* Chapter 19
* World War I and Beyond
* 1914-1920
* Section 1-From Neutrality to War
* What caused World War I? In 1914, Europe was caught up in a string of nationalism, alliances, regional tensions, economic rivalries, militarism and imperial ambitions.
* Beginning in the late 1800s, Europeans began to believe that a nation should express the nationalism of a single ethnic group. This belief evolved into an intense form of nationalism that heightened international rivalries. Nationalism threatened minority groups. (If a country existed as the expression of “its people,” the majority ethnic group, then where did the ethnic minorities fit in?)
* The theory of Social Darwinism fueled the competitive instinct in Europe. Social Darwinists believed that the best nation would come out ahead and in the constant competition between countries.
* The Nationalist sentiments spilled over into the economic goals of countries.
* At the same time, European leaders began preparing for war. They stockpiled weapons and increased the size of their armies. (Germany built the largest standing army and Britain built the largest navy.) A spirit of militarism grew in these competing countries and fueled the arms race even more.
* The contest between Germany and Britain at sea and between Germany, France and Russia on land guaranteed one important thing: The next major war would involve more troops and more technologically advanced weapons than ever before. Machine guns, mobile artillery, tanks, submarines, and airplanes would change the nature of warfare.
* Before 1914, there were 2 major alliances in Europe:
  + 1. Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy joined together to form the **Triple Alliance** (although Italy will not fight with them)
  + 2. France, Russia and Great Britain made up the **Triple Entente**
* These networks of alliances made leaders reckless. They knew if they declared war, powerful allies were obligated to fight with them.
* On June 28, 1914, the Archduke of Austria-Hungary (heir to the throne), **Franz Ferdinand**, was assassinated in Sarajevo by a group of Bosnians. Bosnia was a province controlled by Austria-Hungary and these Bosnians viewed Ferdinand as a tyrant. They wanted Bosnian independence. This act is what began World War I.
* Soon after the assassination, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, because they refused to fully cooperate in an investigation of the assassination. **Kaiser William II**, the German emperor, promised Austria-Hungary that Germany would stand by them.
* Because of the alliance system, what might have simply been a regional quarrel quickly spread. In early August, Russia entered the war to help its ally, Serbia. This caused Germany to declare war on Russia. Then France enters to help Russia and declares war on Germany. Next, Germany declares war on the neutral Belgium so it could use the small country to launch an invasion of France. Belgium answers back and declares war on Germany.
* In less than a week, the **Central Powers** of **Germany and Austria-Hungary** (and later the **Ottoman** Empire) were at war with the **Allied Powers** of **France, Great Britain, Russia and Serbia.**
* The Germans fought through Belgium and got within 30 miles of Paris when the French and the British stopped them at the Battle of the Marne.
* After the Battle of the Marne, the Germans settled into fortified trenches. The French and British did the same. Although fighting continued all over, the critical battle front was right here in France; it became known as the **Western Front**. The side that won here would win the war.
* The war dragged on here for years and was particularly deadly. It became a war of attrition and both sides entered a stalemate. Why?
  + Defensive weapons of the time were better and more devastating than the offensive ones. In every battle on the Western Front, the attacking force suffered terribly. Ineffective offenses and effective defenses produced a deadly stalemate.
* The stalemate led to gruesome conditions for the men in the trenches of the Western Front. They battled harsh conditions of life. For example, many developed “trench foot” from standing for hours in the wet, muddy trenches. They contracted lice from the rats that infested the trenches. They lived in constant fear.
* In between the enemy lines was an area known as “no man’s land.” Artillery fire had blasted no man’s land until trees and homes that had once existed were charred beyond recognition.
* The casaualty numbers were devastating:
  + In two different battles in 1916—**Verdun** and **Somme**—the British, French and Germans sustained more than 2 million casualties. And still the stalemate dragged on.
* As the war raged in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson called for American neutrality. Most Americans agreed and preferred to maintain traditional American isolation from European disputes.
* Keep in mind that in 1914, 1/3 of Americans were foreign born and still thought of themselves in terms of their former homelands. With relatives in Europe, many supported the nation in which they were born.
* Other Americans supported France and Great Britain because they had strong historic ties with the U.S.
* Many people in America were horrified by Germany’s vicious invasion of the neutral Belgium.
* All of these mixed feelings caused three distinct positions to crystallize among Americans:
  + 1. **Isolationists**-believed that the war was none of America’s business and that the nation should isolate itself from the hostilities.
  + 2. **Interventionists**-felt that the war did affect American interests and that the U.S. should intervene in the conflict on the side of the Allies
  + 3. **Internationalists**-occupied the middle ground believing that the U.S. should play an active role in world affairs and work toward achieving a just peace but not enter the war
* President Wilson was an internationalist who sincerely desired peace. Wilson attempted to use his influence to end the conflict among the warring countries.
* 2 actions that changed public opinion of the war:
  + 1. Britain used their navy to blockade Germany to keep essential goods out. (They kept out **contraband** goods such as weapons and other articles needed for war.)
  + 2. Germany responded by attempting to blockade Briatin by sinking Allied ships using their **U-boats**, or submarines.
* The reality of the German blockade struck America on May 7, 1915, when a German U-Boat sank the British passenger ship *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland. The Germans suspected the ship was carrying contraband and ammunition. Americans argued that it was an unarmed passenger ship.
* In 1916, Congress passed 2 pieces of legislation to prepare American for war:
  + 1. The National Defense Act-expanded the size of the army
  + 2. The Naval Construction Act-ordered the building of more warships
* Wilson was reelected in 1916 and in early 1917, two events occurred that helped push the U.S. into war:
  + 1. In January 1917, the German Foreign Minister, Arthur Zimmerman, sent a telegram to Mexico. The **Zimmerman note** proposed an alliance with Mexico, stating that if the U.S. declared war on Germany, Mexico should declare war on the U.S. In return, after a German victory, Mexico could get back the states of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. The telegram was intercepted by the British, who gave it to American authorities.
  + 2. Next, Germany announced unrestricted submarine warfare against Britain (after the sinking of the *Sussex*, they’d promised America they would stop)
* Section 2-The Home Front
* The war affected many things, but its greatest impact was on the lives of ordinary people.
* When the U.S. entered World War I, the U.S. Army was only a fraction of the size of European armies.
* In order to build it up, President Wilson encouraged Americans to volunteer for service and pushed Congress to pass the **Selective Service Act**, which authorized the draft of young men for military service in Europe. (During the war about 2.8 million were drafted and about 2 million volunteered)
* President Wilson also worked to shift the American economy from peacetime to wartime production. This was a slow and frustrating process:
  + The **Council of National Defense** was formed to create an array of new federal administrative agencies to oversee different phases of the war effort. These agencies regulated food production, coal and petroleum productionand railway use.
  + Due to problems and overlap, the **War Industries Board** was created. It was headed by Bernard Baruch and it regulated all industries engaged in the war effort. The WIB determined what products industries would make, where those products went and how much they would cost. America’s free enterprise system was curtailed in order to fulfill the national immediate need for war materials. Americans realized they needed to cooperate to help the war cause.
  + Herbert Hoover headed the **Food Administration**, setting prices high for wheat and other foods to encourage farmers to increase production. Hoover also asked Americans to conserve food as a patriotic gesture. The less Americans ate, the more food could be shipped to American and other Allied soldiers.
    - Hoover established “wheatless Mondays and Wednesdays, meatless Tuesdays and porkless Thursdays and Saturdays.
* The **Committee of Public Information** took on the job of educating the public about the causes and nature of the war. They had to convince Americans that the war effort was a just cause. (Without American support and cooperation, none of the efforts would be successful.)
* George Creel was the director of the Committee of Public Information. He was a former journalist who combined education and a widespread advertising campaign to “sell America” on the war…and government war propaganda was born.
* The CPI distributed 75 million pamphlets and 6,000 press releases and it assembled an army of 75,000 speakers who gave lectures on America’s war aims and the nature of the enemy.
* They also designed, printed and distributed millions of posters that dramatized the needs of America and its allies and they stressed the cruelty of the enemy.
* Despite most Americans supporting the war effort, there was some opposition and consequences.
* Depicting the enemy, particularly Germany, as evil led to discrimination against German-Americans.
* There was also resistance to the draft. Some Americans believed it was an illegal intrusion of the federal government into their private lives. Some men refused to cooperate with the Selective Service process. These men were imprisoned. Others tried to avoid the draft (around 12% of men who received draft notices did not respond to them).
* Another group resisted the draft by becoming **conscientious objectors**, meaning they were people whose moral or religious beliefs forbid them to fight in wars. These people were treated badly by their local draft boards. Their treatment improved as America’s participation in the war increased.
* During the war, the government created a mood in America that did not welcome open debate.
* In June 1917, Congress passed the **Espionage Act**, allowing postal authorities to ban treasonable or seditious newspapers, magazines or printed materials from the mail. It also enacted severe penalties for anyone engaged in disloyal or treasonable activities.
* In 1918, Congress limited freedom of speech even further with the passage of the **Sedition Act**, which made it unlawful to use “disloyal, profane or abusive language” about the American form of government, the Constitution, or the military forces. (Eugene V. Debs was arrested under this act for giving a mildly antiwar speech to a convention of socialists; he was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison.)
* The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Sedition Act in *Schenck v. U.S.* (1919) when they Court ruled that there are times when the need for public order is so pressing that the First Amendment protections of free speech do not apply.
* The war also brought social changes in America.
  + Many women moved into the workforce for the first time as men went off to war. By their efforts and sacrifices during the war, women convinced President Wilson to support their suffrage demands. In 1919, Congress passed the 19th Amendment.
  + African Americans overwhelmingly supported the war effort. Thousands enlisted and were drafted into the military.
    - Also a great movement of African Americans from the rural South to the industrial North was taking place. This movement is called the **Great Migration**.
    - Blacks left their homes in the South for many reasons: to escape the violent racism in the South, desire for better jobs and a chance for economic advancement, a better future for their children. Between 1910 and 1920, more than 1.2 million blacks moved North.
* Section 3-Wilson, War and Peace
* When America joined World War I, most European leaders did not think we could raise, train, equip and transport an army fast enough to influence the outcome of the war.
* Upon America’s entrance, Germany renewed unrestricted submarine warfare. The Allies immediately felt the impact of this, losing crucial supplies carried by merchant ships.
* The Allies responded to German submarine warfare by adopting an old naval trick: convoying. In a **convoy**, groups of merchant ships sailed together, protected by warships. The arrangement was designed to provide mutual safety at sea. These convoys were an instant success.
* Meanwhile, the situation on land began to swing in favor of the Central Powers. The Allies were exhausted after years of combat.
* Russia was torn by revolutions: in March 1917, a moderate democratic revolution overthrew Czar Nicholas II but kept Russia in the war. In November 1917, radical communists led by **Vladimir Lenin** staged a revolution and gained control of Russia and in 1918 Russia left the war. The end of the war on the Eastern Front allowed Germany to send more troops to the Western Front, helping them gain the upper hand.
* General **John J. Pershing** (only American to be promoted in his own lifetime to the rank of General of the Armies—the highest rank in the US Army) was the commander of the American forces in Europe. Large numbers of American troops began arriving in Europe in early 1918 abou the time the German offensive began to stall. Once the Americans joined the fight, Germany began to slowly weaken.
* American troops were called “doughboys.” It is believed that this term originated for US Infantry soldiers during the Mexican-American War because they were constantly covered in chalky dust from the Mexican terrain.
* Doughboys saw significant action in 1918 on the defensive along with the French at the Second Battle of the Marne and on the offensive at the Battle of Cantigny (kahn tee NYEE).
* American troops, added with those of France, Britain and Italy, gave the Allies a military advantage. By the fall of 1918, the German front was collapsing. Some men had deserted, others mutinied and many others refused to fight. Their leaders were forced to surrender and on November 11, 1918, Germany surrendered to the Allies in a railway car in Compiegne (kohn PYEHN), France. This officially ended WWI.
* 5 million Allied soldiers and 8 million Central Power troops were killed. Also, around 6.5 million civilians were dead. (Roughly 117,000 Americans killed)
* After the war, it was revealed that Russia held some secret alliances with some Allies in which they agreed to divide among themselves the empires of their enemies. This revelation undercut the morality of the Allied cause in the war.
* For President Wilson, however, the war was not about acquisitions and imperialism, but about peace and freedom. In January 1918, Wilson outlined America’s war aims in what became known as the **Fourteen Points [of Light]**. The main idea of these points was “peace without victory.” Wilson proposed a peace inspired by noble ideals, not greed and vengeance.
* The Fourteen Points sought to fundamentally change the world by:
  + promoting openness
  + encouraging independence
  + supporting freedom
  + called for open diplomacy (no secret treaties)
  + freedom of the seas
  + free trade
  + moving for an end to colonialism
  + general reduction of armaments
  + promoted national self-determination (the right of people to choose their own government)
  + Wilson also asked for a **League of Nations** to secure “mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike”
* Wilson’s idealism did not inspire other Allied leaders, who blamed Germany for stating the war. They reminded Wilson that they had suffered more in the war than the U.S. and insisted that Germany make **reparations** (payment for war damages). They wanted to weaken Germany so that it would never threaten Europe again.
* The Allies forced Germany to pay reparations and also return Alsace-Lorraine (a strategic strip of land between France and Germany) and some key German colonies.
* Wilson fought hard for the Fourteen Points at the peace conference at Versailles but the only part that the Allies agreed to keep was the League of Nations, however, the U.S. would never join.
* In the end, the peace treaties created at the end of WWI caused almost as many problems as they solved.
  + The redrawing of the boundary lines after the war left many ethnic groups randomly clustered together. For example, many German populations ended up in non-German countries. The same was true for many Austrians and the breakup of the Ottoman Empire.
* America was divided over the Treaty of Versailles (the peace treaty to end WWI):
  + A group called the **“irreconcilables”** opposed any treaty with a League of Nations in it because they believed that the U.S. should not get entangled in world politics or be involved in world organizations
  + Another larger group called the **“reservationists”** were opposed to the treaty as it was written but only wanted small changes. They felt that Article 10 of the treaty could lead the U.S. into war without Congress’ consent. They felt the language was too vague and insisted that it not contradict the power of Congress to declare war.
* Wilson had compromised in Versailles, but was not willing to compromise in Washington. Wilson fought hard and made the League of Nations his personal crusade. America and Congress never fully got on board and it finally died. Wilson’s extensive travels and work on the League made him very weak and he suffered a massive stroke.
* In November 1919, Congress voted against the Treaty of Versailles. This wasn’t because most of Congress were isolationists. It was because they differed on *how* America should be involved in world affairs.
* Section 4-Effects of the War
* World War I produced significant economic, social, political and cultural changes in America and throughout the world:
* 1. Influenza Epidemic
* In September of 1918, an unusually deadly form of influenza (flu) appeared. It is believed that the flu began in the U.S. and as soldiers traveled to new parts of the world, the flu virus traveled with them. It spread quickly and easily and killed millions worldwide.
* 2. Opportunities of Women and African Americans
* The end of the war equaled the end of wartime economic opportunities for both groups.
* An economic recession created a more competitive job market and so, by 1920, less women were in the workforce than in 1910.
* Also, race riots erupted in the summer of 1919 across the country.
* 3. Inflation leads to Labor Unrest
* During the war, **inflation**, or rising prices, had been held in check. After the war, Americans rushed to buy consumer goods rather than war bonds. The scarcity of these goods, coupled with widespread demand, caused inflation.
* Farmers and industrial workers felt the pain of this inflation, leading to strikes and violence.
* In the presidential election of 1920, **Warren G. Harding** ran as the Republican candidate.
* He campaigned for a rejection of Wilson idealism. He was tired of Progressive reforms and foreign crusades. He called for a return to “normalcy,” which meant the normality of what he believed had been a simpler time before Wilson took office.
* Harding won by a landslide and this was the end of Wilson’s ideas.