

# To End All Wars: World War I and the League of Nations Debate



## THE CHOICES PROGRAM

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## Introduction: Wilson's Vision

The First World War was the costliest war the world had experienced both in human and economic terms. From 1914 to 1918, nine million people died fighting on battlefields that stretched all over Europe, parts of Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the world's oceans. The optimism that had greeted the dawn of the twentieth century was destroyed.

World War I was the first war which used the entire industrial capacity of modern states and sacrificed national economies for wartime goals. It was the conflict that ended some of Europe's oldest empires and introduced the idea of self-rule based on ethnic, racial, and religious identity, a concept that still causes wars today. It was the war which led to the rise of Nazi Germany and caused the Bolshevik seizure of power in Russia, sowing the seeds for the Cold War. It was also the first time that the United States participated in a global struggle and found itself center stage in determining world affairs.

The effects of World War I warrant a closer examination of the war itself and of the subsequent Paris Peace Conference that tried to create a peaceful world out of the carnage. U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, who designed a Fourteen Points Peace Plan that included the creation of a League of Nations, envisioned such a world. The concepts and ideas that emerged from the Paris Peace Conference influence much of our thinking about international issues today. At the time, however, Wilson's vision for the world was radical.

### ***Why did Wilson develop his ideas for a peace plan?***

Woodrow Wilson was an outsider to politics. He was, first and foremost, an educator. In 1902 he became president of Princeton University. Eight years later he became governor of New Jersey, and just two years into his first political post he was elected president. Wilson had little support from politicians in Washington and was not well-known to the public. As the son of a minister, however, he was an effective speaker and was familiar with the

value of stimulating public opinion.

The destruction of World War I had a profound impact on Wilson. He was appalled by the secret deals governments made with each other, the arms build-up, the authoritarian empires which refused to negotiate, and the bitterness among the powers of Europe. His Fourteen Points plan, which many called overly idealistic, tried to prevent these problems in the future. Wilson hoped for an end to war and an increase in international cooperation.

Since Wilson's time the nations of the world have fought in a yet more deadly world war and in numerous regional conflicts, some of which have persisted for decades. At the same time, international organizations now work to regulate trade, resolve disputes among nations, and prevent governments from oppressing their people.

So where do Wilson's ideas stand today? What is his legacy? Why do some people cringe and others applaud when they hear a politician referred to as "Wilsonian?" This reading will help to answer those questions.

### ***What will this reading entail?***

Parts I and II of this unit explore World War I, Wilson's attempts to establish a just peace, and the Treaty of Versailles.

Following an investigation of World War I, you will be transported back to France in 1919 where you will take part in the conference to determine the future of Europe. You will be asked to define what constitutes a just settlement for your assigned country and to champion that cause.

You will also sit in the 1919 United States Senate to decide what role America should play in the postwar world. Many of the questions the Senators discussed then are still relevant today: What should America's relationship with its allies look like? How involved should the United States be in international affairs? What are our national interests? How should the U.S. military be employed for matters of world security?

## Part I: The Scourge of War

In August 1914, the major European powers declared war against one another. The causes of the conflict were longstanding and had brought the continent to the brink of war numerous times in the past. Competition for resources, an arms race, and ethnic and political alliances were the primary causes.

### **Why did European countries start an arms race?**

The Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century had led to enormous economic and cultural changes in Europe. The trend toward speedy, large-scale production spurred economic competition among Britain, France, Germany and Russia. As these countries sought raw materials needed for manufacturing and new markets to sell their goods, the competition led to struggles for overseas colonies. This pursuit of raw materials and markets led to clashes between Britain and France over Sudan in 1898 as well as between Germany and France in Morocco in 1905 and 1911. Although war was avoided in these colonial struggles, all of the powers saw the others' ventures into Asia, Africa, and the Middle East as cause for alarm. This alarm led to an increased sense of vulnerability and a desire for stronger militaries to protect their overseas holdings.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany had the continent's strongest land-based military force. Sensing their own vulnerability, both France and Russia saw the need to strengthen their armies to defend themselves. All three powers began an arms race that led to the design of some of the most lethal weapons that the world had ever seen. Long-range artillery, the machine gun, and the airplane were only a few of the new military

technologies introduced by the summer of 1914.

Britain, the world's greatest naval power, felt insecure when Germany began a major shipbuilding program. Both countries began building the largest and most destructive battleships the world had ever seen. In an attempt to improve its odds in fighting the British navy, Germany also began to produce destructive submarines. The more weapons and troops each country amassed, the more insecurity each felt. As a result, each country searched for and found allies on which it could depend if war started.

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**The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall never see them lit again in our lifetime."**

—British Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey, August 1914

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### **What defensive alliances did the European countries form?**

In 1882, Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary formed the Triple Alliance, a pact which required each to come to one another's defense in the event of an attack. In response, Great Britain joined France and Russia in 1907 to form the Triple Entente. These alliance systems effectively divided Europe into two armed camps. War between any two countries would threaten war among them all. Although Europe's leaders thought the system would maintain the balance of power on the continent and keep the peace, the combination of the alliance system and heightened nationalism resulted in tragic consequences.

### **What were the origins of nationalism?**

Nationalism arose in Europe as people began to see themselves as members of a common group rather than as individuals. The concept of a "nation" which shared language, heritage, and culture excited average citizens, especially members of ethnic minorities repressed by their governments.

Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East, and Russia all contained nationalist groups which sought independence and harbored festering resentments. Nationalist sentiments among the groups which lived in those empires, such as Serbs, Poles, Croats, Czechs, Slovaks, Arabs, Armenians, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, conflicted with the system that suppressed their desires for self-rule.

As nationalism grew, other new ideas contributed to Europe's volatile atmosphere. Some people became interested in what they thought was the primitive and irrational nature of humanity and viewed war as a purifying experience. Encouraged by popular press reports championing the courage of soldiers and the importance of duty, many young people were attracted to the idea of the "collective soul" of the nation. Soldiering became heroic, and duty to one's country became honorable.

***“The most cultivated elite among them find in warfare an aesthetic ideal.... Above all, War, in their eyes is the occasion for the most noble of virtues...energy, mastery, and sacrifice for a cause which transcends ourselves.”***

—French scholar, 1912

The rising tide of nationalism, combined with the alliance system and the massive arms build-up, would result in a total European war.

## The War Begins

On June 28, 1914 a Serbian nationalist assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Austria-Hungary's heir to the throne, and his wife



Photograph courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, London # Q5100.

Soldiers fought for years from trenches like these.

Sophie. The Serbs living in Austria-Hungary wanted to join their Serbian brethren in Serbia proper, but Austria-Hungary was unwilling to give up the land. It seemed to the murderers that only a radical action would convince the leaders of their desires. The assassination set off a devastating chain of events in Europe. Austria-Hungary's political alliance with Germany and Serbia's ethnic ties to Russia meant that many would be drawn into what could have been a local, limited crisis.

Germany supported Austria-Hungary's excessive demands for justice from Serbia. Russia, in support of its ally Serbia, refused to give in to the threat of German intervention and mobilized its forces to demonstrate its steadfastness. Fulfilling its military alliance with Russia, France entered into the storm once Germany declared war on Russia. Germany, recognizing that having to fight a two-front war against both France and Russia could be disastrous, attacked France through neutral Belgium as a means to achieve quick victory. This action invoked a treaty that Britain had with Belgium guaranteeing Belgium's neutrality. Great Britain entered the war against Germany.

Russia, France, and Great Britain led the Allied countries, while Germany, Austria-Hun-



gary, and the Ottoman Empire fought for what became known as the Central Powers. National pride had led Europe into an all-out war that would burn a swath across the continent.

#### ***How did the war progress in the first months?***

Young people signed up to fight in large numbers hoping to bring glory to their country. Vowing to “be home by Christmas,” both sides set off in August 1914 to fight a war which they thought would be over quickly. But after the initial success of their invasion of Belgium, the German offensive stalled. German troops established defensive trenches stretching from the North Sea to neutral Switzerland to protect their gains in the West. The system of trenches became known as the Western Front.

This Western Front moved little for the next four, bloody years. From either side of the trench line, British, French, and German soldiers endured endless frontal attacks. The new modern weapons of war brought never-before-seen casualties. Machine guns, poisonous gas, and powerful artillery led to the death of over one million men by the end of 1914. Both sides suffered terrible losses. This “total war” had begun to change the norms of warfare, including the rights of “neutrals.”

### **America’s Neutrality**

President Wilson firmly believed that the United States should act as a model to the rest of the world, and remain out of the conflict fueled by the “ancient hatreds” festering in Europe.

***“Thank God we’re not involved in this war, a war that represents everything evil in the world.”***

—President Woodrow Wilson, August 1914

According to the London Declaration of 1909 negotiated by Britain, Germany, the United States, and other nations, a country was “neutral” as long as it did not shelter warships in ports, train troops, or sell weapons and munitions to either side. Private companies or banks, however, could still make loans

or sell weapons to the governments of combatant nations.

***“The United States must be neutral in fact as well as in name [and]... Impartial in thought as well as in action.”***

—President Woodrow Wilson, August 1914

Americans wanted to stay out of the war for a number of reasons. Many felt that European affairs were far removed—literally—from the United States. It was also not clear which side the United States should support. Large numbers of immigrants to the United States came from Germany, while many Americans felt a vague allegiance to Great Britain.

Wilson was adamant that the U.S. government abide by the terms of neutrality set by the London Declaration. He could not, however, prevent private companies from pursuing business transactions with both sides, a highly profitable enterprise during wartime. Between 1914 and 1916 American companies’ trade in munitions increased from \$40 million to \$1.3 billion while private banks issued loans of \$27 million to the Central Powers and \$2.2 billion to the Allies. This trade helped the United States out of an economic slump. Wilson’s desire for America to steer clear of the conflict and to remain neutral was ultimately unsuccessful.

#### ***How was America’s neutrality threatened?***

Because both the Allied and Central powers had envisioned a short, offensive war, neither was prepared for the stalemate that developed. As a result, both faced financial and economic collapse. From the early days of the war, the British navy had enforced a strict blockade of German ports using mine fields and patrols. Trade between Germany and neutral nations became nearly impossible. In response, the German navy came to depend more on its new submarine forces to fight the British blockade and to deter the Allies from trading with neutral nations as well.

The terms of the London Declaration al-

lowed both sides to stop neutral ships in order to search for “contraband,” which was defined as items used exclusively for military use. The declaration also allowed for contraband to be seized and for neutral ships to be forced to home ports for off-loading. The problem of recognizing neutral ships on the high seas was traditionally resolved by identifying the flag of the vessel. During the early days of the war, both the Central and Allied powers tried to abide by the rules so as not to lose U.S. favor.

**“Britain should do nothing which will be a cause of complaint or dispute as regards the United States Government; such a dispute would indeed be a crowning calamity...and probably fatal to our chances of success.”**

—British Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey, December 1916

As the fighting nations became desperate, both sides began to violate the terms of neutrality and seized materials from neutral ships that they liberally classified as contraband. In response, Wilson sent notes of protest to both sides and reminded both of America’s rights as a neutral nation. Still, the dire economic straits that both sides faced led to extreme measures. Each wished to halt U.S. trade with the other.

The British navy began to fly American flags illegally from their merchant vessels in order to avoid attack. This tactic enabled the British to fire on German ships in surprise attacks. Depending solely on stealth as their main weapon, German submarines were vulnerable once they surfaced. After British ships flying U.S. flags sunk a series of submarines, German submarines started to sink merchant vessels regardless of what flags

they flew. Wilson vehemently condemned both sides for this development, and remained determined to maintain U.S. rights as a neutral. One such right, the right of citizens of neutral countries to sail on passenger vessels of belligerent countries, caused great debate within the Wilson administration.

**What was the result of the sinking of the Lusitania?**

U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan had pleaded with Wilson when war broke out to restrict the travel of Americans on the ships of belligerent countries as well as to end trade with both sides. Bryan believed that this could keep America out of the war. Wilson insisted that international law provided America these rights and refused Bryan’s request.

On May 7, 1915, a German submarine sank the RMS *Lusitania*, one of Britain’s most famous passenger liners, without allowing passengers to disembark. Although the Germans had posted a warning in New York newspapers to potential travelers on the *Lusitania*, travelers did not heed it. The ship, traveling from New York to Britain, went down with 1,196 passengers. Of these, 128 were Americans. The event outraged the American public. Many well-know public figures, including former President Theodore Roosevelt, pres-





Theodore Roosevelt urges Woodrow Wilson to join the war.

sured Wilson to ask Congress to declare war on Germany.

Wilson did not go to Congress. Instead he sent strong notes of protest to Germany that warned that any further attacks would result in the United States' entering the war. Wilson's actions led to the resignation of Secretary of

State Bryan who felt that Wilson's continued insistence on maintaining Americans' rights to travel in a war zone would lead inevitably to its entry into the war. A few critics, such as Theodore Roosevelt and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, attacked Wilson for not asking for a declaration of war against Germany immediately following the *Lusitania* disaster.

With attacks coming both from those who supported involvement in the war and those who did not, Wilson's controversial decision made his 1916 re-election bid uncertain.

But the American public showed its support. Campaigning under the slogan "He Kept Us Out of War," while simultaneously declaring that "preparedness" was essential, Woodrow Wilson narrowly won re-election for the presidency in November 1916.

As the war raged on, private companies in

### The Preacher's Son

Woodrow Wilson was a minister's son and a professor who studied American democracy. He believed he could take politics directly to the people, to gather their support by appealing to their emotions and, after molding and shaping their convictions, to let them loose on his opposition. Because Wilson seemed to respect the public more than elected officials, many Congressional representatives and foreign leaders viewed President Wilson as irritating and haughty. They often saw him as preaching to them. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, a Republican, found Wilson particularly insufferable. Lodge himself has been called austere and grating, but he was also intelligent and determined.

The antipathy between Wilson and Lodge stemmed from long-standing ideological and personal differences. As a Democrat, Wilson, during the early years of his presidency, enacted a number of social and economic reforms that ran counter to Lodge's fiscally conservative views. In addition, Wilson had criticized Theodore Roosevelt's actions as president in the controversial seizure of Colombian territory to construct the Panama Canal. Wilson's actions infuriated Lodge, a longtime friend and political ally of Roosevelt. Lodge was a committed imperialist, who sought to increase American power and eliminate conditions which could compromise it. He once called Democratic Party policies "grotesque and miserable." Both Wilson and Lodge used strong words when referring to each other.



the United States continued to engage in trade with Great Britain. Wilson did not protest this practice, as he knew such trade was keeping the United States out of an economic slump. But the financial connections to the Allies were drawing the United States further away from a truly neutral position.

### America Enters the War

Newly elected for a second term, President Wilson called for both sides to end hostilities in January 1917. He even offered to broker peace talks. Both sides refused. Events in the spring of 1917 would make Wilson's offers as a neutral peacemaker premature, as America found itself being pulled into the war.

Anxious that defeat would come quickly if trade between Britain and America continued, the German government announced on February 1, 1917 that it was resuming unrestricted submarine warfare. Nearly a year earlier Germany had pledged to abide by restrictions Wilson demanded, including providing safety for non-combatants before sinking ships. When he learned of Germany's decision, Wilson cut off diplomatic relations with Germany and received permission from Congress to arm American merchant ships.

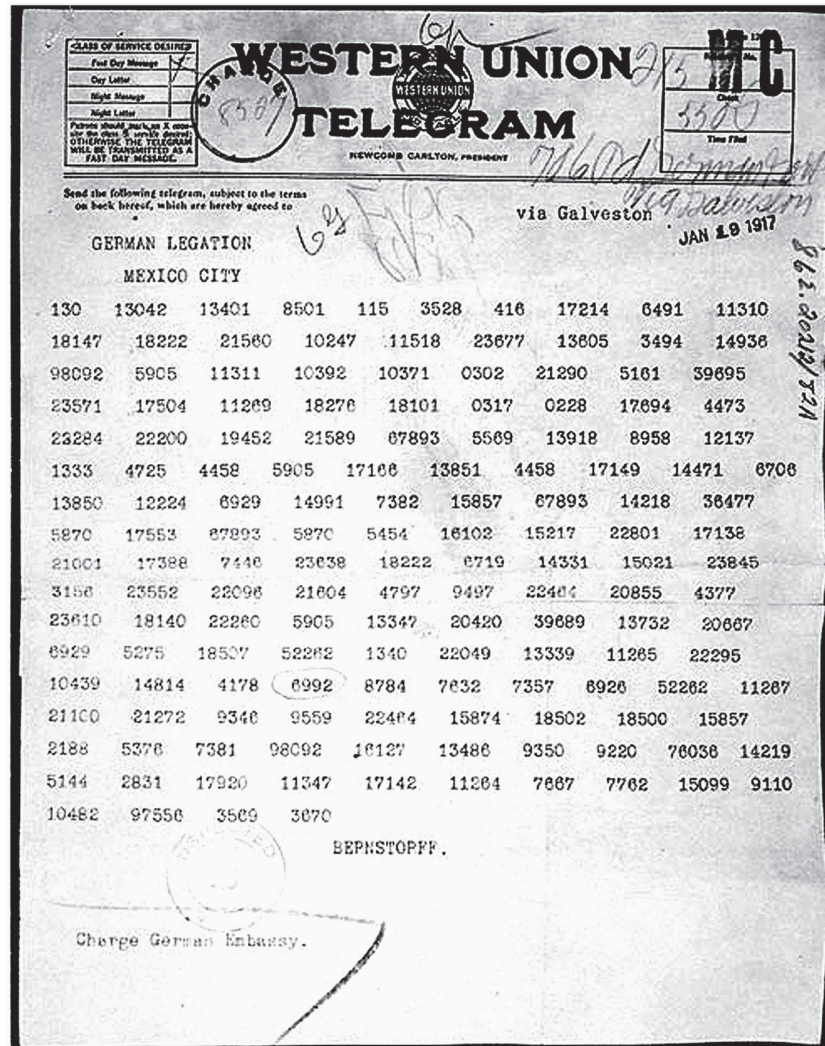
At the same time, the United States learned through British intelligence that Germany's Foreign Minister, Arthur Zimmermann, had made offers to the Mexican government to return Mexico's "lost provinces" of Arizona, New Mexico, and

Texas if it entered the war on Germany's side.

### Why did President Wilson finally want to declare war?

The German government's renewal of unrestricted submarine warfare coupled with the disclosure of the Zimmermann telegram convinced Wilson of the futility of continued American neutrality. On April 2, 1917, he appeared in front of a joint session of Congress and asked for a declaration of war against Germany.

In his speech President Wilson invoked the concepts of democracy and the rights of man as reasons to enter the war. Wilson's ratio-



The Germans sent the Zimmermann telegram in code by Western Union, through Galveston, Texas.



nale for America’s entry into the war included a proclamation that the war was “a challenge... to all mankind.”

**“We are now about to accept gage of battle with this natural foe to liberty and shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the Nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power.... The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind.”**

—Woodrow Wilson, April 1917

Congress approved the request, and the United States mobilized troops to send to Europe on the Allied side. The war that Wilson had avoided for two and a half years finally had arrived.

**What were the Fourteen Points?**

Nine months after the United States entered the war, the president presented his vision for peace, which he hoped would end the war and prevent future conflict. The president’s plan, which he announced in a speech in January 1918, centered on a framework for what he saw as a just peace in the postwar era. The Fourteen Points, as Wilson’s plan came to be known, was comprised of traditional U.S. diplomatic concerns like ensuring freedom of the seas, as well as a vision of a “new world order.”

Wilson had not created the Fourteen Points by himself; he had appointed a committee of experts known as The Inquiry to help him analyze U.S. foreign policy. The Inquiry drew on the ideas of other people, refined Wilson’s plan for peace, and drew up specific recommendations to ensure a comprehensive peace settlement.

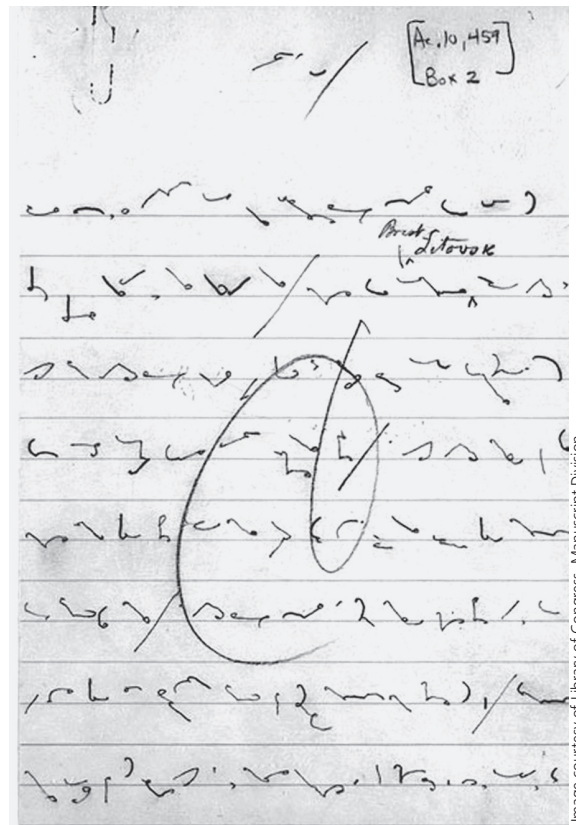


Image courtesy of Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

A section of the Fourteen Points, in Wilson’s shorthand.

The principles in the Fourteen Points represented a radical departure from the old methods of diplomacy. The new principles aimed at eliminating secret treaties and the causes of war through open diplomacy, securing freedom of the seas, developing free trade, and encouraging disarmament. Wilson also spoke of the need for self-rule (often referred to as “self-determination”) for people such as the Poles, Czechs, and Slavs. He hoped these groups would be granted independence and the right to govern themselves.

Wilson believed his most important point was the fourteenth, in which he called for a general association of nations. This association would guarantee territorial integrity and political independence to states both large and small. The Fourteen Points were a clear deviation from the unilateral tradition that America had followed since its creation.

Both Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and

former President Theodore Roosevelt voiced misgivings about the Fourteen Points and Wilson's call for a just peace.

**“Wilson is a mean soul and the fact that he delivered a good message (the war declaration) does not alter his character. If that message was right, everything he has done for two years and a half is fundamentally wrong.”**

—Senator Henry Cabot Lodge

Roosevelt was as critical of Wilson, claiming the peace must “be obtained by machine guns and not typewriters” and that Wilson’s just peace was folly. These concerns highlighted the personality conflict between Wilson and his Republican opponents.

## Fighting the War at Home

By the time America entered the war, Wilson had advocated neutrality to the American public for nearly three years. As a result, a large percentage of the public felt uninvolved in the events taking place across the sea. Even as U.S. soldiers began to be sent overseas many people still thought the events were remote and could not understand why the United States had joined the fighting.

### ***How did the U.S. government address divisions among American immigrants?***

There were other difficulties on the home front. It became clear that the United States was not a “melting pot.” Many recent immigrants felt an allegiance to their former homeland rather than to the United States.

Wilson was eager to keep the national differences that divided Europe from doing the same at home. The administration embarked on a program to encourage the “Americanization” of the immigrant population. Leaders launched a “War Americanization Plan,” which sponsored English language and citizenship classes all over the country. In “Loyalty Leagues” foreign language pamphlets were distributed relaying in simple terms

different aspects of the war message. As the pace of the war picked up, Wilson felt that a unifying patriotic sentiment was important. He viewed public support as essential to winning the war.

**“There are citizens of the United States, I blush to admit, born under other flags but welcomed under our generous naturalization laws to the full freedom and opportunity of America, who have poured the poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life.... Such creatures of passion, disloyalty, and anarchy must be crushed out.”**

—Wilson’s proposal to Congress, 1915

### ***What measures were taken to advance the war effort at home?***

The democratic principles that Wilson championed in his Fourteen Points took a back seat on America’s home front. While Wilson spoke of the necessity of U.S. entry in the war in order to defeat German enemies of freedom, he simultaneously restricted certain freedoms of his citizens at home. Wilson advocated measures which had a major effect on the general public. States also took action. The New York state legislature passed laws which forced teachers to take a loyalty oath and required students and teachers to salute the American flag.

Soon after America entered the war, the Wilson administration enacted the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 which outlawed any obstruction of the war effort and greatly curtailed civil liberties. These acts specifically prohibited expression of anti-war sentiments or pro-German views, and journalists were threatened with imprisonment if found using “disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language.” As a result, the postmaster general closed down ethnic German and left-wing newspapers and police arrested anti-war activists.

Eugene V. Debs, the leader of the Socialist Party, was arrested and given a ten-year prison term for publicly speaking out against Ameri-

ca's entry into the war and urging supporters to "resist militarism." Opponents of the wartime draft were also often arrested and imprisoned. The Supreme Court upheld this and other violations of free speech, justifying its decisions by saying that war required extreme measures.

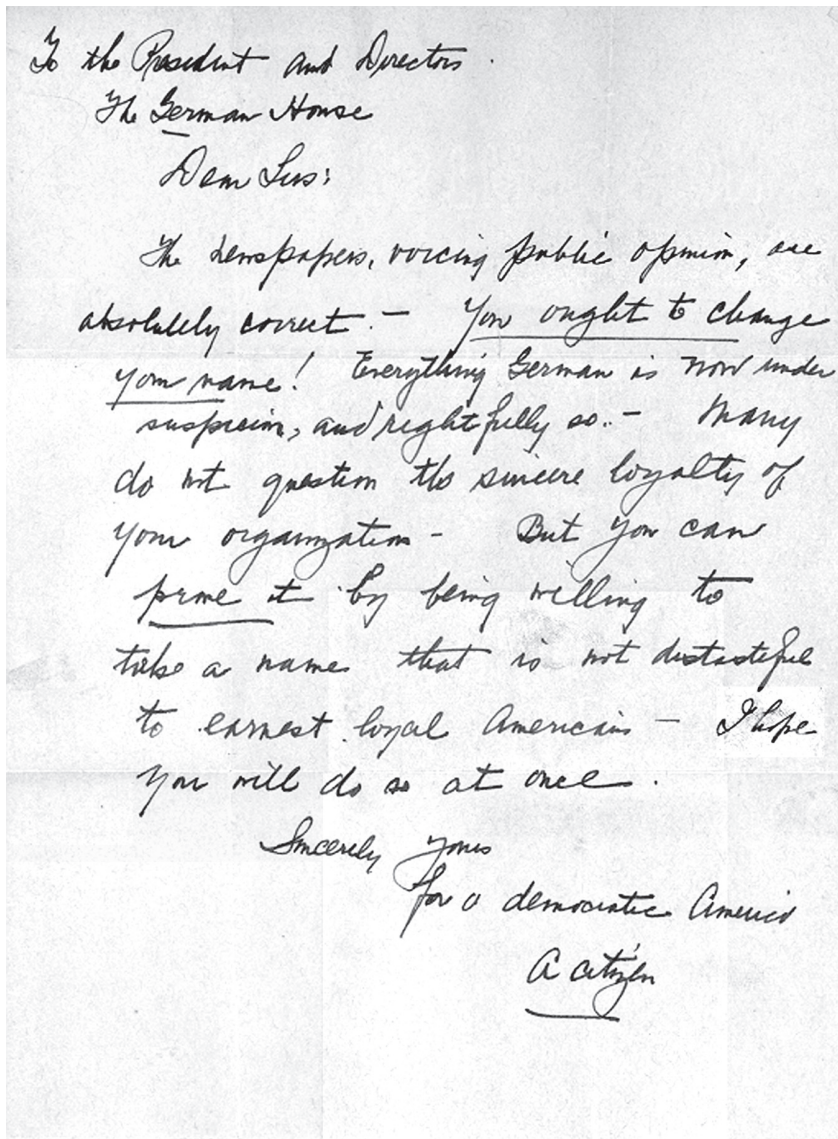
**How did anti-German propaganda turn into war hysteria?**

Though anti-German propaganda was a large factor in generating support for the war, it soon spiraled out of control and contributed to intolerance at home. German institutions and organizations closed down. Local governments prevented some orchestras from playing music by Brahms or Beethoven. Fourteen states banned the teaching of the German language in public schools and many German language teachers were called "traitors." Some schools dismissed students who engaged in pro-German activities. In some states, education officials reviewed textbooks for "seditious material," and they revised textbooks which they considered to have pro-German sections.

There were also movements to eliminate German names on public buildings, parks and streets, and cities changed German lettering on many buildings to English. Sauerkraut was referred to as "liberty cabbage," the hamburger became the "liberty sandwich," Dachshunds were renamed "liberty pups" and German measles were called "liberty measles." In addition, many German-Americans changed their

own names to avoid harassment. All across the country Muellers became Millers and Schmidts became Smiths.

In the Midwest, a mob lynched a German-American who had been rejected from the navy for medical reasons. The mob chased him down, bound him with an American flag and hanged him from a tree while five hundred onlookers cheered. The mob claimed that the victim had made socialist comments. Although the perpetrators were arrested, a jury acquitted them in twenty minutes, calling the event a "patriotic murder."



"A citizen" writes to the German House suggesting a name change.

Athenaeum Turners Records, 1880-2001, IUPUI University Library Special Collections and Archives.



### ***What was the objective of the Committee on Public Information?***

In April 1917, Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (C.P.I.) to promote the war domestically. The C.P.I. shaped the information Americans received about the war and encouraged support for the war. Through use of advertisements, newspapers, films, novels, and other media, the C.P.I. was able to reach much of the American public. The message spread quickly. Roughly seventy-five thousand volunteers, otherwise known as the Four Minute Men, went around the country giving short speeches in theaters, churches, labor unions, synagogues, and anywhere else they could find an audience.

The government hoped that these appeals to patriotism would lead to increased enlistment, increased purchase of war bonds, increased production of goods integral to the war effort, and other actions considered helpful to bringing about a victorious conclusion to the war. The Committee on Public Information's efforts were so effective that during the war it was nearly impossible to look through a magazine, to pick up a newspaper, or even to walk down the street without seeing a poster, an advertisement, or an article promoting the war efforts.

### ***How did the Division of Civic and Educational Cooperation advance the war effort?***

The Division of Civic and Educational Cooperation was a section of the C.P.I. Though the messages it produced were sent to students, in many ways, the students were not the target audience. Rather, the students were used to communicate wartime messages to the hearts, minds, and purses of the adults.

Among the publications produced by the organization were the “war study courses” which were distributed to schools throughout the nation. These lesson plans communicated a “student-appropriate” version of the government’s view of the war dealing with

patriotism, heroism, and sacrifice. The lesson plans provided teachers with specific instructions on how to explain the war to their students. The plans told teachers to explain that the Americans were fighting to protect the French and the Belgians from the Germans and “to keep the German soldiers from coming to our country and treating us the same way.”

***“It now appears beyond the possibility of doubt that this war was made by Germany pursuing a long and settled purpose. For many years she had been preparing to do exactly what she has done, with a thoroughness, a perfection of plans, and a vastness of provision in men, munitions and supplies never before equaled or approached in human history. She brought the war on when she chose, because she chose, in the belief that she could conquer the earth nation by nation.”***

—Excerpt from a pamphlet for students

### ***How did Americans at home view the war?***

As the nation turned its efforts to rallying support for the war effort at home, U.S. soldiers began to arrive in Europe. The United States provided much needed military and economic aid to the Allied cause. The U.S. navy began work on hundreds of new ships, and munitions factories began producing armaments for not only French and British soldiers, as they had been doing throughout the war, but for the new American troops as well. The public followed the course of the war closely, cheering the news of its fighter pilots and successful aerial combat. As a result of the national propaganda as well as patriotism, Americans overwhelmingly supported the war effort. The country’s entire outlook focused on bringing honor to America and then bringing “its boys back home.”

## Study Guide—Part I

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1. What were the three main causes of World War I?

a.

b.

c.

2. Why did the concept of nationalism threaten the large empires and big states of Europe?

3. What event led immediately to the start of World War I?

4. List the members of the Allies and Central Powers:

Allies:

Central Powers:

5. President Wilson invoked the \_\_\_\_\_ of 1909, which explained the rights of \_\_\_\_\_ during wartime. Both the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ governments broke the rules of that treaty.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

6. After the Lusitania sunk, two groups of people criticized President Wilson's actions. Who were they, and what problems did they see with his actions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What two actions did Germany take which led Wilson to declare war?
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. List four principles of the Fourteen Points. Place a check mark next to the one Wilson thought was most important.
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
  
  
  
  - c.
  
  
  
  
  - d.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. List three types of anti-German propaganda used by the United States during the war.
  - a.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What was the purpose of the Committee on Public Information?



## Advanced Study Guide—Part I

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1. “Politics is perception” is a term often used in both domestic and international affairs. How does this saying reflect the rise of military alliances by the European powers at the start of the twentieth century?
2. How did nationalism influence the beginning of World War I?
3. Why did Wilson wish to remain neutral in the first years of the war?
4. Why do you think the American public reelected Wilson in 1916?
5. Why do historians often say that Wilson’s Fourteen Points were not upheld on the homefront? Provide examples of policies to support your argument.
6. What is propaganda? Give three examples of propaganda used in the United States during the war.