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8th. Grade Social Studies

World War I

"The War to End All Wars" Part 4: America Joins the War

America Supplies the Allies

- By 1917, the Allies desperately needed soldiers to help fight the war. Years of trench warfare had led to a shortage of Allied troops and some French troops refused to continue to fight.
- The British had started to run out of food and ammunition.
- German U-boats were sinking 25% of the Allied ships that carried supplies.
- To stop the large losses of supplies to U-boats the U.S. Navy first helped the British find and sink German U-boats.
- The Navy also created a convoy system that drastically reduced attacks.
- The convoys were teams of ships made up of Navy Destroyers and merchant ships that traveled together in an escorted line across the Atlantic.

The Nation comes together to fight the War.

- After declaring war in 1917, the U.S. began to a mobilization to fight the war.
- The mobilization or the gathering of resources and personnel needed to fight the war, affected every part of American life.
- The **National War Labor Board** was created in 1918 and pressured businesses to grant the demands of workers like an eight-hour workday, overtime pay, and equal pay for women, and the right to form unions and bargain collectively.
- In return for the concession workers agreed not to go on strike.

The War changes the American Workforce.

- To build weapons and supply the war the nations industries expanded.
- At the same time, millions of men left their jobs to go fight the war.
- Few new immigrants, who would have filled these jobs, came to the U.S. because of the war.
- There was a shortage of workers to do all the work needed.
- **Women and African Americans helped fill these jobs in the workforce previously held by white men.**
- African Americans, Mexicans and Latinos move North from the South in a **Great Migration** to take many of the jobs.

America pays for the War.

- WWI cost the U.S. about \$32 billion.
- Selling the American people war bonds raised two-thirds of this money.
- The bonds were known as **Liberty Bonds** and were a promise by the U.S. Government to repay the loans or bonds after the war.

America produces supplies for the War.

- The U.S. needed to feed the citizens at home, its own troops, and the allied troops while also feeding the civilians in the Allied countries.
- The agency tried to get farmers to produce more and the public to eat less.
- The agency urged people to eat less by slogans that they popularized.
 - Wheatless Mondays
 - Meatless Tuesdays
 - Porkless Thursdays
 - Serve Just Enough
 - Use All Leftovers
- The agency also urged people to plant a **Victory Garden** to add to their own store of foods.
- The agency also encouraged rationing of certain food products.
- Another government agency the War Industries Board was created.
- It supervised the nation's industrial production and helped convert factories to the production of war goods and set prices for key consumer products.

Mobilizing the Public

- President Wilson created the **Committee on Public Information** and appointed a journalist George Creel as the head to the agency.
- The agency's goals were to persuade the American public the war represented a battle for democracy and freedom.
- The Committee distributed pro-war pamphlets, posters, articles and books.
- It provided newspapers with optimistic government accounts of the war.
- It arranged for short 4-minute speeches to be presented before plays and movies.
- The Committee hired speakers, writers, artists, and actors to build support the war.
- This was the nations first full scale professional propaganda campaign.

The Government deals with Dissent (opposition) and Tensions in America.

- Between the years 1914 to 1920 300,000 to 500,000 African American left their homes in the South to seek jobs in the Northern cities. This became known as the **Great Migration**.
- They often found that racial prejudice was not confined to the South as they faced similar prejudice in the North.
- Race riots took place in Northern cities as white Northerners displayed a similar racial intolerance as did their Southern counterparts.
- Opposition to the war (dissent) was prevalent in German and Irish immigrant neighborhoods. Germans were sympathetic to their native land and the Irish hated the British for their occupation of Ireland.
- Socialists opposed the war because they believed business owners wanted war to achieve even more wealth and that the workers would continue to suffer.
- Congress passed the **Espionage Act** in 1917 that created strict penalties for spying and aiding the enemy or interfering with army recruiting.
- In 1918, Congress passed the **Sabotage Act and the Sedition Act**. These laws made it illegal to say, print, or write anything perceived as negative about the government.
- Thousands of people especially immigrants, socialists, pacifists, and labor activists were convicted and went to jail under the laws.
- German Americans came under suspicion and their music, language, and culture were attacked in their communities.
- Some Americans spoke out against the drastic laws but most believed they were necessary in wartime and were needed to stop traitors and spies.

Russia Withdraws from the War

- The Allies needed more troops after the second Russian Revolution when the **Bolsheviks** (a group of communists) overthrew the democratic Russian government in March of 1917.
- Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks, signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which surrendered Poland, the Ukraine, and other territory to Germany in exchange for an end to the War.
- The loss of the Eastern Front (in Russia) was a blow to the Allies as Germany was able to turn all its forces towards the Western Front (in Belgium and France).

New German Offensive

- With new troops from the Eastern Front Germany launched a powerful attack against the Allies.
- By June of 1918, the Allied lines had been broken and the Germans were 50 miles from Paris.
- After years of stalemate along the French-German border—it suddenly looked as if Germany would win the war.

The American Expeditionary Force enters the War

- Although the U.S. forces had arrived in June 1917, it was many months before they had all their supplies and training so they would be able to fight.
- General John J. (Blackjack) Pershing led the American Expeditionary Force (the name given to the U.S. troops) into battle.
- The American entry into the fight helped turn around the course of the battle. The German offensive was halted and the American troops began to advance on the Germans.
- The American force was at full strength by the spring of 1918, and General Pershing refused Allied requests to use American troops to bolster the French and British forces. Pershing kept the U.S. troops a separate force.
- By November, the Allied forces, led by the AEF, broke through the German lines and Germany was now faced with an invasion of its own country.
- With their troops in retreat, a severe shortage of food and essential supplies the German leaders asked President Wilson of October 4, 1918 for an Armistice Agreement.

The End of the War

- Wilson agreed to the Armistice on the condition that Germany agree to his plan for peace and promise not to resume hostilities.
- While German leaders considered Wilson's terms, political unrest led to the overthrow of Kaiser (emperor) Wilhelm II, and he gave up his throne; Germany then became a republic.
- The new leaders quickly agreed to Wilson's terms for an armistice.

Peace

- The armistice began November 11, 1918 with Germany agreeing to withdraw all its forces west of the Rhine River and its fleet to the Baltic Sea.
- Germany also agreed to surrender large quantity of war equipment.
- President Wilson Announced:

“Everything for which America fought has been accomplished. It will now be our duty to assist by example, by sober, friendly counsel, and by material aid in the establishment of just democracy throughout the world”