

# National 5 Notes. Scottish The Era of the Great War

## Background

In 1910 Britain was the world's greatest power. Britain ruled a huge Empire, it covered one quarter of the globe. Scotland played an important part in creating wealth. Heavy industry was an important source of wealth. Glasgow, because of its location on the Clyde produced 1/5 of the world's shipping. There were many engineering companies employing hundreds of thousands of workers. There were many coal mines in central Scotland, whose coal provided power to Scottish industry

The Liberal party was in power as the Government of Britain. In Scotland a majority of Scots voted Liberal. A minority of Scots voted Conservative. A new party which came to be known as the Labour party had just been created. Its aim was to represent the interests of the working class.

## Some problems

There were indications that other countries were producing more of their own goods. British industry found it hard to compete. There were strikes and demands for better pay. 30% of the population lived in the cities, where living conditions were poor. Many people moved to the cities to find work. There were large areas of slum housing.

## **Section 1 Scots on the Western Front**

### Causes of War

#### What were the MAIN causes?

**Militarism-** Germany wanted a large navy.  
In 1895 Germany opened the Kiel canal which linked the Baltic and the North Sea.  
This made Britons nervous of an attack by sea.  
Britain launched Dreadnought in 1906. It was faster than any other battleship, had armour plating and her guns were set on a revolving turret.  
This caused tension between Britain and Germany.

**Alliances-** Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy formed the Triple

Alliance. Britain, France and Russia formed the Triple Entente. This split Europe into 2 armed camps.

**Imperialism** The Kaiser wanted colonies. He wanted to make Germany more powerful and to gain new supplies of raw materials. Twice Britain and Germany clashed over their African colonies. Germany also clashed with the French over colonies.

This caused trouble between Germany and Britain, and also between Germany and France.

**Nationalism.** The Austro-Hungarian empire ruled over many Slavonic people. They wanted independence for their nations. Bosnia was such a country.

Russia sided with the Slavs.

This caused tension between Austria -Hungary and Russia.

**Alsace+ Lorraine** The French wanted the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine which Germany had taken in 1871, to be returned to them

**The Assassination** of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary when he was on a visit to Sarajevo in Bosnia was another factor.

Austria-Hungary, backed by Germany, declared war on Serbia, whom she suspected of aiding Bosnia.

### **Why did the Schlieffen plan fail?**

1. The Belgians resisted more strongly than the Germans expected
2. Russia mobilised more quickly than expected.
3. The Germany army got too far ahead of their supplies.
4. The Germans failed to encircle Paris.

### **Why did so many Scots join up?**

1. Strong martial tradition in Scotland.
2. They thought it would be over by Christmas and did not want to miss out.
3. It was a chance to escape from a boring job.
4. Their friends were going and they could join Pals Battalions.
5. There was a great deal of propaganda encouraging them to join.
6. They felt it was their patriotic duty to defend their country.

### **The contribution of the Scots on the Western Front.**

#### **The Battle of Loos**

Twenty Scottish regiments fought at Loos. This was 30,000 Scotsmen.

On the first day troops of the 15<sup>th</sup> Scottish division captured the village of Loos.

After 4 days they had to return to their original position as the reserve troops were too far away to assist.

Of the 20,598 names on the Memorial to the Missing one in every 3 names is Scottish.

Five Scots, including Piper Daniel Laidlaw were awarded the Victoria Cross for valour in battle.

### **What were trench conditions like?**

Their life was one of routine. At dawn and dusk there was "Stand to"

The men wrote letters or played cards.

Food was monotonous

Weapons were cleaned

Sandbags were filled and trenches repaired.

Lice and rats were frequent causes of annoyance.

Constant standing in water could lead to Trench Foot.

### **The Technology of War**

Each soldier was issued with the **Lee Enfield rifle**.

They also had **Mills bombs**.

Both sides used **machine guns**. They were good for defending your trench.

**Artillery** was used as a **preliminary bombardment** and also during attacks.

**Gas** was first used by the Germans at Ypres in 1915.

There was **chlorine, phosgene** and **mustard** gas.

Gas did not, however become the weapon which won the war as gas masks were developed.

Gas was released from large canisters. It was difficult to get the top off. If the wind changed you could gas your own men.

**Tanks** were armour plated and could travel at about 4 miles per hour. They could cross trenches and flatten barbed wire. Men could shelter behind them as they drove over No Man's Land.

Tanks were used with very limited success in the later stages of the Battle of the Somme

They were used with greater success at Cambrai in 1917. They were able to create a large gap in the German defences.

This success was not followed up as there were not enough soldiers to follow through and the tanks eventually broke down or ran out of fuel.

## **Aeroplanes.**

At first they were used for reconnaissance. At the battle of the Marne, a pilot spotted a gap between the advancing German armies. The British and French quickly pushed into the gap and the Germans were forced to retreat. Later planes were fitted with machine guns. Some planes could carry bombs.

Pilots who shot down enemy planes became known as "aces"

## **The Battle of the Somme**

Started on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1916.

This battle was planned as a diversionary tactic to draw the Germans away from their attack on the French fortress town of Verdun.

There was a preliminary bombardment which lasted 2 weeks.

The British were told that all the Germans had been killed.

The British casualty figures for the first day were 20,000 killed and 40,000 wounded.

## **Section 2 Domestic Impact of War: Society and Culture.**

### **Government Action**

#### **The Defence of the Realm Act**

**Direction of Labour.** People could be sent to where they were most needed.

**Military Laws.** Railways and docks came under military law.

**Pub opening hours** were reduced.

Pubs were not allowed to open on Sundays.

You could not buy "rounds" of drinks

**Newspapers** were censored.

**Local councils** could take over land in order to grow food

Foreigners had to register as aliens

### **Propaganda.**

Newspapers published drawings showing Germans killing civilians.

The Royal family changed its name from Saxe-Coburg to Windsor.

German civilians living in Britain were arrested as aliens.

British people rejected German music.

German shopkeepers found that their property was attacked.

### **Women**

Women went to work in munitions factories.  
At the munitions factory in Gretna 9000 women and 5000 men worked.

## **Dilution**

Dilution caused problems as a skilled workman served an apprenticeship of several years. Now women, with only a few weeks training, were given the same jobs as them, and the same pay. In 1915 the ministry of Munitions changed the rules. Skilled jobs were broken down into small parts. Women were allowed to do some parts of the job, but not all.

## **Food**

60% of the food eaten in Britain was brought in from abroad. German submarines began to target British supply ships. Substitute foods were introduced:  
Margarine instead of butter.  
Standard bread made from potato flour.  
People were encouraged to grow their own food  
Gardens and public parks were ploughed to grow food. Women joined the Land Army and worked on farms. Rationing was introduced to ensure everyone got an equal share.

## **2 Remarkable Women**

**Dr Elsie Inglis** set up field hospitals in France and Serbia.  
**Mary Chisholm** went with a medical team to Belgium

## **Conscription**

As the war went on there was a shortage of volunteers to join the army.  
Conscription was introduced.

<b>The Military Service Act</b>		
<b>January 1916-</b>	<b>All single men aged 18-41</b>	
<b>May 1916</b>	<b>All married men</b>	<b>18-41</b>
<b>January 1918</b>	<b>All men 18-51</b>	

Some people opposed the war:  
For political reasons. They were socialists.  
For religious reasons. They were strongly religious.

A branch of the No Conscription Fellowship was set up in Glasgow. This organisation helped **conscientious objectors** to explain their objections to being conscripted.

16,000 men refused to serve in the armed forces. Most were prepared to do **non-combatant** duties. Some refused to do any war service. They were the **absolutists**. They were imprisoned and made to do hard labour.

### **Loss of Life**

An estimated 74,000 Scots died in WW1. The army sent a telegram to let the family know. Every community in Scotland was affected. For soldiers who had served in Pals Battalions whole towns were affected.

### **Commemoration**

After WW1 every area in Scotland set up a local war memorial. The Scottish National War Memorial is at Edinburgh Castle.

## **Part 3 Domestic Impact of War: Industry and Economy**

Back home in Britain, a great deal of work had to be done to supply the war effort. The **Ministry of Munitions** was created to organise the war effort.

The war caused a boom in **heavy industries**: shipbuilding, iron and steel, coal and textiles.

**Reserved occupations** were jobs so important to the war effort that these workers could not join up.

The demand for ships led to more workers arriving in the Clydebank area.

### **Jobs boosted by the war**

**Engineering firms**- Beardmore's of Parkhead, building aircraft, tanks and artillery. 20,000 employed.

**Ammunition**- 24,000 men employed in the Clyde Valley

**Rubber**- The North British Rubber Company in Edinburgh made boots, gas masks and rubber sheets.

**Jute**- up to 6 million sacks per month needed by the army led to high wages for juteworkers.

**Steel**. By 1918 Glasgow steelworks were producing 90% of the armour plating used on warships.

**Textiles and canvas**- factories trying to meet demand for uniforms and tents.

### **Farming and Fishing.**

**Wool-** Wages for shepherds increased as the demand for wool for making uniforms grew.

**Food from the farm-** wages for farm workers rose. The government paid guaranteed prices for food. Women, older men and boys worked to increase production.

**Fishing-** this was the exception. Previous markets in Poland and Russia were lost. Fishing boats had to stay near the shore because of the threat from German shipping and submarines.

### **What Happened to Scottish Industries after the War?**

**Demand fell.** Scotland's heavy industries were less in demand. New industries like motor cars, chemicals and electrical goods were now in demand.

**New machines** could now do the jobs previously done by skilled workmen

**Foreign competition.** While Scotland focused on WWI, other countries like the USA and India were developing new industries and did not need British goods.

### **What new industrial changes took place?**

The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was set up by the Government to try to develop new industries.

Scotland's old industries were situated near coalfields and rivers for ease of transport. New industries could be set up near centres of population.

The new industries did not really help, as many Scots were without an electricity supply. The new industries tended to do better in England.

## **Section 4. Domestic Impact of War: Politics**

### **Women and the Vote**

Women had taken responsibilities during the war which they had not done previously.

In 1910 no women had the right to vote, whereas 6 out of 10 men did.

Women lacked civil rights in certain key areas:

**In education** girls received little in the way of academic education after primary school. Until 1889 women could not attend university.

**In the workplace** women were paid 1/3 - 1/2 less than men for doing the same job. Working conditions for many women were unsafe.

**The law** had discriminated against women. Up till 1882 when a woman married she had to put any money she had in her husband's name. Divorce was difficult.

**Many believed that if women had the right to vote they would be able to change laws which they felt were discriminatory.**

## **The Campaign for the Vote**

### **Stage 1 The Suffragists.**

**Suffrage** means the right to vote. In 1897, several suffrage organisations were brought together to become the **National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies**.

They were led by Millicent Fawcett. The NUWSS campaigned using peaceful means. They wrote to MPs, organised petitions and arranged meetings with MPs where they put their point across. In 1909 the suffrage societies in Scotland came together as the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies. By 1914 the NUWSS had 500 branches and 100,000 members. The NUWSS supported the Labour Party who also wished for the right to vote for all men and women.

### **Stage 2 The Suffragettes.**

In 1903 Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst with her daughters Christabel and Sylvia set up the **Women's Social and Political Union**.

Their motto was **Deeds not Words**. Right from the start it was clear that this organisation was going to be militant.

The Daily Mail gave them the nickname "**The Suffragettes**"

What were the tactics of the Suffragettes?

They organised protests and demonstrations. They heckled MPs. Buildings were set on fire.

Suffragettes in Scotland became more militant after 1909 when they felt there was little chance that the government would listen to them. Telegraph wires were cut. Acid was poured on golf courses. There was an attempt to blow up the house at Alloway where Robert Burns was born and an attempt to burn the grandstand at Kelso racecourse.

When war broke out in 1914 the Suffragettes ended their campaign. They helped out in almost every area of war work. See your Great War sheet for details of war work from R Cameron – the Great War

**In 1918** men were rewarded for their efforts in wartime.

**All men over 21 were given the right to vote.**

**Women over 30 who were householders or wives of householders could now vote too.**

**What other actions were taken by women during World War 1?**

### **The Rent Strikes**

During World War 1 thousands of workers had flocked to the Glasgow area to find work. There was a housing shortage and landlords saw an opportunity to exploit this by raising rents. Rent strikes took place in Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen. As the men were away, women withheld their rent. They could not afford to pay such high rents. When faced with eviction they refused to go.

In February 1915 the Glasgow Women's housing Association was set up, led by Helen Crawford, Mary Barbour, Agnes Dollan and Jessie Stephens. They encouraged tenants to unite to resist the rent rises.

The protests were well organised. By late 1915, 25,000 tenants had joined the movement. When law officers came to evict tenants, the supporters of the movement gathered and made it impossible for the law officers to carry out the evictions.

### **What did the Government do then?**

The Government acted quickly. The Rent Restriction Act was hurried through Parliament. Now rent increases were only allowed if the landlord had made improvements to the housing.

This was a victory for direct action and showed what could be achieved and more people began to take an interest in politics.

### **Homes fit for Heroes**

Lloyd George had promised that the soldiers returning from WW1 would have decent houses to live in.

In 1917 the Royal Commission investigating Scottish housing found:

- Serious overcrowding in houses
- A lack of basic sanitary facilities including toilets.
- An unacceptable number of "single ends," one roomed houses.
- Lack of light and ventilation.

In the years after the Great War the Government did try to improve housing.

- Addisons Act was passed to help provide better housing
- The Wheatley Act – some new housing built with electricity, gardens and toilets.

Although some improvement was made Scottish housing remained poor, overall. The Scots blamed the Liberal government for this failure to deliver.

### **What impact did the war have on politics in Scotland?**

Before WW1 most Scots had voted Liberal. Now more people voted for the Conservative party. At the same time support for the Labour party grew.

### **Why did Scots change the way they voted?**

The Liberals were blamed when the war was not going well. Although the Liberal party had always taken a stand for freedom and personal choice, many people felt they had introduced restrictions on liberty like conscription.

During the war there had been a coalition government made up of MPs from all parties. Gradually the Liberal party ceased to be an effective political party.

**After 1918 the Conservative party was seen as the party of patriotism.** In the post war elections many Conservative candidates were ex-army men. The Conservatives seemed to promise a return to traditional values.

**The Labour Party** was a new party which had gained some experience in the coalition government.

During the war the Labour Party had clarified its priorities. They would act to introduce a minimum wage and to gain control of industry.

The Labour Party had also benefited from Trade Union support.

### **Red Clydeside**

The 1917 revolution in Russia had led to fears that capitalists might lose their power and money.

There was already tension in Glasgow as a result of rent strikes and industrial action.

In 1919 a strike was called. The demands were to reduce the working week to 40 hours, and to increase pay to £1 per day. The government rushed 12,000 troops to Glasgow. Troops in Scotland were locked in their barracks at Maryhill in case they supported the strikers. Tanks and machine guns were at the ready.

### **In what way did this help the Tories?**

It may well have been the case that the government panicked over fears that there could be a Communist Revolution in Scotland.

This, however did not happen. The Scots returned to a 47 hour working week

background