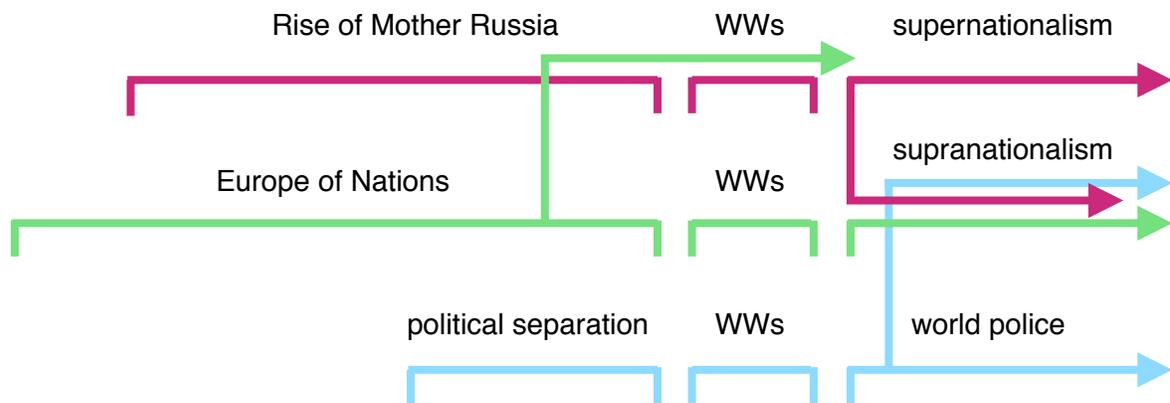


VI. The World Wars

A. The Most Important Chapter of History

1. The History of the world, and especially the history of Europe, Russia, and America (three of the five cardinal cultures) pivots on the world wars.
2. In other words, from a present-centric perspective, there is fundamentally one story in each culture leading to the world wars, and then that culture changes direction—it “pivots”—and becomes something else.

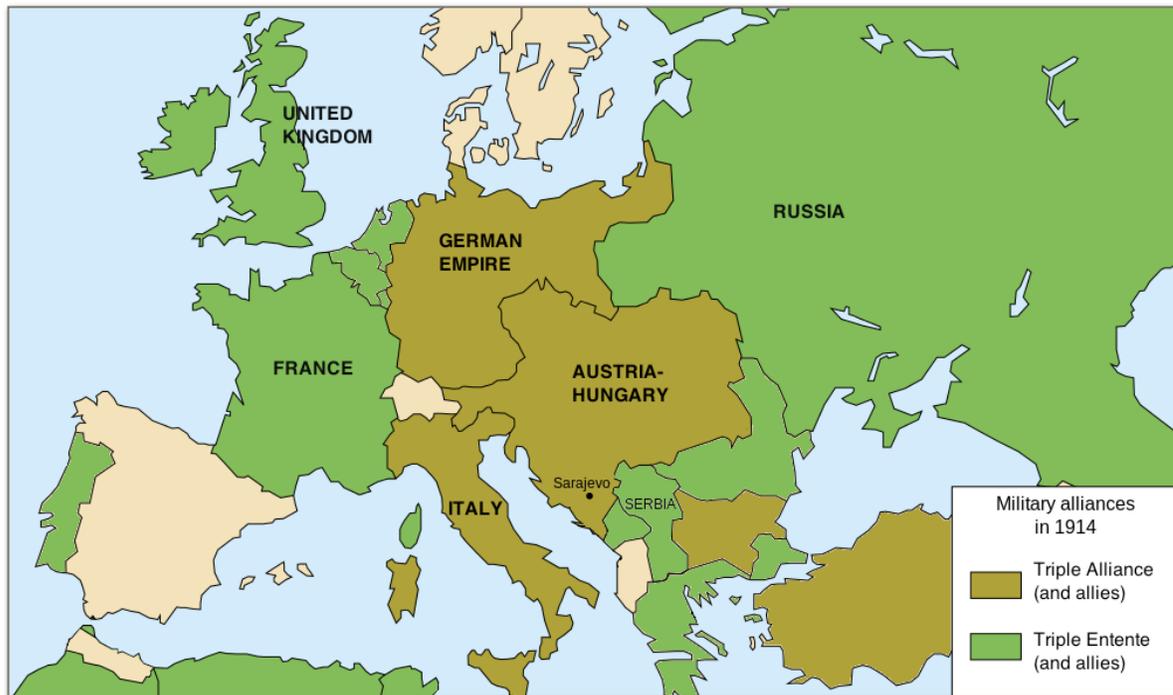


3. Evidently, it’s time to look more closely at the chapter of the world wars, so we can better understand its impact on each of these cultures.

B. World War I (1914-19)

1. World War I (1914-19) is the first of the two wars caused mainly by supernationalist Germany.
2. The goal of German leaders after being conquered by Napoleon was to create a powerful, unified German Empire, and they had achieved that goal by 1914 (see map on next page).
3. The strange thing about it was that it did not include the German-speaking people of Austria, who had wanted to be the leaders of Germany, but found themselves overpowered and excluded by the northern parts of Germany.
4. Instead, the Austrians had partnered with their neighbors, the Hungarians, and created a strange empire called “Austria-Hungary,” or the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
5. Even more strange was the fact that by the beginning of World War I, Austria and Germany had become allies. This was certainly not because they were friends. It was because they both viewed France and Russia as enemies.

6. Austria was particularly afraid of Russia, because both Austria and Russia wanted to conquer southeastern Europe. That part of Europe was populated by Slavs, like much of Russia, so Russia wanted to rule them.
7. The Slavs wanted their own countries, and in June of 1914, a Slav murdered the Archduke of Austria, Franz Ferdinand. This was the “spark” that started the war.
8. Austria-Hungary intended to invade Serbia (the main country of Slavs), but Russia warned Austria that it would defend the Slavs.
9. When Austria checked with Germany about their alliance, Germany told Austria that it would support Austria in a war against Russia. Soon Germany declared war on Russia.



The German Empire established in response to Napoleon’s conquest of Germany, was the driving force behind the “Triple Alliance” in the center of Europe, which is responsible for initiating **World War I (1914-19)**. The war was triggered by the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo.

10. Germany then invaded Belgium to the west and declared war on Russia’s ally, France.
11. Great Britain declared war on Germany, bringing the world-wide British Empire into the conflict. Soon most of the world was at war.

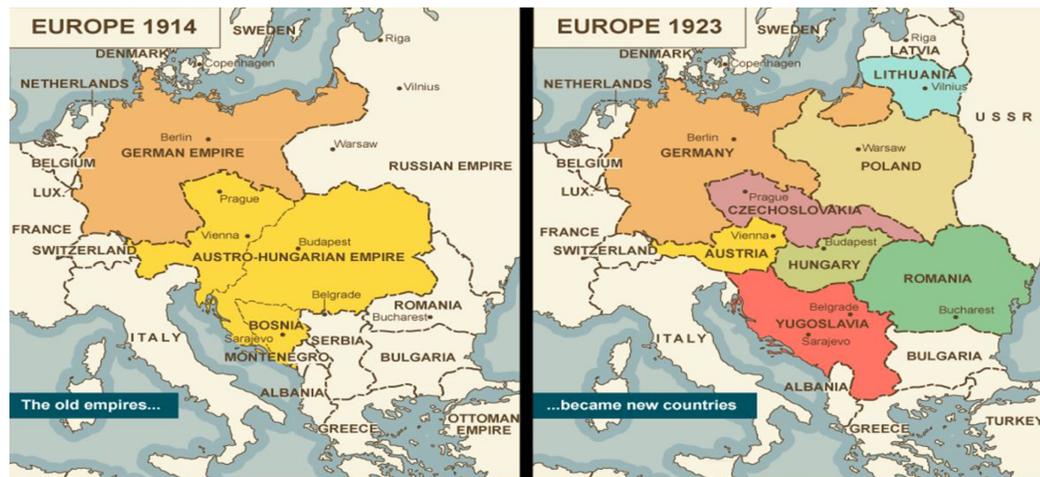
C. American Intervention

1. Americans greatly valued their political separation. They were so relieved not to be involved in the war that they re-elected the popular president Woodrow Wilson on a platform entitled “He kept us out of war!”

2. But then a new concept of political *interconnection* was put forward. It was the idea that America could use its strength to make the world a better place. As expressed by Woodrow Wilson, America could make the world “safe for democracy.”
4. Although Americans were not all convinced that was a good idea, Woodrow Wilson was the president, and he was able to win approval for the idea. Starting in 1917, over two *million* American men were sent to fight in a European war.
5. The positive outcome of this intervention was that Germany and Austria were defeated and the war was brought to an end.

D. A New Concept for Peace

1. Following World War I, Europe’s leaders examined the history that had brought them to such a calamity, and they concluded that “imperialism” was to blame. If one looks at a map of Europe before WWI, it’s easy to see how they might think that:



The German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Russian Empire were the three empires most responsible for starting the war. Not surprisingly, “imperialism” was blamed for the war, with Germany receiving the bulk of the blame.

2. These same leaders still believed in nationalism, so they tried to reject empires while embracing nations as the proper building blocks of Europe. This meant redrawing the map to make nations, and then, to help them maintain peace, create a parliament of nations where they could discuss their disputes in a civilized way and wars could be avoided.
3. This idea of political *interconnection* combined with nationalism is known as “internationalism.”
4. To encourage political interconnection, a “League of Nations” was created in **1920** (the prototype of the United Nations of today).

E. Russia Between The Wars: The Russian Revolution (1917) and Rise of Communism

1. Ever since Peter the Great, Russia wanted to catch up to Europe. By World War I, it still had not achieved that aim.
2. A Russian man named Vladimir Lenin believed he had the answer. He called it “communism.”
 - a) Communism is based on Marxism, which was created by Karl Marx.
 - b) Karl Marx believed it that advanced societies would eventually come to live according to the rule, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need,” and that this would *necessarily* happen.
 - c) The problem for Lenin was that although he was a Marxists (a follower of Marx), he was impatient to bring progress to Russia. He didn’t want to wait for history to bring socialism to Russia. He wanted to make Russia socialist right away. That’s why he advocated “communism,” where he could order everyone to create progress.
3. In 1917, when Russia had suffered terrible losses in World War I, and different groups in Russia were working to overturn the rule of the Tsar/king, Lenin and his supporters took charge and directed the event known as the Russian Revolution.

F. Germany after WWI

1. When it became obvious that Germany would lose the war, the German Emperor and his generals fled from Germany. In their place a democratic government was created.
2. It was this new government that was forced to accept the blame for starting WWI and the punishments selected by the winners by the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 that officially ended the war.
3. Germany was not allowed to become a “nation” by joining with Austria (where the people all spoke German).
4. It seemed like Germany was going to accept peace when it joined the League of Nations in 1926. Inside Germany, however, the people refused to accept responsibility for having started WWI and they were angry about the Treaty of Versailles.

E. Rise of Hitler and the Nazis

1. The German people believed that not only were they not guilty of doing anything wrong by starting World War I, but they believed that they had not really lost. Instead, it was common for Germans believe a conspiracy theory that the German army had been betrayed, thus bringing about defeat. (This is known as the “back stab legend” in German history.)
2. A man named Adolf Hitler wrote a book entitled *Mein Kampf* in which he claimed that it was a people known as the Jews, who were living inside Germany, who were responsible for Germany's defeat and its continuing weakness. (The Jews are people from ancient Israel, but who, because of repeated invasions of their homeland, were scattered

throughout Europe. *To be clear: Hitler's blame upon the Jews is one of the world lies in history.*)

3. Hitler promised the Germans that he could make the changes necessary to make Germany a great country again, and he became the Chancellor of Germany (the leader of the government) in 1933.

G. Meanwhile in America

1. 117,000 Americans died in World War I. It was profound shock, and Americans didn't want to be the world police power yet.
2. In the **1920** presidential election, Americans rejected Wilson's concept of giving up their lives to a global cause. They opted instead to elect Warring Harding, who offered them a "return to normalcy"—which, at that time, meant a return to the "normal" policy of political separation.
3. As Hitler rose to power in Germany, and countries like Italy and Japan (both eventual allies of Nazi Germany) began to attack their neighbors and others, Americans were worried about the advent of a new war, so they passed a series of "Neutrality Acts," hoping not to get dragged into another terrible war.