

## I. A World at War

- Sept 1, 1939, Germany invade Poland--2 days later, Britain and France declare war on Germany
  - U.S. revises its Neutrality Acts (review) to permit sale of weapons to belligerents on cash-and-carry basis
  - April 1940--Germany unleashes blitzkrieg on Western Europe
  - Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France are attacked
  - By end of June, western part of continent under German control
- Summer of 1940, Battle of Britain begins
  - air attack by Luftwaffe
  - U-boat campaign against British shipping
  - Churchill appeals to FDR for help
    - most Americans favor stepped-up weapons shipments
    - isolationists (including Charles Lindbergh--favors Germany) fear pull of U.S toward war
- FDR runs for unprecedented 3d term in 1940, defeats Wendell Wilkie
- FDR takes action even though U.S. officially neutral
  - endorses a peacetime draft and more spending on weapons
  - As Britain runs out of money to buy U.S. war supplies, FDR proposes to send 50 over-age U.S. destroyers to Britain, getting leases on air and naval bases on British possessions in Western Hemisphere
  - Congress passes lend-lease act in March 1941
- June 1941, Germany invade Soviet Union; lend-lease extended to U.S.S.R.
- "Arsenal for Democracy"
  - August 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill meet on battleship off Newfoundland, issue Atlantic Charter outlining their wartime goals (U.S. not at war yet)
- Japanese actions
  - Japan begins to expand its aggression from China to gain control of raw materials in British, French, and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia
  - Japan's drive to create own economic empire clashes with Open Door policy
  - U.S. responds with economic pressure
    - July 1940, prohibits sale of aviation gasoline to Japan
    - Japan occupies northern Indochina and signs mutual aid treaty with Germany and Italy
    - FDR embargoes metals, chemicals, and machine parts to Japan
    - Japan seizes rest of Indochina in July 1941, Washington responds by cutting off all trade
  - Oct. 1941, expansionist Hideki Tojo becomes Japanese prime minister
    - tries to persuade U.S. to reopen trade and recognize Japanese conquests in Asia
    - threatens to attack if Washington will not agree
    - FDR refuses, orders all U.S. commanders in Pacific to be on alert for possible attack
- Dec. 7, 1941, Japan strikes Pearl Harbor in surprise attack--devastates base, sinks most of large ships in fleet (except carriers), destroys most aircraft, and kills 2,100 American soldiers and sailors
  - At same time, Japan launches attacks on Philippines and most of rest of Western Pacific--taking Philippines in May 1942
  - Dec. 8, 1941--U.S. declares war on Japan (FDR and "a day that will live in infamy")
- Germany and Italy declare war on U.S. on Dec. 11
  - we reciprocate next day

- Early days of U.S involvement
  - German U-boat campaign on Atlantic coast and Caribbean--sinks more than 1,000 allied ships
  - Hitler controls most of Europe and North Africa--launch attack to take Moscow and Stalingrad
  - Japan controls most of Pacific west of Hawaii

## II. America Mobilizes for War

- Roosevelt gets government ready to go to war--establishes 4 key agencies
  - War Production Board--allocates scarce materials, limits manufacture of civilian goods, hands out military production contracts
  - National War Labor Board--mediate labor-management disputes
  - Office of Price Administration--imposed price controls to stem inflation
  - Office of War Mobilization--coordinated efforts of government agencies, private industry, and military
- By late 1942, 33% of economy devoted to war production--U.S. turns out more armaments than Germany, Italy, and Japan combined
- Size of federal government and amount of spending soars
  - government spends \$250 million per day fighting in WWII
  - defense contractors and military form tight alliance
  - Agriculture and industry finally out of their doldrums
    - farm income doubles between 1940-1945
    - corporate profits climb 70%
    - unemployment vanishes--extra workers needed
    - War years see significant shift in income distribution, many poor move into middle class
    - Union membership and strength grow--most labor leaders agree not to strike (UMW does so in 1943, bringing Congressional action limiting right to strike)
  - Office of Price Administration works to curb inflation through price controls and rationing
  - Government raises needed money with war-bond sales, tax increases
- Federal government and scientists get together during war
  - FDR establishes Office of Scientific Research and Development--spends over \$1 billion on improving radar, building rockets and aircraft, making new drugs for soldiers
  - Manhattan Project races to develop nuclear weapons before Germany (\$2 billion budget)

## III. Changes in American Society during WW II

- New mobility
  - Like in WWI, Americans migrate to centers of war production, especially on West coast
  - Millions move from farm to city and from South to North and West--causes severe housing shortages in war-industry cities
  - Mobility and overcrowding contribute to family breakdown, urban slums, conflict between newcomers and older residents

- Women and the family
  - More than 6 million American women enter the paid labor force--by 1945 women constitute over 1/3 of employed workers
  - Women take on formerly male-dominated occupations--"Rosie the Riveter" becomes symbol of female defense-plant workers
  - Women only earn 65% of men's pay for same work--women are told they are only emergency replacements until men return from war
  - More than 1/3 of women workers have children under age 14
    - child-care centers exist for less than 10% of children
    - with youngsters left on their own, juvenile delinquency spurts
  - Marriage, birth, and divorce soar
    - 300,000 women enlist in armed forces (compare with 11,000 in WWI)
- African-Americans and the war
  - African-Americans demand U.S. fight against racism at home as well as against Hitler
  - Even before U.S. joins war, blacks prepared to fight for equality in America
    - A. Philip Randolph, head of Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
      - Feb. 1941, plans march on Washington to demand desegregation in defense industries
      - FDR worried about the negative publicity this would provide to Axis
      - FDR signs an executive order prohibiting employment discrimination in defense industries and government agencies--creates Fair Employment Practices Committee
    - NAACP and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) struggle for civil rights during the war
  - Once war begins, labor shortages lead to rise in African-American defense-plant laborers (from 3% to 9% of workforce)
    - black union membership doubles
    - number of African Americans holding skilled and semi-skilled jobs triples
  - One million blacks serve in armed forces
    - mostly in segregated units commanded by white officers
    - most of these units were in supply, transportation, etc.; few see combat until very late (Dec. 1944) in war (exception--Tuskegee Airmen)
  - Like in WWI, race riots erupt as over 700,000 blacks flood from the South into the North and West
  - movement during the war gives African Americans greater opportunities and possible political power
- Japanese-Americans -- Internment and medals
  - strong prejudice against Japanese-Americans erupts following Pearl Harbor (one barber advertised "free haircuts to Japs, not responsible for accidents")
  - U.S. government uproots over 112,000 Japanese-Americans (Nisei) living on West coast
    - most are forced to sell their land and homes (at cut-rate prices)
    - Japanese-Americans locked in remote internment (prison) camps in Southwest
  - Japanese Americans consistently referred to as Japs
  - Only a handful actually found working against U.S.
  - 443 Regiment ("Go for Broke")--fought in Europe (weren't allowed to fight in Pacific) against Germans, most decorated American unit in WWII

#### IV. On the Battlefields

- Allied drive in Europe
  - British, Soviets, and Americans seek to beat Germany first, then Japan (although U.S. has to concentrate much of its men and resources in Pacific)
  - Stalin wants the Allies to invade mainland of Europe from across English Channel; Churchill convinces FDR to open a second front in North Africa first
    - Nov. 1942, U.S. and British invade North Africa; defeat Germans there by May 1943
  - Soviets able to hang on during long winter of 1942-43 (winning at Stalingrad and Leningrad); begin to turn tide in summer of 1943, then push Germans back across eastern Europe in 1944-45; fighting extremely heavy on Eastern Front, huge casualties on both sides
  - Britain and U.S. turn focus to Italy in 1943, get bogged down in heavy fighting against German forces which lasts until early 1945
  - June 6 1944--D Day; U.S. and British forces land in Normandy, begin push across France and reach German border by the fall
  - Dec. 1944, German counterattack at the Battle of the Bulge inflicts heavy Allied casualties, but fails
  - Allied forces close on Germany from both sides by early spring; Berlin falls in May 1945
- War in the Pacific
  - At beginning, U.S. commits most of its resources toward fighting Japan
  - Spring and summer 1942, U.S. Navy wins key battles at Coral Sea and Midway-- halting Japanese expansion
  - During the fall of 1942, U.S. takes the offensive in an "island hopping" campaign designed to take control of South Pacific
  - U.S. returns to Philippines in 1944; Navy destroys most of remaining Japanese fleet at Leyte Gulf
  - Islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa taken after desperate struggles
  - U.S. begins air campaign against Japan; devastate Tokyo and other cities-- sometimes using fire bombs to burn cities to ground (over 100,000 killed in one raid on Tokyo)
- Japan refuses to surrender at this point

#### VI. Late-war diplomacy

- Teheran (1943)
  - Big Three meet to discuss post-war Europe
  - Disputes over how countries should be governed (particularly Eastern Europe)
  - Stalin unhappy with what he sees as lack British and American activities in fighting Germany
- Yalta (Feb. 1945)
  - Big Three meet again in Soviet city of Yalta (on Black Sea)
  - Stalin has upper hand--close to defeating Germany and knowing U.S. wants Soviet help against Japan
  - Question of Eastern Europe remains unresolved (although Soviets control region)--Germany to be partitioned
  - Decision to create the United Nations agreed upon
- Potsdam (Apr. 1945)
  - New president Harry Truman met with Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov
  - Meeting was not friendly and U.S. and Soviet Union strongly disagree over Germany and Eastern Europe
  - Language of agreements leaves each side room to accuse the others of cheating and backstabbing