

## Chapter 23, America and the Great War

### The Road to War

- I. The Collapse of the European Peace
  - A. Alliances were a major issue before WWI—"Triple Entente" was between Britain, France, and Russia; "Triple Alliance" was Germany, Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Italy
  - B. Major Anglo-German rivalry was an underlying cause of WWI
  - C. Nationalist movement in Austro-Hungarian Empire: Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist because the Austrians wanted to move into Serbian territories
  - D. Germany and Austria attack Serbia
  - E. Russia defends Serbia
  - F. Germany declares war on Russia and France as well, invading Belgium to get to France
  - G. Great Britain declares war on Germany because it allied with France
  - H. Italy entered war with GB and France
  - I. Europe ended up all in war
- II. Wilson's Neutrality
  - A. Wilson called for Americans to remain "impartial in thought as well as deed"
  - B. Many Americans took sides with Germany (German- and Irish-Americans)
  - C. Others took sides with England (including Wilson who was a *anglophile*) and American support of England increased with British propaganda about German atrocities
  - D. Economic ties with Britain—a neutral nation would not trade with Germany or Britain during a blockade by Britain of Germany; the US needed trade with England (war produced huge boom for US), US slowly sided with Allies
  - E. Submarine Warfare—new German tactic; Britain had surface
  - F. *Lusitania*—Germany sunk the British "enemy vessel" *Lusitania* causing the deaths of over 100 Americans; although the ship had munitions from US to Britain, Roosevelt said it was "an act of piracy"
  - G. Wilson demanded Germany stop sinking random ships and respect US as a neutral nation
  - H. They agreed and sunk the *Sussex* of France, killing Americans
  - I. This didn't bring the US into war, however
- III. Preparedness versus Pacifism
  - A. Wilson faced reelection but really did not have a major issue with the war because he was good at balancing issues
  - B. Wilson changed his mind from the idea that building the military was provocative to the idea that it was vital as hostilities increased and by 1916 the army was ready for war
  - C. 1916 Election—Wilson won the election against Charles Evans Hughes on the platform that he kept the US out of war on one of the smallest victories ever
- IV. A War for Democracy
  - A. Wilson planned that the war was a catalyst for a new world order
  - B. "Peace without victory"
  - C. Germany launched greater assaults to clinch the war before the US intervened
  - D. Zimmerman Telegram—German Arthur Zimmerman's proposal to Mexico that if the US enter the war, Mexico attack and regain Texas, etc.; British publicized it
  - E. Russian czars were toppled by republicans so the US could ally with a democratic power
  - F. Declaration of War was declared

### "War Without Stint"

*Stalemate*—Wilson knew that with the war at the current situation, the US was the only one who could break the tie between axis and allies.

- I. Entering the War
  - A. US had biggest effect on naval war
  - B. Russian Revolution—after Russia changed from czarist to V.I. Lenin, they left the war and Germany fought mostly on western front
- II. The American Expeditionary Force

- A. Small army, little experience
  - B. Selective Service Act—Roosevelt favored voluntary army, Wilson favored draft, passed draft that called for soldiers in the American Expeditionary Force
  - C. Soldiers were in terrible trenches, many got STDs, in fact, the Department of War declined a French offer (Georges Clemenceau) to have hired prostitutes who are checked for disease
  - D. Women were recruited into the army for auxiliary roles
  - E. Segregated black troops, sometimes caused conflict
  - F. American Psychological Association formed IQ tests to study soldiers, majority scored as “morons” but really just had never had education
- III. The Military Struggle
- A. General John Pershing of America
  - B. Heavy shelling of trenches, ventures across “no-man’s land” between trenches, muddy, wet, cold, etc, disease...
  - C. When US entered war, allies went on the offensive
  - D. Fighting.....
  - E. Germany surrenders on November 11, 1918
- IV. The New Technology of Warfare
- A. Tanks, flamethrowers, etc.
  - B. Chemical weapons, gases, etc
  - C. New vehicles etc, required a lot of maintenance, parts
  - D. New ships were very important
  - E. High casualty rates were a major result of new technology

## **The War and American Society**

- I. Organizing the Economy for War
- A. Financing the war—Americans sold “Liberty Bonds,” etc. to the public to raise money for war; levied excess profit tax on corporations, etc.
  - B. Wilson set up Council of National Defense and Civilian Advisory Commission to have defense councils in every community
  - C. Later they created war boards that divided economy into planning bodies on every issue (agriculture, insurance, etc.)
  - D. War Industries Board—Bernard Baruch controlled this organization that divided factories up into war material plants; really an irrelevant organization
  - E. Economists recommended enhancing economy by mutualistic agreements between the public and private sectors
- II. Labor and the War
- A. National War Labor Board resolved labor disputes and granted provisions to laborers
    - 1. Eight-hour day
    - 2. Maintenance of living standards
    - 3. Equal pay for both sexes
    - 4. Unions
  - B. However—NO STRIKES during war
  - C. There was one strike in coal mines of Ludlow, Colorado
  - D. Ludlow Massacre—fighting broke out, 39 die
- III. Economic and Social Results of the War
- A. Economic boom in the US from industrial needs of war
  - B. Growth in income for everyone; new opportunities for minorities
  - C. “Great Migration”—hundreds of thousands of blacks moved from rural areas into cities
  - D. Push and Pull—push was poverty, racism, pull was factory jobs in the North: double positive
  - E. Results
    - 1. Old black citizens feared that country ways of new blacks would increase racism
    - 2. Inadequate housing situations
    - 3. Race riots went out to hurt blacks
  - F. Women took on roles of men when men were away fighting: steel, trucking, etc.

- G. However, this was ephemeral and women quickly quit or were fired after the war, even those who had worked before the war.

## **The Search for Social Unity**

- I. The Peace Movement
  - A. Composed of German and Irish Americans, Quakers, Mennonites, and socialists, the advocates of peace considered war a meaningless battle for commercial supremacy (a little cynical?)
  - B. Women's Peace Party—although the largest women's groups supported the war, the biggest opposition to the war came from women
  - C. Maternal Opposition to the War—women believed they represented the “mother half of humanity”
- II. Selling the War and Suppressing Dissent
  - A. Many Americans supported the war and the troops once war began
  - B. Patriotism, etc. flowed through the country, even more so in WWII
  - C. Government was worried about opposition because they believed that a united public opinion made the difference in victory
  - D. CPJ—Committee on Public Information, pro-war literature, etc., films, propaganda
  - E. Espionage Act—government got right to deal with spying, in any form, including harmless things like political parties (socialism), etc.
  - F. Sedition Act and Sabotage Act—could not publicly oppose the war, very oppressive
  - G. Socialist Party and IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) were the biggest targets
  - H. Repressing Dissent—outrages ended up occurring, whipping ministers, etc.
  - I. American Protective League was started to protect from dissent, a citizens group; pried into mail, affairs of neighbors, etc.
  - J. Socialists, labor activists, and female pacifists were the major targets as always
  - K. 100% Americanism—first, second generation immigrant families were the biggest opposition other than women and anti-immigration sentiment arose calling for 100% Americanism
  - L. German-Americans faced the worst prejudice, radically Germans were fired for no reason, generally, although many supported war, Americans looked askance on them
  - M. Hamburgers=“Liberty Sausage” and Sauerkraut=“Liberty Cabbage” (remember Freedom Fries?)

## **The War and American Society**

- I. The Fourteen Points
  - A. Wilson presented 14 goals of the war to Congress; generally:
    - 1. New boundaries
    - 2. Freedom of the seas, open covenants instead of secret treaties, reductions in armaments, free trade, and impartial mediation of colonial claims
    - 3. LEAGUE OF NATIONS (fourteenth point)
  - B. Very idealistic
  - C. Lenin had very similar points in one of his proposals
  - D. Wilson asked world to look at US instead of Russia
- II. Early Obstacles
  - A. British prime minister David Lloyd George and French president Georges Clemenceau worked together to tear up Fourteen Points
  - B. Republicans won many elections and became in charge of both houses, since no Republicans drafted the Fourteen Points, they did not pass Congress
  - C. Wilson did not care
  - D. He said in Paris that he was very idealistic on the issue “I have utter as the objects of this great war ideals and nothing but ideals”
- III. The Paris Peace Conference
  - A. Wilson was a savour to the “war-weary” Europeans
  - B. The Big Four—George, Clemenceau, Italian prime minister Vittorio Orlando (who did not speak English), and Wilson were the delegates in Paris
  - C. Issues with Soviet Union were important
  - D. “Tense and vindictive atmosphere” overshadowed idealism

- E. Wilson retreated from many of his points
- F. Reparations were laid on Germany, \$56 billion
- G. Wilson would not back down on League of Nations and designed Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia
- H. League of Nations—although Wilson lost a lot of his points, he believed that the League of Nations would end up correcting the mistakes, like the UN it had 5 permanent members (US, Britain, France, Italy, and Japan); how the covenant would enforce decisions etc. was left up to it

#### IV. The Ratification Battle

- A. Revisions in US made League not challenge Monroe Doctrine, etc.
- B. Wilson stood firm after a few changes
- C. He was rather stubborn because of illness, etc.
- D. Henry Cabot Lodge (Republican-Massachusetts), arrogant senator, did everything to obstruct the treaty
- E. He basically filibustered the treaty by reading 300 pages aloud in Senate slowly, etc.
- F. Wilson appealed to the public when the Senate would not budge

#### V. Wilson's Ordeal

- A. Wilson went out through the country to gain support
- B. He had a stroke after speaking in Colorado
- C. After being out of the public because of shelter from his wife and doctor, he temporarily went back to official work
- D. Wilson had trouble with his mental and emotional state as well as having his left side paralyzed
- E. Very ill, Wilson said to not change treaty at all, the revised one did not pass but neither did the original
- F. Other social turmoil also led to the public demise of interest in war treaties

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