

World War I

Notes - #5

German Attack

- In mid-July the Germans began another drive to take control of Paris.
- The Germans pushed the Allies back, until they came up against American troops.
- In three days, the Allies turned the “tide of war”.
 - The Germans knowing they were being defeated began to retreat.

Battle of the Argonne Forest

- As the Germans began to retreat, the Allied Forces pursued.
- On September 26, more than 1 million Americans pushed into the Argonne Forest.
- The Americans continued to advance despite heavy fire by the Germans.

Battle of the Argonne Forest

- Small units of American forces continued to drive forward, and eventually captured important German positions.
- Finally, after 47 days, the American forces broke through the German defense and won the battle of the Argonne Forest.

Allied Forces

- British and French forces also continued to drive the Germans back.
- By November, German forces on the Western Front were in retreat.
- The “war to end all wars” was nearing its end and peace was in sight.

Peace At Last

- On October 4, 1918, the head of the German “cabinet” contacted President Wilson requesting an **armistice** (an agreement to stop fighting) to end the war!
- President Wilson set two conditions that Germany had to accept in order for fighting to stop:

Conditions of Armistice

1. Germany had to accept his (Wilson's) plan for peace, and
 2. The German emperor must give up his power.
- While German leaders debated a response to Wilson's demands the German armies continued to lose ground daily.

“The Eleventh Hour of the Eleventh Day”

- On November 9, 1918, the German emperor was forced to resign.
- The Germans agreed to Wilson’s demands for armistice at 11 a.m. on November 11, 1918.
- On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month World War I ended!

Cost of the War

- Between 10-13 million people died in battle:
 - Germans = 2 million
 - Russian/French/British = 4 million
 - United States = 50, 000
- Many more soldiers, on both sides, died of diseases.
- More than 20 million men, on both sides, were injured.

Financial Costs of War (Allies)

- Financial costs of war:
 - British = \$40 billion
 - French = \$25 billion
 - Russia = \$22.5 billion
 - United States = \$22.5 billion

President Wilson's Peace Plan

- In January 1918, even before the war ended, Wilson began planning his goals for peace.
- Wilson's plan, known as the **Fourteen Points**, was meant to prevent international problems from causing another world war!

Wilson's Fourteen Points

- One of the items contained within Wilson's Fourteen Points called for an end to secret agreement – he felt secrecy created rival alliances, which helped lead to war.
- In other Points, Wilson called for :
 - Freedom of the seas,
 - Free trade,
 - A limit on arms, and
 - Peaceful settlement of disputed over colonies.

League of Nations

- President Wilson's most important point was the fourteenth.
- It called for a "general association of nations", or League of Nations.
- The job of the League of Nations would be to protect the independence of all countries no matter how small or large!

Paris Peace Conference

- Diplomats from more than 30 nations met at a conference, in Paris and Versailles, hoping to make lasting peace.
- All of the key issues at the peace conference were handled by the **“Big Four”**:
 - United States
 - Britain
 - France
 - Italy

The Big Four

- Each leader had his own aims at established peace.
- President Wilson called for “peace without victory”.
- Wilson was against punishing the defeated powers (Germany/Austria-Hungary).
- The other Allies, however, wanted Germany to pay reparations for the war.

Versailles Treaty

- **Reparations** are payments made for losses suffered during the war.
- The Allies wanted Germany to accept responsibility for the war, and also to protect themselves against future German attacks.
- By June 1919, the Versailles Treaty was ready – however, no one was happy with it!

Terms of the Versailles Treaty

- Terms of the Versailles Treaty:
 - Germany had to take full blame for the war,
 - Germany had to disarm completely,
 - Germany had to pay huge reparations, and
 - Germany was stripped of its colonies.

Germany was not allowed to send delegates to negotiate the terms of the treaty.

They were horrified by the outcomes, but they had no choice – they had to sign it!

Results of the Versailles Treaty

- In Eastern Europe, several new nations were created (Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia) out of lands that once belonged to Germany and Austria-Hungary.
- In time, Germany would seek to regain control of these lands.

Problems Back Home

- When President Wilson returned to the U.S. he had to convince the Senate to approve the Versailles Treaty.
- Many Americans opposed the treaty.
 - Some said the treaty was too soft on the defeated nations,
 - Many German Americans felt it was too harsh, and
 - Isolationists were opposed to the League of Nations.

Henry Cabot Lodge

- Henry Cabot Lodge was a senator from Massachusetts who wanted changes in the Versailles Treaty.
- Lodge's biggest objection to the treaty, he felt that the U.S. could get "dragged in" to future European wars because of the League of Nation's promise to protect threatened territories.

Wilson Takes His Case to the People

- In September 1919, President Wilson set out across the country to defend the League of Nations.
- He made 37 speeches in 29 cities - he urged people to encourage their senators to support the treaty.
- In late September, the President collapsed – he had suffered a stroke that left him bedridden for weeks.

“The Treaty is Dead”

- While President Wilson was sick, Henry Cabot Lodge continued to pressure senators to vote against the Versailles Treaty.
- In November 1919, the Senate rejected the Versailles Treaty.
- Gone, too, was President Wilson’s cherished goal – American membership in the League of Nations.

The League of Nations

- Many nations went on to join the League of Nations.
- Without the United States, however, the League had limited power and influence in world affairs.
- In the years ahead, the League would not live up to its goals of protecting fellow member from outside aggression.