

Summary: Americans and the War

The Home Front

Soldiers needed many things to fight World War I. The U.S. government created more supplies for soldiers by putting rations on civilian goods. For example, if people had meat rations, then more meat could be sent to the soldiers. The government used propaganda to remind people to help with the war.

Many men were in Europe, fighting the war. The factories needed new workers. Thousands of African Americans left the South to take factory jobs in the North. Women also took new jobs. Women worked in jobs that men normally did, such as making weapons and repairing cars. The work women did convinced many people that women should gain the right to vote. In 1920, women finally won that right.

The War Ends

In 1917, the United States joined the war. About one million American soldiers went to France. Finally, the Central Powers realized they could not win. They signed an armistice. The war ended in 1918.

In 1919, Allied leaders met in France to write a treaty. Some European leaders blamed Germany for the fighting in western Europe. These leaders used the Treaty of Versailles to punish Germany. The treaty forced Germany to give up its overseas colonies, give land to France, and pay money to Allied nations.

The treaty also created the League of Nations. President Wilson thought the League would help prevent war by solving problems peacefully. Forty-two nations joined the League. The United States did not. The Senate worried that the United States might get pulled into more wars if they joined.

Americans were upset by the deaths and destruction of World War I. They wanted the United States to stay out of world conflicts. They began to believe in isolationism.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

rations *noun*, limits on the amounts of goods civilians could have

propaganda *noun*, information that is used to shape people's thinking

armistice *noun*, an agreement to stop fighting

isolationism *noun*, a desire to stay out of world events

After You Read

REVIEW Which two groups of Americans took new jobs during World War I? Underline two sentences that tell the answer.

REVIEW What effect did the Treaty of Versailles have on Germany? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.