Created the Free Irish State, becoming part of the Commonwealth
  - 6 counties of Ulster became Northern Ireland, with provisions for home rule, to remain part of United Kingdom

- Civil war broke out between Irish moderates and diehards and continued until 1923.
Legacy

Illustration 1
Trails of the Successor States in Eastern Europe

- The breakup of Austria-Hungary, restoration of Poland, and establishment of nation-states throughout Eastern Europe was seen as:
  - Positive self-determination
  - Providing buffer against the spread of Bolshevism

- However, political problems abounded
  - Britain and France had long experience with liberal government
  - Their problems were finding solutions to new economic & political pressures
  - New eastern nations had to establish effective, stable elected parliaments
Economic and Ethnic Pressures

- Political independence disrupted previous economic relationships to former prewar nations.
  - New state financially dependent on foreign loans
  - Only Czechoslovakia was financially independent

- Nationalistic antagonisms prevented trade – most became dependent on trade with Germany

- Rural nations in an industrial world
  - Import manufactured goods at high prices
  - Falling prices of agricultural goods

- Ethnic groups pursued nationalistic goals & unwilling to compromise
Second Polish Republic
Poland: Reestablishment

- Poland ruled by neighbors for over a century; regained independence in 1918; recognized internationally in 1919.

- Paris Peace Conference established:
  - the western border with Germany
  - Polish Corridor giving access to Baltic Sea
  - separate status of the Free City of Danzig
  - northern, eastern & southern borders remained undetermined

- Ukrainian, Jewish, Lithuanian, German minorities distrusted Polish government & resented domination of Polish culture

- Each region had different administrative systems and laws, different economies, and different experiences with electoral institutions
Poland: Democracy to Military Rule

- Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921
- Treaty of Riga (1921) settled eastern border & gave Poland a false sense of military self-sufficiency
- 1921-1926 parliamentary democracy
  - legislature remained fragmented
  - lacked stable majorities
  - governments changed frequently
  - corruption commonplace
- May 12, 1926 Józef Klemens Piłsudski staged military coup

Piłsudski's May Coup of 1926 defined Poland's political reality for the years leading to WW II
Czechoslovakia: A Viable Democratic Experiment

- Oct. 28, 1918 - Independence proclaimed in Prague
- Slovaks joined 2 days later
- Nov. 14 - Temporary constitution adopted & Tomáš Masaryk declared president
- Sept. 1919 – Treaty of St. Germain formally recognized new republic
- June, 1920 - Treaty of Trianon added Ruthenia
- Parliamentary democracy; distinguished by stability & well-organized political parties

Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, first president of Czechoslovakia
Industrialization in Czechoslovakia

- New state characterized by problems with ethnic diversity.
- Inherited 70-80% of all industry of Austro-Hungarian Empire, most located in Sudetenland, were owned by Germans and controlled by German-owned banks.
Hungary: Turn to Authoritarianism

- In the defeat of WWI, Hungary achieved its independence from Austria.
- In 1919, Bela Kun, a communist, established a short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic, receiving socialist support.
- Allies authorized an invasion by Romanian troops to remove the communist threat.
- Admiral Miklós Horthy established as regent for Habsburg monarchy, a position he held it until 1944.
The Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920): Hungary lost 72% of its land and sea ports in Croatia, 3,425,000 Magyars found themselves separated from their motherland. The country lost 5 of its 10 biggest Hungarian cities.
Trianon Hungary and the Regency

- After the collapse to the Kun government, 1000s of Hungarians were killed or imprisoned.
- Lenin ordered Comintern to reject such cooperation in future (due to Kun’s cooperation with Socialists).
- Kun fled to Russia where Stalin later had him killed.
- Agrarian economy suffered from general stagnation.
- During 1920s, effective ruler was Count Stephen Bethlen, who presided over aristocratic parliamentary government.
- Julius Gömbös succeeded him and followed anti-Semitic policies and rigged elections.

Béla Kun pictured in 1923

Julius Gömbös
Austria: Political Turmoil and Nazi Occupation

- Economic life was in dire condition and the Paris settlement forbade union with Germany.
- Throughout 1920s, leftist Social Democrats and conservative Christian Socialists contended for power.
- Both groups employed armies to terrorize opponents and impress followers.
- In 1933, Christian Socialist Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss negotiated between Austrian Social Democrats and German Nazis – outlawed other major political parties; shot late in 1933.
- Successor Kurt von Schuschnigg presided until Hitler annexed it in 1938.
Southeastern Europe: Royal Dictatorships

- Yugoslavia (Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes until 1929) was dominated by Serbs and opposed by Croats.
  - Serbs – Orthodox, somewhat educated, considered corrupt
  - Croats – Roman Catholic, highly educated, reasonably incorrupt
  - Bosnians & Slovenes – Muslim, played Serbs & Croats against each other

- Violent clash of nationalities led to royal dictatorship in 1929 under King Alexander I, himself a Serb.

- Alexander was assassinated in 1934, but authoritarian gov’t continued under a regency for his son.
Other Royal Dictatorships

- Romania was ruled by King Carol II (r. 1930 – 1940).
- Bulgaria – King Boris II (r. 1918 – 1943)
- In Greece, the parliamentary monarchy floundered amid military coups and calls for republic.
- In 1936, General John Metaxas instituted a dictatorship in Greece under King George II (r. 1935-1947)

**MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS OF THE 1920s**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919 (August)</td>
<td>Constitution of the Weimar Republic promulgated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td><em>Kapp Putsch</em> in Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921 (March)</td>
<td>Naval mutiny leads Lenin to initiate his New Economic Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921 (December)</td>
<td>Treaty between Great Britain and the Irish Free State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922 (April)</td>
<td>Treaty of Rapallo between Germany and the Soviet Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922 (October)</td>
<td>Fascist march on Rome leads to Mussolini’s assumption of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923 (January)</td>
<td>France invades the Ruhr</td>
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<tr>
<td>1923 (November)</td>
<td>Hitler's beer hall <em>Putsch</em></td>
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<td>1923 (December)</td>
<td>First Labour government in Britain</td>
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<td>1924</td>
<td>Death of Lenin</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>Locarno Agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>General strike in Britain</td>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>Kellogg-Briand Pact</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929 (January)</td>
<td>Trotsky expelled from the Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>1929 (February)</td>
<td>Lateran Accord between the Vatican and the Italian state</td>
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</tbody>
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