



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on November 11, 2009

Veterans Day

Veterans Day was once Armistice Day. This holiday once celebrated not our brave fighting men and women but rather the end of one of the most dramatic testaments to the true horror of war.

We, today, cannot even begin to grasp how monstrous “The Great War” was to mankind. That war, which began in 1914 and ended with Armistice Day in November 1918, had everything to do with the old imperial ambitions of European nations and nothing to do with the new promise of America.

The sheer scale of slaughter dwarfed anything men had ever seen, including the mass murders of the Mongols, Assyrians, and Aztecs or the fratricidal bloodbath of the American Civil War. In battles like the Somme, tens of thousands of soldiers were mowed down in a matter of hours. Other battles, like the long siege of Verdun, cost France and Germany each over one quarter of a million men dead — or more deaths in battle than America suffered in the entire Second World War.



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In many respects, the First World War portended the end of the hope that modern technology and production alone would bring a new era of earthly bliss. Industrial production was used to build warplanes, tanks, machine guns, barbed wire, and poison gas. The mass production of food allowed millions of soldiers to wallow in mud and muck for years. Mass communication allowed propaganda to trump reason and decency.

The First World War showed mankind the model for mass extermination of entire people and races as the Turks vented their wrath on Armenian Christians, shoving women and children into stifling boxcars for a slow death in the desert and simply shooting all the men. Without the First World War, we would have had no Bolshevik Revolution, no National Socialist Revolution, and no Fascist March on Rome, no Spanish Civil War, and no Second World War.

But as bad as the Great War itself was — which is why so many nations around the world celebrate Armistice Day or Remembrance Day — even worse for our nation was the perverse action of our very worst President, our first Progressive President, Woodrow Wilson when he brought America into the Great War. Claimed falsely as a war to “make the world safe for democracy,” all the Great War, the Armistice, and the Treaty of Versailles did was make the world ripe for totalitarianism.



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In 1917, all any decent man imbued with Judeo-Christian moral principles could have wanted out of the carnage in Europe would have been peace — peace as soon as possible, under almost any terms possible. Every major power had already “lost” the Great War. A whole generation of Frenchmen had been killed or maimed. The Russian Empire, which had been the fastest growing economy in the world until then, was plunged into deprivation that made someone like Lenin thinkable as a new Tsar. The peoples of Germany and Britain wanted peace much more than vengeance or empire by 1917.

Wilson, who barely won reelection on the slogan “He kept us out of war,” was barely inaugurated for a second term when he asked Congress to declare war on Germany. So millions of American boys, like my grandfather, crossed the Atlantic to fight and to die along the Western Front so that the French and British empires would not be forced to make an unfavorable peace with the German empire. If Italians rightly see Mussolini as a traitor for dragging Italy into the First World War without good reason, Americans should see Woodrow Wilson as our own Mussolini.

And, in many ways, Wilson was the American Mussolini. Both men in 1917 were among the most prominent “Progressives” in the world. Mussolini, known in 1919 as the “Lenin of Italy,” and Wilson, who let the statist planner Colonel House run the White House, both betrayed their own people and the world. Wilson used the war as a pretext to begin borrowing huge sums of money for the war effort, to conscript millions of young men to fight and to die in a war in which our nation was in no danger at all, to introduce unprecedented federal controls over our liberties, and to plan for global governance after the war ended.

Wilson was a disaster for American liberties in other ways. He signed the first progressive income tax law. He gave us the Federal Reserve System. Wilson began the creation of “alphabet” federal agencies. He started introducing federal power into areas long recognized as the province of state government. Biographers benignly note that Wilson did not end segregation of the federal government: Wilson, in fact, re-segregated a federal government which Republican Presidents had de-segregated. And instead of using the good offices of the United States to negotiate a fair peace in Europe, Woodrow Wilson waged a war which, effectively, made “the world safe” ... for Lenin, Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini.

Americans in 1918 understood what had happened. In the first chance voters had to express their feelings for Woodrow “He kept us out of war” Wilson, Republicans made huge gains in the House and in the Senate, just days after Armistice Day, and gained control of both houses of Congress. Armistice Day and Veterans Day are days in which we should remember with honor all the brave men and women who have worn the uniform of our country with patriotic courage. But it is also a time to remember our own ghastly monument to progressivism and world government: Woodrow Wilson.



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