

Power Notes: Progressive Movement & WWI

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Understand the circumstances of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in America that led to the progressive movement.*

- 1) The progressive movement was a white, middle class, Protestant, "native" American movement prior to World War I caused by: 1) urbanization--most rapid growth in U.S. history; 2) industrialization and technological change; 3) immigration--during 1901-1910 "New Immigrants" from Southern and Eastern Europe were 71% of total (8,795,191).
- 2) These factors caused the "progressives" to lose social, economic and political power in many northern cities.
- 3) The progressive movement was an attempt to regain control over the American agenda.

Importance: The progressive movement illustrates how people respond to change by using the political system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: *Understand the outcomes of the progressive movement.*

- 1) Prior to World War I in many cities, immigrants, through the Democratic Party, gained control of the political system. Under the name of "reform" the progressives attempted to throw out the Democratic "Machine." During this period, graft and corruption were ways of getting access to political decision-making power. In return for jobs and social help the immigrants gave the Democratic Party their vote.
- 2) Progressive "reforms" made the American political system less democratic and more efficient. Recall (electorate can remove a politician from office), referendum (electorate votes on a political issue), and initiative (electorate can put an issue on the ballot) all took power away from elected officials and gave it to interest groups.
- 3) Municipal civil service centralized power and made it difficult for the Democratic Party to "reward" its followers with jobs. Power of ethnic groups was reduced and voter turnout declined.
- 4) Zoning laws had the unintended effect of segregating people by wealth.
- 5) The 17th Amendment (1913) allowing the direct election Senators, and the 19th Amendment (1919) giving women the vote, were attempts to help the middle-class gain power.
- 6) Other Amendments which effected reform were the 16th, which established an income tax, 18th, which established Prohibition and the 19th, which established women's suffrage.
- 7) Progressive Presidents, Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson signed into law several reforms:
 - Pure Food and Drug Act
 - Elkins and Hepburn Act which boosted the Interstate Commerce Commission
 - Meat Inspection Act
 - National Reclamation Act
 - Department of Labor
 - Bureau of Corporations
 - Federal Reserve Act
- 8) Muckrakers exposed many of the social evils such as child labor, unfair business practices, abuse of immigrants and the poor and government corruption.

Importance: These outcomes are still a major part of the American political system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the European conflicts that led to World War I.

- 1) The fundamental cause of the war was the conflict between Germany and France over which country could establish hegemony over Europe. The 1870 Franco-Prussian War had created tension and hatred between the two nations.
- 2) A second cause of the war was the conflict between Russia and Austria. Russia wanted a warm water port, to bring all Slavic peoples under Russian control, protect its southern border and get access to markets and raw materials. The Russo/Turkish War (1877-78) allowed Russia to get influence in the Balkans which greatly disturbed Austria because it also wanted to control the region.
- 3) The race for colonies, primarily in Africa, also increased tensions between the major European powers. Imperial expansion, it was believed, would provide markets and raw materials for industrialism, and ports for navies. The completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 caused a rush for African colonies. By 1914, only Ethiopia and Liberia were independent.
- 4) By 1900 France & Russia were allied against Germany, Austria & Italy. Britain had stayed out of alliances. The naval race that began in 1900 between Germany and Britain threw Britain into the Franco-Russian alliance system.
- 5) The immediate cause of the war was the conflict between Austria and Serbia. The assassination the Austrian Crown Prince in June 1914 was the spark that ignited the war. The alliance system dragged the other countries of Europe into the war.
- 6) World War I was the first total war. Those countries without an industrialized base were at a great disadvantage.

Importance: World War I was a mistake, in that no single country thought that its actions would lead to total war.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why the United States entered World War I.

- 1) American leaders (President Woodrow Wilson, special advisor Colonel House, and Secretary of State Lansing) wanted to ensure that no country gained control of Europe since that would threaten US's security and economy. In addition, German militarism was seen as a greater threat to American interests than the French & British governments.
- 2) Neutrality was seen as the way to achieve U.S. goals. To ensure that the Germans would not win the war, U.S. trade to the Allies increased from about \$825 million in 1914 to \$3.2 billion in 1916. The U.S. also began to lend the Allies money (\$2.3 billion by 1917).
- 3) In February 1915 the Germans declared a submarine blockade of the British Isles; within the war zone, all belligerent shipping would be destroyed without warning. The American government, after the sinking of several belligerent ships, including the British passenger liner Lusitania, warned the German government that if unrestricted submarine warfare against Allied ships continued the U.S. would come into the war. Germany backed down.
- 4) After his reelection in 1916 Wilson made a major effort to end the war on terms favorable to the U.S. He failed.
- 5) In February, 1917 the Germans declared unrestricted submarine warfare. The Germans hoped that they could win the war before the Americans could make their weight felt. Unrestricted submarine warfare threatened all of the US's goals: its commerce, its concept of neutral rights, its security, and its ability to dictate the peace. The Zimmermann Telegram further inflamed American public opinion. America declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917.

Importance: America went to war when neutrality would no longer ensure that its goals for Europe could be met.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the American mobilization for the war.

- 1) Just like the countries of Europe had done previously, the American government mobilized American industry for war. The Committee on Public Information flooded America with propaganda. Under the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sabotage and Sedition Acts of 1918 opponents of the war were silenced and about 900 were imprisoned.
- 2) The government used the war as an opportunity to destroy the socialist IWW union.

Importance: During World War I, opponents of the war lost their civil liberties.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the consequences of World War I.

- 1) When the Communists gained power in Russia in November, 1917 they pulled Russia out of the war, and created the Soviet Union.
- 2) The Germans tried one final offensive in March, 1918, but the Allies held and the fresh U.S. troops that arrived in May helped turn the tide of battle. On November 11, 1918 an armistice was signed.
- 3) About 10 million dead and about 20 million wounded. Deaths: Germany, 1.8 million; Russia, 1.7 million; France, 1.4 million; Austria-Hungary, 1.2 million; the United Kingdom, 1 million; the United States, 115,000.
- 4) The economy of Europe was seriously damaged.
- 5) The concept of "total war" was accepted.
- 6) Europe was deprived of world hegemony. The U.S. became the West's most powerful nation.
- 7) Western civilization was demoralized. Life was cheap.

Importance: World War I left such bitterness that World War II followed 21 years later.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand the Treaty of Versailles.

- 1) The terms of the treaty were primarily set by the U.S. (Woodrow Wilson), Great Britain (David Lloyd George), France (Georges Clemenceau), and Italy (Vittorio Orlando).
- 2) Two approaches: the "hard" line advocated by the French & the "soft" line advocated by the U.S. France wanted to punish and weaken Germany. Wilson wanted to reform the world's diplomatic system (in contrast to Lenin who wanted to change the entire system). Wilson saw himself as a mediator between radical socialism and old-fashioned imperialism.
- 3) Wilson's 14 Points: a) enemy evacuation of all Allied territory; b) Alsace-Lorraine to France; c) self-determination of peoples (e.g. creation of Poland, the breakup of Austria); d) no more secret treaties; e) freedom of the seas; f) the reduction of armaments; g) the "fair" adjustment of colonial claims; and h) the League of Nations.
- 4) Public opinion (domestic political considerations) played an important role in the making of the treaty.
- 5) Provisions of the Versailles Treaty (June, 1919): a) Germany surrendered Alsace-Lorraine, Rhineland demilitarized, Saar under French control for 15 years, Germany ceded land to Poland, Germany lost its colonies; b) German armed forces restricted to 100,000; c) Reparations: Germany had to pay Allies \$33 billion; and, d) Germany had to accept the responsibility for starting the war.
- 6) Austria and Turkey lost much territory.
- 7) The League of Nations was created. It would act as an organ of collective security. It had no power to enforce its decisions. Allied countries were given ex-German colonies as "mandates."

Importance: The perceived harsh aspects of the Treaty of Versailles helped the Fascists come to power in Germany in the 1930s, and helped cause World War II.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: Understand why the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Versailles Peace Treaty.

1) President Wilson made several major political mistakes: he excluded the Republicans from the peace negotiations and he campaigned against them in the 1918 election?? They had no stake in the League's success. Since the Republicans controlled the Senate, and the Senate had to approve the treaty by a two-thirds majority, not reaching out to the Republicans was a major blunder.

2) The leader of the Senate opposition was Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, a personal and political enemy of Wilson.

3) The Senate was divided into 4 groups: a) the "Irreconcilables" who would have nothing to do with the League; b) "Mild Reservationists" who favored membership with only a few changes in the League Covenant; c) "Strong Reservationists" (Lodge's group) who wanted major changes—especially in Article X of the League's Charter which dealt with collective security; and, d) the Democrats who supported the President.

4) President Wilson had a stroke in October, 1919 and he refused to compromise with Lodge. The Treaty would have passed if Wilson had accepted the Lodge reservations (amendments). The Senate did not approve the treaty and the U.S. did not join the League of Nations.

Importance: Many historians believe that the failure of the U.S. to join the League, and take an interest in world politics during the 1920s and 1930s, was a major cause of World War II.