

America Between the World Wars

Class 1

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Why Is This Important?

- The era between America's entry into World War I and America's entry into World War II is an important era – much that defines our modern world and modern America had its roots in this era
- Many of you had parents and/or grandparents who came of age and lived through this era
 - Understanding the world they lived in will help us understand them

Some Innovations that Originated Between WWI and WWII - 1

Hertz Rent-a-Car	Aerosol cans	Ballpoint pens
Daylight Saving Time	Academy Awards (Oscars)	Electronic computer
American Legion	Radar	Electron microscope
United Parcel Service	Scotch tape	<i>Superman</i>
Thompson sub-machine gun	Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade	Birdseye Frozen foods
National Football League	Drive-in movies	<i>Bugs Bunny</i>
Radio Broadcasting	<i>Time & Newsweek</i>	Chanel #5
Color & Sound Motion Pictures	Xerox copies	Loudspeakers
Band-Aids	Gallop Poll	Walt Disney cartoons
Television	Paperback books	"The Big Bang Theory"
35mm cameras	Nylon	Radio astronomy
Monopoly	Canned beer	FM radio

Some Innovations that Originated Between WWI and WWII - 2

Good Humor Ice Cream Bar	Alka Seltzer	Sliced bread
Chanel No. 5	Monopoly board game	Chlorofluorocarbons
Fast Food Chain Restaurants – White Castle	Colonial Williamsburg	Fluorescent lamps
Bureau of the Budget (predecessor of OMB)	Tomb of the Unknown Soldier	NBC & CBS
Reader's Digest	Electric guitar	Waring blender
35mm Camera	Teflon	Instant coffee
Book-of-the-Month Club	LSD	Helicopter
Schick electric razor	Freeze-drying	Kleenex
Blondie & Dagwood	Batman	Desk-model Stapler
Jet engine	Life magazine	Pap Tests

What We Will Cover Today

- Impacts of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles
 - Economic, Social & Political Effects
 - Financial
 - Agricultural
 - Industrial
 - Political
 - Other
 - Impacts of the Russian Revolution
 - The Influenza Pandemic
 - Immigration Restriction
- Woodrow Wilson's Four Great Mistakes
- Begin discussion of Prohibition

Effects of World War I

- You can't understand the 1920s and 1930s without understand the impact of WWI
- Most of what happened in the 20th century had its roots in WWI and the resulting peace treaties
 - The Russian Revolution
 - The Great Depression
 - World War II
 - The Cold War
 - Vietnam
 - The Arab-Israeli Wars
 - The two U.S. wars with Iraq

The Russian Revolution -1

- The war placed a major strain on the Russian economy
 - Decline in civilian production
 - Rampant inflation, especially in the cities
 - Inadequate railroad infrastructure
 - The Ottoman Empire cut Russia off from the Western Allies
 - Prevented the Allies from shipping supplies to Russia
 - Led to the ill-fated Dardanelles campaign
 - Made Kamal Ataturk and unmade Winston Churchill
 - Fostered a sense of Turkish, Australian, and New Zealand identity

The Russian Revolution - 2

- Decline of the Russian economy led to the “February” Revolution
- The failures of the Provisional Government led to the “October” Bolshevik coup
- Intermediate result: Russian Civil War
- End Result: A Communist Russia

Effects of a Communist Russia

- Split the World Socialist movement into a Communist wing and a Democratic Socialist wing.
 - Founding of the American Communist Party as a response to the events in Russia
- The Communist Revolution in Russia and the Founding of the American Communist Party Led to:
 - The “Red Scare” in the U.S. &
 - A fear of Communist revolution among both political elites and the political Right in Europe

Impact of the US Involvement in WWI

- US involvement in WWI had impacts in many different areas
 - Financial
 - Agricultural
 - Industrial
 - Political
 - Other

Financial Impact of WWI - 1

- Sizable increase in the national debt
 - Led to postwar policies of cutting federal govt expenditures
- Income Tax becomes the dominant mode of taxation
- Mass marketing of war bonds as both an investment and as a means of showing one's patriotism
 - Made a large proportion of the American public bondholders

Financial Impact of WWI - 2

- Generated a high-degree of inflation
 - CPI doubled between 1915 and 1920
- Led the Federal Reserve to raise the discount rate from 4% to 7%
- The resulting recession was a major factor in the defeat of the Democrats in the 1920 Election
 - Other factors were the abrupt cancellation of war contracts and the process of demobilization

Agricultural Impact of WWI - 1

- European food production declined as agricultural manpower was drafted into military service
 - Led U.S. farmers to vastly expand agricultural production
 - Farmers took on mortgages to purchase land and to mechanize agricultural production
 - Mechanization and chemical fertilizers led to a vast increase in productivity

Agricultural Impact of WWI - 2

- A Depressed agricultural economy in the 1920s due to:
 - Post-war return of European agriculture to normal levels of production
 - The increased productivity and expanded output of American agriculture which led to:
 - Crop surpluses,
 - Low farm prices
 - Farmer agitation for measures that would restore parity

Industrial Impact of WWI - 1

- Created a big demand for munitions, steel, motor vehicles, communications equipment, and ships
 - Turned DuPont into a chemical-industrial giant
- Created a planned economy run largely by big business interests via the Federal Government's War Industries Board (WIB)
 - WIB had over 60 commodity divisions relating to specific industries that:
 - Were largely staffed by people from the industry
 - Were interwoven with the supply departments of the Army, Navy, other Federal agencies, and even the Allies

Industrial Impact of WWI - 2

- WIB Conservation Division standardized a whole host of products in terms of size, color, versions, and variety
 - E.g. Sizes, colors, & varieties of clothing; the shaping and sizes of drill bits & screw threads
- Prior to WWI, each company and industry had determined its own standards
 - 250 types of plow models
 - 755 types of drills

Industrial Impact of WWI – 3

- WIB Price-Fixing Committee was responsible for:
 - Setting prices to control inflation
 - Guaranteeing a ‘fair profit’ to the producers in order to stabilize the market

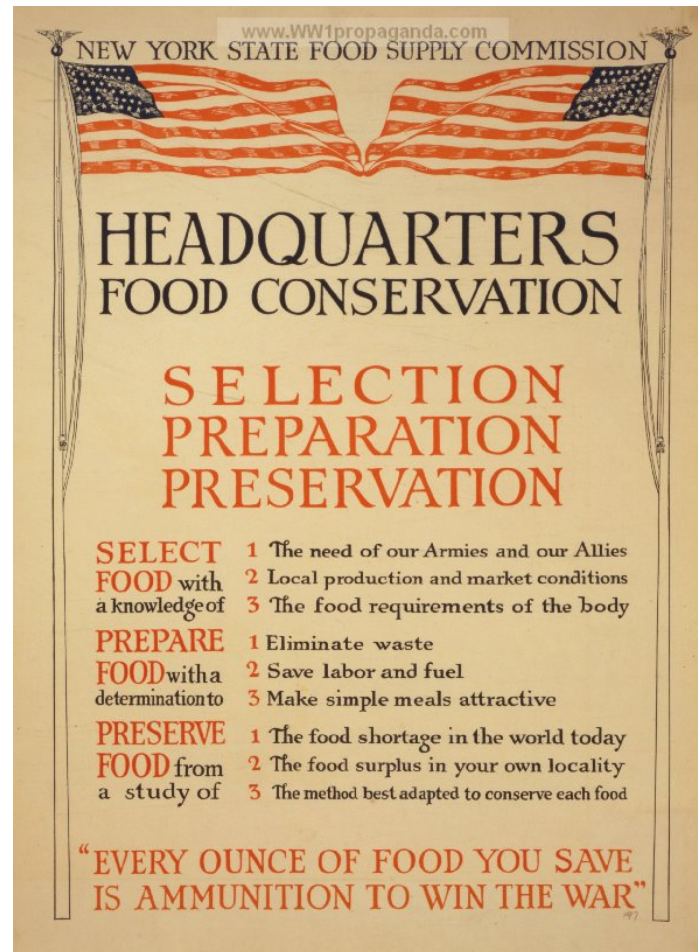
Industrial Impact of WWI - 4

- The Food Administration
 - Headed by Herbert Hoover
 - Persuaded Americans to eat fish and vegetables in place of wheat and meat
 - Promoted “wheatless’ and ‘meatless’ days
 - Popularized spaghetti (pasta with tomato sauce) as both a meat strecher and as a dish for meatless days
 - Standardized food sizes & portions
 - Standardized the size of bread loaves

Food Administration Poster



Food Administration Poster



Industrial Impact of WWI – 5

- Provided a model
 - For big business, a model of what could be achieved by national coordination and cartelization
 - For liberal intellectuals, a model that was
 - An alternative to both laissez-faire capitalism and Soviet communism
 - A way of transcending the weaknesses and social conflicts of both of the above
 - For the FDR Administration, a model for many New Deal agencies and programs

Political Impact of WWI - 1

- Wilson created the Committee on Public Information headed by George Creel (CPI) to create the war spirit necessary to fight the war
 - Led to an upsurge of anti-German hysteria
 - Based on propaganda demonizing everything German
 - Pioneered in the use of media celebrities to propagandize and sell war bonds
- Erosion of civil liberties
 - Suppression of anti-war groups
 - Suppression of the American Socialist Party

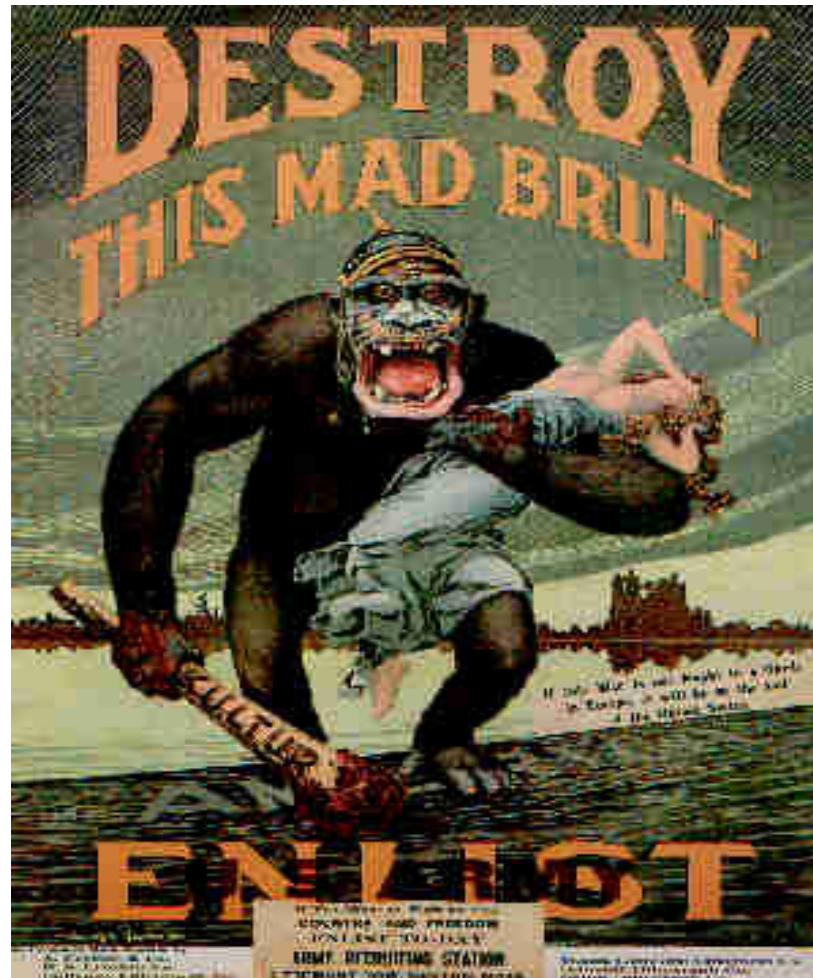
Savings Bond Ad



Anti-German Propaganda Poster



Anti-German Enlistment Poster



Political Impact of WWI - 2

- Made possible the enactment of Prohibition
 - Supporters of Prohibition exploited the belief that drink impeded industrial productivity and soldierly fighting ability
 - The Anti-Saloon League successfully linked liquor to disloyalty and beer-drinking with sympathy to the kaiser and his Huns
- Led to the Post-war “Red scare”
 - The Russian Revolution and the founding of the American Communist Party led to a fear that revolution could happen here
 - This fear was intensified by the “100% Americanism” promoted by the war and the Creel Committee

Political Impact of WWI – 3

- Anti-German hysteria (and the Red Scare) in turn led to:
 - A stress on 100% Americanism
 - Immigration Restriction
 - Immigration Act of 1917
 - Emergency Quota Act of 1921
 - Immigration Act of 1924 (National Origins Act)

Immigration Restriction Acts

- Immigration Act of 1917
 - Barred entry to immigrants from most of Asia
 - Barred many categories of “undesirables”
 - Barred immigrants age 16 and above who were illiterate
- Immigration Act of 1921
 - Limited the annual number of immigrants from each country to 3% of the number of persons from that country living in the U.S. in 1910

Immigration Restriction Acts -2

- Asian Exclusion Act of 1924
 - Barred immigration from an Asia-Pacific triangle from Japan, China, Korea, India, and Southeast Asia
 - Barred immigration of any persons ineligible for naturalization
 - Non-whites were not deemed eligible for naturalization
- Provoked an official diplomatic protest from Japan

Immigration Restriction Acts -3

- National Origins Act of 1924
 - Temporarily limited the annual number of immigrants
 - After July 1, 1927 (later postponed to July 1, 1929)
 - Imposed a total annual quota of 150,000 with the annual quota for any country or nationality being proportional to their proportion of the U.S. population in 1920
 - Gave non-quota status to wives and unmarried children of U.S. citizens and natives of Western Hemisphere countries

Other Impacts of WWI -1

- Airplane
- Gave Hollywood dominance in the motion picture industry
- Consumer products
 - Safety razors
 - Wrist watches
 - Kotex
 - Cigarettes

Other Impacts of WWI – 2

- Spread Jazz from New Orleans to the cities of the North
- Created New Standards of What Was Considered to be Attractive
 - From full-bodied to slim
 - From Gibson Girl to Flapper
- Created the Conditions for the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1917-1919

The Influenza Pandemic - 1

- Started on a pig farm in Haskell County Kansas
- Two events led to the virus becoming a pandemic:
 - Annual Iowa Cedar Rapids Swine Show in September 1917, and
 - Large-scale induction of Iowa & Kansas farm boys at Fort Funston
- First wave in the spring and summer of 1918
 - Unlike most flu, which have U-shaped death graphs, this flu had a W-shaped graph

The Influenza Pandemic – 2

- Flu spread from Camp Funston to other Army training camps and to Europe thanks to crowded barracks, sealed troop ships, and the fetid trenches of the Western Front
- Called “Spanish Flu” since neutral Spain did not censor news accounts of the flu
- Second (and most lethal) wave first appeared in September 1918 at Camp Devens MA

The Influenza Pandemic – 3

- Second wave virus singled out 20- and 30-year olds
 - By the end of October 1918, 1 in 5 U.S. soldiers had been infected
- Virus provoked a hyper immune response which flooded the lungs with fluid
 - This allowed secondary bacterial infections (most commonly pneumonia) to deliver the fatal blow

The Influenza Pandemic - 4

- An estimated 50 million people died of the flu
 - This included 550,000 Americans
 - Roughly half who died were people in their 20s and 30s
 - May have killed as many as 8%-10% of the people in the 20s-30s age group
 - In many American cities, over half the population was infected

The Influenza Pandemic – 5

- WWI contributed to the Flu Pandemic in several ways:
 - Providing an initial funnel of infection at Fort Funston
 - Creating population movements of both refugees from areas of fighting and rural workers to areas of war-time employment in cities
 - Creating a malnourished population in Europe
 - By channeling more and more doctors and nurses into military-related medicine, it caused a deterioration of civilian medical care

Camp Hospital



Other Impacts of WWI – 3

- Created a potential market for ham and broadcast radio
 - Large number of wartime radio operators
- American Legion and other veterans organizations
- Tomb of the unknown soldier
- Armistice Day (November 11th) as a national holiday
 - Later renamed Veterans' Day

Four Key Wilson Decisions - 1

1. The decision to turn the Paris peace negotiations into an extended summit
 - Kept Wilson out of touch with what was going on in the U.S.
 - Led Wilson to ignore the problems of war-related inflation and postwar demobilization
 - This was to have deep implications for the Democrats in the 1920 election

Four Key Wilson Decisions – 2

2. The decision to accept a flawed treaty in order to win foreign acceptance of the League of Nations

- Treaty contained provisions and omissions that
 - Were politically unpalatable to the U.S. Senate
 - Were to cause future trouble

3. The refusal to accept any changes or reservations in the Treaty to win Republican support

Four Key Wilson Decisions - 3

4. The Decision not to resign the Presidency after his stroke

- Led to the U.S. being governed by Wilson's wife
 - This meant that the problems of postwar inflation, demobilization, and recession were totally ignored
- Let the Lodge Republicans dominate the debate over ratification of the Versailles Treaty
 - This sapped support for the Treaty and led to its eventual defeat

Impact of the Treaty of Versailles

- Led to great resentment in Germany
 - Signing the Versailles “diktat” weakened the Weimar Republic, giving the German Right (and the Nazis) a tool with which to attack the Republic
- Created instability in Eastern Europe
 - Created weak and unstable states
 - Strengthened Germany strategically
 - Constituted a peace settlement that neither Germany nor Soviet Russia supported

Impact of Failed Ratification

- Greatly weakened the League of Nations
- Fostered a sense of disillusionment
 - With World War I and its results
 - With U.S. participation in the war
 - With U.S. engagement with the world
- This in turn fostered a spirit of isolationism that was reflected in restrictive immigration laws, high tariffs, and the Neutrality Acts of the 1930s

The Impact of High Tariffs

- Harding and Coolidge Administrations followed a policy of:
 - Minimalist government
 - Lowering taxes
 - Paying down the National Debt
 - Support of high tariffs
- High tariffs
 - Reduced European access to the U.S. market
 - Made Europe dependent on U.S. bank loans to pay war debts, reparations, and buy U.S. goods