

REVIEW OF THE WORLD WAR AND OTHER HISTORY MAKING EVENTS OF YEAR 1917

Entrance of United States into Conflict Outstanding Development of Past Twelve Months—Political Upheaval in Russia Affects Struggle—British and French Smash Teuton Lines on West Front—Austro-Germans Launch Drive Against Italy.

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THE WORLD WAR.

After three and a half years of the most sanguinary fighting in history, the great nations of the world, together with many of the smaller ones, are still at death grips, with less prospect of an early peace than was thought to exist a year ago.

Undoubtedly the greatest development of the year was the entrance of the United States of America into the conflict. The throwing of the tremendous resources and man power of the American republic into the balance on the side of the entente allies, in the opinion of military experts, has more than off-set the advantages gained by Germany and her allies during the past twelve months and has made possible the continuance of the conflict until a time when a definite military decision can be obtained.

There have been a half dozen or more outstanding events in the past year. Some of these have been of purely military significance and others have been occurrences of a political nature which have had a far-reaching effect upon the military conflict.

Chief among the political upheavals of the year was the Russian revolution which resulted in the overthrow of Czar Nicholas and culminated during the closing months of the year in a counter-revolution which practically eliminated Russia from the ranks of the nations opposed to the central powers. From a military standpoint the chief events of the year have been the launching of the German ruthless submarine campaign, which was directly responsible for the entry of the United States into the war; the British offensives on the west front, first in the Arras sector, later in Flanders and still later on the 35-mile front between Arras and St. Quentin; the Italian offensive against Austria from Tolmino to the Adriatic and the subsequent offensive of the Germans and Austrians against Italy, which resulted in the overrunning of northern Italy by the Teutonic allies.

The entry of China, Cuba, Brazil, Siam and other countries into the war on the side of the entente allies, the overthrow of King Constantine of Greece on the demand of France and her allies and other events important in themselves were overshadowed by the greater developments of the year.

American Peace Effort Fails.

As the year opened the only military movements of importance in progress were those aimed by Germany and her allies to complete the annihilation of Roumania and attention was centered upon the request that had been made by President Wilson that the various belligerent nations state the terms upon which peace might be discussed. The replies seemed to preclude any further action by the United States as a peacemaker, but on January 22 President Wilson in an address before the senate laid down the principles which he declared should guide the United States in participating in a league to enforce peace at the close of the present war.

On January 31, Germany announced the inauguration of ruthless submarine warfare.

President Wilson acted promptly, severing diplomatic relations with Germany on February 3.

The Cunard liner Laconia was sunk without warning off the Irish coast February 25 with the loss of 13 lives, including those of two American women.

On February 28, it was announced that the United States government was in possession of a communication addressed by the German foreign minister to the German minister at Mexico City, instructing him to propose an alliance between Germany and Mexico, and to suggest that as soon as war with the United States was certain, the president of Mexico communicate with Japan, offering to mediate between Japan and Germany. As a reward Mexico was promised general financial support from Germany and the reconquest of lost territory in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

The United States department of state announced, March 12, that it had determined to place armed guards upon all American merchant vessels sailing through the German war zone. March 14, it was learned that the American steamship Algonquin had been sunk without warning by a German submarine. On the same day China severed diplomatic relations with Germany and seized German merchant ships in the harbor at Shanghai.

Czar Nicholas Dethroned.

On March 15, the Russian revolutionary movement, which had begun with food riots and strikes, culminated in the abdication of Czar Nicholas both for himself and his son. Pending the meeting of a constituent assembly the government was vested in the executive committee of the Duma and a newly chosen council of ministers with Prince Lvoff as premier.

The German forces on the west front, on March 17, began a general retirement on a front of 85 miles from south of Arras to Soissons, falling

back to new lines which had been prepared.

The relations between Germany and the United States were further strained March 18 by the receipt of reports of the sinking of three American steamers, the City of Memphis, Illinois and Vigilance, fifteen of the latter's crew being lost.

On March 21, President Wilson issued a proclamation calling congress in special session on April 2.

The American steamer Hauldton was torpedoed without warning, March 22, 21 men including seven Americans, being lost.

United States Declares War.

On April 2, President Wilson appeared before a joint session of congress and called for a declaration of a state of war with Germany. On April 4, the senate passed a resolution declaring the existence of a state of war. The resolution was adopted by the house of representatives April 6 and was signed by the president the same day. At the same time 91 German-owned vessels in American ports were seized by the government. Cuba declared war on Germany on April 7. The following day, Austria-Hungary severed diplomatic relations with the United States.

The British forces on the west front began the first great offensive of 1917 on April 9, penetrating the enemy positions north and south of Arras to a depth of from two to three miles.

The French forces launched an offensive against the enemy on a 25-mile front between Soissons and Reims, April 16, and after three days' fighting reported the capture of more than 17,000 prisoners.

The first American casualties in the war were reported April 28, when the armed American tank steamer Vacuum was sunk by a submarine and several American gunners were lost.

American Fleet in Action.

It was learned on May 16, that a squadron of American destroyers under Rear Admiral Sims had safely crossed the Atlantic and had been patrolling the seas in war service since May 4.

The United States army draft bill became a law May 18 when President Wilson affixed his signature to the measure and issued a proclamation fixing June 5 as registration day.

During the early part of June growing unrest in Russia began to attract the attention of the allies. On June 1, workmen and soldiers seized Kronstadt, the Russian fortress defending Petrograd, and repudiated the provisional government. On June 3, the American commission to Russia, headed by Elihu Root, and the American railroad commission, headed by John F. Stevens, arrived safely at Russian ports. On June 7, the Russians in possession of Kronstadt yielded to negotiations and recognized the provisional government.

In the meantime the American preparations for the war were proceeding rapidly. On June 5, nearly 10,000,000 men of military age registered for military service under the selective draft law.

On June 8, Major General John J. Pershing, who had been selected to head the American expeditionary forces in France, arrived with his staff in London. On the same day Washington reported the safe arrival in France of 100 American aviators, the first American fighting forces to reach that country.

King Constantine Dethroned.

A solution of the Greek situation, which had endangered the operations of the allies in the Balkans, was reached June 12 when on the demand of France, Great Britain and Russia, King Constantine abdicated in favor of his second son, Prince Alexander, who was known to be favorably inclined toward the allies. London reported another big raid by Zeppelins on June 13, in which 157 persons were killed and many injured.

The subscriptions to the first American Liberty loan closed June 15, the loan being oversubscribed by \$750,000,000.

On June 26, it was announced that the first contingent of American troops, under command of Major General Sibert, had arrived safely in France.

The new Greek cabinet, headed by Eleutherios Venizelos, went into office on June 27 and two days later the new government severed diplomatic relations with Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey.

On the first of July, the Russian forces, under the personal leadership of War Minister Kerensky, electrified the allies by launching a powerful offensive on an 18-mile front in Galicia, capturing many strongly fortified towns and taking thousands of prisoners. For two weeks the Russians continued to advance along a front that widened to 100 miles, but on July 19 the Russian offensive collapsed and turned into a rout, when many Russian regiments mutinied and fled. Kerensky succeeded Prince Lvoff as premier of Russia on July 20.

The first political crisis in the German cabinet during the war resulted on July 14 in the resignation of Chancel-

lor von Bethmann-Hollweg and the appointment as his successor of Dr. Georg Michaelis. On July 22, Siam declared war against Germany, and Austria-Hungary, bringing the number of the allied nations to sixteen.

British Launch Great Offensive.

The British launched their second great offensive of the year on the Flanders front on July 31, attacking on a 20-mile front from Dixmude to Warneton, after three weeks of intense artillery preparation. The British forced their way into the German lines to a depth of two to two and a half miles, taking ten villages and more than 5,000 prisoners.

Pope Benedict, on August 14, transmitted peace proposals to all belligerent and neutral governments.

The Italian forces opened a grand offensive on August 19, attacking on a front 40 miles long from Tolmino to the Adriatic sea. On August 25, the Italians captured Monte Santo, an Austrian stronghold on the Isonzo front. Two more nations entered the war on the side of the allies in August. Liberia declaring war on Germany August 7, and China declaring war on both Germany and Austria-Hungary August 14. On August 28, President Wilson's reply to the peace proposals of Pope Benedict was made public. It declared that "we cannot take the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure, unless explicitly supported by such conclusive evidence of the will and purpose of the German people themselves as the other peoples of the world would be justified in accepting."

Other allied governments later adopted President Wilson's note as their own reply to the pope. Early in September the Italians continued to make progress in their drive on the Isonzo front, announcing on September 1 the capture of 14 strongly fortified mountains, causing an 11-mile breach in the Austrian lines and resulting in the capture of 27,000 prisoners.

Chaos Threatens in Russia.

Conditions in Russia grew more chaotic during the month of September. General Korniloff, commander in chief of the Russian armies, on September 10 demanded that all civil and military powers be placed in his hands. Premier Kerensky immediately deposed General Korniloff and civil war threatened as Korniloff, at the head of a large force of troops, marched on Petrograd. The rebellion collapsed, however, on September 13 when General Korniloff agreed to surrender to General Alexieff, chief of staff of the Russian army.

The first American casualties in France were announced on September 4, when four Americans were killed in a German raid on American hospitals in France. America's war preparations were continued rapidly, the first contingent of five per cent of the new National army arriving at their cantonments September 5. The replies of Germany and Austria-Hungary to Pope Benedict's peace proposals were made public September 21. They accepted the pope's offer as a basis for the beginning of negotiations, but made no definite concessions.

Italians Driven Back.

The great Austro-German offensive against the Italians was launched along the Isonzo front October 24, and within ten days the Teuton forces had retaken all the territory won by the Italians in two months' fighting and had overrun all of northern Italy. The United States began to take a more active part in the fighting during October, the first American troops going into the first line trenches in France on October 23. On October 17 the American transport, Antilles, returning from France, was torpedoed and sunk, with a loss of 67 lives. The second American Liberty loan of \$3,000,000,000 closed October 27 with an oversubscription of nearly \$2,000,000,000. Several more South American nations took a decided stand in favor of the allies in October. Peru broke off diplomatic relations with Germany October 6 and Uruguay took similar action the following day. On October 26 Brazil declared the existence of a state of war with Germany.

There were evidences of internal disturbances in Germany during the month, a mutiny of German sailors at Ostend being reported October 18. On October 30 Count George von Hertling was made imperial chancellor of Germany. Chancellor Michaelis having resigned.

On the sea the chief event of the month was the sinking by two German raiders of two British destroyers and 12 Scandinavian merchantmen they were conveying in the North sea on October 17. On October 31 the American transport Finland, returning from France, was struck by a torpedo, and eight men were killed.

Italians Stop Invaders.

Big events crowded fast upon each other during the month of November. The Italians, after reforming their lines back of the Tagliamento river, were forced to execute a further retreat, falling back to the Piave river. The Italians, re-enforced by British and French armies, which reached the Italian front November 25, withstood repeated attacks launched by the Austro-German forces, holding their lines at all points along the Piave. On November 20 the British opened the greatest offensive of the year on the west front between St. Quentin and the Scarpe. In a surprise attack, begun without the usual artillery preparation, the British infantry under General Byng, headed by a large force of tanks, smashed through the Hindenburg line toward Cambrai, taking many towns and thousands of prisoners. Russia was thrown into civil war during the month by a counter-revolution by means of which the bolsheviks, under the leadership of M. Lenin, seized the government at Petrograd on

November 9. Premier Kerensky fled from Petrograd, and other members of the cabinet of the provisional government were arrested. On November 10 the rebel government made Lenin premier. Kerensky, at the head of a body of loyal Cossack troops, attacked Petrograd November 12, but was badly defeated. The bolsheviks were apparently in full control of Russia by November 22, when the Lenin government proposed a general armistice to all belligerents.

American troops on the west front suffered their first casualties on November 3 when German troops raided a salient held by the Americans, killing three, wounding five and taking 12 prisoners. On November 5 the American patrol boat Alcedo was sunk by a torpedo and 21 were lost.

During the last days of November and the early part of December the Germans made determined efforts to regain some of the territory captured by the British around Cambrai but the British held a large portion of the ground taken, inflicting heavy losses on the Germans. The Austro-German forces began a new offensive in Italy early in December, forcing the Italian lines back for a distance of several miles at some points.

Early in December it was announced that a large number of national guard troops from the United States had arrived in France, units from every state being included. On December 7, the United States congress declared the existence of a state of war with Austria-Hungary. The following day it was announced that the American destroyer Jacob Jones had been sunk by a German submarine with a loss of 64 men.

The Russian situation was further complicated by a new revolt against the bolshevik government launched by Generals Kaledines and Korniloff, Cossack leaders.

British, French and Italian troops on December 10, captured Jerusalem, which for 673 years has been under the undisputed sway of the Moslems.

On December 16, it was announced that Russian and Teuton emissaries had signed a four-weeks' armistice, one provision of which was that peace negotiations should begin immediately.

THE WAR CONGRESS

The first "war session" of the Sixty-fifth congress which opened on April 2, was the most momentous session in the history of the United States up to that time.

The first war bill passed by congress was one authorizing the issuance of bonds to an amount not exceeding \$5,000,000,000 and authorizing the secretary of the treasury to purchase securities of governments at war with Germany to the amount of \$3,000,000,000.

The army conscription act was passed by the house April 28 by a vote of 397 to 24 and by the senate on May 1 by a vote of 81 to 8.

The first big war appropriation bill, carrying appropriations aggregating \$3,281,094,541.60 for the army and navy, was passed in the house May 2 with one opposing vote and in the senate May 19 without a roll call.

The measure known as the espionage act, intended to prevent disloyal acts on the part of residents of the United States and also containing provisions giving the president power to place an embargo on exports, was signed by the president June 15.

A bill appropriating \$640,000,000 for the development of the air service was passed without a record vote by the senate on June 18 and by the house on June 28.

The food control act, under which broad powers were given to the president for the regulation of the sale of food and fuel, was passed in the house June 23 by a vote of 365 to 5 and in the senate July 21 by a vote of 81 to 6.

The second great bond issue act, authorizing the issuance of bonds to the amount of \$7,538,945,640 and war savings certificates to the amount of \$2,000,000,000, was passed in the house September 6 and in the senate September 15.

The revenue act, first introduced in the house May 9, was passed by the house May 23, but was not passed by the senate until September 10. The conference report was accepted October 2. The measure provides for the raising of nearly \$3,000,000,000 annually, largely from income and excess profits taxes.

The second big war appropriations act, carrying a total of \$3,356,696,016.93, including \$635,000,000 additional for the emergency shipping fund, was approved by the president October 6.

The second session of the war congress opened December 3, and the following day President Wilson delivered a message declaring that nothing will turn the United States aside from its task until the war is won.

During December both houses of congress opened far-reaching investigations into the war preparations of the war and navy departments.

DISASTERS ON LAND AND SEA

The year 1917 was marked by many disasters on land and sea, aside from those resulting from the land and naval operations of the countries at war. Thousands of lives were lost and millions of dollars worth of property was destroyed by fires, explosions, earthquakes, tornadoes and other destructive agencies in all parts of the world.

On January 5, an earthquake in Formosa caused the death of 300 persons. On January 25, an earthquake killed 50 persons on Bali Island, Malay archipelago.

On February 2, an explosion and fire in a Chicago tenement killed 25, (con-

tinued) February 3, 30 were killed and 344 hurt in a ship explosion at Archangel. On the same day an explosion at Yokohama killed 100. On February 21, the British transport Mendi was sunk in a collision, 625 South African laborers being lost.

On March 11, a tornado in east central Indiana killed more than 20 persons and on March 23, 38 were killed and more than 200 injured when a tornado wrecked part of the city of New Albany, Ind.

Explosions in a Russian ammunition plant near Chester, Pa., killed 112 persons April 10. An explosion in the Hastings mine near Ludlow, Colo., April 27, caused a loss of 119 lives.

May 22, the city of Gyonyoes, Hungary, was devastated by fire. Thirty lives were lost and great damage was done by a storm in Kansas May 25 and the following day tornadoes in central Illinois killed 150 persons and destroyed property worth millions of dollars. May 29, many persons were killed in tornadoes in southern Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Arkansas.

San Salvador, capital of Salvador, and a number of surrounding towns were partially destroyed by volcanic eruption, earthquake and fire June 7. More than 150 men perished in a blazing mine at Butte, Mont., June 9. Thirteen were killed and many injured when a water tank fell on the steamer Christopher Columbus at Milwaukee, Wis., June 30.

A Niagara Gorge trolley car plunged into the rapids, July 1, and 28 were killed. A mine explosion at New Waterford, Cape Breton, killed 62 men on July 25.

A mine explosion at Clay, Ky., caused the loss of 31 lives on August 4. Nineteen were lost when the British steamer City of Athens, carrying missionaries to Africa, was sunk by a floating mine on August 10. Eighteen were killed in a trolley car collision near North Branford, Conn., August 13. On August 18, a disastrous fire swept Saloniki, Greece, destroying a large part of the city.

Many persons were killed in a typhoon and flood at Tokio, October 2, and a thousand persons were reported drowned in great floods in Natal, South Africa, October 28.

About 1,200 persons were killed and millions of dollars worth of property destroyed December 6 by an explosion and fire which followed a collision in the harbor at Halifax, N. S., between Mont Blanc, a French munition ship, and the Imo, laden with supplies for the Belgian Relief Commission.

INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC

Industrial unrest was apparent in the United States throughout 1917, largely as a result of war conditions and in spite of efforts made by the government, aided by leaders of organized labor, to prevent strikes which would delay the nation's war preparations.

Early in the year a nation-wide strike of the skilled railroad employees, which had been averted in 1916 by the passage of the Adamson law, providing indirectly for an increase in wages, was again threatened, owing to the fact that the placing of the Adamson law in operation was delayed pending a decision by the United States Supreme court on its validity. The threatened strike was averted March 18 by the capitulation of the railroad managers. On the following day the United States Supreme court handed down a decision holding the Adamson law constitutional.

Serious troubles were precipitated in the Arizona copper fields July 1 when the miners struck. Disorders were reported from several points and on July 12 the people of Bigbee, Ariz., deported 1,200 members of the Industrial Workers of the World, who it was charged had fomented the strikes in the copper mines. On July 31, 32 I. W. W. leaders were deported from Gallup, N. M. On August 1, Frank Little, I. W. W. leader, who had been prominent in the Arizona troubles, was lynched at Butte, Mont., where he had gone to take part in a strike of miners and where he was alleged to have made speeches attacking the government.

A serious tie-up of all shipbuilding plants in the country was threatened in August and September. Machinists and boiler-makers in Eastern shipyards went on strike August 21 and 25,000 skilled mechanics and other workmen struck in San Francisco September 17. On September 20, President Wilson named a commission, headed by Secretary of Labor Wilson and representing both employers and employees, to act as his personal representatives in allaying labor troubles during the war. The strike in the San Francisco shipyards was ended September 26 through the efforts of the government mediators.

Leaders of organized labor in the United States took a decided stand throughout the year in support of the government preparations for war and against antiwar propaganda. At the annual meeting of the American Federation of Labor in Buffalo in November, union labor pledged its solid support to the government in the prosecution of the war.

The railroads of the country faced another crisis during the closing months of the year when demands were made by the four brotherhoods for wage increases averaging 40 per cent, affecting directly and indirectly, approximately 2,000,000 railroad employees.

Labor troubles of the year were closely allied with economic developments, growing out of the increased cost of living in the United States. In order to prevent further increases in prices government regulation of many industries was undertaken as a war

measure. On May 10, President Wilson selected Herbert C. Hoover, chairman of the Belgian relief commission, as head of a food control board, and later, on August 11, following the passage by congress of a food-control bill, Mr. Hoover was made food administrator. On August 21, President Wilson issued an order fixing the basic prices for bituminous coal in the producing districts of the country. On August 23, President Wilson appointed Dr. H. A. Garfield fuel administrator for the United States. On August 30 the United States wheat committee fixed the basic price for the 1917 crop at \$2.20 a bushel.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

The Danish West Indies, purchased from Denmark for \$25,000,000, passed under the jurisdiction of the United States January 27, and were renamed the Virgin Islands.

Serious race riots in East St. Louis, Mo., July 2, resulted in the killing of more than 20 negroes and two white men and a heavy property loss by fire. The riots were followed by prosecutions by state officials and a congressional investigation.

Soldiers of the Twenty-fourth U. S. Infantry (colored) started a race riot at Houston, Tex., August 23, resulting in the death of 15 whites and several negroes.

Interest in the general elections on November 6 was centered in New York and Chicago, where Socialist tickets were defeated by large majorities. Judge Hylan, Democratic nominee, was elected mayor of New York over fusion, Republican and Socialist candidates.

In Milwaukee, Wis., November 23, ten policemen and a woman were killed by the explosion of a bomb found in a church and taken to police headquarters.

Thirteen negroes, convicted by court martial of participating in the race riots at Houston, Tex., August 23, were hanged at San Antonio, December 11. Forty-one others were given life sentences.

The house of representatives, on December 17, adopted a resolution, already adopted by the senate, submitting to the states a constitutional amendment for national prohibition.

MEXICO AND UNITED STATES

The friction between the United States and Mexico, which had threatened for two years or more to result in open warfare, began to disappear early in 1917 and when the attention of the people of the United States was focused upon more important matters by the entrance of the United States into the world war, the Mexican "crisis" faded from the public view.

Despite the failure of negotiations with the Carranza government President Wilson ordered the withdrawal of the American troops from Mexico and on February 5, General Pershing and his troops marched out of Mexico after having been in that country almost a year.

On March 11, General Carranza was formally elected president of Mexico. From this time on conditions in Mexico became more tranquil and there were evidences that President Carranza was succeeding in restoring order in the republic. It was not until late in the year that Villa again became active. On November 13, troops led by Villa's aids, captured Ojinaga, on the American border, after a hard fight. Several hundred Carranza soldiers fled across the border and were interned in the United States.

POLITICS IN FOREIGN LANDS

A spirit of unrest was apparent in many widely separated countries in 1917, leading in some cases to revolution and civil war. The revolution in Russia, resulting in the abdication of Czar Nicholas and the forced abdication of King Constantine of Greece were events closely allied with the war. Disturbances in China, including an attempt to restore the monarchy, were influenced partly by the war. Conditions in China were unsettled until June 30, when under the influence of monarchists, Hsuan Tung, Manchou emperor, announced his resumption of the throne of China. Civil war immediately broke out and on July 10 the attempt to restore the monarchy collapsed. On July 13 the monarchist army, led by Chang Hsun, surrendered after a battle at Peking. The republican government was firmly established again and later declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Civil war in Cuba threatened to disrupt that country during the early months of the year. The rebels were badly defeated in several engagements and on March 7, Gomez, their leader, was captured. The rebellion was stamped out quickly after the capture of Gomez.

Great Britain continued to wrestle with the Irish problem throughout the year. The Irish nationalists, on March 7, demanded immediate home rule and marched out of the house of commons in a body. On July 25 a convention proposed by Premier Lloyd George and representing all factions in Ireland met for the purpose of drafting a home rule constitution for Ireland.

Some misunderstandings between the United States and Japan over far Eastern matters were cleared away by the signing by diplomatic representatives of the two countries on November 2 of an agreement by which the United States recognizes the fact that Japan has special interests in China because of its proximity but guaranteeing the territorial integrity of China and the maintenance of the open door policy in that country.

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