**Unit 8: The First World War and the Roaring Twenties**

**Chapter 22: The Great War, 1914-1918**

“Now young Willy McBride, I can’t help but wonder why  
Do those who lie here know why did they die?  
Did they believe when they answered the cause?  
Did they really believe that this war would end wars?”

—Eric Bogle, Scottish singer, “No Man’s Land,” 1976

**Lesson Objective**

Explain how the United States became involved in the First World War.

Explain how the United States entered into a new era of isolationism after the First World War

**Thesis**

Though promising to not enter “the war to end all wars,” Woodrow Wilson entered the United States into World War I to make the world “safe for democracy.” Ultimately however, Wilson would fail in his vision of a post-war international order because of his unwillingness to compromise.

1. Context and US Involvement in WWI
   1. Long term causes
      1. Militarism: arms race between European nations
      2. Alliances: Central Powers (Germany + Austria-Hungary) vs. Entente or Allies (United Kingdom, France, Russia)
         1. Prevent the balance of power becoming upset
      3. Imperialism: competition for territory in Africa/Asia
      4. Nationalism
         1. Germany, Italy, Pan-Slavism
         2. Social Darwinism: our nation is the greatest, need to prove strength
         3. “War is the health of the state”
   2. Short term causes
      1. Assassination of Archduke Ferdinand🡪 chain reaction
         1. Alliances go off, the world is at war
         2. “When a Serb kills an Austrian so you as an Indian in the British Raj have to fight in France because Germany invaded Belgium”
   3. The brutality of war
      1. Initial enthusiasm
         1. War is a good thing, weed out the weak
         2. Society moving too fast, need to slow down
         3. “Over by Christmas”
      2. Senseless slaughter…
         1. Blockade of Germany by Britain, German submarine warfare
   4. Historiography: Gregory (irreconcilables) vs. Stoller (revisionists)
      1. Ross Gregory: “In Defense of National Honor”
         1. Germany pushed the US to join WWI
         2. Efforts for peace failed
         3. War was a last resort
      2. Mark Stoller: “A War to End Wars”
         1. US was pro-Ally even before war started
         2. US policy was dead set against Germany
         3. Only needed excuse to declare war
   5. Americans at the outbreak of the war
      1. War shocked Americans, BUT no preparation for war
         1. “Balance of power will prevail”
         2. “West is too democratic to engage in long wars”
         3. “War isn’t profitable, it will be over soon”
         4. “Modern weapons will end this war rapidly”
      2. 1914: Wilson declares Neutrality
         1. “We must be impartial in thought as well as in action…”
         2. Why
            1. American is a nation of immigrants

1/3 foreign born…from Europe mostly

8 million Germans, 4 million Irish (both anti-British states)

* + - * 1. War is undemocratic, wants to decrease influence of military on foreign policy
        2. Desire to continue trade
    1. Both sides try to appeal to US
       1. Germans: appeal to Irish/German Americans
       2. British: more successful in appealing to Americans as a whole
          1. Control major English language newspapers
          2. Propaganda

German barbarians in Belgium (the Huns!)

Germany: aristocratic, anti-democratic (Kaiser Wilhelm II)

Wilson=Anglophile, Britain is America’s sister democratic society

* + - * 1. Effect: Americans are anti-German, less willing to trade with Europe
      1. HOWEVER, USA benefits from being neutral
         1. Continued trade
         2. Europe needs goods and food

Factories profit from the war!

* + - * 1. Europe needs money🡪 loans from banks
  1. Threats to neutrality
     1. British blockade
        1. UK strategy: starve out Germany
           1. UK issues contraband lists to incoming American ships
           2. Neutral ships searched

Just like War of 1812!

* + - 1. Wilson’s dilemma
         1. Freedom of seas? Help the British?
         2. Americans tended to trade more with British anyways…

US traded over $3 billion with Allies

US traded only $2 million with Germany

* + 1. Germany’s response to blockade🡪 unrestricted submarine warfare
       1. Submarines are new, no international law about them
       2. 1915: Germany is getting desperate🡪 increase in submarine attacks against ships going to Britain
          1. Germany sinks 90 ships in Jan. 1915
       3. Wilson’s response to submarine warfare: diplomacy
          1. Demanded right to trade without harassment
          2. “Strict Accountability” for harassment…
          3. HOWEVER, no increase in American military
    2. Further challenge🡪 sinking of Lusitania (1915)
       1. British passenger ship, lots of American passengers
       2. BUT WAS IT JUST A PASSANGER SHIP?
          1. Cargo had lots of weapons…
       3. Wilson’s response
          1. Avoid war

“we must work for peace”

“we cannot be too proud to go to war”

* + - * 1. Germany must promise to stop attacking our ships

No more attacks on passenger ships

* + - * 1. Compensate victims
        2. Wilson wants to keep trading, despite obvious threat

Causes conflict within Democratic Party

William Jennings Bryan resigns as Sec. of State, Robert Lansing (pro-war Democrat) replaced him (1915)

Gore-McLemore Resolutions (1916): warns American citizens from travelling

* + 1. Germany keeps going🡪 Sussex and Arabic sinking
       1. Wilson warns to break off diplomatic ties (Sussex Warning)
       2. Germany fears US entry🡪 Sussex Pledge (1916)
          1. Passenger ships will not be targeted
          2. Cargo ships can be inspected WITH WARNING
          3. Cargo ships have to safely evacuated before sinking
       3. Most Americans still want peace..
    2. Preparedness Movement
       1. Pro-War American group, led by former President Roosevelt
          1. Initially rejected by Wilson, starts to move towards it by 1916
       2. National Defense Act (1916)
          1. Expansion of army, up to 200,000 men
          2. Funds for military preparedness
  1. Election of 1916
     1. Main issue: will we join WWI?
        1. Americans sympathetic to Allies, but still don’t want to join war
     2. Democrats: Wilson
        1. Division between progressives and conservatives, in addition to pro/anti-war factions
           1. Roosevelt back in the Republican party, Wilson realizes he needs to side with progressives more
        2. Platform
           1. Domestic reform

Louis Brandeis pick for Supreme Court

Farm Loan Act

Adamson Act (8 hour Railroad work days)

Keeting-Owen Act (no child labor)

Labor unions exempt from Sherman Anti-Trust Act

* + - * 1. “HE KEPT US OUT OF THE WAR”

Wilson wants “military preparedness,” but country wants peace

* + 1. Republicans: Charles E. Hughes
       1. Division between progressive (Roosevelt) and conservative (Hiram Johnson) wings
       2. Compromise🡪 Hughes
       3. Platform
          1. Oppose Underwood Tariff
          2. New Freedom
          3. Blame Wilson for Mexico disaster
          4. Not doing enough to prepare for war
       4. Campaigned heavily with Hiram Johnson in swing state of California🡪 alienates progressives🡪Wilson wins

1. The War
   1. The Road to War
      1. No end in sight…
         1. 60,000 British soldiers die in six hours during Battle of the Somme (1916), but no ground gained
         2. Wilson sends Edward House to try and have Allies/Central Powers sign a peace treaty
            1. Both sides reused to sit down
         3. Wilson’s “Peace Without Victory” (1917)
            1. All nations should be equal
            2. Self-determination
            3. Disarmament
            4. Freedom of the seas
            5. We should have an international organization…
      2. Germany increases submarine warfare
         1. Desperate to break British blockade🡪 Germany revokes Sussex Pledge
            1. “The Americans already choose sides…”
         2. 100 more submarines, more attacks on cargo ships
      3. Zimmerman Telegraph (1917)
         1. Germans send Mexico message promising to help retake Mexican Cession in exchange for helping Central Powers
         2. Public opinion shifts to war
         3. Wilson starts arming merchant ships…
      4. Russian Revolution
         1. Czarist Russia out of war
         2. Democracy vs. Autocracy
      5. Wilson asks Congress for war…
   2. “What are we fighting for?”
      1. Wilson: democracy and international stability
         1. “A war to end wars”
         2. “Make the world safe for democracy”
      2. Wilson’s Fourteen Points
         1. No secret treaties
            1. Reaction to pre-war alliances and Brest-Litovsk Treaty
         2. Freedom of the seas: no subs and no tariffs
         3. Disarm
         4. End colonialism
         5. Self-determination: Austria, Poland, Hungary, Serbia
         6. A League of Nations
   3. Americans at War
      1. Pivotal point
         1. No more Russia🡪 Germans send all troops against France
         2. Americans needed to keep Allies in war
            1. DOUCHBOYS TO THE RESCUE
            2. US troops in France by 1917🡪 war quickly ends
      2. Mobilization
         1. Big result🡪 HUGE increase in federal government’s power and size
         2. War Industries Board (1917)
            1. Bernard Baruch
            2. Designed to coordinate war time production
         3. US Railroad Administration (1917)
            1. William G. McAdoo
            2. Nationalizes railroads to consolidate transportation
         4. Food and Fuel Control Act (Lever Act), 1917
            1. Govt. control of food/fuel production

No alcohol from grain…

* + - * 1. US Food Administration (1917)

Herbert Hoover

Food relief for Belgium/Allies

Increase wheat prices🡪 encourage farmers to produce more ($2.40 a bushel)

Propaganda🡪 discourage waste

“Meatless Mondays”

* + - 1. National War Labor Board (1917)
         1. W.H. Taft
         2. Regulate hours/pay
         3. BUT still bad conditions/inflation
         4. No tolerance for strikes…
      2. Selective Service Act (1917)
         1. Hugh Johnson
         2. Very effective🡪 5 million men
    1. Finances
       1. Fear of bank loans🡪 bonds
       2. 20% taxes, 80% bonds
          1. $21 billion raised throughout the war
          2. War ultimately costs $112 billion
    2. Propaganda/Civil Liberties
       1. Committee of Public Information (George Creel)
          1. Influence Americans to support war effort
          2. Govt. partnership with Hollywood🡪 propaganda movies

“Over There!”

* + - 1. Restrictions on civil liberties
         1. Espionage Act (1917)

Cannot obstruct recruitment of soldiers

Cannot have “treasonable” mail

* + - * 1. Sedition Act (1917)

Cannot talk bad about war bonds or Constitution

* + - * 1. Schenk v. US (1919)

First amendment rights can be restricted if there is a “clear and present danger”

It would be like shouting “fire” in a theatre

* 1. Women, Minorities, and Reform
     1. Women
        1. Involved in mobilization (factory work, blood drives, nurses, etc.)
        2. Yet, even though factory work🡪 ended after war was over
        3. AND YET, some gains for women after war in recognition of effort
           1. Sheppard-Towner Act (1921): maternity/childcare relief
           2. The Nineteenth Amendment (1920): the vote

Wilson initially skeptical of suffrage

War for democracy + female participation🡪 changed mind

Endorsed by 1918

* + 1. African Americans
       1. Need for factory work🡪Northern factories encourage migration
          1. 500,000 AAs move from South to North (Great Migration)
       2. African American troops!
       3. Problems
          1. Segregation in military
          2. Race riots in North
          3. Unions exclude AAs
    2. Reforms
       1. 18th Amendment (1919): Prohibition
          1. Lever Act🡪increased support for prohibition
       2. 19th Amendment (1920): Female Suffrage
          1. “Dr. Hosmer, what’s your ideal Saturday night?”
          2. “18 beers, 19 women”
    3. Spanish Flu (22 million worldwide, 600,000 in US)

1. The Peace
   1. Paris Peace Conference (1919)
      1. High expectations
         1. “Peace without Vengeance…”
         2. Wilson goes directly to Paris
            1. Angers Republicans
            2. Also Congressional Elections in 1918: Republicans win House and Senate…
      2. Big Four: George, Wilson, Clemenceau, Orlando
         1. Britain and France most vocal during treaty signing
      3. Treaty of Versailles
         1. Wilson compromises on everything
         2. 14 Points ignored
            1. Secret treaties still exist
            2. Little self-determination, colonies persist
            3. No freedom of the seas
            4. Only Germany forced to disarm

HUGE reparations ($33 Billion…)

* + - 1. Some things listened to
         1. New nations!
         2. Germany’s a republic now!
         3. A LEAGUE OF NATIONS!
  1. Senate Treaty Debates
     1. Republicans not happy about treaty… and also control Senate
     2. Wilson refuses to compromise
        1. “The Senate MUST take its medicine”
     3. Partisan divisions
        1. Republicans factions
           1. Irreconcilables: NO treaty

Republicans and Democrats

* + - * 1. Strong Reservationists: lots of changes need to be made
        2. Mild Reservationists: some changes need to be made

Henry Cabot Lodge

* + - 1. Objections
         1. Anglophobia by Irish, German-Americans didn’t like it
         2. Dislike of Wilson
         3. Lodge Reservations: list of 14 problems Senators had with Treaty, suggestions for fixing

Article X: League of Nations could make war without consent of Congress

* + - 1. Wilson
         1. Adamantly pro-League of Nations, refuses to compromise
         2. Speaking tour, 1919

But then, stroke🡪 weakens hold over party

Mrs. Wilson, president?!?

* + 1. The vote
       1. First vote: Moderate Reservationists + Dems reach a compromise
          1. Wilson rejects it🡪 gets enough pro-treaty Dems to oppose resolution
          2. WILL NOT COMPROMISE ON LEAGUE OF NATIONS
       2. Second vote, with NO COMPROMISES🡪 failure
          1. Did this change world history?
  1. Aftermath of the war
     1. Partisan fighting + horrors of war🡪 isolationism and conservativism
        1. American interest in rest of the world weakens
        2. Desire for more progress and reforms weakens
           1. Govt. grew too large
     2. Election of 1920
        1. Democrats: Cox and FDR
           1. Wilson’s health is decline
           2. Divisions over treaty ratification
        2. Republicans: Harding and Coolidge
           1. Republicans campaign against treaty and big govt.
           2. Republicans win! Promise a return to “normalcy”
     3. Flourishing of Avant Garde and abstract
        1. “The Lost Generation”
        2. Things suddenly seem less rational…
        3. Was there any meaning or point if such a war could happen?
        4. No absolute truths…

**Chapter 23: Post-War America**

“The parties were bigger, the pace was faster, the shows were broader, the buildings were higher, the morals were looser, and the liquor was cheaper”

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, A Not Great Husband, 1925

**Lesson Objectives**

Explain changes in culture, politics, and society following the First World War.

Explain the context of the Great Depression before 1929.

**Thesis**

The horrors of the First World War shook the United States’ pre-war optimism in progressivism, leading to an increased appeal towards political conservatism and a culture of carefree consumerism. Both factors would create the extremely unregulated conditions of the 1920s, which, while it might have led to prosperity for some, ultimately created the conditions for the Great Depression.

1. Returning to Isolation and pre-war Republican policies
   1. Turmoil, Strikes, Red Scare and Xenophobia
      1. 6000 strikes
         1. Steel
         2. Boston Police
            1. Rise of Calvin Coolidge
            2. “No right to strike against the public safety.”
      2. Idealism replaced by post war fear
         1. Red Scare – Bombings
            1. Anti-immigration fervor
            2. Palmer Raids

5000 Arrests

Deportation

* + 1. National Origins Act
       1. Quota 3% of those residing in 1910
       2. 2% in 1890
       3. Ends E - S Europe
    2. Xenophobia
       1. Sacco and Vanzetti
  1. Changing Urban-Rural
     1. 1/2 urban/rural – 1920
     2. Changing families
        1. New Trends
           1. Males continue in factories
           2. 1/4 women worked - only 1/10 married women

8.4 million work in 1920---10.6 in 1930

* + - * 1. Italian seldom outside home
        2. Irish & blacks-domestic servants
      1. Scientific child-raising
         1. Middle class more permissive
         2. Education to 8th grade
         3. Attention to emotional needs of child
  1. Younger Generation
     1. War dashed hopes of many
        1. Red Scare altered values
        2. Models were bohemians.
     2. And yet . . . Jazz Age - Era of flamboyant youth
        1. Modernization produced unconventional lives
           1. Danced to syncopated rhythms
           2. Car added freedom
           3. Movie star gods
        2. Authority lost meaning
        3. New relationships between the sexes
           1. Dating changed
           2. Women smoked
           3. Styles changed--corsets gone-dresses short
           4. Short hair was the rage
     3. The “New Woman” emerged
        1. Social restrictions ebbing🡪 more open about sex
           1. Freud-Darwin

Sex crucial to evolution

Victorian attitudes easing

* + - 1. Margaret Sanger
         1. Founder of Planned Parenthood
         2. Supported birth control
         3. Jailed for violating Comstock laws
      2. Woman in politics
         1. Gains illusory--double standard

Clerk, receptionist, salesperson

College but home-ec major

Adkins v. Children’s Hospital 1923

* + - * 1. Vote made no difference

Alice Paul - Woman’s Party--Sought ERA

Moderate--League of Women Voters

Margaret Sanger fought for birth control—prison

* 1. Popular culture--Radio – Movies
     1. Radio—FCC
        1. KDKA
        2. Connected urban & rural
     2. Movies
        1. Great Train Robbery & Birth of a Nation
        2. Jazz Singer first “talkie.”
           1. “Greatest Cultural advance of the era.”
     3. Golden age of sports
        1. With urban growth - sports popular
        2. Remarkable athletes
           1. Jim Thorpe
           2. Red Grange
           3. Babe Ruth, the Sultan of Swat.

1. Urban rural conflicts--Modern v Traditional
   1. Differences emerge
      1. Religious fundamentalism at heart of differences
         1. Agrarian “rednecks"
         2. City as sinful
         3. Scopes trial--symbolized split.
      2. Urban-Rural conflict went to war over alcohol
         1. Prohibition - Progressive reform
            1. Moralistic--middle class crusade
            2. Lever Act--dislike of foreigners
         2. Rise of organized crime.
      3. Traditionalism & KKK
         1. Small towns-anti-black
         2. Anti-Catholic
         3. Antisemitic
         4. Klan grew quickly in reaction to “urban sin”
         5. Cruelty and corruption inside the organization hurt KKK
2. Intellectuals & cultural change
   1. Before the Great War, hope abounded
      1. After War-gone.
   2. "Lost Generation”
      1. Fitzgerald-Hemingway
      2. H. L. Mencken
      3. Sinclair Lewis
         1. Main Street – Babbitt
         2. Satire small town America.
   3. However, new militancy in Black America
      1. Blacks in despair
      2. KKK - Few jobs
      3. 1919 Race riots - Lynd's—sociologists
      4. 1925, new urban attitude-Pan-African Conferences
         1. M. Garvey-- Back-to-Africa Movement
            1. Universal Negro Improvement Association
            2. Black Cross and Black Star Line
            3. “Fancy Dan Dresser”
            4. Unsuccessful at business ventures
         2. Harlem Renaissance - Langston Hughes
            1. Uniquely American
            2. Jazz--Force for racial tolerance.
3. Despite Urban-Rural tensions-technology & economy boomed
   1. Business grew
      1. US possessed 40% of worlds wealth
      2. Richer than all Europe
   2. Reasons
      1. Federal Reserve - low interest and supported big business
      2. Wartime demands grew
      3. Mechanization increased productive
   3. “Age of the Consumer”
      1. Middle and upper classes benefited most
      2. More goods required higher demand
      3. New products
         1. Installment plans
            1. “Buy on credit”
            2. By 1925 75% bought on credit
         2. New household appliances
         3. Automobile biggest effect
            1. Created ancillary industries
            2. Art celebrates technology, city, & “the modern”

Stella

Sheeler

* + - * 1. Henry Ford

Responsible for auto popularity

25,000 cars a day

River Rouge

* + - 1. Advancement in the air
         1. Charles Lindbergh--"Lucky Lindy"
         2. American hero

1. Pol in Roaring Twenties
   1. W. G. Harding “Gamalese” and Normalcy
      1. Poor qualifications
      2. Successes
         1. Big Four Powers
         2. Pardoned Debs.
         3. Cabinet--Hoover, Mellon, Wallace
      3. Scandals
      4. Died in office
   2. Regulating business
      1. Mellon - “LF” - supply side
         1. Lowered taxes on top 1%
      2. Fordney-McCumber Tariff of 1922
         1. Protected industry
         2. High tax on European farm goods
      3. Business loved Harding-Coolidge
         1. “Business of the US is business”
         2. ICC - FTC - business tools
      4. Despite tariff, Farm Block opposition
         1. Farm debts high
         2. Farm income down 50%
         3. European back
         4. Pushed Revenue Act-higher corporate tax
         5. Farm Block pushed McNary-Haugen--buy surplus wheat
   3. Harding Scandals
      1. Harding's Ohio gang
      2. Forbes-Fall and Sinclair Oil
      3. Forbes Veterans Bureau
      4. Albert Fall - Sec of Interior-Teapot Dome Scandal
   4. Election of 1924
      1. Dems divided-MacAdoo vs. Smith--John W. Davis, Dark Horse
      2. Progressive - Robert La Follette
      3. Republican – Coolidge
         1. Reverse of 1912--Huge Rep victory
   5. Coolidge: Business boomed--unemployment decline-wages rose
      1. US 40% of world's $
         1. Pent up money created boom
         2. Construction increased
      2. Industrial output - Frederick W. Taylor
      3. LF--interest rates low
   6. Coolidge Foreign Policy
      1. Neo-Isolation - Little interest in FP
      2. Foreign policy success minimal
         1. Old Progressive idea: Man rational - End War
         2. Peace Societies flourished
      3. Washington Armament Conference (1921)
         1. Four-Power Treaty. (1922)
         2. Five-Power Treaty (1921)--fixed a ratio of naval vessels at 5:5:3:1 tons
         3. Nine-Power Treaty(1922)--respect China - Open Door
      4. Kellogg-Briand Pact--“We have outlawed war.”
      5. “Toothless” but imposed on weaker powers
      6. LA - “Good Neighbor Policy.”
         1. Roosevelt Corollary alive
            1. LA harbored ill feelings
            2. US stationed troops in LA
         2. Hoover changed American policy
            1. Clark Memorandum - “Not intervene in LA”
            2. Good Neighbor instead
            3. FDR continued this idea
   7. Despite peace efforts, totalitarianism grew.
      1. Japan invaded Manchuria 1931.
         1. Manchukuo
         2. Stimson Doctrine - We don’t recognize aggression
      2. China torn by revolution
      3. First Fascist states – Mussolini
   8. War debts and reparations
      1. US lent $10 billion to Allies
         1. US: “It was a loan--Repay it!”
         2. UK: “Consider it your costs”
      2. High tariffs hurt Europe
         1. Germany defaults
         2. Allies default
      3. Solutions
         1. Dawes Plan (1924)-Young Plan (1929)
            1. Dawes--$200 million to help Ger debts
            2. Young--Scale down Ger debt
         2. Hoover (1931) moratorium on all loans
         3. Johnson Debt Default Act
2. Election of 1928 and Hoover administration
   1. Herbert Hoover vs. Al Smith
      1. Urban-rural contrast
      2. Hoover v Smith (tied to Bosses and city machines)
         1. Huge triumph for Hoover
         2. Dems showed strength in urban areas but worried about future of party
   2. The unfortunate Mr. Hoover
      1. Booming economy falters
         1. Rich got rich
         2. Most workers benefitted marginally
      2. Key businesses flaws
         1. Coal faced competition from oil
         2. Cotton - wool suffered
         3. Holding companies grew
      3. Agriculture problems
         1. Over extended during war
         2. Machinery more expensive
         3. Europe retaliated against US tariff
         4. George N. Peek proposed McNary-Hougen Bill
            1. Old Populist idea

Govt buy surplus

Sell when prices rise

* + - * 1. Vetoed three times
    1. Then Stock Market Crashed in October 1929
       1. Overpriced
          1. Bought on margin
          2. Stock market did not cause depression
       2. Depression world wide phenomenon-Causes
          1. Economic imbalances

Maldistribution of wealth

Easy credit

* + - * 1. Unbalanced tax structure
        2. Under-consumption - over production

Factories overproduced with new machinery

Lay offs

* + - * 1. Too little government spending
  1. Hoover's program for ending the Depression
     1. Acted slowly
     2. Mellon advised LF
        1. HH rejected LF - began modest public interest programs
        2. Cooperate with business
           1. No anti-trust lawsuits
        3. Keep wages up
        4. Small Public works projects
        5. RFC Loans to banks
        6. Little help for farmers—That will come with Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) with FDR
     3. Too little