

World War I

A. The Great War (1914-1919)

1. The assassination of *Archduke Franz Ferdinand* on June 28, 1914 in Bosnia sparked a series of events that resulted in World War I
 - a. By 1914, European nations had begun to embrace militarism (glorification of the military) & to guarantee their security began to form alliances like the *Triple Alliance* & the *Triple Entente*
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. These alliances emboldened European leaders to act recklessly, so when Austria-Hungary sought to punish Serbia for the assassination, it caused what was a localized quarrel to quickly spread due to the alliance system
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. This intricate series of alliances led to the formation of the *Allied Powers* (Great Britain, France, Russia, & eventually the U.S.) & the *Central Powers* (Germany, Austria-Hungary, & the Ottoman Empire)
2. The Germans used a military plan known as the *Schlieffen Plan* that hoped to quickly knock France out of the war to avoid a 2-front war when Russia mobilized, so Germany sent a small force to defend their eastern border while a much larger force raced across Belgium into France
 - a. This plan was a violation of international law, because Belgium was neutral, which caused Britain to come to its defense
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. German forces were halted at Marne River & the war bogged down into trench warfare on the Western Front where a series of trenches that were constructed that stretched from the English Channel to the Swiss border
 - (1)
 - (2)

- c. Trench warfare tended to be begun with officers from one side yelling “Attack!” followed by their men rising & charging toward the opposing trench
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - d. To gain an edge, new technologies were developed like poison chlorine gas, hand grenades, tanks, aerial bombs, & submarines
3. By the time World War I ended it involved more countries & cost more money than any previous war in history & resulted in the death of more than 9 million soldiers, sailors, & flyers
- a. The stalemate caused by trench warfare produced political turmoil across Europe
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Disruption to European economies by the war allowed the U.S. to become the world’s leading creditor & industrial power

B. American Neutrality

- 1. On August 4, 1914, Wilson issued an official declaration of neutrality, because many citizens did not believe the outcome of this war had any bearing on U.S. interests or our security
 - a. While Wilson privately sympathized with the *Allies*, he felt the war was too complicated & obscure to involve the U.S. in war
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. By 1917, U.S. loans to *Allies* amounted to \$2.25 billion, while loans to Germany only totaled \$27 million, which meant that for the first time, the U.S. was a creditor nation & had a strong economic interest in an *Allied* victory
- 2. To break up Britain’s naval superiority, Germany relied on submarine warfare & on February 4, 1915, Germany proclaimed a “*war zone*” around the British Isles where enemy merchant ships that entered this *zone* would be torpedoed without warning & neutral ships would not be guaranteed safe passage
 - a. International law required ships that attacked other vessels at sea to warn their intended victims, allow time for passengers to reach lifeboats, & then rescue survivors after the sinking

(1)

(2)

b. Since German actions threatened the lives of the innocent, Wilson threatened that Germany would be held “strictly accountable” for American lives lost due to submarine attacks

(1)

(2)

(3)

c. Germany expressed regret & paid some money, but said they would not stop sinking merchant ships

(1)

(2)

3. On February 1, 1917, Germany announced that all vessels caught in the war zone would be sunk without warning

a. In January 1917, the British intercepted a secret message from German Foreign Minister Arthur Zimmermann to Mexico known as the *Zimmermann Note*

(1)

(2)

b. On March 15, 1915, the Russian Revolution erupted & the czar’s government was replaced by a provisional government with a representative government

(1)

(2)

C. War on the Home Front

1. During the war, the government set up programs to raise an army, construct a war economy, & even finance the war

a. On May 18, 1917, Congress passed the *Selective Service Act*, which required men ages 21-30 to register with local draft boards, where people would be chosen at random to serve in the military

(1)

- (2)
 - b. The government established the *War Industries Board (WIB)* to regulate all industries engaged in the war effort, while other agencies like the *Food Administration* were set up to conserve supplies so there would be enough for soldiers abroad
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. The war was financed through the issuing of 5 government bonds, new taxes on business incomes, & large personal income taxes
- 2. With hundreds of thousands of men serving in the army, industries were extremely short of laborers
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. Around this same time, there was a great movement of African Americans from the rural South to the industrial North in what is better known as the *Great Migration*
 - (1)
 - (2)
- 3. Wilson also launched a huge propaganda campaign to mobilize support for the war effort
 - a. In 1917, the *Committee on Public Information (CPI)* was formed that had the goal of getting all Americans to support the war effort
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. The *CPI* stressed the cruelty & wickedness of the enemy & in the process, fostered a witch-hunt in the name of patriotism where many attacked the loyalty of German Americans
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - c. Vigilante groups attacked anyone suspected of being unpatriotic

4. The political climate became very repressive during the war with the passing of the *Espionage Act (1917)* & the *Sedition Act (1918)*, & the *Schenck v. United States (1919)* Supreme Court case
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. In the *Schenck* case, Charles T. Schenck was convicted for distributing leaflets urging draftees to oppose the war, but Schenck argued that he should be protected due to the 1st Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - d. Due to such laws & court rulings, the *American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)* was founded during World War I to defend the 1st Amendment

D. The End of the War & Wilson's Fourteen Points

1. American ships relieved British in patrolling & some combated against the submarine problem
 - a. To contain German U-Boats, U.S. ships laid more than 60,000 mines in the North Sea & U.S. warships patrolled the U.S. Atlantic coastline
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. The convoy system proved so successful that it was used to transport U.S. troops to Europe
2. While U.S. troops trained, the situation in Europe got worse with instances of French mutiny, & Communist Bolsheviks making peace with Germany
 - a. In spring of 1918, Germany launched an all-out offensive on the Western Front that brought them nearly 50 miles from Paris
 - (1)
 - (2)

- b. During the final months of fighting, American troops hit Europe like a tidal wave & fighting ended on November 11, 1918
- 3. The ***Fourteen Points*** was Woodrow Wilson's personal peace formula, which called for freedom of the seas, free trade, arms reduction, *self-determination* (right for country to choose own government), partial or full independence for minorities, & a ***League of Nations***
 - a. The *League of Nations* was to be an international organization to promote world peace by guaranteeing territorial integrity of all nations
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. While Wilson wanted his *Fourteen Points* enacted, most of the other major participants at the *Treaty of Versailles* wanted either more territories or reparations from Germany
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. Germany was given a \$34 billion reparations bill & was forced to accept blame for World War I
 - (1)
 - (2)
- 4. In February 1919, 39 Senate Republicans led by Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge warned that they would not approve of the *League of Nations* in its present form
 - a. Lodge & the *strong reservationists* offered "***Lodge Reservations***" to the *Treaty of Versailles* & the *League of Nations*
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. When Warren G. Harding won the presidency in 1920, he Harding interpreted his victory as a directive to reject the *League*, which resulted in the U.S. never joining