UNIT 8: 20th-CENTURY GLOBAL CONFLICTS

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| MAIN  IDEA | KEY CONCEPTS | NOTES AND VOCABULARY |
| Contextualizing 20th-Century Global Conflicts | Total war and political instability in the first half of the 20th century gave way to a polarized state order during the Cold War and eventually to efforts at transnational union.   * *World War I, caused by a complex interaction of long- and short-term factors, resulted in immense losses and disruptions for both victors and vanquished.* * *The conflicting goals of the peace negotiators in Paris pitted diplomatic idealism against the desire to punish Germany, producing a settlement that satisfied few.* * *In the interwar period, fascism, extreme nationalism, racist ideologies, and the failure of appeasement resulted in the catastrophe of World War II, presenting a grave challenge to European civilization.* |  |
| The stresses of economic collapse and total war engendered internal conflicts within European states and created conflicting conceptions of the relationship between the individual and the state, as demonstrated in the ideological battle between and among democracy, communism, and fascism. |
| During the 20th century, diverse intellectual and cultural movements questioned the existence of objective knowledge, the ability of reason to arrive at truth, and the role of religion in determining moral standards.   * *Science and technology yielded impressive material benefits but also caused immense destruction and posed challenges to objective knowledge.* |
| Demographic changes, economic growth, total war, disruptions of traditional social patterns, and competing definitions of freedom and justice altered the experiences of everyday life.   * *The 20th century was characterized by large-scale suffering brought on by warfare and genocide, but also by tremendous improvements in the standard of living.* |
| World War I | World War I, caused by a complex interaction of long- and short-term factors, resulted in immense losses and disruptions for both victors and vanquished.   * A variety of factors—including nationalism, military plans, the alliance system, and imperial competition—turned a regional dispute in the Balkans into World War I. |  |
| New technologies confounded traditional military strategies and led to trench warfare and massive troop losses. |
| World War I | The effects of military stalemate, national mobilization, and total war led to protest and insurrection in the belligerent nations and eventually to revolutions that changed the international balance of power. |
| The war in Europe quickly spread to non-European theaters, transforming the war into a global conflict. |
| The relationship of Europe to the world shifted significantly with the globalization of the conflict, the emergence of the United States as a world power, and the overthrow of European empires. |
| Review | Explain the context in which global conflict developed in the 20th century.  Explain the causes and effects of World War I.  Explain how new technology altered the conduct of World War I.  Explain how the developments of World War I changed political and diplomatic interactions between and among nations. | | |
| The Russian Revolution and Its Effects | The Russian Revolution created a regime based on Marxist–Leninist theory.   * *In Russia, World War I exacerbated long-term problems of political stagnation, social inequality, incomplete industrialization, and food and land distribution, all while creating support for revolutionary change.* * *Military and worker insurrections, aided by the revived Soviets, undermined the Provisional Government and set the stage for Lenin’s long-planned Bolshevik Revolution and establishment of a communist state.* * *The Bolshevik takeover prompted a protracted civil war between communist forces and their opponents, who were aided by foreign powers.* * *In order to improve economic performance, Lenin compromised communist principles and employed some free-market principles under the New Economic Policy.* |  |
| Review | Explain the causes and effects of the Russian Revolution. | | |
| Versailles Conference and Peace Settlement | The conflicting goals of the peace negotiators in Paris pitted diplomatic idealism against the desire to punish Germany, producing a settlement that satisfied few.   * *Wilsonian idealism clashed with postwar realities in both the victorious and the defeated states. Democratic successor states emerged from former empires and eventually succumbed to significant political, economic, and diplomatic crises.* * *The League of Nations, created to prevent future wars, was weakened from the outset by the nonparticipation of major powers, including the U.S., Germany, and the Soviet Union.* * *The Versailles settlement, particularly its provisions on the assignment of guilt and reparations for the war, hindered the German Weimar Republic’s ability to establish a stable and legitimate political and economic system.* |  | |
| The League of Nations distributed former German and Ottoman possessions to France and Great Britain through the mandate system, thereby altering the imperial balance of power and creating a strategic interest in the Middle East and its oil. |
| Global Economic Crisis | The Great Depression, caused by weaknesses in international trade and monetary theories and practices, undermined Western European democracies and fomented radical political responses throughout Europe.   * *World War I debt, nationalistic tariff policies, overproduction, depreciated currencies, disrupted trade patterns, and speculation created weaknesses in economies worldwide.* * *Dependence on post-World War I American investment capital led to financial collapse when, following the 1929 stock market crash, the United States cut off capital flows to Europe.* * *Despite attempts to rethink economic theories and policies and forge political alliances, Western democracies failed to overcome the Great Depression and were weakened by extremist movements* |  | |
| Review | Explain how and why the settlement of World War I failed to effectively resolve the political, economic, and diplomatic challenges of the early 20th century.  Explain the causes and effects of the global economic crisis in the 1920s and 1930s. | | |
| Fascism and Totalitarianism | The ideology of fascism, with roots in the pre-World War I era, gained popularity in an environment of postwar bitterness, the rise of communism, uncertain transitions to democracy, and economic instability.   * *Fascist dictatorships used modern technology and propaganda that rejected democratic institutions, promoted charismatic leaders, and glorified war and nationalism to attract the disillusioned.* * *Mussolini and Hitler rose to power by exploiting postwar bitterness and economic instability, using terror, and manipulating the fledgling and unpopular democracies in their countries.* * *Franco’s alliance with Italian and German fascists in the Spanish Civil War—in which the Western democracies did not intervene—represented a testing ground for World War II and resulted in authoritarian rule in Spain from 1936 to the mid-1970s.* * *After failures to establish functioning democracies, authoritarian dictatorships took power in central and eastern Europe during the interwar period.* |  | |
| After Lenin’s death, Stalin undertook a centralized program of rapid economic modernization, often with severe repercussions for the population. |
| Stalin’s economic modernization of the Soviet Union came at a high price, including the liquidation of the kulaks (the land-owning peasantry) and other perceived enemies of the state, devastating famine in the Ukraine, purges of political rivals, and, ultimately, the creation of an oppressive political system. |
| Europe During the Interwar Period | French and British fears of another war, American isolationism, and deep distrust between Western democratic, capitalist nations and the authoritarian, communist Soviet Union allowed fascist states to rearm and expand their territory. |  | |
| In the interwar period, fascism, extreme nationalism, racist ideologies, and the failure of appeasement resulted in the catastrophe of World War II, presenting a grave challenge to European civilization. |
| Review | Explain the factors that led to the development of fascist and totalitarian regimes in the aftermath of World War I. | | |
| Review | Explain the consequences of Stalin’s economic policies and totalitarian rule in the Soviet Union.  Explain how and why various political and ideological factors resulted in the catastrophe of World War II. | | |
| World War II | Germany’s Blitzkrieg warfare in Europe, combined with Japan’s attacks in Asia and the Pacific, brought the Axis powers early victories. |  | |
| American and British industrial, scientific, and technological power, cooperative military efforts under the strong leadership of individuals such as Winston Churchill, the resistance of civilians, and the all-out military commitment of the USSR contributed critically to the Allied victories. |
| Military technologies made possible industrialized warfare, genocide, nuclear proliferation, and the risk of global nuclear war. |
| The Holocaust | Fueled by racism and anti-Semitism, Nazi Germany—with the cooperation of some of the other Axis powers and collaborationist governments—sought to establish a “new racial order” in Europe, which culminated with the Holocaust. |  | |
| World War II decimated a generation of Russian and German men; virtually destroyed European Jewry; resulted in the murder of millions in other groups targeted by the Nazis including Roma, homosexuals, people with disabilities, and others; forced large-scale migrations; and undermined prewar class hierarchies. |
| Review | Explain how and why various political and ideological factors resulted in the catastrophe of World War II.  Explain how technology and innovation affected the course of World War II and the 20th century.  Explain how and why cultural and national identities were affected by war and the rise of fascist/totalitarian powers in the period from 1914 to the present. | | |
| 20th-Century Cultural, Intellectual, and Artistic Developments | The widely held belief in progress characteristic of much of 19th-century thought began to break down before World War I. |  | |
| When World War I began, Europeans were generally confident in the ability of science and technology to address human needs and problems despite the uncertainty created by the new scientific theories and psychology. |
| The challenge to the certainties of the Newtonian universe in physics opened the door to uncertainty in other fields by undermining faith in objective knowledge while also providing the knowledge necessary for the development of nuclear weapons and power. |
| World War I created a “lost generation” and fostered disillusionment and cynicism, while it transformed the lives of women, and democratized societies. |
| During the world wars, women became increasingly involved in military and political mobilization, as well as in economic production. |
| Review | Explain how the events of the first half of the 20th century challenged existing social, cultural, and intellectual understandings.  Explain how economic challenges and ideological beliefs influenced prior conceptions about the relationship between the individual and the state. | | |