

ACTIVITIES

1. Why did Prime Minister Borden believe that conscription was necessary? Why were many people opposed to conscription?
2. Write a letter to the editor of the Toronto *Globe* from Henri Bourassa explaining why conscription was not good for the country.
3. In pairs, create two thumbnail election posters for the Khaki Election, for either political party. Aim your advertising at two of the following groups: soldiers, women, French-Canadians, English-Canadians.
4. Why do you think Borden did not allow conscientious objectors or recent Canadian immigrants from enemy countries to vote in the 1917 election? Why did he not give the vote to all women in 1917?
5. By 1917 Canadian soldiers were being used as "shock" troops, leading the attacks in battles. Imagine you are in the position of Robert Borden. Make a list of pros and cons for sending more troops.

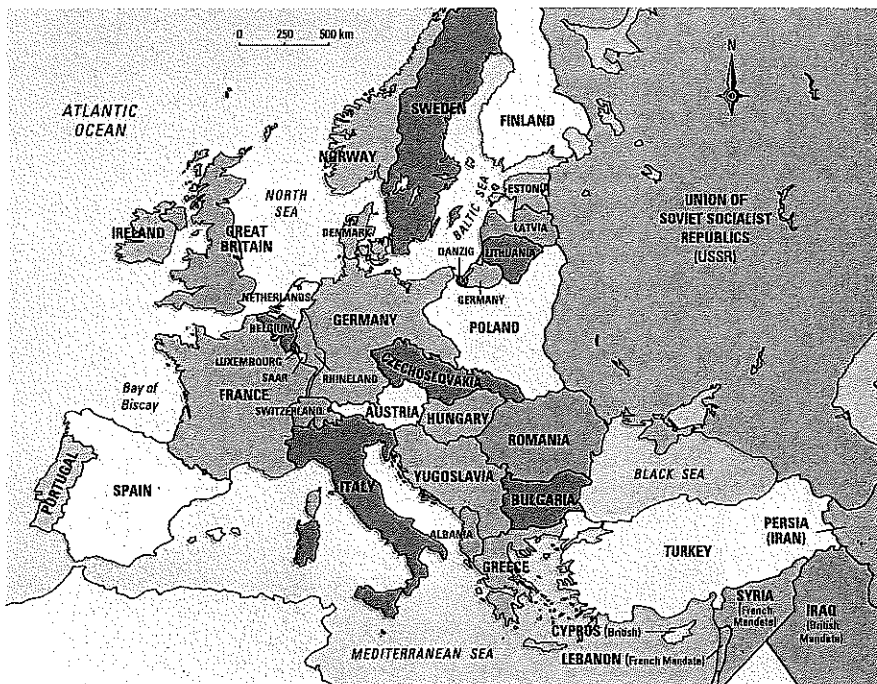
The Central Powers Collapse

Two important events in 1917 changed the direction of the war. First, Czar Nicholas of Russia was forced to abdicate in March of 1917 and a provisional Russian government was formed. Second, the United States, angered by the sinking of neutral ships and passenger liners such as the *Lusitania*, declared war on Germany on April 2. In October 1917, revolutionaries, called Bolsheviks, overthrew the provisional government in Russia and, promising the war-weary public "peace and bread," signed a peace treaty with Germany. This truce on the Eastern Front in early 1918 freed German troops for fighting on the Western Front. Germany moved to take advantage of its last chance at victory before large numbers of American troops reached France.

In a last desperate offensive, the German army struck at weak points in the enemy lines and succeeded in driving deep into France. Positions that had been won at great cost in lives were lost in weeks: Ypres, the Somme, Passchendaele, everything but Vimy Ridge. By the summer of 1918,

Figure 2-21 Europe in 1922.

Gathering information
Compare this map with the map of Europe in 1914, on page 22. Describe the changes in national borders, then list the names of the new countries created.



the new front line was only 75 km from Paris. But the Germans had exhausted themselves. They had no reserves, and without fresh troops, food, and supplies, they could not continue. The generals knew the war was over.

During the final months of the war, known as the “Hundred Days,” Canada’s offensives were among the most successful of all the Allied forces. Canadian troops, under the disciplined command of General Currie, broke through German lines and won important battles at Arras, Cambrai, and Valenciennes. The Central Powers collapsed one by one; the German Kaiser abdicated and fled to Holland. An **armistice**, or truce, was finally signed in a railway car in France, and the war ended at 11:00 a.m., November 11, 1918. An unfortunate Canadian was the last soldier to die on the Western Front—Private George Price was killed by a sniper’s bullet just a few minutes before the armistice.

Canada on the World Stage

After the signing of the armistice, the Allies and the new leadership of Germany met in Paris to discuss the terms of a peace agreement. Prime Minister Borden fought successfully for Canada to have its

own seat at the **Paris Peace Conference**, and not simply be represented by Britain. He also insisted that he be included among those leaders who signed the **Treaty of Versailles**, the document that eventually set out the terms of the peace agreement in 1919. American President Woodrow Wilson had proposed, early in 1918, a fourteen-point plan for peace that emphasized forgiveness, but the French and Belgian leaders wanted compensation from Germany for the damage their countries suffered during the war. They insisted in the 1919 conference that:

- ❖ Germany had to agree to a war “guilt clause,” meaning that the country had to accept responsibility for causing the war.
- ❖ Germany had to pay war reparations totalling about \$30 billion.
- ❖ The map of Europe was to be redrawn, reducing Germany’s territory and dividing it into two parts so that the newly independent Poland would have a corridor to the sea.
- ❖ The German army was to be restricted to 100 000 men; the nation was not to be allowed U-boats or an air force.

The reparation terms were particularly harsh. After the war, Germany’s economy, like that of



Figure 2-22 The first Remembrance Day parade.

Identifying

viewpoint How do you think these women felt about their sacrifice? Give reasons for your view.

other European countries, was in ruins so it was unable to meet the payments. It also greatly resented the guilt clause, a fact that would come back to haunt the world twenty years later.

* Participating in Peace

Prime Minister Borden also fought hard to have Canada become a member of the newly formed League of Nations. The League of Nations was the brainchild of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. It was established by the Treaty of Versailles.

The League was made up of many nations throughout the world and was based on the principle of **collective security**. If one member state of the League came under attack, all members were to cooperate in suppressing the aggressor.

The idea of a League of Nations was not welcomed by the great powers. Britain and France had doubts about such an organization. They wanted the freedom to pursue their imperialist

ambitions. But their leaders realized that Wilson's proposal had good propaganda value—it would gain them publicity and support. As a result, they agreed to the basic concept, in principle at least. Smaller nations, always concerned about becoming victims of the great powers, eagerly looked forward to a new era of peace.

* The League's Limitations

Unfortunately, the League of Nations proved to be more an idealistic vision than a practical solution to world problems. It required the nations of the world to cooperate with one another, which was not something they had done very well in the past. The League could punish an aggressive nation by imposing economic **sanctions** against it, thus restricting trade with the offending nation, but the League had no military force of its own to impose its decisions upon aggressor nations.

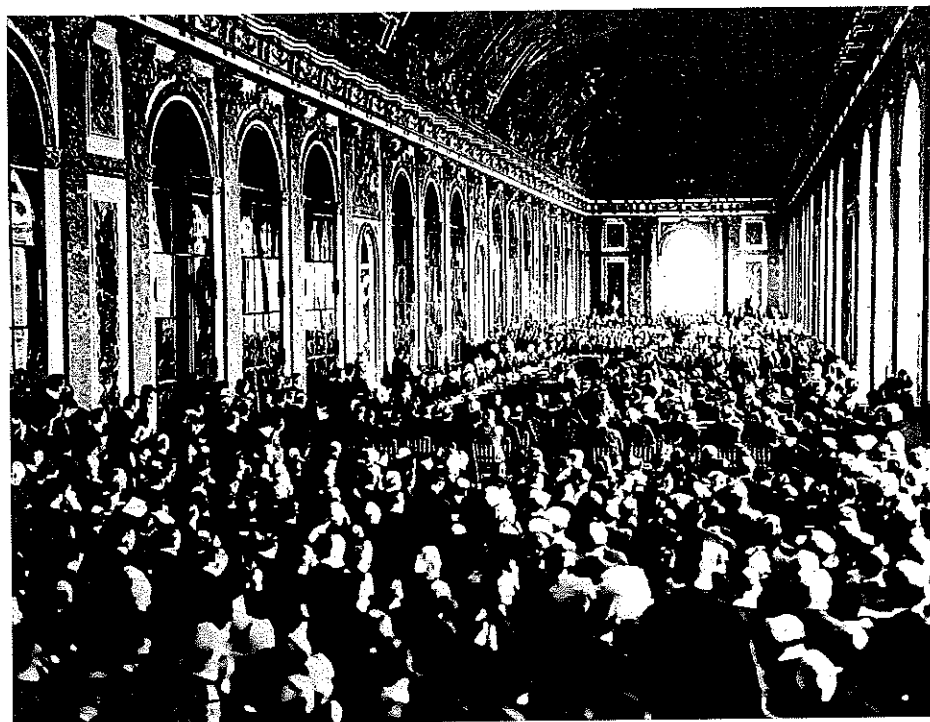


Figure 2-23 Leaders from around the world gathered in Versailles, outside Paris, to negotiate a peace agreement, which became known as the Treaty of Versailles.

Ironically, the Americans refused to join the League of Nations, even though their own president was responsible for its creation. Wilson had powerful opponents who rejected the principle of collective security. During a heated debate on the issue, the president became ill. Half paralyzed by a stroke, he could no longer campaign for a vote in favour of the United States joining the League, and the motion was defeated. The refusal of the United States to join the League greatly undermined its effectiveness to resolve disputes in the years after World War I.



The Aftermath of War

The armistice of November 11, 1918, did not end people's suffering. During the winter of 1918–1919, people went hungry across large areas of Europe, their crops and transportation systems ruined. At the same time a deadly influenza virus (known as the Spanish Flu) swept across Europe, killing millions, and many returning soldiers carried the virus to North America. Young people

were especially susceptible to the virus, which caused the deaths of an estimated 22 million people worldwide, more than the war itself. From 1918 to 1920, approximately 50 000 Canadians died during the epidemic. Schools and public places were closed for months in an effort to stop the spread of the virus, and in some communities, Canadians were required to wear breathing masks in public.

ACTIVITIES

1. With a partner, prepare briefing notes for the Canadian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference. Emphasize Canada's status as a nation, its contributions to the war, and the costs of the war to Canada.
2. Write a medical bulletin on the Spanish Flu of 1918 to be circulated as a warning to all communities and to all Canadian military bases.
3. Research the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Make a PMI chart on the treaty's terms and their possible consequences.

Figure 2-24 After the devastation of World War I, conditions were right for the flu virus to spread rapidly.

Developing understanding Why are these people wearing masks?

