April 15, 2008

Europe 1919-1925

I) Intro
II) Versailles
III) France
IV) Britain
V) Germany

Final Exam is on Monday; first day of finals. Period between wars was full of tensions. WWII not inevitable.

Several treaties came out of ~~the~~ WWI. Versaille was most important- From the conference of Paris. IDeals & Reality.

IDeals - Wilsons 14 points. Wilson could not transform ideals to reality. Open covenants of democracy- transparency, inclusion. Reality was 4 players (US, Britain, France & Italy) in closed sessions. Germany & Austria not present. No role in process except to sign.

Self Determination of Nations - one political process, boundaries, culture, etc. Reality is secret treaties like London one with Italy. South Tirhd given to Italy w/o peoples consent.

New Poland - Silesia given to Poland.

Hungary move to New Romania. Self-determination not followed. New states created like Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, New Austria created - neutral, not allowed to be part of Germany. Many states not economically viable. Unstable arrangement. Croatians are catholic, Serbs were orthodox. Armenians are Christians

Turkey becomes a secular, western looking state. Tensions still exist today. EU & Turkey. Kosovo, Serbs, etc.

Reparations issue - Germany & its allies get the full bill for the war. Germans protested. Keynes the ~~econ~~ economist from Britain agreed that Germany could not pay. Issue added to German economic instability. Only a fraction was ever paid.

Germany allowed only a volunteer army of 100,000 men & for defense only. No subs, naval fleet, etc. Germans sign ~~under~~ under duress. Harsh treaty.

France - many wanted to annex the Rhineland. Alsace-Lorraine went back to France. Italy wanted eastern Adriatic lands (Yugoslavia). No enforcement of treaty. Western powers lacked will to enforce treaty. 2 issues - nature of treaty & lack of enforcement

Fear ~~of~~ that conquering Germany would bring in communists in a chaotic central Europe. US did not approve Versaille treaty. Did not join League of Nations. We went into isolation mode.

France - problematic features of government comes out. Lower house of parliament had the most power. Constantly shifting power base. 27 different ~~cabinets~~. cabinets. Weak structure. & weak executive power. Little Entente - Yugo, France, Czech, Romania & Poland. Weak states - broke apart quickly. Out of fear & ~~des~~ desperation France builds a wall - Maginot line. Gaps in areas. Not around Belgium. ~~Expensi~~ Expensive, forced France to skimp on Air Force, Navy, tank divisions, etc.

See section in Alsace. Check out vineyards too.

France need funds & supplies. Timber, coal, steel, etc. 1923 - Germans default on materials. France sends troops to Ruhr valley - industrial heartland. Germans call a general strike. Chaos ensues. German strikers are paid & inflation begins. Black troops used by France, Germans really upset now. Brits refuse to help French. Eventually France withdraws. Lesson is that France could not do it alone.

Great Britain - weakened by war. Entire classes of students, a generation decimated. Factories worn out. Conservatives rule from 1919-1923. Tremendous economic problems that appeared unsolvable. High unemployment. Problem of returning veterans. Imperial overstretch - huge empire but not able to be sustained by Britain. Competition from Japan & U.S. General strike in mid 20s. Everyone left their job. Economy collapses more. Unable to enforce Versaille treaty - many problems at home.

Germany - Weimar Period - Weimar is city where new constitution was created. First exp. in democracy. Bill of Rights, universal suff. Shaky & burdened from beginning. Born from defeat. Worse inflation ever seen comes after WWI. Govt. attacked from left & right. Political figures assassinated. Erzberger - shot to death for signing treaty. Unsettled political landscape. Tough on currency. Currency is a psychological instrument.

Currency goes into a Free Fall. 1 Billion Marks = 1 Dollar in 1923. Used Marks For Fuel → cheaper than wood. Paid with wheelbarrows of Marks. Hard currencies were ok. Middle class gets destroyed. Destabilized Germany + allowed extremist groups to grow. Nazis, etc.