

Overview of Unit 11: The First World War and the Russian Revolution

Chapters 17 and 18

Both events, major turning points in world history, share certain things in common:

- 1. Both were the result of major historical trends going all the way back to the French Revolution and Napoleon**
- 2. Both were the culmination of situations which could only be defined as an identity crisis / schizophrenic experiences**
- 3. Both had long term negative effects on global history**
 - a. WWI -> WWII**
 - b. Russian Revolution -> Cold War**
- 4. Both were examples of the bad combination of external pressures and internal instability on the cusp of a new century**
- 5. Both had very unexpected / unplanned results with a terribly ironic twist**
 - a. WWI, done in the name of European superiority, resulted in the decimation of Europe**
 - b. The Russian Revolution, done on the name of re-making Russian reality, became a dictatorship based on rather old models of force, oppression, and inequality**
- 6. Both outcomes were directly determined by the actual process; in both cases, the event represented a “*total war*” as a means of accomplishing the goals, yet it was the “*totality*” of the methods which prevented the goals from ever coming to fruition**
- 7. Both events eventually pulled the US into the situation in completely unanticipated ways**
- 8. Both events had a certain spontaneity to them which caused major dilemmas and contradictions for leaders at that time (a sort of “out of control” quality to the events)**
- 9. Both events could be considered as representing a major gap between theory and reality**