**Unit 13: The United States Enters World War I**

**I. Woodrow Wilson’s Diplomacy**

**A.** President Wilson was opposed to imperialism and believed democracy was necessary to keep the nation stable and prosperous. He wanted a world free from revolution and war.

**B.** In 1911 a revolution in Mexico forced its leader, Porfirio Díaz, to flee the country. The new leader, Francisco Madero, was a poor administrator. General **Victoriano Huerta** took over in Mexico and presumably had Madero murdered. Wilson refused to recognize the new government and prevented weapons from reaching Huerta.

**C.** In 1914 Wilson sent marines to seize the Mexican port of Veracruz to overthrow Huerta. Anti-American riots broke out in Mexico. International mediation of the dispute placed Venustiano Carranza as Mexico’s new president.

**D.** Mexican forces opposed to Carranza conducted raids into the United States, hoping Wilson would intervene. **Pancho Villa** led a group of **guerrillas,** an armed group that carries out surprise attacks, into New Mexico, and a number of Americans were killed.

**E.** Wilson sent General **John J. Pershing** and his troops into Mexico to capture Villa. Pershing was unsuccessful. Wilson’s Mexican policy damaged U.S. foreign relations.

**II. The Outbreak of World War I**

**A.** The roots of World War I can be traced back to the 1860s, when Prussia began a series of wars in order to unite German states. By 1871 Germany was united. The new German nation changed European politics. France and Germany were enemies. Germany formed the **Triple Alliance** with Austria-Hungary and Italy. Russia and France formed the Franco-Russian Alliance against Germany and Austria-Hungary.

**B.** Great Britain remained neutral until the early 1900s, when it began an arms race with Germany. This increased tensions between the two countries, causing the British to gain closer relations with France and Russia. The three countries became known as the **Triple Entente.**

**C. Nationalism,** intense pride for one’s homeland, was a powerful idea in Europe in the late 1800s. The right to **self**-**determination,** the idea that people who belong to a nation should have their own country and government, was a basic idea of nationalism. This idea led to a crisis in the **Balkans** where different national groups within the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires began to seek independence.

**D.** In June 1914, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke **Franz Ferdinand,** was killed by a Bosnian revolutionary. This act set off a chain of events that led toWorld War I. On July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia. On August 1, Germanydeclared war on Russia. Two days later Germany declared war on France.

**E.** The **Allies**—France, Russia, Great Britain, and later Italy—fought for the Triple Entente. Germany and Austria-Hungary joined the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria to form the **Central Powers.**

**F.** Germany and France became locked in a stalemate along hundreds of miles of trenches. The stalemate lasted three years. The Central Powers had greater success on the Eastern Front, capturing hundreds of miles of territory and taking hundreds of thousands of prisoners.

**III. American Neutrality**

**A.** Wilson declared the United States to be neutral. He did not want his country pulled into a foreign war. Americans, however, began showing support for one side or the other with many immigrants supporting their homelands. Most Americans favored the Allied cause.

**B.** President Wilson’s cabinet was pro-British, believing that an Allied victory would preserve an international balance of power. The British skillfully used **propaganda,** or information used to influence opinion, to gain American support.

**C.** Companies in the United States had strong ties to the Allied countries. Many American banks gave loans to the Allies. As a result, American prosperity was tied to the war. The money would only be paid back if the Allies won.

**IV. Moving Toward War**

**A.** While most Americans supported the Allies, they did not want to enter the war.

**B.** The British navy blockaded Germany to keep it from getting supplies. The British redefined **contraband,** or prohibited materials, to stop neutral parties from shipping food to Germany. To get around the blockade, Germany deployed submarines known as **U-boats.** Germany threatened to sink any ship that entered the waters around Britain. Attacking civilians ships without warning violated an international treaty and outraged the United States. The *Lusitania*, a British passenger liner, was hit by the Germans, killing almost 1,200 passengers—including 128 Americans.

**C.** Americans instructed Germany to stop U-boat strikes. Germany did not want the U.S. to join the war and strengthen the Allies. The **Sussex Pledge,** a promise made by Germany to stop sinking merchant ships, kept the United States out of the war for a bit longer.

**D.** A German official, Arthur Zimmermann, cabled the German ambassador in Mexico, proposing that Mexico ally itself with Germany. In return, Mexico would regain territory it had earlier lost to the United States. The **Zimmermann telegram** was intercepted by British intelligence and leaked to American newspapers.

**E.** In February 1917, Germany went back to unrestricted submarine warfare and, soon after, sank six American merchant ships. On April 6, 1917, the United States declared war against Germany.

**Unit 13: The War At Home**

**I. Building Up the Military**

**A.** As the United States entered the war; it was necessary to recruit more soldiers. Many progressives thought **conscription,** or forced military service, violated both democratic and republican principles. A new system of conscription, called **selective service,** resulted in about 2.8 million Americans being drafted.

**B.** African American soldiers faced discrimination and prejudice within the army, where they served in racially segregated units under the control of white officers. Many African Americans won praise from their commanders and received war medals.

**C.** World War I was the first war in which women officially served. The navy enlisted some 11,000 women, whose jobs included clerics, radio operators, electricians, pharmacists, photographers, chemists, and torpedo assemblers. The army, refusing to enlist women, hired them as temporary employees to fill clerical positions. Army nurses were the only women in the military to go overseas during the war.

**II. Organizing Industry**

**A.** President Wilson and Congress agreed that the government should not control the economy. Instead, they wanted to establish a cooperative relationship between big business and government to ensure efficient use of resources during the mobilization of the American economy for war.

**B.** In 1917 the **War Industries Board** (WIB) was created to coordinate the production of war materials. In 1918 the WIB was reorganized and **Bernard Baruch,** a wealthy Wall Street stockbroker, was appointed to run it.

**C.** The Food Administration, under the direction of Herbert Hoover, was responsible for increasing food production while reducing consumption. Hoover asked people to plant **victory gardens** to raise their own vegetables in order to leave more food for the troops.

**D.** The Fuel Administration encouraged people to conserve coal and oil. **Daylight savings time** was introduced to conserve energy.

**E.** To raise money to pay for the war, the government began selling **Liberty Bonds** and **Victory Bonds.** By buying bonds, Americans were loaning the government money that would be repaid with interest in a specified number of years.

**III. Mobilizing the Workforce**

**A.** To prevent strikes, the government established the **National War Labor Board** (NWLB) in 1918. In exchange for wage increases, an 8-hour workday, and the right to organize unions and bargain collectively, the labor leaders agreed not to disrupt war production with a strike.

**B.** The war increased the need for women in the workforce. They took factory and manufacturing jobs and positions in the shipping and railroad industries. After the war, women returned to their previous jobs or left the workforce.

**C.** The war stopped the flow of immigrants to the United States, which allowed African Americans wartime jobs. Between 300,000 and 500,000 African Americans left the South to settle in the North. This “Great Migration” changed the racial makeup of many Northern cities.

**D.** Many Mexicans moved north, providing labor for farmers and ranchers in the American Southwest. Mexicans also moved to cities to take wartime factory jobs. They faced discrimination and hostility from Americans.

**IV. Ensuring Public Support**

**A.** The **Committee on Public Information** (CPI), was a new government agency that attempted to “sell” the idea of war to the American people. Pamphlets and speeches helped deliver patriotic messages.

**B. Espionage,** or spying to acquire secret government information, was addressed in the Espionage Act of 1917. It set up consequences for people who aided the enemy. The Sedition Act of 1918 went a step further by making it illegal to criticize the president or the government.

**C.** Suspicions of disloyalty led to the mistreatment of German Americans. Anti-German feelings sometimes led to violence. Radical labor activists, socialists, pacifists, and anyone appearing disloyal also came under attack.

**D.** In the case of *Schenck* v. *the United States* (1919), the Supreme Court ruling limited an individual’s freedom of speech if the words spoken constituted a “clear and present danger.”

**Unit 13: A Bloody Conflict**

**I. Combat in World War I**

**A.** By 1917 World War I had claimed millions of European lives. Americans, however, believed their troops could bring the war to a quick end.

**B.** Soldiers dug trenches as a means of protection from modern weapons. **“No man’s land”** was the space between the opposing trenches. Soldiers would charge the enemyby scrambling out of the trenches. This inefficient military move made soldiers easytargets. In major battles, both sides lost several hundred thousand men.

**C.** To break through enemy lines and reduce causalities, new technologies were created. Poison gas, first used by the Germans, caused vomiting, blindness, and suffocation. Tanks were unsuccessfully used. Airplanes dropped small bombs on the enemy and engaged in air battles.

**II. The Americans and Victory**

**A.** “**Doughboys**” was a nickname for American soldiers. Although inexperienced, the American soldiers boosted the morale of Allied forces.

**B.** American Admiral William S. Sims proposed **convoys,** in which merchant ships and troop transports were gathered into groups and brought across the Atlantic by warships. The result was a reduction in shipping losses and ensured that American troops would get to Europe safely.

**C.** Although Russians supported the war effort, their government was not equipped to handle the major problems of the nation. In 1917 **Vladimir Lenin,** leader of the **Bolshevik Party,** overthrew the government and replaced it with a Communist one. Lenin pulled Russia out of the war and agreed with Germany to sign the **Treaty of** **Brest**-**Litovsk,** removing German armies from Russian lands in exchange for territory. This closed the Eastern Front for Germany.

**D.** In March of 1918, Germany launched a massive attack along the Western Front and pushed deeply into Allied lines. Americans troops captured the village of Cantigny, and with French assistance the German attack of Paris was blocked. The American and French troops held their ground.

**E.** In September 1918, American General Pershing put together the most massive attack in American history, causing one German position after another to fall to the advancing American troops.

**F.** On November 11, 1918, Germany finally signed an **armistice,** or cease-fire, that ended the war.

**III. A Flawed Peace**

**A.** In January 1919, leaders of the victorious Allied nations met to resolve the issues caused by the war. Wilson’s plan, called the **Fourteen Points,** addressed “the principle of justice to all people and nationalities.” The points proposed by Wilson included eliminating the general causes of the war through free trade and disarmament, open diplomacy instead of secret agreements, and the right to self-determination. The points required the evacuation of the Central Powers from all countries invaded during the war. The fourteenth point, known as the **League of Nations,** called for member nations to help preserve peace and prevent future wars.

**B.** The other Allied governments felt that Wilson’s plan was too lenient toward Germany. The **Treaty of Versailles,** signed by Germany, weakened Wilson’s proposal. The treaty stripped Germany of its armed forces and made it pay **reparations,** or war damages to the Allies.

**C.** The Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations were opposed by many United States lawmakers. The “Reservationists,” led by Henry Cabot Lodge, supported the League but wanted to change the treaty with amendments that would preserve the nation’s freedom to act independently. Wilson, exhausted by trying to sell his plan to Americans, suffered a stroke. The Senate refused to ratify the treaty. Instead, the United States negotiated separate peace treaties with each of the Central Powers.

**Unit 13: The War’s Impact**

**I. An Economy In Turmoil**

**A.** After World War I ended, rapid inflation resulted when government agencies removed their controls from the American economy. Inflation increased the **cost of living**—the cost of food, clothing, shelter, and other essentials people need.

**B.** While workers needed higher wages to keep up with the cost of living, companies wanted to lower wages due to an increase in operating costs. The number of members in unions increased greatly during the war. Unions were better organized than before. Business leaders wanted to break the power of unions. The result of these factors was a large number of strikes.

**C. General strikes**—strikes that involve all workers living in a certain location—worried Americans because they were common in Europe by Communists and other radicals. The Seattle general strike involved more than 60,000 people and brought the city to a halt for five days.

**D.** In 1919 75 percent of the police force of Boston went on strike. The governor of Massachusetts, **Calvin Coolidge,** called in the National Guard to stop looting. When the police tried to return to work, Coolidge fired them, and a new police force was hired to replace them.

**E.** One of the largest strikes in American history took place when 350,000 steelworkers went on strike for higher pay, shorter hours, and recognition of their union. The failure of their strike set back the union cause in the steel industry until 1937.

**II. Racial Unrest**

**A.** In the summer of 1919, race riots occurred in many Northern cities. They were caused by the return of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers who needed to find employment. African Americans, who moved North to work, were now competing for the same jobs as the soldiers.

**B.** The worst violence occurred in Chicago where whites and African Americans entered each other’s neighborhoods and attacked one another. The violence lasted almost two weeks.

**III. The Red Scare**

**A.** After World War I, Americans associated communism with disloyalty and unpatriotic behavior.

**B.** The numerous strikes in the U.S. in 1919 made Americans fear that Communists or “reds” might take control. This led to a nationwide panic known as the **Red Scare.**

**C.** The postal service intercepted 30 parcels addressed to leaders in the business and political arena that were set to explode upon opening. One bomb damaged the home of United States Attorney General **A. Mitchell Palmer.** Although no one ever took responsibility for the packages, most people felt it was Communists or revolutionaries trying to destroy the American way of life.

**D.** Palmer set up a special division in the Justice Department called the General Intelligence Division, headed by **J. Edgar Hoover.** Today this is known as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Palmer organized raids on various radical organizations, mostly rounding up immigrants who were then **deported,** or expelled from the country.

**IV. An End to Progressivism**

**A.** Warren G. Harding won the election in 1920 with a campaign that called for a return to “normalcy,” or a return to the simpler days before the Progressive Era reforms.

**B.** Harding won the election by a landslide. The American people liked the idea of returning to a simpler time.