

Chapter 34: America in World War II (1941-1945)

- Although Pearl Harbor was devastating to the U.S.'s navy and while many Americans clamored to get revenge on Japan as the first action in the war, the U.S. and Britain decided in the ABC-1 agreement that the initial primary focus of the war would be Germany
 - This was a wise decision because Germany was on the verge of conquering all of Europe; this had to be avoided at all costs
 - There were angry protesters because they wanted revenge on Japan first, but they were ignored by the government

The Allies Trade Space for Time

- The Allied powers were more numerous than the Axis powers, but the Allies were less prepared for war
 - The U.S. was especially unprepared for war
 - It had to provide a huge amount of food and ship it across the world to its forces and to other Allied troops

The Shock of War

- The shocking attack on Pearl Harbor united many Americans against the Axis powers
 - This included even the people of German and Italian ethnicities
 - This was because immigration had been largely shut off since WWI with the Immigration Acts, and therefore the immigrant communities were mostly all well-established American communities already
- The Japanese were still mistrusted widely (despite the general acceptance of other immigrant groups)
 - Executive Order No. 9066 forced the Japanese into concentration camps during the war
 - The concentration camps did not guarantee basic American rights, and the prisoners lost much of their possessions
 - The Supreme Court supported this in 1944, only apologizing formally 40 years later for this savage act
- The wartime Congress became conservative
 - Many of the New Deal programs, such as the CCC and WPA, were taken down by Congress
 - This essentially meant that New Deal reform was over during WWII
- Americans basically fought the war to win over the enemy, but not to fight for democracy and ideals of the democratic world
 - I.e., many people did not know of the Atlantic Charter and the ideals of democracy it asked for

Politics and Power: The U.S. government became conservative in response to the war, focusing not so much on progressive reform such as in the New Deal policies but more on the war effort. This meant that the country became insensitive to the new ideas of racial equality and reformism that bolstered the nation during the progressive New Deal era. This allowed the nation to pass the Executive Order No. 9066, which strongly discriminated against Japanese Americans and forced them into concentration

camps. In a non-emergency situation, this rash and racist legislature would not have been passed. While this seems morally faulty, it gave the Americans some reassurance at home toward their fellow citizens so that the war effort could be focused solely abroad (with no focus on infighting within the U.S.). This therefore increased U.S. patriotism in war and an increased feeling of national security, albeit at the Japanese's expense.

Building the War Machine

- The War Production Board (WPB) organized the production of war supplies during WWII
 - It caused the massive increase in industry and employment of people in munitions factory jobs
 - In 1942 alone there was over \$100 billion in war products bought
 - It ordered for thousands of aircraft, ships, tanks, and millions of guns and ammunition
 - Wartime efficiency of the factories increased dramatically
 - The production of non-military, nonessential items (e.g., cars) were sometimes slowed
 - Farming efficiency improved with government subsidies in improved fertilizers and machinery
- The Office of Price Administration (OPA) brought inflation involved with the massive production down with regulations
 - Regulations included rationing to limit demand of goods
- The National War Labor Board (NWLB) “imposed ceilings on wage increases” to allow industry to stay afloat
 - This went against previous pro-labor laws to help the individuals, instead practically helping the factories' efficiency, which was more essential during this emergency war period
 - Labor unions protested the wage ceilings with strikes, such as the United Mine Workers who had several strikes
 - Congress in return passed the Smith-Connally Anti-Strike Act (1943) that allowed the government to seize industries that were frozen by strikes and operate them
 - This allowed the government to take control and force necessary production through regardless of wages — unidealistic but practical

Manpower and Womanpower

- WWII enlisted 216,000 women for noncombat jobs
 - This included the Women's Army Corps (WAC), Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPAR)
- Millions of men were drafted into the war
 - The draft excluded workers from some key industries to keep production going
 - The draft created shortages of manpower in the factories and farms
 - The Bracero program with Mexico was a contract giving thousands of Mexican agricultural workers to work the land in the West to help the absent fighting American farmers

- Over six million women filled factory jobs left by men
- While women involvement in the war and war industry was great in the U.S., it was still not very significant
 - It was a small percentage of women working in the war effort compared to that of Britain or Russia or France
 - Over ⅔ of the women returned to their domestic lives after the war was over

Work, Exchange, and Technology: The war effort made it necessary for many people to take part. This means that men and women, Anglo-descendants and immigrants alike were involved fighting for or working in the factories of America. Although the New Deal was over, this involved the creation of several new government programs (which expanded the government's influence much like the New Deal programs did) to manage the work necessary and prevent economic disaster. This included the WPB to manage war supplies, the OPA to bring down inflation, the NWLB to help war industries stay prosperous, and the Bracero program to increase manpower in the farms and factories of the U.S. when many men had left to fight in the war. Women too were very involved directly with the war, participating in programs such as the WAC, WAVES, and SPAR. This active employment of many millions of people gave many people work and increased spending power that had been lacking since the Roaring '20s, something that not even the New Deal could induce; this huge and necessary war industry allowed the U.S. to climb out of the Depression.

Wartime Migrations

- Many American soldiers (over 15 million) chose to resettle somewhere in America other than their origin after the war
 - Boomtowns ("Los Angeles, Detroit, Seattle, and Baton Rouge") grew dramatically
 - The South received a lot of government subsidies for industry and many people were sucked into those new industrial jobs and moved to the South accordingly
 - Over 1.6 million African Americans left to the North and the West to look for jobs
 - This was largely due to the creation of the mechanical cotton picker, which greatly outpaced the manual labor of the South's most widespread cash crop
- There was still discrimination against blacks during the war
 - Roosevelt passed the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to ensure that blacks had an equal opportunity and no discrimination in jobs related to the war
 - Blacks were enlisted into the war but were often only given service positions
 - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) were created during the war as black support for no discrimination rose
- Native Americans got involved in the war effort as well
 - Thousands of Native Americans worked in the war industry factories in cities
 - Thousands served in the military
 - Some were "code talkers," who transmitted messages in their own language (which was unknown to the enemy European nations)
- Racial tensions grew between nativist white Anglo-Americans and other racial groups that had recently moved to the cities, causing violence sometimes

Migration and Settlement: Many people involved in the war, of all ethnicities, settled in different areas than they had before the war. This included 15 million soldiers, who moved to many boomtowns, especially in the South and West. The South grew the most because the government had spent much money in building factories for war supplies in the South, and therefore many people moved to the South. There was also a great emigration from the South with African Americans, especially because a mechanical cotton picker was invented and the demand for agricultural laborers (a job that many African Americans held) declined. Also prominent was the movement of the Native Americans away from the reservation system and into the workforce, even finding highly valuable jobs as “code talkers” in the war. All three of these ethnic groups had many people move away from their original economic situation to one with better financial security, especially in the war industry in boom towns or cities.

Holding the Home Front

- The U.S. fared pretty well during WWII
 - None of the fighting had really touched the U.S. (besides Pearl Harbor), whereas the European nations had been heavily bombed
 - The war had taken the U.S. out of the Great Depression and increased the GDP and corporate profits
 - Money from the war (sales of war supplies) helped mobilize the economy and drag it out of the depression
 - Wages and spending power generally increased during this time period
 - This happened especially when restrictions on wages (i.e., those imposed by the NWLB) were lifted
- The war cost \$330 billion
 - Income taxes were greatly increased to increase government revenue
 - The national debt rose to \$259 billion by 1945 (from \$49 billion in 1941)

The Rising Sun in the Pacific

- The Japanese quickly and efficiently conquered many lands in the Pacific Ocean
 - They attacked Pearl Harbor, Guam, Wake, the Philippines, and more at the same time
 - They took over Hong Kong and Malaya, important British economic centers
 - They cut the Burma Road, which carried most of the supplies to the Chinese army
 - The U.S. had to fly supplies over to the Chinese army
 - They took over the Dutch East Indies, which were rich with petroleum
- The Philippines resisted the Japanese invasion
 - General Douglas MacArthur held off the Japanese for a long time, despite being greatly outmatched
 - They were forced to retreat by the Bataan Death March, from which MacArthur went to Australia to defend it
 - At this point, the Japanese had also conquered the Philippines

Japan's High Tide at Midway

- The Japanese threatened to invade Australia

- The Americans and Australians won a victory in the Coral Sea in a battle of aircraft carriers
- Japan tried to take Midway Island, a strategic island that could launch attacks on Pearl Harbor again
 - The Battle of Midway (1942) was a crucial American victory won by aircraft carriers that saved Pearl Harbor and much of America's naval power
- After Midway the Japanese continued to take over more islands and move towards Alaska
 - The U.S. in response began to fortify Alaska in case of a Japanese invasion there

American Leapfrogging Toward Tokyo

- The U.S. won several victories in the Pacific Ocean after the Battle of Midway
 - It won Guadalcanal Island, New Guinea, Attu, Kiska, Tarawa, the Marshall Islands, Guam, the Marianas, and then it began non-stop bombings of Japan
 - Many of these battles were won by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz
 - The U.S. decided to bypass some of the major Japanese strongholds in their invasion, fortify their possessions and build airfields, and bomb the Japanese bases from their bases

Politics and Power: While Americans were fighting a defensive, primarily land-and-air war against Germany, it was also fighting a mostly defensive war with Japan at the same time. At the same time, modern warfare of the time was changing, and only the most up-to-date techniques could survive in the hellhole of WWII. Specifically, the use of aircraft carriers (only) in major naval battles such as the Battle of Midway became some of the most powerful battles of all time. Several other battles in the Pacific under Admiral Nimitz were fought and won by naval battles as well. The constantly improving technology, whether of war or of industry, that helped to keep America very modern showed the dynamic power of America, which is the source of its power. For example, if the U.S. had not helped invent radar or had been too stubborn with their neutrality and isolationism to ignore the helplessness of the democratic nations in Europe, WWI would have been lost and Germany would have become a world power; here, likewise, the U.S. was able to fend off the overexpanded (past international agreement) fleet of the Japanese with the ultramodern technology of the aircraft carrier, and by adopting new battle tactics to attack the Japanese islands quickly and successfully. These new tactics give the U.S. awesome power over other nations in times of war.

The Allied Halting of Hitler

- The Allies lost a lot of ships to the U-boat "wolf-packs" that ganged up on American ships
 - Eventually they started to lose fewer ships because of British code breakers (who had solved the Enigma code used to encode German messages) and because of radar
- The British victory of the Battle of the Atlantic prevented the Germans from having naval control of the seas and the repulsion of German troops in Egypt prevented the Germans from taking the vital Suez Canal
 - If either of these battles had been lost Britain had a high chance of losing the war to Germany, and Germany would mass-produce even more powerful U-boats
- The Russians held off the Germans at Stalingrad (September 1942)

- The Russians fought back in November of that year and reclaimed $\frac{2}{3}$ of the land lost to the Germans

A Second Front from North Africa to Rome

- The Russians had lost a great deal of land and many millions of people, and thus wanted a second front fought on the Germans from the west (i.e., from Britain or France) to aid its efforts
 - Most Americans and FDR wanted to open a second front on the west to strengthen the Allied offensive on Germany
 - Most British did not want to open a second front because they were worried that a direct attack on the Germans would likely end unsuccessfully and disastrously
- A compromise between U.S. and British was a second front in North Africa
 - Dwight D. Eisenhower led mainly American troops to defeat the German and Italian armies in Northern Africa
- FDR and Churchill met in Casablanca in 1943 and decided that they would invade Sicily and Italy and demand unconditional surrender of the Italians
 - The term “unconditional surrender” was made popular by Ulysses S. Grant and meant that the loser had essentially no power after the war was over (Google definition: “no guarantees are given to the surrendering party”)
 - It was criticized because it encouraged the enemies to fight to the last man and not surrender, because they would have no power unless they won anyways (and therefore losing was not worse than living under the complete power of the enemy)
- The Allies attacked Italy in August of 1943
 - Italy surrendered unconditionally to the attack and Mussolini was taken out of power
 - The Germans continued to fight in Italy, even if the Italians had already surrendered
 - It was only the next year after the Allied invasion of France that Rome was taken, and two years later and just before the official surrender of Germany that the German soldiers in Italy surrendered
 - The continued fighting in Italy only diverted a little bit of German attention away from the Soviet and French fronts, but was overall not that effective

D-Day: June 6, 1944

- FDR, Churchill, and Stalin met in Tehran in 1943 to discuss creating a second Allied front in France
 - Preparations were made in Britain and in the U.S.
 - Most of the men were American, and therefore their leader was General Eisenhower
- The Allied troops invaded France at Normandy on D-Day (June 6, 1944)
 - 4,600 ships attacked the beach, while an air force dominated the skies and cut off supply lines
 - The Allies secured the beach, despite strong resistance
 - There was a second attack in southern France, and the two Allied forces in France worked together towards Paris and liberated it in August 1944
 - The French front began to invade Germany

America in the World: The invasion of North Africa and D-day were the first major majority-American offensives in Europe during WWII. In both cases, the U.S. worked strongly with British troops to fend off the Italians and Germans. Both invasions were successful, and the U.S. helped lead the reconquering of North Africa, Italy, and France within a couple of months. These attacks again revalidated the American military strength as a world power as it had done during the American Revolution and the War of 1812 against the British superpower, but with the modern warfare of the 1940s this time. With these invasions there was a major distraction of the German forces from the Soviet front, thus providing the promise of a second front requested for their ally of Soviet Russia, first hesitatingly as a minor front in North Africa and Italy, but later in the all-out invasion of France through Normandy beach. Thus America expressed both its soft power (promise to the Allies of a second front) and its hard power (military strength and strategy), while also greatly weakening their enemy Germany.

FDR: The Fourth-Termite of 1944

- The Republicans nominated Thomas E. Dewey, the governor of NY, for their presidential nominee of 1944
 - He was young and had a reputation for justice against racketeers and grafters
- The Democrats again nominated FDR because he was their major political figure and the war was almost over
 - They chose Harry S. Truman as vice president
 - Truman was a trustworthy chairman of a Senate committee with a clean slate; few people had grudges held against him

Roosevelt Defeats Dewey

- Dewey was an active speechmaker during his campaign for presidency, while FDR was busy directing the war and not actively campaigning
 - Dewey advocated for the end of the New Deal and “better” fighting in the war
- FDR won the presidential election of 1944
 - The CIO helped with his campaign, asking people locally to vote for Roosevelt
 - He won mostly because he was leading a winning war and the people did not want him to stop leading them to victory

American and National Identity: Despite the most costly and deadly war of all of history, and despite talk of delaying the elections until the war’s end, American democracy and the ultimate law of the land, the Constitution, dictated that the president be re-elected every four years. The American people stayed true to this fundamental part of their identity, a rule established to prevent against the kind of despotism that had happened in other nations that gave unlimited power to its leaders. Thus the election of 1944 was carried out like usual. Both sides used a very likeable representative of their party as their nominee as president (victorious FDR and righteous Dewey) and chose slightly more moderate vice presidential candidates (young Truman and moderate Bricker). In the end, it came down to choosing the incumbent FDR, mostly because he was victorious in war. This continued a trend of choosing popular generals or other leaders of war that had occurred since the Civil War: generals Zachary Taylor and Ulysses S. Grant, for example, were popular generals-turned-presidents. Thus it became a stronger part of American identity when FDR followed this trend.

The Last Days of Hitler

- Germany was desperate by the time FDR's fourth term began
 - The Soviets had begun to invade Germany
 - The U.S. was nonstop bombing German cities and supplies
- Germany decided to throw a whole-hearted last offensive into one attack in December of 1944
 - They succeeded in invading for ten days but were stopped by the Americans
- The Soviets captured Germany up to Berlin
 - Hitler committed suicide when the enemy approached
- FDR had died in April of 1945
 - Truman had suddenly become president
- V-E (Victory in Europe) Day was May 8, 1945, the day after Germany surrendered unconditionally in the war

Japan Dies Hard

- Japanese ships were quickly being sunk by American submarines
- American planes bombed Japanese cities such as Tokyo
- The Japanese's last attempt to win over the seas was at Leyte Gulf (October 1944)
 - The Americans won this battle
 - The loss of so many important Japanese ships in this battle made them lose their place as a naval superpower of the world
- MacArthur and the U.S. navy went on after the battle at Leyte to capture the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa
 - They were slowed by Japanese kamikaze pilots, who would commit suicide by crashing their planes into American forces to inflict more damage

The Atomic Bombs

- The Japanese showed no indication of having an unconditional surrender to the Allied forces, and therefore the Americans prepared to invade
- At the Potsdam conference (July 1945), Truman, Stalin, and Churchill declared that Japan was to surrender or be destroyed
 - The U.S. had developed an atomic bomb through the Manhattan Project, a group of advanced scientists
 - The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima (August 6, 1945)
 - This killed or injured 180,000 people
 - The second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki (August 9, 1945) after the Japanese refused to surrender
- The Japanese agreed to surrender on August 10 as long as their emperor could keep the throne
 - Although this went against "unconditional surrender," the Allies agreed to this
 - The surrender of the Japanese was known as V-J (Victory in Japan) Day (August 10, 1945)

The Allies Triumphant

- The U.S. suffered heavy losses (1 million soldiers)

- This would have been a greater number if not for the invention of penicillin (antibiotics)
 - This was still small compared to the Russian loss of 25 million men
- American land was relatively untouched
 - The only attacks on the U.S. were small bombings in California and Oregon
- The U.S. was very well-prepared for the war and fought it well
 - This was mostly because it had begun unofficially fighting the Axis powers before they officially entered the war
 - The U.S. factories were also geared up to war production before they entered the war

Politics and Power: As was the case in WWI, the Allied powers were victorious in WWII. Hitler and Japan in this war are defeated, and the rule of those dictatorships are not a threat to the western democracies any more. Both sides executed desperate measures to try to become victorious in the war, but the power of the combined Allied forces, especially with the huge workforce and resources of war-untouched America, was too difficult for Germany and Japan (the former which was heavily burdened from the Depression and still paying off its debts from WWI and the second which had limitations in the Naval Treaty following WWI which limited its navy to a smaller size than those of Britain and the U.S.) to defeat. As a result, although not officially recognized, the Atlantic Charter's goals could be continued now that the major imperialist powers of the world were now under the control of the victorious Allied nations. Although the Allies called for unconditional surrender of the Axis powers, they realized that giving some leniency — such as allowing Japan to keep its beloved leader — was necessary to preventing future hatred and causing another WW, as was the case after WWI with the strict Treaty of Versailles that put heavy demands on the Central Powers. Therefore, the Allies had to maintain a strict, but not overly so, regime of power over the defeated dictatorships in order to reform them away from their imperialist and authoritarian ways but prevent a revengeful spirit from being aroused in those nations.