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Topic A: Negotiating Peace After The Great War
Topic B: Public Unrest and the Spread of Communism

Committee Overview

The United States Senate of 1918 is the upper house of the United States legislature, and is often regarded as the most prestigious house due to its smaller size and longer terms compared to the House of Representatives. It is comprised of 96 senators, with two from each state,¹ and primarily manages the appointment of federal officials, uniformed officers, and Supreme Court judges. More importantly, the Senate is charged with the approval of international treaties and agreements, and therefore, is the primary dictator of US foreign policy.²

The Senate has been historically seen as the less partisan and more reflective of the legislative bodies, making it well-equipped to handle contentious issues and act in the best interest of the nation.³ However, after elections held throughout 1918, although the Republican party holds a slight majority, the floor is largely divided between the two parties.⁴ Furthermore, in the context of the Great War and other global events, corporations, lobbyists, labor unions, and other prominent figures have been attempting to exert influence on national policies and procedures.⁵

The goal of this committee is twofold. Following participation in the Great War

and the changing political environment around the world, the national environment has undergone significant change due to enacted legislation as well as social concerns regarding the security of the United States. It is imperative that, with the loss of soldiers overseas and the weakened positions of US allies, that the Senate is able to evaluate current policies and impose new ones to preserve national security and quell public unrest.

However, in the aftermath of turmoil, the world now also looks to the United States for a response to the damage done globally and the deterioration in world relations. The policies that the United States enacts locally and puts forth at upcoming negotiations will define its foreign policy for the coming decades, and establish its role in the global economic, social, and political spheres.

There are many factors that must be considered in developing national and international policy over the course of the next session. It will be a test of the Senate's ability to prioritize tasks, address national and international demands with feasible solutions, and develop a cohesive policy that will set apart the United States as a global leader while protecting its national interests from degradation.

¹ "Party Division." *United States Senate*.

² "United States Senate." *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

³ "Senate Legislative Process." *United States Senate*.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ "Lobbyists." *United States Senate*.



Topic A:

Negotiating Peace After The Great War

Introduction

Dubbed “The War to End All Wars,” the Great War has been the most destructive and widespread conflict the globe has ever seen. With upwards of 8,500,000 deaths recorded internationally, massive damage to European infrastructure, and the involvement of so many world powers throughout four years of strife, people around the world hope that no conflict of this magnitude shall ever befall a nation again.⁶

But, with the end of the war comes large uncertainty about the future balance of global physical and political power, as well as the state of relations between all parties involved in the conflict, with the possibility of future rivalry. Preparations for the war at home and abroad have also radically altered the American household as well as the national economy. They also have shifted Americans’ perspective on the security of the nation and its cultural identity.

In the United States’ efforts to negotiate terms that will ensure long-term peace among all nations, it must acknowledge its responsibility to protect democracy and the free world internationally, while simultaneously taking measures locally to preserve national interests.

⁶ White, Matthew. *Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Primary Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century*. Necrometrics.
⁷ Llewellyn, Jennifer and Steve Thompson. *Imperialism as a Cause of The Great War*. Alpha History.

Historical Background

Accelerating Imperialism

The desire of multiple European powers to expand their spheres of influence laid the foundations of war long before its outbreak in 1914. With the rapid expansion of European empires due to the industrial revolution throughout the 19th century, these countries were incentivized to colonize other lands for the purposes of economic and military development and to remain competitive with their European and East Asian rivals.⁷

This began what is commonly referred to as the Scramble for Africa, where European powers aimed to exploit the rich natural resources and strategic military value of the continent for economic and political gain.⁸ The rules by which such colonization could occur were largely established during the Berlin Conference of 1884. Convened by Chancellor Otto von Bismarck of Germany, the conference placed restrictions on the actions of European powers in Africa in pursuit of their land claims. However, despite these restrictions, which were largely ignored, tensions rose between competing states, nearly resulting in war in several cases.⁹

In particular, Germany’s *Weltpolitik* (world policy), in which it sought to secure itself as a global power through overseas acquisitions and aggressive diplomacy, led

⁸ Frankema, Ewout et. al. *An Economic Rationale for the West African Scramble? The Commercial Transition and the Commodity Price Boom of 1835–1885*. The Economic History Association: The Journal of Economic History.
⁹ Ibid

to a very fast and provocative expansion during this period. In fact, Germany purposefully attempted to aggravate other European competitors and incite conflicts between them in order to expand unhindered. In 1905, German diplomat Wilhelm II delivered a speech in Morocco supporting local independence, all while France was trying to establish a protectorate.¹⁰ Conflict again arose in 1911, when Germans landed an armed vessel, the *Panther*, at the Moroccan port of Agadir without purpose, permission, or prior notification while the French attempted to suppress a rebellion.¹¹ Both of these incidents triggered strong diplomatic responses and press coverage, and, while designed to weaken relations between France and Great Britain, only brought France and Germany closer to the brink of war.

Other areas of the globe were simultaneously falling into turmoil. The power of the Ottomans had shrunk dramatically by the mid-19th century, particularly after a series of defeats in the Crimean, Russo-Turkish, and First Balkans Wars.¹² Combined with rising nationalism in Ottoman-controlled regions, this resulted in massive losses of territory, and European empires such as Austria-Hungary, Russia and Germany eagerly looked to lay claim to newly unoccupied areas near the Balkans, the Black Sea, and Baghdad, respectively.¹³ Britain and France also wanted to establish dominance in the region and would remain competitive with these other powers.

¹⁰ Llewellyn, Jennifer and Steve Thompson. *Imperialism as a Cause of The Great War*. Alpha History.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Penix, Matthew David. *The Ottoman Empire in the first world war: A rational disaster*. Michigan: Eastern Michigan University.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ The National Atlas of the United States of America. "Map Layer Info." Territorial Acquisitions of the United States. Accessed November 2, 2019.

https://nationalmap.gov/small_scale/mld/usacqup.html.

Throughout this period, the United States gained control of the Philippines, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and several islands in the Pacific, but largely avoided disputes with European powers over land claims.¹⁴

Formation of Mutual Defense Alliances

In response to rising tensions between the expanding empires, many states elected to form alliances with each other in order to dissuade any aggression by other parties. The Dual Alliance (1879) was first formed between Germany and Austria-Hungary, where both nations pledged to aid each other in the event of an assault by Russia. They would also remain neutral towards one another in the case of any other attack.¹⁵ Italy joined in this agreement to form a Triple Alliance in 1882, although they abandoned their allies once the war began. Germany would also proceed to sign the Reinsurance Treaty (1887) with Russia to ensure mutual neutrality as well as prevent a possible alliance between Russia and France. In the context of competition between Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, Germany did not want to be caught in a war on two fronts in the case that the situation worsened, and France chose to align differently than expected.¹⁶

Nevertheless, with the new German Emperor's refusal to renew the Reinsurance Treaty in 1890, and with Russia being left vulnerable to the Triple Alliance states, the Franco-Russian Alliance (1894) was formed.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Austro-German Alliance." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., July 18, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Austro-German-Alliance>.¹⁵

¹⁶ Wilde, Robert. "The Major Alliances of The Great War Began as Hope for Mutual Protection." ThoughtCo. ThoughtCo, September 6, 2019. <https://www.thoughtco.com/world-war-one-the-major-alliances-1222059>.

This stipulated that the nations would aid each other if any of the Triple Alliance states attacked.¹⁷ Britain, acknowledging its alliance with Japan and France's alliance with Russia during a period of competition between the two in Manchuria and Korea, then signed the Entente Cordiale with France, greatly improving relations between the two shortly before the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War (1904). Britain went on to sign an agreement with Russia as well to settle their disputes in Central Asia, which solidified their stance, along with France and Russia, against the Triple Alliance.¹⁸

Ultimately, these three decades of competition and diplomacy resulted in the formation of two distinct groups of world powers, which we now call the Allies (Britain, France, and Russia), and the Central Powers (Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Italy).¹⁹

Nationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Colonial competition had also given rise to nationalist ideologies in the colonies occupied by these large countries. In particular, the Catholic and Orthodox communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, controlled by Austria-Hungary starting in 1878, were heavily influenced by Serbian and Croatian policies which called for the formation of an independent South Slavic state. Austria-Hungary tried to encourage a pluralist and multi-confessional colony through social and political reforms; however, this state structure was supported mostly by the Muslim population, which constituted a minority after the mass emigration of Muslim dissidents at the

beginning of occupation. This left nationalist parties to dominate elections in the region and perpetuate the idea of an independent state.²⁰

This ideology would be strengthened following Austro-Hungarian attempts at formal annexation of the colony in 1908. The attempt failed following protestation by Serbia, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire, who all had land claims and interests in the region, damaging Austria-Hungary's relations towards all of these nations.²¹

The escalation of political tensions finally culminated in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, by a young Bosnian revolutionary in Sarajevo. Austria-Hungary, after Serbia failed to satisfy the requirements of an ultimatum given to them following the assassination, mobilized its army to bomb the Serbian capital of Belgrade.²² Russia came to Serbia's aid, with Germany then standing alongside Austria-Hungary and demanding Russia's demobilization. Germany declared war on Russia following Russia's failure to comply, with Austria-Hungary following suit and France defending Russia shortly thereafter.²³ In Germany's efforts to swiftly conclude the conflict, they demanded free passage through Belgium to attack France, and invaded the country when they refused. However, with the previous establishment of Belgium as an independent nation by the Treaty of London (1839), it was also regarded by many European nations as entirely neutral by Britain's insistence. The violation of this agreement prompted Britain to declare war on Germany, beginning the Great War.²⁴

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Browne, Alex. *Europe in 1914: First World War Alliances Explained*. History Hit.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ McCormick, Jennifer. *Causes of The Great War*. Indiana: Indiana Department of Education.

²¹ Ibid.

²² *Six Causes of The Great War*. Norwich University Online.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid.

US Neutrality & The Preparedness Movement

The United States initially aimed to stay neutral in the conflict, having no direct stake in the proceedings. President Wilson repeatedly dispatched his aide, Edward Mandell House, to all participating parties to negotiate peace, but all refused, being confident in their eventual victory.²⁵ Despite this, no major preparations were made for war. There were, however, multiple American banks that took advantage of laissez-faire economic policies to make substantial loans to Britain and France, mainly for the purchase of munitions, raw materials, and food.²⁶

Opinions on whether to join the war effort became divided as the war progressed, both in Congress and amongst the public. One of the main catalysts for this divide was the sinking of the British liner RMS Lusitania on May 7, 1915 by the German U-20 U-boat. This resulted in the casualties of 128 US citizens on board, and spurred President Wilson's subsequent demands to end German practices of unrestricted submarine warfare on passenger ships.²⁷ While supported by former President Roosevelt and other British delegations, other members of Congress found this to conflict with the official US policy of neutrality. This ultimately led to the resignation of Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan.²⁸

This also began a movement spearheaded by Roosevelt, as well as former Secretaries of War Elihu Root and Henry Stimson, that has come to be called the

Preparedness Movement, which called for the expansion of US naval and land forces for defensive purposes in case the war arrived at the homefront. President Wilson agreed to bolster the nation's naval capacity, and, after the appointment of Newton Baker as Secretary of War in place of Lindley Garrison, reached a compromise with advocates for the Preparedness Movement to expand the military and National Guard, although not by nearly as much as they would have liked.²⁹

Public opinion very much opposed these policies at first, and in general against joining the war effort, particularly due to peace advocates such as Jane Addams, David Starr Jordan, and Henry Ford. Multiple German acts of sabotage to US munitions suppliers, however, started to reverse this stance. The Black Tom explosion on July 30, 1916 in the New York Harbor, destroyed \$20,000,000 worth of military goods, in addition to causing damage to the Statue of Liberty due to the explosion's sheer size.³⁰ Similarly, an explosion at the Kingsland munitions factory on January 11, 1917 is suspected, though it has not been confirmed, to have been the doing of German agents.³¹ It was after these events that President Wilson chose to outline the role of the United States as a global defender of democracy, and began accumulating support for US entry into the war.

US Entry & War Conclusion

In January of 1917, Germany resumed its practice of unrestricted submarine warfare after briefly suspending it following the Lusitania incident.³² In conjunction with

²⁵ Kennedy, Ross. *Peace Initiatives*. International Encyclopedia of the First World War.

²⁶ Rathbone, Albert. *Making War Loans to the Allies*. Foreign Affairs.

²⁷ *Over Here: WWI and the Fight for the American Mind*. New York: New York Public Library.

²⁸ Glass, Andrew. "William Jennings Bryan resigns as Secretary of State, June 9, 1915." *Politico*, June 9, 2015.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Jefferson, Jordan. *Explosion at Black Tom: A forgotten history of sabotage during WWI*.

³¹ Maag, Christopher. *Lyndhurst commemorates 100th anniversary of historic Kingsland explosion*. USA Today Network.

³² Bellamy, Jay. *The Zimmermann Telegram And Other Events Leading To America's Entry into The Great War*. National Archives.

this, it attempted to transmit a telegram to Mexico, convincing them to declare war on the United States in alliance with Germany for the reclamation of the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. However, this telegram, sent by German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann, was intercepted by British intelligence and provided to the United States, and later released to the public by President Wilson and causing nationwide outrage. This was seen as a cause for war, and assisted President Wilson in encouraging Congress to declare war in April.³³

Multiple temporary agencies were established with over 500,000 new employees to direct the production of necessary supplies and munitions for the war effort, as well as to boost homeland morale. This included the Committee on Public Information, the Commission to Negotiate Peace, and the War Trade Board³⁴ among many others. National programs were also instituted to encourage citizens to contribute to the war effort and providing them with ways to do so. The Food Administration, for example, launched a campaign to educate Americans on handling their food budgets and on how to grow gardens in their backyards to produce food for US soldiers, greatly improving the nation's food distribution and pricing.³⁵

Unfortunately, having been isolated from the war effort for the majority of its duration, American soldiers were not greatly prepared for conflict overseas, where tactics had radically evolved since the start of the war. This repeatedly resulted in very high casualty battles with minimal military success. Notwithstanding, US military deployment came at a period where

Germany could not replenish its losses on the battlefield, greatly boosting morale for the Allies and contributing to the final Allied offensive from August to November of 1918. Armistices were gradually signed with all of the Central Powers, with Germany being the last to surrender on November 11, 1918.³⁶

Contemporary Conditions

Global Sentiments & Aims

The Great War greatly impacted the trajectories of all nations involved, but affected each quite differently. Therefore, their objectives to be reached during the coming negotiations are also quite different, as they have different strategies for repairing damage to their countries and for ensuring continued growth and prosperity.

France undoubtedly suffered the most damage as a result of the conflict, with 1.3 million soldiers lost, and large portions of land labeled the *zone rouge* (red zone) being damaged so heavily that they have been deemed unfit for human habitation. Industrial regions have suffered extensive damage, greatly reducing production of coal and iron, and destroying critical infrastructure such as railroads, bridges, and factories.³⁷ Physically, economically, and emotionally devastated, the French must preserve their status as a European power and protect their remaining possessions, and they aim to do so by weakening Germany, who is seen as the main aggressor of the war.

This so called "just peace" perspective held by France and a large portion of Britain labels Germany as the instigator of The Great War, demanding that

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ "World War I Special Agencies." *The National Archives*.

³⁵ *Victory Gardens*. Virginia: Virginia Museum of History and Culture.

³⁶ "World War I: The End of the German War." *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

³⁷ *Red Zone*. National Geographic Society.

they pay reparations for damages to the Allies, as well as greatly reduce their military and navy to prevent future aggression. France, being the more vulnerable of the two, also requests annexation of the Saar Valley for coal and iron resources, and the establishment of a frontier along the Rhine (following Germany's demilitarization of the area) to defend against future attacks.³⁸

It is important to note that for the purposes of stabilizing Europe politically and economically, these demands have the potential to be counterproductive. If Germany is to become and/or remain a viable ally and trading partner for any nation, she would not have the necessary resources under these provisions to make any meaningful contributions to such an alliance. Members of the British government as well as The United States have voiced these concerns, although others have very clearly characterized Germany as an enemy, and require that they be dismantled so that they do not retain the ability to compete with the remainder of Europe militarily or economically.³⁹

Goals of Negotiations

As for The United States, due to physical distance from the conflict, there is not much to be said about territorial claims and allowing Germany to retain her military and/or economic prowess would not pose a major threat. Even so, the international policy adopted in the aftermath of such conflict has a large bearing on where the United States stands as a global power, and has great political and economic

implications. There are two main directions that it has the option to take.

The first, outlined and championed by President Wilson, is a series of Fourteen Points that dictate immediate action to be taken to remediate wartime disputes, as well as more general aims that nations should strive for in international interactions.⁴⁰ Among these points are ideals such as transparency in international negotiations and agreements, freedom of navigation upon international waters, equality of trade conditions for all involved in the agreement of peace, adjustment of colonial claims considering the presiding governments and the constituent populations equally, and various changes in territorial ownership and occupation.⁴¹ Perhaps the most impactful of these points, however, is the proposal for a "general association of nations," now known as the League of Nations, which would protect the political independence and territorial integrity of all involved states, regardless of global standing and power.⁴² The implementation of these points would follow President Wilson's vision for the United States as an advocate for global democracy and cooperation and would likely integrate it into a global political and economic system by virtue of its proposals.

However, dissention against this policy, as well as a general opposition against US involvement in international affairs after the emotional and financial costs incurred by the war, has given rise to calls for a return to isolationism. After enduring the war and its consequences on the domestic social and political climate, it may be beneficial to shift focus towards more national issues and attempt to return to a

³⁸ "The Search for Peace (Part IV) - The Cambridge History of the First World War." Cambridge Core. Cambridge University Press. Accessed 2, 2019. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-history-of-the-first-world-war/search-for-peace/A1EA3118A03B00E0F895F9C39AAC5FF6>.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ *President Wilson's Fourteen Points*. Utah: Brigham Young University The Great War Document Archive.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² Ibid.

pre-conflict state. Through this policy, although The United States would still aim to further their international interests, they would avoid involvement in international alliances and obligations, separating themselves from global developments.⁴³

In any case, the ultimate imperative during negotiations is to secure a lasting peace between the European states, and whether demanding that Germany pay reparations and demilitarize will achieve this goal is currently ambiguous. The subsequent actions of The United States unilaterally, however, will then determine how much power and influence it holds in the aftermath of the conflict.

Humanitarian Conditions & The Allied Blockade

During the war, in an effort to limit the supplies of the Central Powers, the Allies, utilizing the Royal Navy, imposed a prolonged naval blockade across the North Sea and the English Channel that seized any and all contraband of war that passed through on merchant ships and vessels. This blockade currently remains in place, with the Allies refraining from lifting it to solidify German inferiority and reduce the probability of another offensive.⁴⁴

The continuation of the blockade has two major consequences. Firstly, it very evidently supports an anti-Germany policy in that it deprives them of resources and prohibits the immediate recovery of their economy. But, more pressingly, the blockade also prevents food items from being transported through blockaded channels, which has reportedly caused mass

malnutrition and death from starvation.⁴⁵ The German Board of Public Health has made note of 763,000 such deaths since the beginning of the blockade, a number which is likely to rise as the blockade continues.⁴⁶ Along with the political consequences of allowing resources into Germany, we must also recognize that the blockade imposed creates humanitarian concerns that must be addressed by the Allies in a timely manner.

State of the Nation

The United States also faces significant challenges domestically following the end of the war. With much of its former labor force currently overseas or killed in combat, the economy has been considerably crippled. Furthermore, while the production of military goods and agricultural products sustained the economy throughout the war effort, the nation now holds large stockpiles of such resources, with no international buyers, leading to drops in exports and a stagnant economy.⁴⁷ This is, of course, in addition to a considerably more somber social environment at home due to involvement in the conflict.

Much of the population is of the opinion that the United States should have never joined the war effort, and there is much demand to return to a social, political, and economic state that resembles that of the country before entry into the war. This “return to normalcy” would involve not only reintegrating returning soldiers into the workforce, but bolstering the economy by other means and supporting citizens suffering economically and emotionally from familial deaths.⁴⁸

⁴³ *Isolationism and U.S. Foreign Policy After The Great War*. Norwich University Online.

⁴⁴ Howard, N. P. *The Social and Political Consequences of the Allied Food Blockade of Germany, 1918-19*. England: University of Sheffield.

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Rothermund, Dietmar. *Post-war Economies*. International Encyclopedia of the First World War.

⁴⁸ “Return to Normalcy.” American History USA. Accessed December 1, 2019.

Past Action and Legislation

Peace Attempts During the War

Multiple attempts to establish peace were made during the war; however, most of these negotiations were bilateral rather than multilateral, and were motivated by a desire to partition the enemy and ensure victory rather than bring a general peace to the region. In particular, Germany made concurrent efforts to negotiate with Britain and France, aiming to make minimal concessions in order to divide the Allies.⁴⁹ However, due to the vague nature of Germany's diplomatic statements and difficulty in previous negotiations, the Allies all shared information on the state of their negotiations, and relayed to Germany that all further communications would be discussed with their Alliance partners. Upon receiving this message and realizing the large concessions that the Allies expected from Germany to negotiate a peace, these negotiations were halted.⁵⁰

The sincerest attempts at peace were made by Austria-Hungary, which greatly favored a return to the *status quo ante bellum*.⁵¹ The nation did not benefit from the war in any capacity. The economy continuously suffered from inflation, as well as severe food and fuel shortages, and the labor force continued to be considerably weakened. Political tensions between Austria and Hungary also began to increase, along with nationalist sentiments among many of the Empire's ethnic groups. Nonetheless, Austria-Hungary grew increasingly reliant on Germany the longer these problems persisted, and so any peace that they sought to negotiate would have to be agreed upon by Germany as well, lest

they lose them as an ally. This condition would prove to curtail many of their pursuits toward peace.⁵²

Throughout the war, the Allies, with the naval blockade imposed on Germany and greater access to resources overseas from the United States, were confident that their resources would outlast that of the Central Powers. Germany's tactical position during the war, however, was not quite dire enough to warrant a surrender. It retained control of Belgium and northern France, Russia's advance in the east, and much of Romania for a good portion of the war. Germany's campaign for unrestricted submarine warfare also seemed to promise a swift conclusion to the conflict once initiated, although the impact of U.S. entry into the war was greatly discounted by the Reich. Thus, neither coalition saw any reason to reach a total compromise.⁵³

The single successful peace initiative reached came from the collapse of the Tsarist regime of Russia in 1917.⁵⁴ With the Provisional Government in place after a socialist revolution, Russia aimed to establish a general peace based on the *Petrograd formula* - a peace "without annexations or indemnities... based on the rights of nations to decide their own affairs."⁵⁵ They would proceed to negotiate war aims with the Allies based on this ideology, and to hold a conference of socialist leaders from the belligerent parties in Stockholm to outline the terms of a general peace.

However, with many parties questioning the wisdom of such initiatives, they would both achieve limited success. This led the nation to launch a desperate

<https://www.americanhistoryusa.com/topic/return-to-normalcy/>.

⁴⁹ Kennedy, Ross. *Peace Initiatives*. International Encyclopedia of the First World War

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid

offensive in July 1917 instead so as to expand their diplomatic influence, which also resulted in catastrophic failure. Vladimir Lenin seized power shortly after the offensive and, following another German offensive, would be forced to make large concessions to Germany to withdraw from the war in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.⁵⁶

National Legislation & Initiatives

Conditions on the homefront largely changed because of legislation enacted at the start of US entry into the conflict. This occurred most noticeably with the Selective Service Act (1917), which allowed 2.8 million males aged 18 to 45 to be drafted through conscription for military service. This accounted for above 50% of the total Americans who served during the war.⁵⁷ The War Revenue Act (1917) also supported the war effort by radically raising income taxes for all classes during the year it was enacted, with rates on the top bracket rising from 15% to 67%.⁵⁸ Although conscription was terminated immediately following Germany's surrender, and the lifetime of the latter policy was relatively short, both still have implications for the state of the national social, political, and economic environment.

Other measures taken during the war, however, currently remain in effect. Enacted shortly after US entry into the war, The Espionage Act (1917) was designed to punish acts of insubordination and support of enemy powers during wartime. The

provisions of the act were expanded by a set of amendments commonly known as the Sedition Act (1918) to include other offenses, such as speech and other expression directly against the United States, or that was otherwise abusive of its government, flag, or armed forces.⁵⁹ While instances of enforcement of the act have been minimal, especially following the conclusion of war, the hope is that they nonetheless discourage unpatriotic activism and advocacy moving forward. However, with some elements of the legislation applying specifically to war conditions, they must be further evaluated for relevance and possible consequences in a post-war environment.

Preparations for mobilization also necessitated exemptions to the Immigration Act (1917), particularly for Mexican migrant workers in agricultural, mining, and railroad industries to aid in war production and transportation.⁶⁰ With the now diminished workforce, it is important to consider whether these exemptions will continue, as well as whether the other provisions restricting immigration from the Asiatic barred zone adequately reflect US foreign policy. Along with this, delegates must also consider the internment of German aliens in Hot Springs, North Carolina and Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, and whether to continue the incarceration of these individuals.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ray, Michael. *Selective Service Acts*. Encyclopaedia Britannica.

⁵⁸ Blakey, Roy G. *The War Revenue Act of 1917*. Tennessee: American Economic Association.

⁵⁹ *The Espionage and Sedition Acts*. Jack Miller Center.

⁶⁰ Coerver, Don M. et. al. *Mexico: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Culture and History*. California: Library of Congress.

⁶¹ Burns, Kerry. *Redefining the Word 'Home.' German Internment Camp in The Great War, 1917-1918*. North Carolina: North Carolina Museum of History.

Questions a Resolution Must Address

1. *How can future global conflict be prevented?*

What were the root causes of the conflict? Were they preventable? What can the United States do to mediate disputes? Should any reparations be imposed for damage caused by the conflict?

2. *Should Germany be punished for its actions during the war?*

Can Germany be considered the instigator of the war? Do their actions constitute a violation of existing war treaties or conventions? What about the actions of other nations?

3. *What foreign policy should the United States adopt moving forward? Isolationism or Globalism?*

Does the United States have a responsibility towards other states? Should it prioritize national interests or international? Can it survive by isolating itself in an age of globalism?

4. *Are President Wilson's Fourteen Points feasible? Are they desirable?*

Do President Wilson's points adequately outline the US' foreign policy goals? Are they comprehensive? Do they treat all nations fairly in their proposals?

5. *Should the League of Nations be considered? How would such a body be structured?*

Is it feasible for all participating nations to collaborate given their differences? Would all nations benefit? How would equality in debate and in enacted policies be ensured?

6. *How can the United States benefit from post-war negotiations?*

What international policy should the United States put forward? What relationships should it establish with other nations? How will this impact the US' global standing in the future?

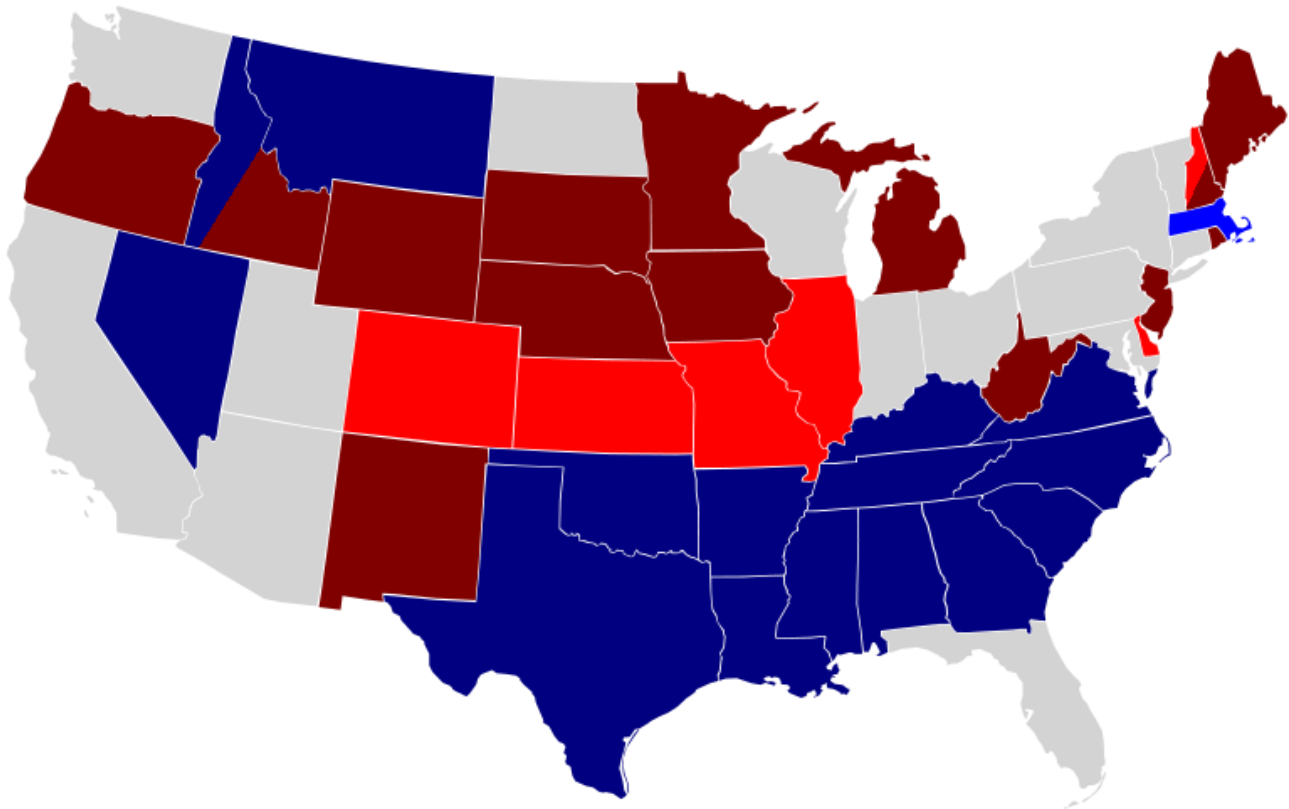
7. *Who should remain the US' allies? How should they benefit from post-war negotiations?*

What claims of the US' allies are legitimate? Does the United States benefit if its allies benefit? Does it need its allies to function?

8. *What national legislation can be enacted to return to a pre-war state?*

How has life domestically changed since entry into the war? Can and should this change be reverted? How? What can be done to assure the public of the US' security?

Bloc Positions



- *Republicans: Atlanticists*

These Republicans were those in favor of the Preparedness movement, and who believed in the rapid military buildup of the United States for domestic defense. They value economic and military strength for security over ideals such as preservation of global democracy.

- *Republicans: National Conservatives*

These Republicans have a large focus on domestic affairs and ensuring the “return to normalcy” demanded by their constituents. They strive to curtail soaring unemployment and provide compensation for veterans of the war, and quell public unrest resulting from security concerns.

- *Democrats: Global Democrats*

Following the example of President Wilson, these Democrats aim to preserve democracy internationally. They would be in support of measures that repair international relations and prevent further conflicts.

- *Democrats: Peace Advocates*

Supported by peace figures such as Jane Addams, these Democrats were those who opposed entry into the Great War, the Preparedness movement, and were reluctant to initiate buildup of the navy and military. A predominant view of the party is that disarmament is the only way to ensure peace.

Conclusion

The largest outbreak of violence the globe has seen is not something to be taken lightly, and the response of the United States, as with all other nations, will permanently paint its foreign policy and attitude towards a globalized society. Although physically distant from the heart of the conflict, the United States has been profoundly affected by the events of the past few years, and it is in its best interest to prevent their replication.

The Great War had its roots in a multitude of multilateral agreements, historical tensions, and pivotal events, all of which went largely unnoticed or unaddressed by the greater international community and compounded over time. It was characterized by nations compelled to participate in the destruction despite having no prospects for political, economic, or social benefit. The result is now a fractured political landscape in Europe, with all major countries vying for power in the midst of the recent chaos.

There are many proposals for how to move forward, ranging from total political and economic isolation, to the collection of reparations for damages from the aggressor in Germany, to the creation of an international body that would help mediate

future disputes multilaterally and transparently. Each have their advocates domestically as well as internationally, and represent different strategies for ensuring peace and security following the ravages of war.

It also remains an open question how the United States should recover from the conflict. It must decide not only who it should retain as its allies, but what relationships it should aim to establish with other nations to maximize benefits--or minimize losses--after the conflict. Moreover, with the damages incurred upon the national social and economic landscape in the aftermath, it is largely ambiguous if, and how, the United States can return to its original state *ante bellum*.

In short, there are many fronts for the United States, as well as all nations, to tackle. The formulation of sound international policies and treaties in the present is the only way to avert a future crisis of the same sort, and the inevitable confusion that would come in its wake. Whether these proceedings will establish a new form of global governance and international cooperation is uncertain; but it must at the minimum give rise to a peace which will not again be disturbed within the foreseeable future.



Topic B:

Public Unrest and the Spread of Communism

Introduction

Following the Great War, many countries have found themselves going through extensive social, political and economic changes. The Great War has led to incredible technological advancements, but left international trade frayed, restructured national identities and left the world in an economic downturn.

Recently, fear of a communist uprising has spread through the US leading through widespread hysteria and panic. Persecution of supposed communist proponents by government officials and citizens has left the country divided by social and political views. In our efforts to preserve the integrity of the country, we must determine a balance between defending the security of the country and ensuring the rights of every citizen.

Historical Background

Communist Uprisings

The cause for American hysteria began in Russia as Czar Nicholas II left the capital of Petrograd to personally lead troops during the Great War.⁶² Despite having the largest army in the war, Russia's early battles resulted in massive losses, deteriorating both army morale and strength. While the czar was away, his wife, Alexandra was left to manage the affairs of the state. However, Alexandra's overreliance on advice from the mystic,

Rasputin, left the state in shambles.⁶³ Conditions continued to deteriorate as financial policies led to steep inflation, making it increasingly difficult for people to buy food despite a bountiful harvest. In October 1916, railroad workers in the Russian capital went on strike and troops were sent to put down the strike. However, the troops ended up joining the workers. Soon after, citizens waiting in a bread line stormed a bakery and police opened fire on them, galvanizing further unrest. Within days, the czar had lost the support of the military and was forced to hand over power to an interim government.⁶⁴

Following the establishment of an interim government, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known as Vladimir Lenin, returned from exile and quickly took control of the country.⁶⁵ His followers, the Bolsheviks, spent the coming months consolidating power by changing the capital to Moscow, suppressing rival factions and slowly withdrawing from the Great War. Many in the US were unhappy with Soviet Russia's departure, as it decreased the manpower and materials available to face Germany and its allies.⁶⁶ In addition, many Americans were shocked by the pugnacious and virulent nature of the uprising stirring fears of a similar scheme forming within the country.

⁶² *Grigory Rasputin*. Encyclopaedia Britannica.

⁶³ *Ibid*

⁶⁴ *Timeline of the Russian Revolution*. British Library.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*

⁶⁶ *Ibid*

Growing Radical Movement

Even before the communist uprisings in other countries, events were unfolding in the country that many considered subversive attempts by foreign and leftist elements to destabilize the country. In 1886, an explosion during the Haymarket riot in Chicago caused several deaths, over one hundred injured and resulted in the executions of four men that many believed were innocent.⁶⁷ Public outrage in the coming months was enormous. The so called, “anarchists” who set off the bomb were denounced by the media and the Knights of Labor who organized the original strike lost much of their credibility.⁶⁸ Fears of militant anarchists continued to rise in the following decades. In 1901, President McKinley was assassinated by a self-proclaimed anarchist. With many government officials believing the assassin, Leon Czolgosz, had acted in coordination with others, support for surveillance programs to monitor and neutralize national threats to security blossomed.⁶⁹ In 1908, many of these programs were consolidated into the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Around 1901, the Socialist Party of America was also formed, combining factions of trade unionists, progressivists, populists and immigrants.⁷⁰ Led by prominent figure, Eugene B. Debs, the group was constantly persecuted for its staunch opposition to The Great War, sympathy for communism which later mortally fractured the group, and refusal to form coalitions with other parties, leaving it socially isolated. Overall, growing radical leftist movements set the

⁶⁷ Linenberger, Melisa. *The Chicago Haymarket Riot and its Influence in American Labor*. Center for Sacramento History.

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Staff, HistoryNet. “President William McKinley: Assassinated by an Anarchist.” HistoryNet. HistoryNet, January 24, 2018. <https://www.historynet.com/president-william-mckinley-assassinated-by-an-anarchist.htm>.

stage for hysteria in the country following The Great War.⁷¹

Wilson’s Plan and Isolationism

As the Great War came to an end, President Woodrow Wilson envisioned a “world made safe for democracy.” President Wilson’s plan for a “League of Nations” where countries could meet to resolve differences peacefully was met with stiff opposition from American legislators who saw it as a gateway for foreign influence into American politics.⁷²

America’s entrance into the Great War was a deviation from decades of foreign policy best characterized as isolationist. During the 1800s, the U.S. sought to expand its influence over the Americas, fighting the War of 1812, the Mexican War and Spanish-American War, all without the help of European alliances or fighting on an European front. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 further demonstrated the American resolve to stay out of European affairs.⁷³ However, with newly acquired territories in the Pacific and Philippines and increased commerce in the Atlantic, the country found itself inevitably threatened in the face of rising European and Japanese expansionist ambitions. Following the war, the country was indignant at the loss of American troops and material and resumed an isolationist stance towards the rest of the world.⁷⁴

Post War Economy

Many soldiers returned home following the Great War to find a shrinking economy. This was due to a variety of factors. First, boosted production of wartime

⁷⁰ Barga, Michael. *The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor (1869-1949)*.

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² *President Wilson’s Fourteen Points*.

⁷³ “Monroe Doctrine.” *Office of the Historian*. United States Department of State.

⁷⁴ Bailey, Budd. *Red Scare: Communists in America*. New York, Cavendish Square Publishing.

goods and loss of manpower during the war brought many women into the workforce, but also temporarily raised the supply of available manpower by tapping into a new source.⁷⁵ Second, immigration resumed following the war and immigrants were immediately assimilated into jobs with low wages and low job security. Longtime citizens were alienated by the idea that new immigrants were hired while they remained jobless and increasingly suspicious of the immigrants that came from Eastern Europe, where communism was on the rise.⁷⁶ Unions had also formed since the American Civil War to protect workers' rights for higher pay, safer conditions and more benefits. During the war, many unions tabled their demands for higher pay as they were concerned asking for wage increases under a national emergency would be interpreted as unpatriotic.⁷⁷ However, when the war ended, international trade had effectively disintegrated, cutting deeply into profits for businesses and making it even more difficult for them to meet demands for higher wages. With tensions rising, business owners grew increasingly concerned that these post-war conditions would set up an ideal environment for a communist uprising.⁷⁸

Contemporary Conditions

Labor Strikes

In 1917, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) was established with the goal of spreading pro-government propaganda.⁷⁹ The Bureau of Investigation simultaneously bolstered these efforts by

leading raids against groups that were suspected of being against these efforts, including German American, union, and leftist organizations.⁸⁰ President Wilson sympathized with organized labor, and attempted to facilitate negotiation between workers and employers. However, official support ended when union actions disrupted the war effort.⁸¹

After the war ended, workers began to go on strike. Most unions focused on "bread and butter" issues of higher pay and shorter working hours. But many were also calling for a larger overhaul in the economic system, specifically for government control of private industries. Farmers, railroad workers, and coal miners all joined this movement.⁸² These protests came as a shock to traditional Americans who saw little need for labor unions. They feared that the strikes meant the United States faced the same revolutions that had just taken place in Russia, especially because Lenin himself had warned that the Bolshevik Revolution would spread to workers across the world.

Media Coverage

America's newspapers continually reinforced their readers' pro-American views and presented a negative attitude toward the Soviet Union and communism, with exaggerated headlines and weighted words to support the fear of an imminent threat.⁸³

Additionally, films similarly played into American fears of a Communist

⁷⁵ "Post-War Economies." New Articles RSS. Accessed December 1, 2019. https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/post-war_economies.

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ McNamara, R. *Committee on Public Information, America's WWI Propaganda Agency*. ThoughtCo.

⁸⁰ Lepore, Jill. *Eugene V. Debs and the Endurance of Socialism*. New York: The New Yorker.

⁸¹ Burnett, Paul. *The Red Scare*. Missouri: University of Missouri-Kansas City.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Schroeder, Christy, "Red Scare Propaganda in the United States: A Visual and Rhetorical Analysis." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2007.

https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_hontheses/2

uprising, with many featuring an idealistic American hero fighting left-wing agitators.⁸⁴

Past Action and Legislation

National and State Legislation

In order to suppress anti-war sentiments, Congress passed the Espionage Act in 1917 imposing stiff fines and prison sentences to any citizen who spread information intended to interfere with the U.S. armed forces prosecution of the war effort or to promote the success of the country's enemies.⁸⁵ A year later, the Sedition Act was passed, intensifying penalties against anti-war supporters.⁸⁶ Orchestrated heavily by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, the Act was aimed at stifling the opinions of leftists, socialists, pacifists and other anti-war activists. One of the most notable uses of the Sedition Act was the prosecution of Eugene B. Debs, a former presidential candidate and leader of the IWW (International Workers of the World).⁸⁷ After appealing his initial sentence, the case eventually reached the Supreme Court where Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes upheld the sentence by referencing *Schenck vs. United States*. Justice Holmes reaffirmed that freedom of speech and press could be constrained in certain instances, and that the question in every case is whether the words used are used "in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent."⁸⁸

Various states also passed legislation to stem the spread of communist ideals. In 1917, Minnesota, South Dakota, Oklahoma and California passed laws banning the presentation of red flags. California also passed a criminal syndicalism law which prevented radical individuals or groups

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ "The Espionage and Sedition Acts." Digital History. Accessed December 1, 2019. http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2.

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Lepore, Jill. *Eugene V. Debs and the Endurance of Socialism*. New York: The New Yorker.

⁸⁸ Ibid

from advocating via criminal or violent means. However, groups such as the IWW believe that this grossly infringes on citizens' First Amendment rights.⁸⁹

Committee on Public Information

The Committee on Public Information was created in 1917 to combat foreign spies and saboteurs, as well as bolster public opinion on the war effort.⁹⁰ Rather than censoring the press directly, George Creel, an aspiring magazine writer, proposed having the press voluntarily fed information from the government. Rather than feeding the public outrageous stories of German atrocities, the committee focused on American military's sacrifices to support freedom and democracy in the face of German barbarism.⁹¹ Throughout its time, however, the committee garnered heavy criticism for overstepping its boundaries. Creel, known for having a bad temper, often insulted members of Congress, had companies controlling transatlantic telegraph traffic divert cables to the CPI in Washington to be reviewed before they were routed to the press and was accused of trying to punish newspapers which had supported the war effort, but later grew doubtful of the manner in which the war was conducted.⁹² While the efforts of the committee were successful and public support increased in favor of the war, the group was ultimately disbanded as a result of rising controversy. The propaganda materials of the committee had a significant impact on minorities and is attributed to harassment and violence towards German-Americans as well as pro-communist citizens.⁹³

⁸⁹ Mineshima-Lowe, D. *Criminal Syndicalism Laws*.

⁹⁰ McNamara, R. *Committee on Public Information, America's WWI Propaganda Agency*. ThoughtCo.

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ McNamara, R. *Committee on Public Information, America's WWI Propaganda Agency*. ThoughtCo.

Questions a Resolution Must Address

1. *How can we protect the security of the country?*

How can we prevent bombings or uprisings in the future? How do we address pro-war/anti-war tensions?

2. *How can we address the post-war economy?*

How do we balance the needs of business owners and the working class? What should our response be for rising workers' unions? How do we repair the post war economy?

3. *Should America continue its isolationist policies?*

How do we safeguard our values as a country? Should we prioritize American interests or international interests? How about immigrant/minority interests?

4. *How can we protect the rights of the citizens?*

Are the Espionage and Sedition Acts constitutional? Are the raids and arrests constitutional? How should citizens be tried? Where do we draw the line regarding First Amendment rights?

5. *How will we address immigration policy?*

How can anti-immigrant sentiments be addressed? How can we prevent the persecution of immigrants?

6. *How will we address rising global communist influence?*

How will we engage in diplomacy with communist nations? What measures will be taken to curb the spread of communism?

Bloc Positions

- *Left Wing of Socialist Party*

These members became more united after the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. They made revolutionary socialism an important issue for many people in America and around the world.

- *Socialist Labor Party*

The socialist labor party was critical of the Soviet Union and reformism, becoming increasingly isolated from the Left Wing of the party. The party had always advocated the purest form of socialism as dictated by Marx.

- *Global Democrats*

These Democrats were concerned with maintaining democracy across the world. They supported repairing international relations and worked to prevent further global conflicts. They are opposed to isolationist policies. Many, but not all, within this bloc are supportive of Wilson's anti-socialist actions.

- *Isolationist Democrats*

These Democrats wish to focus on concerns at home. Many are sympathetic to the labor movement, particularly goals in favor of higher wages and shorter hours, but most do not support radical approaches to achieving these goals.

- *Republican: National Conservatives*

These Republicans are focused on returning to a state of normalcy. They support strong efforts to lessen public unrest, including, but not limited to, limitations on speech, restrictions on labor groups, and the observation of such suspicious groups.

- *Cautious Republicans*

This small group of Republicans is concerned that efforts to suppress socialist movements may be going too far. While they do not support radical action, or even necessarily the underlying goals, of some labor groups, they believe that suppression violates American values, and are thus critical of Wilson.

Conclusion

The aftermath of war has proven to be a difficult time for everyone involved. Concerns about the domestic economy and job security for the working class has given rise to many protests and general negativity towards the structure of the economic system. When combined with the conditions overseas following The Great War, and the spread of Bolshevism and communistic ideologies, the legitimate fear that the homefront may be where communism spawns next has caused a huge uproar. This has been made none more manageable by the media, who have exploited the chaos to create content targeted towards this hysteria and to propagate it.

This has given rise to multiple instances of radical activity, including bombings and other acts of violence, which

the US government has had to respond to by force. This is not the preferred method of conflict resolution by any means, especially considering President Wilson's desire to negotiate with representatives of the working class and come to mutually beneficial terms. These responses also further deteriorate the credibility of the government the longer they are employed. In order to restore order to the nation, it must first be ensured that the borders are indeed secure from external threat and influence. But, in conjunction with this, we must also sufficiently convince our constituency of the robustness of the American economy, which entails finding a compromise between the demands of our labor unions and a broader economic policy amidst the decline in exports that will lift us out of stagnation.

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