

# WORLD WAR I AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER WW I

Jana Hrabcova

# CENTRAL EUROPE BEFORE WWI

- ◉ two blocks of powers at the beginning of the war:
- ◉ **Entente (Allied Powers):** Great Britain + France + Russia
- ◉ **Central Powers:** Germany + Austria-Hungary + (later) Bulgaria + Turkey
  
- ◉ Italy - firstly neutral, in May 1915 joined the Entente (the London Treaty in April 1915 promised territorial gains to Italy)
- ◉ neutral countries: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Albania
- ◉ USA - neutral at the beginning of the war, entered the war in April 1917
- ◉ the pretext for starting the war was **the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria** in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914
- ◉ July 28, 1918 - Austria-Hungary declared the war on Serbia

# EUROPE DURING WW I



The blocs of Powers

# CENTRAL EUROPE AND WW I



Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sofia in Sarajevo.

# THE TARGETS

- ◉ **Germany** - the most aggressive, wanted new colonies and wanted to expand to the Middle East (Berlin-Baghdad), also wanted to rule in the Central, Eastern and South-East Europe (with the help of Austria-Hungary), Germany also wanted some areas in France and Belgium
- ◉ **Austria-Hungary** - wanted to expand into the Balkan Peninsula and defeat the Kingdom of Serbia, which was independent, Serbia was enemy for A-H also because of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ◉ **France** - wanted to get back Alsace and Lorraine from Germany + keep its colonial domains
- ◉ **Russia** - wanted Galicia (which was Austro-Hungarian in those times), Silesia, and some parts of Balkan Peninsula, especially around the straits between Asia and Europe - Bosphorus and Dardanelles
- ◉ **Serbia** - wanted to keep its independence and to form the Balkan federation - with Croats, Slovenes and Serbs living in Austria and Hungary
- ◉ **Great Britain** - wanted to keep its colonies and exclude Germany from world trade, stop its expansion to the Middle East
- ◉ **USA** - wanted to defend democracy in the world and the principle of self-determination of the nations (Woodrow Wilson)

# FOUR PHASES OF THE WAR:

- ❑ August - December 1914 - offensive operations
- ❑ 1915-1916 - trench warfare
- ❑ 1917-1918 - the era of total exhaustion
- ❑ March 191 - November 1918 - supremacy of Allied Powers (USA entered the war in April 1917)

# FOUR MAIN FRONTS

- ◉ Balkan front (Balkan Peninsula, firstly in Serbia, then in Greece)
  - ◉ Western front (against France)
  - ◉ Eastern front (against Russia)
  - ◉ Italian front
- 
- ◉ also naval war (in the Pacific Ocean - Japan + Great Britain against Germany, in the Northern Sea - Great Britain against Germany)
  - ◉ warfare in the colonies

# WESTERN FRONT

- ◉ the Germans attacked France according to the so called **Schlieffen Plan** - designed to attack France quickly through neutral Belgium
- ◉ the German troops were stopped at **the First Battle of Marne** in September 1914 - the offensive war changed into trench warfare
- ◉ March 1915 - **the second Battle of Ypres** - the Germans used chlorine gas - 15 thousands of men were poisoned
- ◉ from February till September 1916 - bloody **battle of Verdun** - 600 thousands of casualties,
- ◉ from July till November 1916 the great **battle of the Somme** - totally 1 million casualties during the whole battle, the new British invention was used - the tanks



# WESTERN FRONT



The Second Battle of Ypres



The Battle of the Somme

## BALKAN FRONT

- ⦿ Austrian army was not successful in Serbia
- ⦿ September 1915 - **Bulgaria** entered the war
- ⦿ during October and November 1915 German-Austrian and Bulgarian troops occupied Serbia
- ⦿ in spring 1915 - the Allied Powers **prepared the operation in Gallipoli** under the command of **Winston Churchill**, but the operation was not successful
- ⦿ then in 1916 the Macedonian Front in Greece was opened
- ⦿ the Bulgarians were defeated in September 1918

# EASTERN FRONT

- ◉ In the east, Russia attacked East Prussia but was defeated by German army at the series of battles collectively known as **the Battle of Tannenberg** in August 1914
- ◉ Already in 1914 - the Czech Company in Russian Army - Legions
- ◉ summer 1916 - so called Brusilov offensive
- ◉ 1917 - the Czechoslovak Corps in Russia - from 38,000 to 70,000 of men
- ◉ the Russians were more successful against Austria-Hungary in Galicia
- ◉ Russia occupied parts of Galicia and Bukovina
- ◉ July 1917 - so called Kerensky offensive - **the Battle of Zborov** (Galicia) - Czechoslovak Legions, the offensive was unsuccessful for Russians
- ◉ After the Russian Revolution the Czechoslovak Legions were fighting against bolsheviks

## ITALIAN FRONT

- Italy entered the war in April 1915 - the Allied Powers promised to Italy Istria with Trieste, Dalmacia and Trentino, so Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary and later also on Germany
- but the Italians were not very succesful, their offensives along **the Isonzo River** were repelled by the Austro-Hungarians
- 1917 - the Battle of Caporetto - Italian troops were defeated by Austro-Hungarian army and the front line was broken through, use of poison gas
- during 1916 the front stabilized at the Piave River till 1918 - June 1918 - **the Battle of the Piave River** - participation of Czechoslovak Legions
- the Austro-Hungarians were defeated in October - **the Battle of Vittorio Veneto** - participation of Czechoslovak Legions again

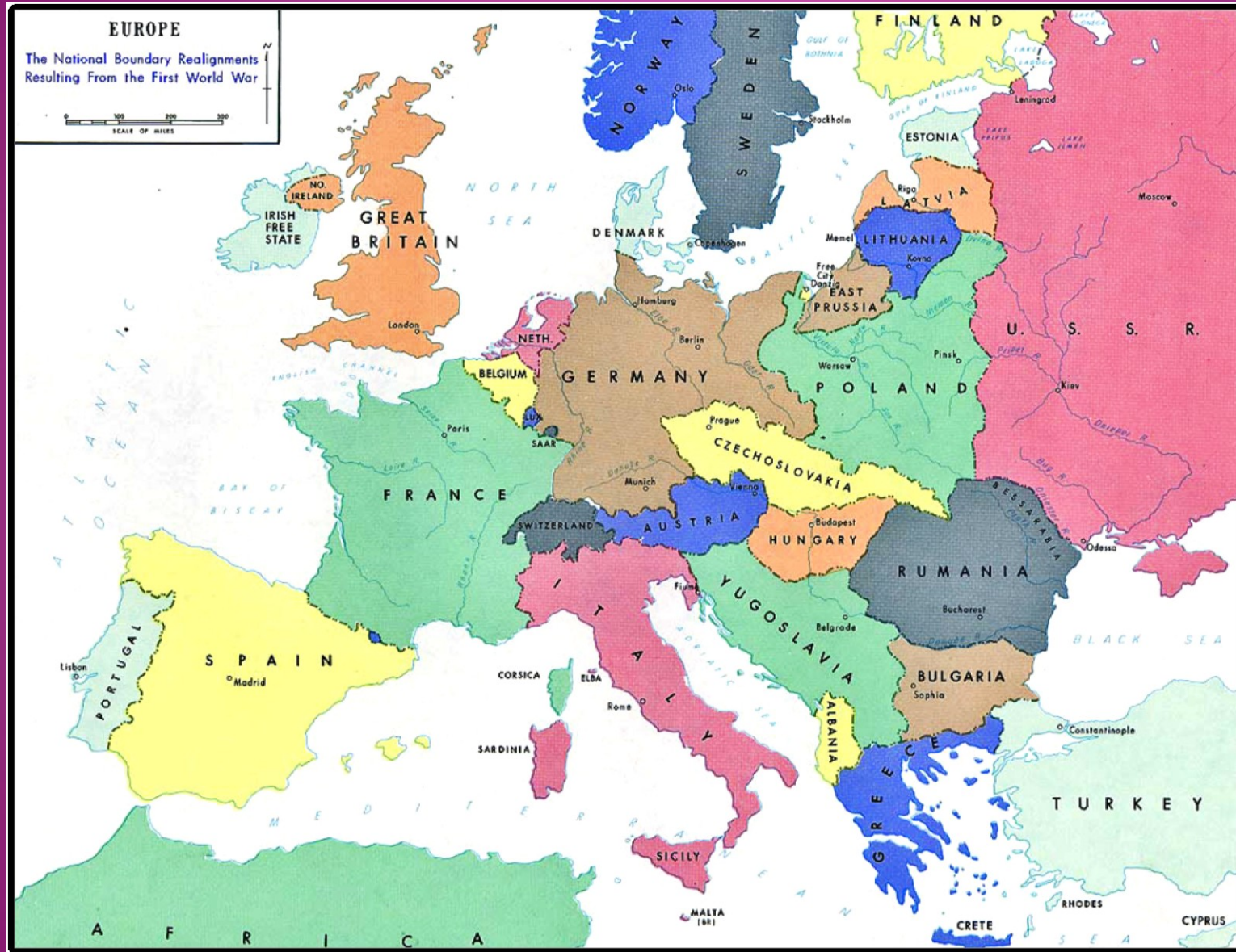
# THE FINAL PERIOD OF THE WAR

- ◉ after the Russian revolutions in 1917 Russia concluded separate peace with Germany in **Brest Litevski** in March 1918
- ◉ April 1917 - USA declared war on Germany - originally USA pursued the politics of non-interventions, but German submarines several times attacked merchant ships and civil ships with American passengers
- ◉ The United States were never formally a member of the Allies but became a self-styled "Associated Power"
- ◉ American troops came to Europe and after the great offensive of Allied Powers in summer 1918 the Central Powers collapsed very quickly
- ◉ On **November 3, 1918** Austria-Hungary sent a flag of truce to ask for an Armistice and the armistice with Austira was signed in Vila Giusti near Padua
- ◉ on **November 11, 1918**- an armistice with Germany signed in railroad carriage near **Compiègne**
- ◉ at 11 a.m. on **November 11, 1918** a ceasefire came into effect

# RESULTS OF THE WAR

- ◉ **dissolution of four monarchies** (Russia, Austria-Hungary, German Empire and Otoman Empire)
- ◉ after dissolution of Austria-Hungary:  
**constitution of 5 new states** (Austrian Republic, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes)
- ◉ the map of Europe changed: **Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia** was established, independent and unified **Poland** was renewed

# RESULTS OF THE WAR



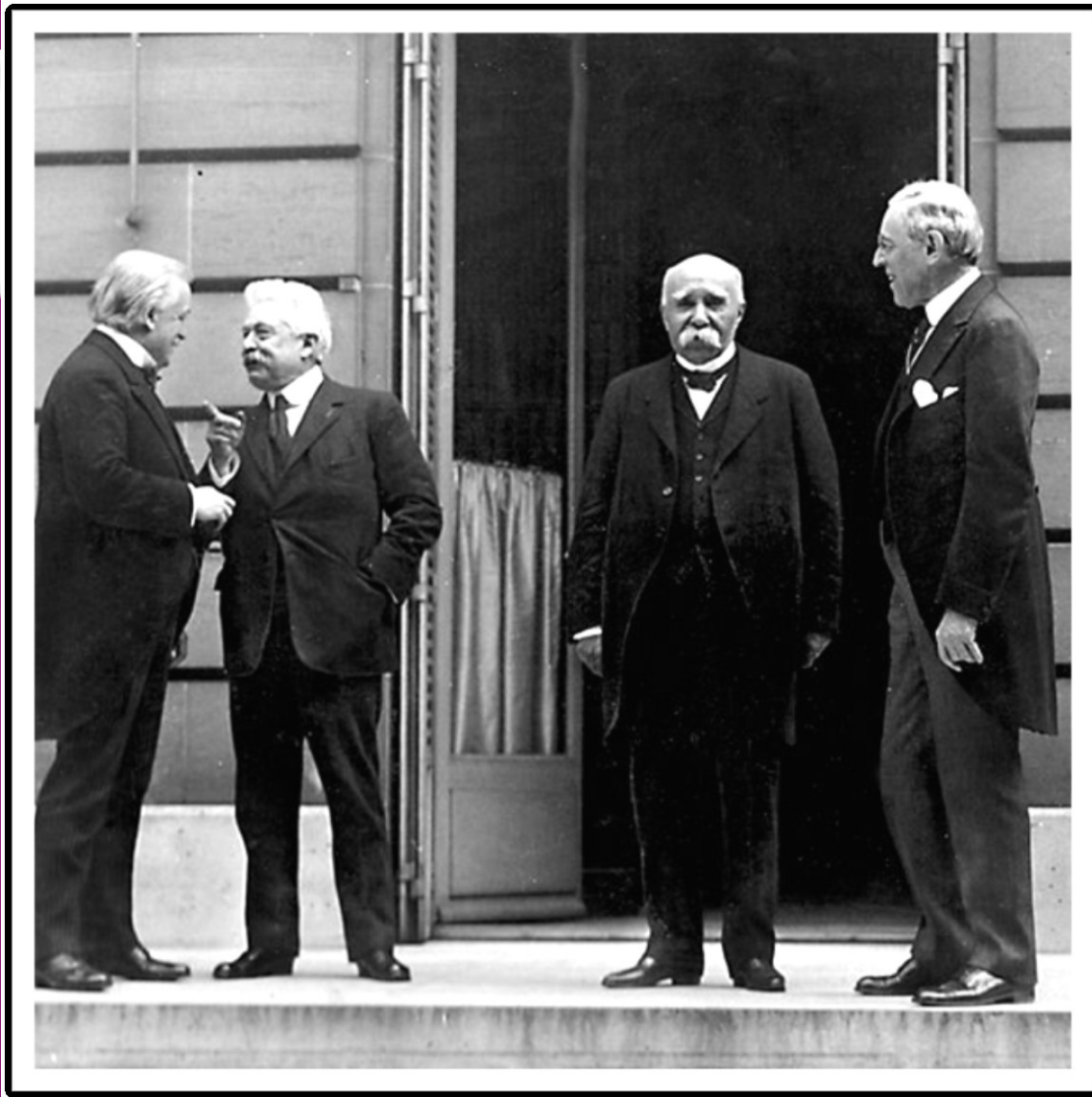
Europe after WW I

# PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

- ◉ the meeting of the Allied victors following the end of World War I - the aim was to set the peace terms for the defeated Central Powers following the armistices of 1918
- ◉ It took place in Paris in 1919 and involved diplomats from more than 32 countries and nationalities. They met, discussed various options and developed a series of treaties ("Paris Peace Treaties") for the post-war world
- ◉ **the winning powers** - France, Great Britain, USA, Italy, Japan
- ◉ **other fighting states** - Belgium, British dominions, Poland, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Greece, Portugal and other non-european states
- ◉ **defeated states** - Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkey
- ◉ Russia was not invited to the Paris Peace Conference (bolshevik revolution and civil war in Russia)



# PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE



**The Big Four -**  
David Lloyd Geroge  
(GB), Vittorio Orlando  
(It), George  
Clemencau (Fr),  
Woodrow Wilson (US)

# PEACE TREATIES

*The following treaties were prepared at the Paris Peace Conference:*

- ◉ **the Treaty of Versailles**, 1919, 28 June 1919, (with the German Empire in Weimar Republic form)
- ◉ **the Treaty of Saint-Germain**, 10 September 1919, (with Austria)
- ◉ **the Treaty of Neuilly**, 27 November 1919, (with Bulgaria)
- ◉ **the Treaty of Trianon**, 4 June 1920, (with Hungary)
- ◉ **the Treaty of Sèvres**, 10 August 1920; subsequently revised by the Treaty of Lausanne, 24 June 1923, (with Turkey)

# VERSAILLES SYSTEM

- The so-called "Paris Peace Treaties", together with the accords of the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-1922, laid the foundations for the so-called Versailles-Washington system of international relations
- the United States never ratified the Treaty of Versailles, never joined the League of Nations, and signed separate peace treaties with the three countries it had declared war against
- 1920 - the **League of the Nations** was established - the all over the world organization which goal was to save peace in the World, USA did not join this organization

# CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER WWI

## *Economy*

- ◉ 1921-1922 - economic depression as a consequence of the war
- ◉ 1924-1929 - economic boom, liberal economic reforms, technical development, intensification and growth of production
- ◉ 1929, October 24 - the Black Tuesday, New York Stock Market Crash (Wall Street) → The Great Depression - the longest, most widespread, and deepest depression of the 20th century, drop of industrial production, high unemployment, social unrests, crisis of democracy
- ◉ since 1933 - economic development again, but slow

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER WWI

- ◉ unstable peace, effort to avoid conflicts, era of democratism a pacifism
- ◉ April - May 1922 - **Conference in Genova, Italy** about economy after WWI
- ◉ also Russia and Germany invited
- ◉ the conference was about German reparations - Germany was not able to pay it but France insisted on it → no agreement
- ◉ the result of the conference: meeting of German and Soviet diplomats - they concluded an **Agreement in Rappalo** - Germany was the first state which recognized the Soviet Union de iure
- ◉ 1924 - **the Dawes Plan** - the plan of stabilization of German economy and economical recovery (stabilization of mark, budget, sequential paying of reparations)
- ◉ The Dawes Plan relied on money given to Germany by the US - high loans

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN CENTRAL EUROPE AFTER WWI

## Locarno Conference, Switzerland - October 1925

- ◉ 4 great powers (Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany) – an attempt to overcome the differences between the winners and losers
- ◉ The principal treaty concluded at Locarno was the "**Rhineland Pact**" between Germany, France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Italy. The first three signatories undertook not to attack each other, with the latter two acting as guarantors
- ◉ the western borders of Germany were guaranteed but the eastern were not - there could come up to some changes
- ◉ Germany's admission to the League of Nations, the international organization established under the Versailles treaty to promote world peace and co-operation, and in the subsequent withdrawal (completed in June 1930) of Allied troops from Germany's western Rhineland

# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CENTRAL

## EUROPE AFTER WWI

- ◉ **Briand-Kellog Pact** - also called the **General Treaty for the Renunciation of War** or the **World Peace Act**) was signed on August 27, 1928 57 states
- ◉ prohibited the use of war as "an instrument of national policy" and as an instrument of settlement of disputes between states
- ◉ the problem was that there were not defined any sanctions in case of breaching the Pact
- ◉ no program of disarmament
- ◉ **The Young Plan** was a program for settlement of German reparations debts after World War I written in 1929 and formally adopted in 1930
- ◉ Germany was not able to pay the huge annual payments, so the amount of the reparation payments was reduced again - to 112 billion Gold Marks, Germany should pay them in next 59 years, 2 billion marks every year

# READINGS

- ◉ WWI:

<http://www.firstworldwar.com>

- ◉ Treaty of Locarno

<http://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002801683d0>

- ◉ HENIG, Ruth B (1995). *Versailles and after, 1919-1933*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.