

## Chapter 30

# The Nation Joins World Wars

### WORLD WAR I BEGINS IN 1914

ON JUNE 28, 1914 an eighteen-year-old student shot the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, as he drove away from a reception in the town hall of Sarajevo, Bosnia. The young Slav killed the prince of the ruling Hapsburg family and his wife because Austria had taken control of the province of Bosnia which belonged to his native country of Serbia. This incident was the spark that set off an explosion in the Balkans, called the “powder-keg of Europe.”

Since nations, like individuals, want friends who will help them in time of trouble, they enter into alliances. When war threatens, a nation appeals to its allies either to intercede for peace or to furnish military aid if attacked. Russia, another Slavic country, was Serbia’s friend. Fearing the rising might of Germany, both France and Great Britain had made treaties of alliance with Russia. These three countries formed the Triple Entente, called the Allies. Germany was the close friend of Austria-Hungary. These two nations in central Europe formed the backbone of the

Triple Alliance. Italy was a weak tail which might wag in either direction. Thus were the great countries of Europe lined up, three to three, in a balance of power.

Tension and fear gripped the capitals of the continent when the Archduke Ferdinand was murdered in the shaky Balkans. Officials of the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance met to discuss the danger of war. Europeans breathed easier when the royal victims were buried privately in Vienna without the excitement of a state funeral to stir the wrath of the Austrians against the Serbs. Nearly a month passed before the clouds of war began to gather over Europe, lulled into a feeling of security by the weeks of silence.

On the twenty-third of July, the Austrian Government sent an ultimatum to Serbia. Serbia did not meet the stern demands of this note. Five days later, exactly a month after the fatal shots were fired in Sarajevo, Austria declared war on Serbia.

In a few days Russia, Serbia’s friend, began to mobilize army and navy units. On July 31, Germany, Austria’s friend, demanded to know why Russia was mobilizing troops. At the same time German soldiers were moving toward the

frontier of France, an ally of Russia. The French grew nervous and started calling men to the colors on August 1. In the meantime Great Britain was busy trying to arrange a conference to halt the impending conflict.

Germany declared war on Russia on the first of August because Russia had failed to halt mobilization within the time limit of hours, set by the German officials in Berlin. On August 4, 1914, German soldiers crossed the border of Belgium. Great Britain was pledged to protect Belgian neutrality. Thus Great Britain declared war. The Triple Entente locked horns with the Triple Alliance (except for Italy) in a struggle for power.

Germany planned that it would be a short, swift campaign, with the fast-moving, well-drilled, and thoroughly equipped German armies marching into Paris within a few weeks. There, a victorious peace would be signed that would make Germany the master of the continent. The timetable was upset. Early in September the German armies reached the Marne River, almost within sight of Paris. Their drive was checked at the Marne by French soldiers, many of whom had been rushed to the battlefield in taxicabs. The contest lingered on. History has named the conflict World War I because it spread over the continents of the earth, dragging into the struggle more than thirty nations.

## THE UNITED STATES ENTERS THE EUROPEAN WAR

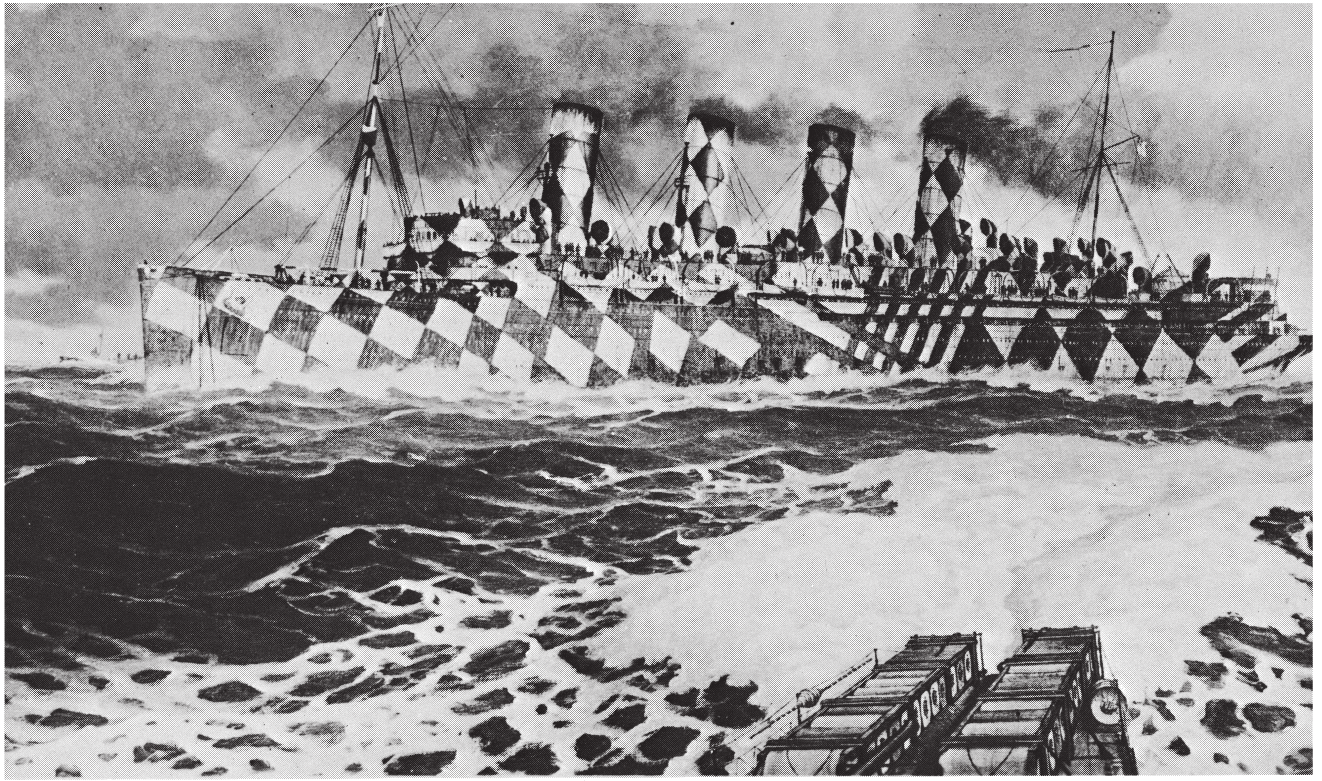
ON THAT FATAL FOURTH of August in 1914 President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation of neutrality. He stated that this country would take neither side

in the conflict among Europeans. The United States would stay out of their war. However, Americans soon learned how difficult it was to remain neutral when the deadly feud interfered more and more with their affairs at home and abroad.

Blockade is a common weapon with which warring nations try to starve one another into defeat. American overseas trade suffered when Great Britain declared food, clothing, and fuel as well as munitions and other war materials to be contraband and subject to capture if going to an enemy. The waters between Scotland and Norway were patrolled by British men-of-war to prevent merchant ships of any nation reaching German ports with supplies. Then Germany struck back with a blockade of British ports. Germany warned neutral nations that their vessels plying the waters around the British Isles were in danger from torpedoes. The torpedoes would be fired from submarines.

Ever since the War of 1812, by which the United States won the freedom of the seas, the policy of this country has been to defend the rights of its citizens to travel on the oceans, anytime and anywhere. Accordingly, William Jennings Bryan, then Secretary of State in President Wilson's Cabinet, warned the German Government against sinking American vessels and taking American lives. Bryan's warning went unheeded. On May 1, 1915 the German Embassy inserted an advertisement in New York papers, cautioning American citizens of the danger of traveling under the flag of Great Britain or her allies. On that same day the *Lusitania*, flying the Union Jack, sailed on schedule from New York harbor on a homeward voyage. There were nearly 2000 persons on board. A week later the vessel, zig-





United States Navy

#### A CAMOUFLAGED SHIP

**Ships were painted in odd designs to confuse German U-boat commanders and to escape torpedo-attack at sea.**

zagging through the war zone off the coast of Ireland, was hit by a German torpedo. The *Lusitania* sank in eighteen minutes. Over 1100 persons were lost, including more than a hundred citizens of the United States.

The sinking of an unarmed passenger ship without warning turned American public opinion toward the Triple Entente. About a year later the German Government promised not to sink unarmed vessels without warning and without saving lives unless the captains tried to escape or started to fight. This note pacified Americans after the torpedoing of the *Sussex* in the English Channel, although both passengers and mail from this country were lost. At this time

President Wilson addressed identical notes to the warring nations. He hoped to arrange a conference for a peace without victory and to end the war. The German Government hesitated to accept Wilson's offer as peacemaker and gambled on winning the war with submarines.

Meanwhile, a revolution on the eastern front favored Germany. Russia was the first nation to mobilize and the first to quit. Discontent, festering for years, had broken out in 1905 when Russia was defeated in a war with Japan. Although the Czar's government had put down the rebellion, revolutionaries kept the revolt simmering among the peasants on farms and among the workmen in factories. As

the war beginning in 1914 went on and on, the government was not able to maintain the flow of supplies to soldiers on the long battle line. German armies were steadily advancing into Russian territory.

At this time, a revolutionary leader who had been exiled from Russia returned to his native land, after ten years. Nikolai Lenin, whose right name was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, was living in Switzerland when a violent strike broke out in St. Petersburg in February of 1917. Factories and schools closed and mobs roamed the streets. Police fired on the mobs, trying to restore order. Long lines formed at bakeries as food became harder to get. Soldiers on short rations joined the peasants.

On March 15, 1917, Czar Nicholas II abdicated his throne, naming his brother Michael to succeed him, but the Grand Duke was also forced to abdicate. On March 18, the State Duma, the Russian Parliament, set up a provisional government and named a list of ministers to rule for the time being. The Soviet (council) of Workmen's and Soldier's Delegates elected Alexander Kerensky, a Socialist, to be the premier with full power. Kerensky tried to rally the army to fight and continue the war, but failed. A rival party, the Bolsheviks, who took their name from the Russian word meaning majority, steadily gained power and undermined the Kerensky government, but not until their leader had returned from exile.

How could Lenin cross German lines to get home? That was arranged by some officials of the German government. Thinking Lenin would use the revolution to take Russia out of the war, they secured permission to run a secret train across Germany. On April 9, 1917, Lenin and 32 of his followers left Zurich, Switzerland for the secret journey through

enemy territory. The cars were not opened at stations, the running time was not scheduled in advance, windows were shaded, no passengers were seen, and no one knew, except the plotters, who was on the train. On April 16, Lenin and his party arrived at the Finland station in St. Petersburg, now Leningrad, and was met with a guard of honor, soldiers, sailors, and workmen from an arms factory. Standing in an armored car, Lenin made a short but fiery speech, closing with the slogan, "Long live the worldwide socialist revolution!"

From the railroad station, he went to the Bolshevik headquarters where he made another speech to his followers gathered there. In this speech he gave his revolutionary party a new name, "Communist," and outlined part of his program, closing again with the slogan, "Long live the worldwide socialist revolution!"

Early in 1917, with revolution sapping the strength of the Russian war effort, Germany resorted to unrestricted submarine warfare. President Wilson asked Congress for permission to arm merchant vessels. Since this country was unprepared for war and it would take a long time to get ready for it, the Germans figured that Great Britain could be starved into submission. They thought a victorious peace could be signed before the United States could send enough help overseas to turn the tide against them. The announcement of unrestricted submarine attacks upon shipping amounted to a German declaration of war against the United States.

On April 2, 1917 President Wilson addressed Congress on the world situation. He asked for a declaration of war. The President stated in his speech:



We shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts – for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself free.

That the United States would not be suspected of seeking territory, the President declared:

We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves – . We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind.

On April 6, 1917, after Congress had voted for war by a large majority, President Wilson signed the resolution formally declaring war against Germany. The United States became an ally of Great Britain, France, and Italy. Italy was a part of the Triple Alliance but had remained neutral until May of 1915, when she denounced her treaty of alliance with Austria. Italy joined the Allies in order to regain control of former Italian provinces and other territory. By the time the United States entered the war, Russia was in the throes of revolution. The day April 6, 1917 is the historic date on which the United States abandoned its life-long policy of isolation from European entanglements as outlined by Washington in his farewell address:

'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of thē foreign world.

In a little over a hundred years, the United States had grown to be a world power, sharing responsibility in world affairs. With grim determination, citizens of this country tackled the many problems involved in waging war on foreign soil.

## THE NATION GIRDS FOR WAR OVERSEAS

ON THE DAY war was declared, the United States Army numbered less than 200,000 men, a puny force with which to enter a world-wide conflict. The first demand was manpower. On May 18, 1917 Congress passed a draft law summoning men 21 to 30 years of age for military service. The law was later extended to include men 18 to 45. In all, about 24,000,000 registered with draft boards between June, 1917 and August, 1918.

Men could be inducted into service only as fast as they could be provided with shelter, clothing, and food. Lumberjacks raided the forests for lumber to erect training camps that were hastily being built in every section of the country. Mill owners used their looms to weave yards and yards of woolen cloth for uniforms. Farmers kept busy sowing wheat, raising cattle, planting gardens, trimming orchards, and cultivating corn under the slogan, "Food will win the war."

For trench warfare fighting men needed helmets, hand grenades, and gas masks in addition to guns, shells, and bayonets. Since the output of munition makers was too small for such a large-scale war, manufacturers of peacetime products made weapons of all kinds. In an automobile plant sheets of steel were pressed into helmets. Shoemakers lined the metal headgear. An old New England firm of silversmiths turned from tableware to hand grenades. Manufacturers of rubber tires, tin cans, hardware, castings, and even a bread company, that baked charcoal in its ovens, had a share in producing gas masks. A laundry machine company furnished mortar barrels instead of washers and a

harvester firm made the carts to mount the barrels. Industry prepared to make the necessities of war, anything from bullets to bombs, trucks to tanks, and pots to planes.

As men were drafted into the army, women took their places at desks and benches. In seaport towns gaunt frames of wooden ships stood in rows along the waterfronts. Citizens in all walks of life saved and scrimped to buy Liberty Bonds to pay for these Liberty Ships and the war supplies the vessels carried overseas.

By the time the United States entered the war, Russia's defeat had released thousands of German soldiers and their equipment for a determined attack on the western front. The Germans wanted to win the war before help arrived from the United States. British and French forces were pushed back in the German drive toward Paris. To brace their morale and prove that "the Yanks are coming," as well as to prepare for the arrival of American troops, General John J. Pershing sailed on the *Baltic* in May to confer with Allied leaders. He was the Commander in Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces. A month later the first American contingent of approximately 5000 soldiers landed in France. Late in October the first shots by Americans were fired from European trenches. By the end of December, 1917 there were more United States soldiers in France than were in the whole army when war was declared in April of that year.

At the same time, events in Russia were affecting the progress of the war. On the seventh of November of that year, the Bolsheviks had gained control of the Russian government after a bloody uprising costing many lives. Lenin, the new leader in power, wanted peace at any price to clear the way for extending his



*The American Stock Exchange*

#### THE OUTDOOR CURB MARKET ON A SUMMER DAY IN 1917 — NEW YORK

Brokers weave their way through the crowd gathered between the curbs of Broad Street near Wall Street buying and selling stocks and bonds for their customers. Here, Liberty Bonds were sold to buy armaments and supplies for World War I, then in progress.

In 1921, this outdoor market moved indoors to a spacious hall with tiers of comfortable telephone desks and eight-sided trading booths scattered over the floor.

control over more Russian territory, and for promoting the revolution in other countries. On December 15, 1917 the Bolshevik government had agreed to an armistice with the Central Powers — Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Three months later, a peace treaty was signed at Brest-Litovsk, releasing more German soldiers for fighting on the western

front. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Bolsheviks, who had changed their name to Communists, moved the capital from Petrograd (St. Petersburg) to Moscow.

Early in the summer of 1918 troop trains were rolling to points of embarkation on the Atlantic seaboard. On many kinds of vessels, large and small, soldiers were crowded into every nook and corner. Troop transports and merchant vessels traveled in convoys. They were protected from submarine attack by warships of the United States fleet. Ships landed over 2,000,000 soldiers in Europe and more than 5,000,000 tons of supplies in the space of seventeen months. Although some vessels were torpedoed, the convoy system blocked success of the German plan to win the war with the submarine. The Yanks came.

When it was plain that the war would be decided on land, the Germans summoned all their strength for a final offensive to reach Paris. They realized after the second battle of the Marne in August that victory had slipped from their hands. As fresh troops from the United States took over sectors of the battle line from war-weary French and British soldiers, the Germans began a retreat. Veterans of World War I remember Chateau Thierry, Belleau Woods, the Meuse River, the Argonne Forest, St. Mihiel and other places in France. Thousands of Americans gave their lives and now lie buried in military cemeteries in France.

Finally, with the people alarmed and rebellious, the German Government asked for peace terms. The terms included Wilson's principle of settlement:

Compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.

At five o'clock on the morning of November 11, 1918 the armistice was signed in a railroad car in France. A cease-fire order for eleven A.M. brought to an end the most destructive war in all history to that date. This conflict introduced new death-dealing weapons — tanks on the land, planes in the air, and submarines under the water. The United States Department of War estimated that approximately 65,000,000 men were mobilized by all nations. Over 8,500,000 were killed in battle or died of wounds or disease; over 21,000,000 were wounded; and over 7,750,000 were listed as prisoners or missing. The total casualties amounted to more than half the men called into military service. All over the world Armistice Day was celebrated with wild outbursts of joy. The war had ended but the shock of the global struggle lingered on to make the world a different place for almost everyone — everywhere.

## TRUCE OR PEACE?

AFTER MORE THAN four years of war and a loss of life that saddened the world, peace was a cherished word. Men groped for a cure of war. Would it be possible for representatives of nations to meet and discuss their common problems? Such an idea had been suggested by a citizen of the United States in the early days of this Republic.

In a letter to a friend in the British Parliament, Benjamin Franklin had expressed his views on how to secure peace. He sent the note with John Adams who was going to London for treaty negotiations with the British Government after the War for Independence. The letter of October, 1783 read:



What would you think if I should make it, of a family compact between England, France, and America? What repeated follies are these repeated wars! You do not want to conquer and govern one another. Why then should you be continually employed in injuring and destroying one another? How many excellent things might have been done to promote internal welfare of each country — with the money and men foolishly spent during the last seven centuries by our mad wars in doing one another mischief? You are near neighbors, and each have very respectable qualities. —

In 1918, following a disastrous war in which Great Britain, France, and the United States fought together, another citizen of the United States voiced a similar appeal. He was Woodrow Wilson, then President of the United States, who wanted a league of all the countries in the world — a League of Nations. President Wilson arrived in Paris for the peace conference with a covenant for such a league in his mind as well as in his pocket. Nearly a year before he had issued fourteen points as a basis for peace. These included freedom of the seas, equality of trade among nations, reduction of armaments, evacuation of occupied territory by the enemy, and peaceful settlement of the claims of small countries to govern themselves. The fourteenth point was to be the cornerstone of the new league. It read:

A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

Wilson vainly hoped that the conflict of 1914 — 1918 would be the war that ended wars. Through a League of Nations, he thought, the basic causes of conflict between countries could be openly discussed and settled by agreement or com-

promise. War would be used only as a last resort. Wilson wanted a new kind of peace.

The first general session of the peace conference was held on January 18, 1919. It was exactly forty-eight years to the day after the German Empire had been proclaimed in Paris when France had been defeated in the Franco Prussian War. Now France was the victor over Germany. Although President Wilson favored a more lenient treatment for the losers, he was outvoted by the Allies who had suffered from the German invasions. In the war 1,300,000 Frenchmen had been killed, and over 4,000,000 had been wounded. The French peasant whose cow had been driven off by German soldiers wanted Germany to buy him another cow. The industrialist whose factory had been destroyed by gunfire, demanded that it be rebuilt by German money. The university president expected the German government to restore the library burned by the invaders. The sum of money required to repair the damage done by German arms was called reparations, which was to mean toil and taxation for Germans yet unborn.

The loss of territory and colonies, added to reparations, made the Treaty of Versailles a harsh document. The representatives of twenty-seven Allied Nations rose when the German delegates entered the room to receive the peace terms. They signed the treaty on June 28, 1919 in the Hall of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles, former home of French kings. In less than fifty minutes over seventy delegates wrote their signatures. President Wilson signed for the United States. Some used traditional goose quills but Lloyd George, prime minister of England, preferred a fountain pen. The signing was a solemn affair, without the display of goldbraided

uniforms and the colorful ceremony on like occasions in former days. Too many men had died. It was peace with a heavy heart.

It was not the new kind of a peace for which Wilson had hoped although he had won a covenant for a League of Nations. As in former years at other peace conferences, men gathered around a big table and changed the map of Europe. Europe was cut up into more nations than before in an effort to place disgruntled peoples under governments to their liking. As of old, diplomats juggled for balance of power to which they had long been accustomed. On the day the treaty was signed, crowds gathered in public squares throughout Germany to protest the back-breaking debt of reparations and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine. On that day a German editor printed on the front page of his paper:

The German people reject the treaty which its delegates are signing today — . Despite the fact that it is written on parchment, it remains a piece of paper.

At noon, the day after the signing, President Wilson sailed from Brest for home. He had won a covenant for the League of Nations. He pinned his faith in this plan to avert another war. However, his covenant had to be approved by the Senate since only this body has the right under the Constitution to ratify treaties. Opposition was growing in the Senate against the League Covenant.

Many citizens, including Congressmen, interpreted Article X of the document to mean that the United States would be obligated to go to war upon foreign soil if any nation belonging to the League suffered invasion or attack from any other nation. The nation's first and costly

venture into the never-ending squabbles of Europe was still fresh in the public mind. Many citizens recalled Washington's advice in his farewell address:

'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.

Geography often determines the course of history. Protected by two oceans, the United States had been able to grow without fear of aggression. Citizens followed the pursuits of peace, not war. When the European conflict ended, the average citizen wished to pick up where he had left off. He wanted to go on as before, feeling secure with ocean barriers and friendly neighbors in the Western Hemisphere. For a hundred and thirty years the policy of the United States had been to evade "entangling alliances" abroad. Yet, some public opinion was strong for joining the League in the vain hope of ending war.

Determined to take the issue of the League to the people, President Wilson left Washington on the third of September to tour the country. He spoke in large halls in the big cities and from the rear platform of his train in the small towns. The President traveled over 8000 miles to deliver forty speeches before he made the last one of the tour in the western steel town of Pueblo, Colorado. When his special train arrived in Wichita, Kansas, on September 26, he was too ill to speak and returned to Washington. He never fully recovered from the breakdown suffered on this strenuous journey although he lived for four more years.

The war had shoved the United States into first place as the most powerful nation in the world. Great Britain had held this position before the catastrophe of 1914.

The average citizen was slow to realize that world leadership had saddled him with world responsibility.

In the next election held in November of 1920, people went to the polls to vote Wilson's Democratic Party out of office, and to elect Warren G. Harding, a Republican from Ohio, President of the United States. The League was defeated in the Senate. Although the United States did not officially join the League of Nations, the Government cooperated with the program outlined to promote peace. Americans were familiar figures at headquarters of the League in Geneva, Switzerland.

To help restore peace, the United States extended aid to the unfortunate victims whose homes and fortunes had been lost in the conflict. Among the 200,000 Americans stranded in Europe when war suddenly broke out in 1914 was the mining engineer, Herbert Hoover. In the emergency he organized the groups of panic-stricken tourists, arranged for a London bank to cash their checks, engaged ships, and sent them home. Then he accepted the responsibility of directing relief for the Belgians. From this beginning Herbert Hoover advanced to the position of Director of Relief for the Allied Governments. During the nine months following the armistice Hoover raised the money to deliver over 4,000,000 tons of food valued at more than \$1,000,000,000. When the harvest of 1919 increased the food supply in many countries, Hoover organized another relief program to care for 10,000,000 children, victims of the war.

Over a period of ten years, from 1914 to 1924, there were few citizens of the United States who failed to make some

personal sacrifice to feed and clothe the victims of war and revolution. This relief cost over \$5,000,000,000 without including the huge sums of money spent by private charity. Americans opened their hearts and their pocketbooks when poverty and starvation stalked over war-torn Europe.

This generosity did not win the peace. Other forces were at work undermining it. Since the Treaty of Versailles changed the map of Europe, some peoples suddenly found themselves living in new nations with new names like Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Many felt strange with their new neighbors who spoke different languages and were not always friendly. For a short time the future looked bright with more self-government spreading over Europe. Many peoples had long been more accustomed to rule by a few men than to rule by representatives of the people. They were bewildered with new forms of government and new patterns of living under systems of political liberty. Following the war, millions lost their newly acquired freedoms before they had time to become acquainted with them. On the battlefield the fight was won for government recognizing the human rights of man. In the chaos resulting from the war dictators rose to sabotage the victory. Young constitutional republics crumbled into dictatorships.

## THE RISE OF DICTATORS

OUT OF THE TRAGEDY of world war, a new hunger for freedom emerged. As the old way of life disappeared during the conflict, the desire grew among peoples to have governments shared by



the people. Since Russia was the first large nation to collapse under the impact of war, a feeble beginning toward personal liberty was made in that nation. When Czar Nicholas gave up his throne, the State Duma (the Parliament) formed the Provisional Government with a president and a cabinet elected by its members. On March 16, 1917 this emergency government announced its principles. A few of these are quoted from the official document, "Declaration of the Provisional Government:"

Freedom of speech, press, union, assembly and strikes, with extension of political liberties to persons in military service within limits consistent with military technical conditions.

Immediate preparation for the convention of a Constituent Assembly, which will establish the form of administration and the constitution of the country, on the basis of general, equal, secret and direct voting.

Replacement of the police by a people's militia with an elected administration, subordinated to the organs of local self government.

Elections to the organs of local self government on the basis of general, direct, equal and secret ballot.

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The Provisional Government considers its duty to add that it does not intend to exploit military circumstances for any delay in the realization of the above outlined reforms and measures.

This document was signed by the President of the State Duma, President of the Council of Ministers, and eight ministers of the cabinet, including Alexander F. Kerensky, Minister of Justice.

A month later, Lenin arrived from Switzerland and announced some of his plans for a new government in Russia, as follows:

No support to the Provisional Government . . . .

Not a parliamentary republic, . . . but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Farmhands' and Peasants' Deputies in the whole country, . . .

Confiscation of all land belonging to landlords.

Nationalization of all land in the country, management of the land by local Soviets of Farmhands' and Peasants' Deputies . . . Creation out of every big estate of a model farm under the control of farmhands' deputies and at public expense.

Immediate fusion of all the banks of the country into one general national bank . . .

Many Russians favored a constitutional republic similar to the United States. The Communists who followed Lenin favored a socialist state. On November 8, 1917, the Congress of Soviets published a decree on land signed by "Vladimir Ulyanov," Lenin, as a temporary law:

The right of private property in land is forever abolished; land can be neither sold, nor bought, nor leased, nor pledged, nor alienated in any other way. All land, state, Crown, monastery, Church, which is owned by private persons, by public organizations, by peasants, etc. is taken away without compensation, . . .

All the mineral resources of the earth, ore, oil, coal, salt, etc., and all forests and waters which are of general state significance pass into the exclusive possession of the state.

Caught between two opposite kinds of government, the people formed groups to express their own personal opinions on what kind of government they wanted. Although all were revolutionaries, they fought one another over their differences. In the struggle, factories closed, transportation broke down, and famine swept over the country. It took four years of civil war, 1917 to 1921, to bring a cruel victory. The Communists won and Lenin became the first dictator of a new government in an old country with a new name, UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS, the U.S.S.R.

In 1922 Benito Mussolini seized the government of Italy and became the dictator of that country. The following year Adolph Hitler organized an unsuccessful revolt in

Germany. Ten years later he became Chancellor and the short-lived republic in that nation fell. From the Arctic to the Mediterranean, dictators gained power over millions of people.

## **DICTATORS LEAD TO AGGRESSION**

WAR REFUGEES RETURNED to their desolate homes in the battle areas. In the aftermath of “the war to end wars” simmered revolts, bloody and bloodless, that halted liberty in its stride. Hungry and despairing men fell victim to dictators in bartering freedoms for bread.

In order to gain power, dictators promised employment and prosperity to starving peoples whose means of earning a living had been swept away in the war or during the years immediately following. To keep their word and their power, dictators embarked upon armament programs and prepared for aggression against their neighbors. Perhaps they thought they needed territory held by a border nation to provide farms for their loyal followers. Maybe a country nearby had rich deposits of iron and coal needed by manufacturers to provide steel for armaments. Large populations are always a temptation to an ambitious dictator who needs soldiers for his armies and laborers to support them by toil in field and factory.

With dictatorships established in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in Italy, and in Germany, free peoples all over the world began to tremble with fear of another war. Since the dictatorships allowed only a single political party, the people had no opportunity to vote against the policies of the dictators. They could

not vote them nor their parties out of office. Personal liberty withered away in the dictatorships where the people were being helplessly regimented. In countries where a few men have seized complete control of the government, few of their subjects risk arrest, imprisonment, exile, and death to criticize their all-powerful rulers. Freedom of speech, press, religion, and assembly were crushed under dictators whose will had been imposed upon the people.

Millions of people in the world had pinned their wishful hopes for peace on the newborn League of Nations. The United States took the lead in disarmament by inviting a number of countries to send representatives to discuss ways and means to cut down the production of war materials. The conference met in Washington in November, 1921 with delegates from Great Britain and the Dominions, Japan, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, China, and the United States. About two months later the five large naval powers – United States, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy – agreed to limit dreadnoughts and large cruisers. More important, perhaps, was the effort made at this meeting to maintain peace in the Orient. The nine-power treaty resulting from this conference bound the nations that were represented to maintain the policy of the Open Door in China, and not to take advantage of China’s weakness to secure special privileges in that country.

In 1925 the nations that had defeated Germany met in Locarno, Switzerland, to ease the terms of the Versailles Treaty to which Germans so strongly objected. They hoped to keep peace. In 1928 sixty-three nations agreed to outlaw war by signing the Pact of Paris. The pact was drawn up by

France and the United States as the result of a remark made by Aristide Briand, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Frank B. Kellogg, American Secretary of State. Briand suggested that their two nations sign a pact of perpetual friendship and agree never to go to war with each other under any circumstances. When so many countries joined the Kellogg-Briand Pact, peoples all over the world rejoiced. War was outlawed and all disputes would be settled peaceably.

The following year the economic depression, creeping in the wake of the great conflict, struck the United States. It had gradually settled over the world like a pall of smoke. In all countries prices fell, banks closed, and many were unemployed and hungry. The Japanese looked with longing at the bread basket of Manchuria across the Sea of Japan. In September, 1931 Japan seized Mukden and gained a foothold in a country with vast plains for raising grains and soy beans. Rich mineral deposits were there as well. Although Japan was a monarchy ruled by Emperor Hirohito, a small group of military-minded men actually held the power. In the chaos resulting from World War I, they found the opportunity to extend Japanese authority in Asia where China was torn by revolution and too weak to resist aggression.

The Japanese Government ignored a strong protest made by the League of Nations over this violation of Chinese territory. The following year, Japanese troops invaded Shanghai. By 1933 the hopes for peace were fading fast. When the League of Nations asked Japan to end the conquest of China, Japan withdrew from the organization and invaded North China. The failure of the League to halt aggression in Asia encouraged dictators in Europe to

consider military adventures. In that same year Adolph Hitler gained a dictator's power in Germany. When Hitler established a dictatorship, the Germans lost their right to vote against him. Hitler then took Germany out of the League, and outlawed all parties except his own Nazi Party.

In 1934 Japan conquered Manchuria. Japan installed a puppet emperor there and changed the name of the country to Manchukuo. Meanwhile, under Hitler's leadership, Germany was marching toward war again. The dictator wanted not only to regain territory lost in World War I, but to extend the nation's authority over neighboring countries. The rich Saar region was returned to Germany by the vote of its people. Hitler's demands only increased with each gain. He demanded the union of Austria with Germany and marched triumphantly into Vienna.

At the same time Italy, under the dictatorship of Mussolini, was engaged in the conquest of Ethiopia.

Italy sent troops across the Adriatic into Albania. Germany added a province of Czechoslovakia and was making demands upon Poland. Germany, Italy, and Japan signed a pact to fight communism, which the form of government in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was called. Japanese troops were digging deeper into China and threatening Mongolia on the Soviet border. While war was spreading in Europe, Africa, and Asia, what was happening in the United States?

## **THE COUNTRY ENDURES A DECADE OF DEPRESSION**

WHEN THE ARMISTICE was signed on November 11, 1918, about one-fourth of



this nation's labor force was employed in war industries that supplied the 4,355,000 men enlisted in the armed services. Immediately, the Government cancelled orders for war materials. Men working in ammunitions were laid off; factories producing armaments shut down while changing over to make peacetime goods; and some offices in Washington closed suddenly. As soon as the war ended, the soldiers wanted to go home. Their families urged their release from service. At the rate of over 300,000 per month, almost the entire force was demobilized within a year. All of these men were not able to secure employment immediately upon their return, although the United States Employment Service set up bureaus for veterans in towns and cities.

No serious crisis developed for a number of reasons. The shipyards continued in operation, completing vessels that were started in the hope of restoring the merchant fleet of this country. Women who had worked in the war industries returned to their home duties. People who had left the country to enter war plants during the war emergency returned to their farms when they lost their jobs. Each soldier as he was mustered out of the service received his transportation home and \$60. The purchase of civilian suits, when uniforms were put aside, aided employment in the textile industry. However, exports were largely responsible for the brief post-war boom. Since the Government of the United States was still lending money to the Allies, this sum was spent in this country mainly to purchase food. Farmers were prosperous for several years.

By 1921 a recession was beginning and unemployment increased. The following

year, however, business began to recover and to expand. During President Coolidge's term of office there was an era of prosperity. New industries were creating many new markets for new products — automobiles, phonographs, radios. These products could be purchased on the installment plan. Advertising to create a popular demand for new products almost doubled the output of paper plants.

The assembly line, which speeded production, lowered the cost of automobiles and many luxury items, making their purchase possible by more buyers. More cars created a demand for better highways. A spurt in road building provided employment for many, including some farmers who worked on roads when not busy in the fields. With a car, a family could move from a crowded apartment district in the city to a house in a suburb, which then needed more stores to serve the newcomers. The construction business enjoyed a boom during the first half of the prosperous 1920's. New markets were found at home to replace, in a measure, those lost in foreign countries. Could this prosperity be maintained? For how long?

Farmers formed a large buying group and the prosperity of the nation in part depended upon their purchasing power. In the second year following the war, prices of farm products dropped because of overproduction. Spurred by the slogan, "Wheat will win the war," farmers had planted far too much wheat. In many parts of the South growers planted more cotton than they could sell and the price went down. People began to eat more fruits and vegetables and less bread and cereal and to wear more garments made of rayon fabrics instead of cotton goods. When farmers fed their surplus grain to

hogs, there were soon more pigs than could be marketed and the price of pork fell. The wider use of tractors and machinery made it possible for fewer farmers to raise larger crops. Many tenants and share-croppers lost their homes and their means of earning a living. Industrial prosperity is endangered when customers do not have the money to buy manufactured articles.

Even in prosperous years following the war coal was a sick industry. The fuel was still used for house heating but faced new competitors – oil and electricity – in manufacturing. Bituminous operators and miners suffered the most. As the demand for this kind of coal decreased, profits dwindled. Miners worked fewer days per month, earned less money, and were able to purchase less goods for themselves and families. Cotton and woolen manufacture declined. Cotton mills migrated from New England to the South Atlantic States, not only to be near the cotton fields, but to get cheap labor, a good supply of soft water, and a favorable climate. During the decade following the war the shoe industry began moving from Massachusetts into towns of the midwestern states. This western move was not to get cheap labor but to be nearer the center of population. The old basic industries such as coal, cotton, wool and leather failed to grow in proportion to new ones – petroleum, automobiles, textiles, and chemicals.

During the general prosperity of the 1920's citizens were not aware of the many events, at home and abroad, that were pushing this nation and the world toward a serious depression. If they had realized the danger, could they have prevented the disaster? The average level of living in the United States was the highest in the world. Large incomes, however, were

increasing much faster than small incomes. The surplus, in part, was being used for speculating in land and stocks.

During Jackson's term as President, nearly a hundred years before, a similar speculation in land had helped to bring about the Panic of 1837. In the 1920's some people bought land, not to live on it, but to resell it quickly at a profit. Fortunes were made in the land booms of Florida and California where populations were growing rapidly. Both individuals and corporations bought shares of stock in business concerns, not intending to invest their money and wait for dividends, but only to resell in a few days or weeks when the price rose. This gambling was indulged in by wage earners and small business men as well as by millionaires and large corporations. By October of 1929 the price of stocks began to drop. Investors rushed to sell before the values of their stocks fell to lower sums. On October 24, 1929, "Black Thursday," nearly 13,000,000 shares were sold and prices experienced the widest drop in the history of the New York Stock Exchange. Although the loss in market value of stocks the day before had amounted to \$4,000,000,000, the collapse of the stock market in 1929 was only a partial cause of the depression.

Herbert Hoover, who succeeded Calvin Coolidge as President, was in office when the depression came. Having lived for years in foreign countries, Hoover realized that the depression was world-wide. The President's first concern in meeting the situation was to help the farmers. He outlined a program to be carried out by the Farm Board. He objected to the Government buying and selling and fixing the price of farm products. Conditions did not improve much because farmers were still

producing more staples than could be sold profitably. The drought of 1930, which ruined many crops, actually helped to solve farming problems. Although Hoover did not approve of government interference, he thought it was necessary to offer federal aid in the emergency.

The President asked Congress to establish the Reconstruction Finance Corporation with a capital of \$500,000,000, advanced from government funds, for loans to restore industry and provide employment. Although this bill was opposed by Democrats in Congress, the RFC finally was established. Hoover signed the act on January 22, 1932. Promptly, agencies of the RFC were opened in thirty cities to lend government funds to banks, building and loan associations, and insurance companies to protect the savings of people which would be lost if these institutions failed. Money was also loaned to railroads, to farmers, and other groups to prime the business pump and increase employment. The RFC did help to relieve the depression but could not cure it.

When so many men and women were unemployed, they were unable to buy more than necessities with their decreased incomes. They paid less money for taxes and government receipts declined. In 1932 tax collections amounted to less than half the sum collected in 1930. President Hoover called for more economy, stating, "We cannot squander ourselves into prosperity." He wanted to balance the budget, if possible, by spending no more money than could be raised by taxes.

In November, 1932 Franklin Delano Roosevelt, candidate of the Democrats, was elected President. In these times of distress the people wanted a change. Roosevelt asked Congress to appropriate

large sums of money for public works in order to give jobs to unemployed men. For young men, the Civilian Conservation Corps was organized in the spring of 1933. With the C.C.C. the Government employed about 250,000 youths in outdoor work for "the prevention of forest fires, floods and soil erosion, plant pest and disease control, the construction, maintenance or repair of paths, trails, and fire lanes" and such aids to conserve the natural resources. The Works Progress Administration, created by act of Congress in 1935, appropriated almost \$5,000,000,000 to provide jobs for everyone from transients to artists. The program of the WPA emphasized individual skills and talents. Jobs had to be found for plumbers, painters, and electricians; writers, musicians and artists; janitors, waiters, and cooks, where their employment would not conflict with private employment. Although millions of dollars were spent for direct relief, an effort was made to help people to help themselves through some kind of employment. The largest engineering project attempted by the Government during this period was the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The National Industrial Recovery Act, commonly called NRA, was a plan whereby Government, business, and labor would cooperate in trying to restore prosperity through regulations outlined in codes worked out for every industry. This proved to be such a complex procedure that NRA had already bogged down in confusion when the Supreme Court declared the act was unconstitutional. However, Section 7a was not declared unconstitutional. It stated:

That employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing . . . .



That no employee and no one seeking employment shall be required as a condition of employment to join any company union or to refrain from joining, organizing, or assisting a labor organization of his own choosing.

That employers shall comply with the maximum hours of labor, minimum rates of pay, and other conditions of employment, approved or prescribed by the President.

This clause was approved by both employers and employees when the National Recovery Act was framed. The same principles were later included in the Wagner Act and the Taft-Hartley Act, laws regulating procedures of both employers and employees.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of May 12, 1933 was the rural relief program. It was a plan to limit production. For example, too much cotton was grown so administrators of the AAA arranged to have about 10,000,000 acres of growing cotton plants plowed under. The farmers who destroyed their crops were paid by the Government for their cooperation in making cotton scarce. Under AAA over 6,000,000 pigs were killed in 1933. The cooperative farmers were reimbursed for their losses by the Government. Nature took a hand in the game and helped to create scarcity with severe droughts in 1934 and 1936. Nature limited production and increased prices of farm products more than did the agreements with farmers to destroy crops and livestock. The Government appropriated \$500,000,000 yearly for paying farmers not to plant certain crops and for diverting part of their acreage to pasture.

Although taxes were greatly increased to raise money to operate the increasing number of welfare agencies of the Federal Government, it was necessary to borrow large sums of money. When Franklin

Roosevelt took office as President in March of 1933, the federal debt amounted to \$22,500,000,000 or about \$180 per person. Eight years later the debt had more than doubled and amounted to \$367 for each man, woman, and child. The system whereby a government operates on borrowed money is called "deficit financing." In the national emergency President Roosevelt felt the large increase in the debt was justified by the efforts of his Administration to provide jobs at government expense to relieve the depression. His policies are often spoken of as the "New Deal" because in his speech accepting the nomination for President on the Democratic ticket, he said:

I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people.

In March of 1935 about 22,000,000 persons were receiving money from the Government. In November of that year the records showed that during the eighteen months preceding, \$3,694,000,000 of tax funds had been spent for direct relief, in addition to vast sums aimed at helping people to help themselves. Although more and more government bureaus were created to spend more and more money, the actual depression lingered on. Finally, the President and Congress began to view the depression as a symptom of changing times. The cure was difficult.

It was a time of experiment in which some measures succeeded and some failed. Some families living on eroded land that was no longer fit to support them were moved to better soil by the Resettlement Administration. During drought years when dust blew on the plains, thousands of tenant farmers migrated west to California. They looked for employment

picking fruit and harvesting vegetables. Since California ranchers could not give work to all who came, these migrant families created a relief problem in that state. The Federal Government decided it was better for these people to be aided in their home communities than to be moved. Soil conservation programs carried out at government expense helped them to make their land produce again. For an experiment in reclaiming eroded country, flood control, navigation, and electric power, the Tennessee Valley Authority was the boldest venture of the Federal Government into big business.

The Social Security Act of August 14, 1935, is the best known piece of legislation of the depression decade. The law instructs employers to deduct money from the pay checks of wage earners in order to provide a small income for them at the age of 65 years when they are retired from employment. Employers also contribute to this social security fund in proportion to the amount deducted from the pay envelopes of their employees. Each wage earner whose job comes under the Social Security Act is assigned a number when he is first hired, and he keeps that same number for life no matter how many times he changes his job.

The numerous welfare programs set up during the depression decade changed the pattern of taxation. As services rendered by the Federal Government increased in number and volume, more bureaus were

established, more buildings were erected to accommodate them, and more persons were employed to operate them. To meet this added expense, it was necessary for all citizens to pay more taxes to the Federal Government. Before the depression citizens generally paid the largest sum for local taxes to support their town, city, and county governments; the next largest amount for their state, and the least to maintain the National Government. The welfare and defense programs called for such huge expenditures of money that the pattern of taxation was reversed. Citizens began to pay most of their taxes to the Federal Government and least to their local governments.

Yet the welfare program of the Government did not cure the depression, although it did relieve some distress of the period. Real recovery did not set in until war broke out in Europe. The unemployed were put back to work supplying the armaments needed for the conflict and for the defense program of the United States. Under a lend-lease plan whereby this nation supplied funds to warring nations to buy food, clothing, machinery, guns, ammunition, trucks, and all kinds of war materials, employment rose steadily.

#### MAPS:

WA26r WA27r

*Atlas of American History* by Edgar B. Wesley