Guided Notes: WWI

**Causes of WWI:**

1. **Imperialism**: Britain, France, Germany, and Italy all were **competing for colonies** in Africa and Asia. Germany had fewer colonies than the others, and they were not happy about it.
2. **Nationalism**: Many countries had an increasingly strong sense of **pride, loyalty, and protectiveness** towards their own country. They were out to prove that their country was the best.
3. **Militarism**: With nationalism fueling the fire, many nations had a primary goal of making their nation a strong military power. Consequently, they **built up their armies and navies**.
4. **Alliances:** European nations formed a network of competing alliances. If one country in the alliance went to war, the others would support that country. This meant that there would be **no small conflict**.
5. The Final Straw: In June of 1914, a Serbian man assassinated **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. After the assassination, **Austria-Hungary declared war** on Serbia. The alliances squared up to face off against each other.

**Which nations fought against each other?**  *(YOU WILL HAVE TO KNOW THIS)*

**Central Powers:** Austria-Hungary, Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria.

**Allied Powers:** Serbia, Russia, France, Great Britain, Italy, and later… the U.S.

**How WWI was different that previous wars**:

1. **Trench Warfare**: The bulk of soldiers in combat fought in trenches with obstacles like **barbed wire** in between enemy trenches. While it provided protection to soldiers, trenches were filled with rats, mud, raw sewage, and rotting corpses. Soldiers were often in trenches for **weeks at a time**. They were not fighting all the time, but they had to be ready to fight at any time.
2. **New Technology**:
   1. **Machine guns** were now firing 600 bullets per minute. Soldiers who left the trenches to rush enemy lines were very likely to be killed.
   2. **Poison Gas** was used by both sides to burn and blind soldiers.
   3. The **tank** was able to smash through barbed wire, cleared the way for men to cross the land between the trenches.
   4. **Airplanes** were used for the first time in battle. Planes would battle each other high above the trenches.
   5. Submarines were used by **Germany.** Known as **U-boats**, they had both guns and torpedoes. They annihilated allied trade ships.

**Neutrality:**

When WWI began in 1914, President Woodrow **Wilson announced that United States would remain neutral**, meaning they would refuse to take sides.

**Why our desire to be neutral changed:**

Sinking of the Lusitania: Britain set up a blockade of German ports, so German U-boats retaliated by trying to sink Allied merchant and supply ships. However, in May of 1915, **U-boats sank a passenger ship called the Lusitania**, killing nearly 1,200 people, and more than 100 Americans. **This created heavy anti-German sentiment in America**. Wilson demanded that Germany stop unrestricted submarine warfare. They agreed for awhile, but resumed unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917.

Zimmerman Telegram: Arthur Zimmerman, the German foreign minister, sent a telegram to Mexico saying that if they joined Germany and the Central Powers, that **Germany would help Mexico gain back its lost territory from previous wars with the U.S.** (Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona)

Sinking of American Ships: After resuming unrestricted submarine warfare**, German U-boats sank three American ships.** Americans had reached their breaking point. In April of 1917, Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of War.

**America Enters the War:**

The allies were thrilled to have American support. **Food shortages and military failures** in Russia caused Czar Nicholas II to step down. The Bolshevik revolution, led by **Lenin,** replaced the former Russian government with a **Communist government**. In a Communist country, the **government controls the economy** and there is **common ownership of all property**. With Russia totally devastated, Lenin began peace talks with Germany, and in **1918, withdrew from the war**. This shifted the focus to the war in Western Europe, and allies needed reinforcements.

American soldiers, however, were **not prepared for war.** Our army had only 200,000 soldiers, so in May of 1917, Congress passed the **Selective Service Act**. This required all **males ages 21-30 to sign up for military service**. This brought our troop numbers to over 3 million by the end of 1918.

America sent 2 million soldiers to France under **General John J. Pershing**. They served as American **Expeditionary Forces**. They were asked to join British and French ranks, but Pershing refused and Wilson supported him. We wanted to be a distinct presence in the war and the peace process.

Nearly **400,000 African** **Americans** served in WWI. They faced a great deal of discrimination from white American soldiers and struggled to earn roles in combat. Nearly **40,000 women** also went overseas, often as **nurses**, though some were bilingual operators.

**Mobilization at home:**

To pay for the cost of the war, Americans bought **war bonds.** It’s a loan to the government that will be paid back later. Citizens also **conserved resources** so that more supplies could be sent overseas. Women would knit socks and sweaters for soldiers, saved gas by avoiding leisure trips, and many observed wheatless and meatless days to conserve food.

Wilson also created the **War Industries Board** to produce much needed war supplies. It managed the buying and distributing of war materials, and was given a great deal of power. It set production goals, prices, and wages. He also set up **the National War Labor Board** to settle disputes between factory owners. **The Committee on Public Information produced propaganda**, **selling the war through posters, pamphlets, and movies**. The **Espionage Act** and **Sedition Act** were passed that set heavy fines and long prison terms for those participating in Anti-war activities. The dark side of this is that over 1,000 pacifists and anti-war demonstrators went to war for their beliefs.

**America helps the allies win the war:**

American forces were a huge **morale boost** to the weary allies. To help combat the destruction of German U-boats, a **convoy system** of heavily guarded destroyers escorted merchant ships. This quickly reduced the rate of lost ships. Americans further incapacitated U-boats by laying **70,000 mines** in the North Atlantic.

Americans on the ground turned to helping the Allies push back the Germans from Paris. By the fall of 1918, through a series of several battles, the Germans lost all the ground they had gained throughout the year. In November, General Erich Ludendorff advised the German government to seek an **armistice.** Its navy mutinied; its other allies stopped fighting. On **November 11, 1918, WWI was officially over.**

**Human Cost:**

Soldiers Killed: **8.5 million**

Civilians: **13 million**, often dying from starvation and disease.

Flu Epidemic: Killed some **550,000** Americans. Those in trenches were especially susceptible.

**Peace Process:**

Wilson wanted to prevent such a large scale event from ever happening again. As such, he created a plan for peace that became known as the **Fourteen Points**. The Fourteen Points called for smaller militaries, free trade, freedom of the seas, for an end to secret trade agreements, and changes to national boundaries. Most importantly he wanted to form **the League of Nations, whose purpose was to peacefully settle international disputes.**

Wilson’s philosophy was for **“peace without victory.”** The British, French and Italians did not share that viewpoint. They wanted **Germany to pay** heavily for the war. **The Treaty of Versailles** forced Germany to accept **full blame** for the war. Germany was **stripped of its colonies, and had to pay $33 billion in reparations**. The treaty divided up the empires of Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans. Czechoslovakia was created, and Poland gained its independence.

**How the War impacts America:**

1. Increased involvement in world affairs during the war.
2. **Women move into the work place**, replacing soldiers overseas. They appreciate their expanded opportunity, and also worked hard to win suffrage.
3. **Great Migration** – movement of African Americans to northern cities
4. **Civilian participation in the war effort**
5. Stifling dissent with the Espionage and Sedition Acts
6. For the first time, African American soldiers were given acclaim for their bravery and effort in battle.
7. Racial tension and violence – Now returning soldiers and African Americans had to compete for jobs, housing, and other limited commodities. This led to escalating tension between races, and riots broke out around the country.
8. **Strikes and social turmoil.** While Americans worked for low wages for the war effort, when the war was over, employees wanted a raise. When that didn’t happen several people went on strike. Then a fear erupted that a communist form of government would take over. This is called the **Red Scare**. Suspected radicals were subjected to **Palmer Raids**, and were arrested without a warrant.
9. We withdraw from world leadership as the senate rejects the Treaty of Versailles.