**Chapter 21**

America and the Great War

*Reviewing Objectives*

**A thorough study of Chapter Twenty-One should enable the student to understand:**

1. The background factors and the immediate sequence of events that caused the United States to declare war on Germany in 1917.
2. The contributions of the American military to Allied victory in World War I.
3. The extent of government control of the economy during World War I and the results of that control.
4. Propaganda and the extent of war hysteria in the United States during World War I.
5. The announced American objectives in fighting the war.
6. Woodrow Wilson’s successes and failures of Versailles.
7. The circumstances that led the United States to reject the Treaty of Versailles.
8. The economic problems the United States faced immediately after the war.
9. The reasons for the Red Scare and the upsurge of racial unrest in postwar America.

**Chapter 21**

**Pertinent Questions**

**The Road to War**

1. What “may have been” the most important underlying source of the tensions that led to World War I? What sparked the conflict? Which nations were referred to as the Allies? The Central Powers?
2. What considerations forced the United States out of its professed stance of true neutrality? To what degree was this decision based on economics?
3. Why did Germany rely on U-boats? Why did it back off early in the war from the unrestricted use of U-boats?
4. Before 1917, how did Wilson balance the demands for preparedness and the cries for peace? What effect did his position have on the 1916 election?
5. What key events early in 1917 combined to finally bring the United States fully into World War I? How much resistance remained?

**War Without Stint**

1. On what aspect of the war did American entry have the most immediate effect?
2. How did the United States raise the troops necessary for the massive war effort?
3. What roles did women and African-Americans play in the military? How were African-American troops treated?
4. What impact did the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) have on the ground war in Europe?
5. Describe the new military technologies that the two sides employed in WWI? What were the consequences of the new killing power?

**The War and American Society**

1. On what two methods did the Wilson administration depend to finance the war effort? How did the war cost compare with the typical peacetime budgets of that era?
2. Describe the role of the War Industries Board and the National War Labor Board. How successful were they? What implications did they have for the future of American politics?
3. On balance, what was the economic impact of the WWI era?
4. What was the “Great Migration” inspired by WWI? What was its impact?

**The Search for Social Unity**

1. What groups made up the peace movement prior to and, to a lesser extent, during WWI?
2. What tactics did the Committee on Public Information employ to propagandize the American people into unquestioning support of the war effort? In what other ways did the government suppress criticism? Who suffered most?
3. How did private acts of oppression supplement the official campaign to suppress diversity and promote unity? Who suffered most?

**The Search for a New World Order**

1. Into what three major categories did the Fourteen Points fall? How did the points reflect the ideas of progressivism?
2. What obstacles did Wilson face in getting the European leaders to accept his approach to peace? What domestic development weakened his position?
3. How did Wilson structure the American negotiating team in Paris?
4. Which of Wilson’s ideals were most directly challenged at Versailles? Why were the allies so insistent on reparations?
5. What consequences did American intervention in the Russian Civil War have on the course of the Russian Revolution and the future of Soviet-American relations?
6. What victories for his ideals was Wilson able to salvage? What, in Wilson’s view, was his key victory in the negotiations?
7. What were the arguments and motives of domestic opponents to the League of Nations? Who was the leading opponent in the Senate? How much of the blame for the treaty’s defeat should be laid on Wilson himself?

**A Society in Turmoil**

1. What happened to the American economy in the postwar years? Why?
2. What inspired the labor unrest of 1919? What were the most important strikes? What did the wave of strikes reveal about the labor movement?
3. Describe the nation’s postwar racial climate and its causes. Why did some black soldiers feel a sense of betrayal?
4. What inspired the Red Scare of 1919 to 1920? Was the threat real or imagined?
5. What did the results of the election of 1920 indicate about the mood of the American people?

**Patterns of Popular Culture: Bill Sunday and Modern Revivalism**

1. How did Bill Sunday combine fundamentalism with showmanship? What effect did WWI have on the revival movement?