Section 5: Searching for Peace

Making a Peace
- Paris Peace Conference – January 1919, leaders from 27 nations
- European landscape, farms, and towns destroyed, huge loss of life
- estimate of 9 million killed worldwide in WWI
- Europe faced social and political turmoil: homelessness, widespread hunger, revolutions, civil war in Russia

Wilson’s Fourteen Points
- Wilson’s vision of a just and lasting peace outlined in his Fourteen Points
- national self-determination (the right of the people to decide how they should be governed) as a focal point
  - adjusting boundaries in Europe
  - creating new nations
  - number of principles for conducting international relations (We went over a number of these in class, some of which are below. They are not in the book.):
    - free trade
    - freedom of the seas
    - spread of democracy (as learned about in class; not in book)
    - international organization to help keep the peace
    - return of Alsace-Lorraine to France

League of Nations
- Goal: preserve peace and prevent future wars by respecting and protecting one another’s independence
- Europeans first welcomed the idea of the League of Nations, but problems arose when nations put their own interests first.

The Allies Disagree
- Germany and Russia left out of peace talks
- The Big Four participated: U.S. (President Woodrow Wilson), Great Britain (Prime Minster David Llloyd George), France (Georges Clemenceau), and Italy (Prime Minister Vittorio Orlando)
- Europeans were not interested in Wilson’s Fourteen Points
- Wilson did not want to punish the defeated nations; Europeans wanted revenge.
- Lloyd George and Clemenceau wanted Germany to pay reparations for the damage caused.
- Wilson forced to compromise with the other Allies

The Treaty of Versailles
- June 28, 1919 – Treat of Versailles was signed
- Treaty dealt harshly with the Germans
Germany had to pay billions to the Allies, disarm completely, give up its overseas colonies and some European territory
- new nations were created and old nations were restored out of the old empires
- League of Nations included in the treaty

**Opposition at Home**
- many Americans had doubts about the Treaty of Versailles
- some thought it dealt too harshly with Germany
- some worried that it permanently committed the U.S. to the affairs of Europe
- Republicans controlled the Senate in 1919
- Some Republicans wanted to embarrass President Wilson by not ratifying the Treaty of Versailles. Others viewed the ratification of the treaty as a chance to weaken the Democrat Party before the upcoming elections of 1920.

**Henry Cabot Lodge, Senator from Massachusetts**
- head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- longtime foe of President Wilson
- did not want the U.S. ordered to war by an international organization
- proposed changes that would limit America’s obligations

**The Treaty is Rejected**
- Treaty of Versailles was rejected in the Senate.
- U.S. signed a separate peace treaty with each of the Central Powers.
- U.S. never joined the League of Nations.