

Ch 11 The First World War

Section 1: World War I Begins

4 Long-term Causes of WWI

1. Nationalism – the belief that national interests and national unity should be placed ahead of global cooperation and a nation's foreign affairs should be guided by its own self-interest

a. France – jockeying for European leadership, still recovering from land losses during the Franco-Prussian War

b. Germany – created after the Prussian victory over France, competing with France for European power

c. Russia – protector of Europe's Slavic peoples

d. Serbia – independent nation

e. Austria-Hungary – rival with Russia for influence over Serbia

2. Imperialism - as Germany industrialized, it competed with France and Britain in the contest for colonies

3. Militarism – development of armed forces and their use as a tool of diplomacy

a. By 1890, Germany was the strongest European nation

b. Had an army reserve system and a strong navy

4. Alliance System – mutual hostilities, jealousies, fears, and desires led European nations to sign alliances

- a. Two major alliances by 1914
 1. Allies (Triple Entente) – France, Great Britain, and Russia (also has a separate treaty with Serbia)
 2. Central Powers (Triple Alliance) – Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy (joins allies in 1915), and the Ottoman Empire
- b. Provided a measure of international security

Assassination Leads to War

1. Balkan Peninsula – bounded by the Black Sea, Adriatic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, and the Aegean Sea (Powder Keg of Europe)
 - a. Russia – wanted an outlet to the Mediterranean
 - b. Germany – extend RRs to Ottoman Empire
 - c. Austria-Hungary – annexed Bosnia in 1908, objected to Serbia encouraging Bosnians to reject Austria-Hungary rule
2. Archduke Franz Ferdinand – heir to the Austrian throne
 - a. Parading through Sarajevo on June 28, 1914 with his wife
 - b. Shot by a teenager who was a member of the Black Hand (wanted to unite all Serbs, including those in Bosnia)
 - c. July 28, 1914, Austria-Hungary declares war against Serbia, putting the alliance system into action
 - d. July 29 - Russia mobilizes army to protect Serbia

- e. Aug 1 – Germany declares war on Russia
- f. Aug 3 – Germany declares war on France, Britain declares war on Germany and Austria-Hungary

Schlieffen Plan – put together by Count Alfred von Schlieffen in 1905, enacted on Aug 4 when Germany invaded Belgium

1. Holding action against Russia
2. Quick drive through Belgium lowlands to Paris
3. After France falls, German armies would join to defeat Russia
 - a. No Man's Land – barren expanse of mud pockmarked with shell craters and filled with barbed wire entanglements
 - b. High Casualties – Battle of Somme July 1, 1916 to mid-November
 - i. Germans – 650,00
 - ii. British – 420,000
 - iii. French – 200,000
 - c. Trench Warfare – opposing forces attack and counterattack from systems of fortified ditches rather than an open battlefield

American Neutrality

1. Opposition to war
2. Sympathy for Allies – ancestral ties to England, German atrocities, economic ties

British Naval Blockade – designed to prevent military goods and food from entering German ports

1. American ships carrying goods to Germany refused to challenge British blockade
2. Germany found it increasingly difficult to obtain foodstuffs and chemical fertilizers
3. German Response – blockade by U-boats, any ship found in waters around Great Britain would be sunk, far less destructive than British blockade
4. Lusitania – British cruise liner sunk by a U-boat killing 1,198 people, including 128 Americans
 - a. Sussex & Arabic – liners also attacked by U-boats

Election of 1916

1. Wilson (Dem) vs. Charles Evans Hughes (Rep)
2. Wilson wins a close election

Neutrality Collapses

1. Wilson tries to negotiate “A Peace Without Victory”
2. Zimmermann Note – message sent by German foreign minister to the German ambassador in Mexico, proposing a German-Mexican alliance and promising to help Mexico regain Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona if U.S. entered war
3. Four unarmed American merchant ships were sunk killing 36
4. War of democracies against brutal monarchies

U.S. Enters War – enters in April 1917 for two reasons:

1. To ensure allied repayment of debts
2. Prevent Germans from threatening shipping

Section 2: American Power Tips the Balance

American Military Mobilization

1. Only 200,000 men were in service when war was declared
2. Weapons were out of date, only 55 small planes, and 130 pilots
3. Selective Service Act – May 1917, passed by Congress requiring men to register for military service
4. About 2 million troops would reach Europe before the wars end

Building the “Bridge to France”

1. Exempted shipyard workers from the draft or delayed their participation in the draft
2. Government & U.S. Chamber of Commerce emphasized importance of shipyard work
3. Fabrication – instead of building an entire ship in the yard, they had standardized parts built elsewhere and assembled them at the yard
4. Government took over ships being constructed for private owners and converted them for transatlantic war

Breaking the Blockade

1. Convoy System – merchant vessels would travel in a large group with a guard of circling destroyers and cruisers
2. Convoy system & mining of the North Sea greatly decreased the effectiveness of U-Boats

Fighting in Europe

1. Americans initially served only as replacements for Allied casualties, not until April of 1918 would they serve as an independent force
2. AEF (American Expeditionary Force) – commanded by General John J. Pershing
3. “Doughboys” – nickname for American infantry men because of the white belts they wore and cleaned with clay or dough
4. By early 1918 the Germans had defeated the Russians on the eastern front and were only 50 miles outside of Paris
5. American forces helped to drive the Germans back, turning the tide of the war against the Central Powers by Oct 1918
6. Alvin York – originally a conscientious objector to the war (opposes warfare on moral grounds), became one of America’s greatest war heroes during fighting in the Meuse-Argonne area
 - a. Oct 8, 1918 – York, armed with only a rifle and a revolver, killed 25 Germans and along with 6 other soldiers captured 132 prisoners

b. Promoted to sergeant and became a celebrity

New Weapons

1. Machine Gun – sprayed 600 rounds per minute, also used to fire tubes of poison gas
2. Mechanized Warfare – relies on machines powered by gasoline and diesel engines
 - a. Tanks – first developed by the British, had caterpillar treads and were built of steel to deflect bullets
 - b. Airplanes – initially used only as scouting devices, but due to technological improvements they became increasingly used for dog fighting and bombing raids
3. Observational Balloons – connected to HQ by a telephone allowing for direct communication which was not possible with airplanes

Medical Care

1. Filth, lice, rats, and polluted water causing dysentery
2. Stench of decaying bodies and poison
3. Battle Fatigue & “Shell Shock” – complete emotional collapse
4. Trench Foot – caused by standing in wet trenches without changing socks or boots
 - a. Toes would turn red or blue, then go numb, and then begin to rot; only cure was to amputate

Collapse of Germany

1. Spread of Mutiny – started in the navy and quickly spread to mainland Germany
2. Nov 9, 1918 – rebellion broke out in Berlin forcing the Kaiser to flee to the Netherlands
3. The German war machine and war economy were too exhausted to continue
4. 11th hour of the 11th day in the 11th month of 1918, Germany agreed to a cease fire

Final Toll

1. WWI lasted four years, involving more than 30 nations
2. War resulted in 26 million deaths (half of them civilians)
3. 20 million people wounded and 10 million refugees
4. Cost: \$350 billion

Section 3: The War at Home

Congress Gives Power to Wilson

1. Necessary to mobilize the entire economy, had to shift from producing consumer goods to producing weapons, ammunition, and other war supplies
2. Wilson was given direct control over much of the economy, including the power to fix prices and to regulate certain war related industries
3. War Industries Board (WIB) – established in 1917 to increase efficiency and discourage waste in war-related industries

- a. Run by Bernard M. Baruch
- 4. Railroad Administration & Fuel Administration
- 5. War Economy
 - a. National War Labor Board – established by Wilson in 1918 to deal with disputes between management and labor
 - b. Food Administration – headed by Herbert Hoover, designed to produce and conserve food
 - i. Meatless, Sweetless, and Wheatless days
 - ii. Victory Gardens

Selling the War – war was not universally popular

- 1. Government propaganda campaign:
 - a. Promote Patriotism
 - b. Manufacture Hate
- 2. War Financing – spent \$33 billion on war
 - a. 1/3 came from taxes: income, war-profits, and excise (tobacco, liquor, and luxury goods)
 - b. Rest came from public borrowing and war bonds
- 3. Committee on Public Information (CPI) – headed by George Creel, a former muckraking journalist
 - a. Created posters, paintings, cartoons, sculptures, speeches, pamphlets, and booklets promoting the war

Attacks on Civil Liberties

- 1. Anti-immigrant Hysteria – targeted anyone who had emigrated from a different country, especially Germany and Austria-Hungary

2. Espionage and Sedition Acts – enacted in 1917 and 1918 that imposed harsh penalties on anyone interfering with or speaking out against U.S. involvement in WWI
 - a. Clearly violated the 1st Amendment
 - b. Targeted Socialists and labor leaders
 - c. The civil liberties record of the Wilson Administration was not one to make Americans proud

Social Changes During the War

1. African Americans – led by W.E.B. Du Bois, most African Americans backed the war
 - a. Great Migration – large scale movement of hundreds of thousands of Southern blacks to cities in the North, greatly accelerated by war
 - i. Tried to escape racial discrimination
 - ii. Poor cotton crops in the South
 - iii. Henry Ford opened up his line to blacks
 - iv. Steel mills, munitions plants, and stockyards needed laborers due to war
2. Women in the War
 - a. Began to fill jobs normally occupied by men in addition to traditional jobs
 - b. Many volunteered – Red Cross, selling war bonds, and promoting victory gardens
 - c. Increased role of women led to passage of 19th Amendment in 1919, granting them the right to vote

3. Flu Epidemic

- a. Fall of 1918 – nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of U.S. population fell ill to high fever, headaches, and aching muscles often followed by pneumonia
- b. Devastated the economy
- c. 500,000 Americans died before the end of the epidemic in 1919
- d. Killed as many as 40 million people worldwide

Section 4: Wilson Fights for Peace

Wilson's Fourteen Points – speech delivered to Congress on Jan 18, 1918

1. Divided into three groups
2. 1st Five – addressed issues Wilson believed caused the war
 - a. Nations should engage only in open agreements, there should be no secret treaties
 - b. Freedom of the seas should be maintained for all
 - c. Tariffs and other economic barriers should be lowered or abolished to foster free trade
 - d. Arms should be reduced in order to lessen militaristic impulses during diplomatic crisis
 - e. Colonial policies should consider the interests of the colonial peoples as well as the interests of the imperialists
3. Following 8 points dealt with specific boundary changes according to self-determination

- a. National groups who claimed distinct ethnic identities were to decide for themselves what nations they would belong to
4. 14th Point – League of Nations – international organization designed to address diplomatic crises before they lead to war
5. Wilson was forced to concede on most of his 14 points in return for the establishment of the League of Nations
 - a. France, Britain, & Italy each wanted the Central Powers to pay

Treaty of Versailles – June 28, 1919, negotiated by the Big 4 (U.S., France, Britain, and Italy) w/o the presence of Russia or the Central Powers

1. Established 9 new nations: Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, and shifted the boundaries of others
2. Carved 4 areas out of the Ottoman Empire: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine (now Israel & Jordan)
3. Demilitarized Germany
4. Reparations – war damages, Germany was ordered to pay \$33 billion to the Allies
5. War-guilt Clause – forced Germany to acknowledge that it alone was responsible for WWI

Treaty's Weaknesses – set the seeds for postwar international problems leading to WWII

1. Treaty humiliated Germany – other European nations were equally responsible for poor diplomatic

conditions leading up to WWI, no way for Germany to pay huge reparations

2. Bolshevik government of Russia felt that the Big 4 ignored its needs

a. Russians fought for 3 years to help the Allies, suffering more casualties than any other nation

b. Lost more territory than Germany did

3. Colonial Territories

a. Germany was stripped of colonial possessions in the Pacific

b. Self-determination wasn't given to colonies in SE Asia

Opposition to the Treaty

1. Herbert Hoover believed economic conditions were too harsh

2. Ethnic groups objected to new national boundaries

3. Most opposition centered around the League of Nations

a. Henry Cabot Lodge – lead a group of conservative Senators who were suspicious of the provision for joint economic and military action against aggression

4. Realizing that the Senate may not approve his treaty, Wilson launched a massive speaking campaign delivering 35 speeches in 22 days

a. Already in fragile health, Wilson suffered a stroke on Oct 2, 1918

5. Senate rejected the treaty and the League of Nations and Wilson refused to compromise

Legacy of War

1. A severe depression hit Germany in 1923 rendering millions of workers jobless
2. German money (mark) became nearly worthless
3. Many Germans were searching for scapegoats and a former Austrian corporal, Adolf Hitler, convinced them that the source of their problems were the Jews
4. Hitler and his Nazi party would gain control of Germany in 1933, instituting military policies leading directly to WWII