

## CHAPTER 27

# The Second World War at Home and Abroad, 1941–1945

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After you have studied Chapter 27 in your textbook and worked through this study guide chapter, you should be able to:

1. Discuss U.S. military strategy and the major military operations in the Pacific theater that brought America to the verge of victory by 1945.
2. Describe the military strategy and the major military operations undertaken by the Allies in the European theater; discuss the disagreements that arose concerning strategy; and explain the resolution of these disagreements.
3. Examine the impact of the Second World War on American businesses, institutions of higher learning, organized labor, and the federal government, and discuss and assess the role played by the federal government in the war effort.
4. Discuss the impact of the Second World War on American civilians in general and on African Americans, Mexican Americans, women, and American families specifically.
5. Examine the tensions between America's democratic ideals and its wartime practices, and discuss specifically the civil liberties record of the U.S. government during the Second World War with regard to Japanese Americans, African Americans, and the plight of Jewish refugees.
6. Discuss the impact of military life and wartime experiences on the men and women in the U.S. armed forces during the Second World War.
7. Examine the relations, the issues debated, and the agreements reached among the Allies from the second-front controversy through the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, and discuss the issues left unresolved after Yalta and Potsdam.
8. Explain and evaluate President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb.
9. Assess the impact of the Second World War on the world community of nations and on the world balance of power.

### THEMATIC GUIDE

In Chapter 27, as in Chapters 23 through 25, we look at the changes begot by war. Having dealt with changes fostered by the First World War, Americans entered into an era of "normalcy" during the 1920s. Yet even in the midst of the peace and prosperity of the 1920s, Americans often seemed to be fighting a cultural war that pitted those who adhered to older "traditional" values and beliefs against those who accepted the new values of the era. It was during the Jazz Age that America continued its transition from an agricultural to an industrial nation, women made strides in breaking out of their constraints, and African Americans became more outspoken in their demand for equality. Furthermore,

the new openness about sex and the challenges of science to fundamentalist religious beliefs during the 1920s caused anxiety in many quarters. Then came the economic disasters of the Great Depression.

The collapse of the nation's economic system led to the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and to the mobilization of the federal government in a war against joblessness, poverty, and homelessness. The Roosevelt revolution forever changed the relationship between the American people and their government. Then, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Americans had to face the anxiety of change within a nation whose very survival depended on successful mobilization for war. Since this was total war, not only did troops have to be mobilized, but the home front had to be mobilized as well to produce the materiel necessary to defeat Japan and the Axis powers.

In the first section of Chapter 27, "The United States at War," we look at the earliest stage of the Second World War in both the Pacific and European theaters. In the Pacific, America was largely on its own to fight the Japanese; and after initial losses, successfully broke the momentum of Japan's offensive at the Battle of Midway. In turning to the European theater we look at America's "Europe first" strategy and at the undercurrent of suspicion among the Allies, obvious in the second-front controversy. In November 1942 American and British forces landed in North Africa and were eventually successful in defeating General Erwin Rommel and his Afrika Korps. Back in Europe, the Soviet army's successful defense of Stalingrad proved to be a turning point in the European war.

The focus of the chapter then shifts to a discussion of the nation's mobilization for war on the production front. This mobilization brought (1) renewed government-business cooperation and an acceleration of corporate growth, (2) the growth of scientific research facilities through government incentives, (3) new economic opportunities for African Americans, Mexicans, and women, (4) the growth of labor unions, and (5) the successful conversion of American factories from civilian production to military production.

The Second World War, to an even greater extent than the First World War, was a total war, requiring not only military mobilization but mobilization of the civilian population as well. As civilian workers poured into the nation's defense plants, the primary responsibility for coordinating total mobilization of the home front fell on the federal government. Therefore, the federal bureaucracy mushroomed in size as one can see in the coordinating efforts of the War Production Board, the Office of Price Administration, and the Office of War Information. Furthermore, the government relied primarily on deficit spending to finance the war. This massive influx of money into the economy brought full employment. As more Americans than ever before moved to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by wartime prosperity, communities changed and conflict emerged between war workers and native citizens. Although the war provided opportunities for African Americans, the Detroit riot of 1943 made clear that racism remained a shaping force in blacks' lives. The zoot-suit riot in Los Angeles in 1943 demonstrated that the same was true for Mexican Americans.

For women, the war became a turning point. More women, including more married women and mothers, entered the labor force than ever before. As some of the negative attitudes toward women working in heavy industry began to change, women experienced more geographic and occupational mobility. Although they continued to receive lower pay than men and were still concentrated in sex-segregated occupations, more women decided to remain in the labor market. But home and family responsibilities continued to fall on their shoulders. In many cases, the wartime absence of husbands and fathers made women fully responsible for the family, meaning that many women gained a new sense of independence.

In "The Limits of American Ideals" we discuss three significant examples of America's failure to live up to its ideals. While, America handled the issue of civil liberties well for the most part, it is obvious that the treatment of Japanese Americans was an enormous exception to the nation's generally creditable wartime civil liberties record. Forcibly removed from the West Coast, Japanese Americans were transported to relocation centers and interned because of their ethnic origin. As a result, many felt

betrayed by their government. There was also the paradox of African American soldiers fighting in a segregated American military against racist Nazi ideology. African Americans on the home front continued to face political, social, and economic discrimination. As in the First World War, African Americans saw the war as an opportunity to achieve their goal of equality in American society. Through the NAACP's "Double V" campaign and through the founding of the Congress on Racial Equality, African Americans became more outspoken in their attempt to realize that goal. We then turn to America's most tragic failure to live up to its democratic ideas—America's refusal to help European Jews and others attempting to escape Hitler's Germany. As we saw in Chapter 26, Roosevelt and Congress knew of Hitler's anti-Semitic policies and actions as early as 1938. By 1943, FDR was aware of the existence of the Nazi death camps. Finally the administration established the War Refugee Board in early 1944, but it was a case of too little too late.

Life in the military, life away from family, and the experience of war profoundly affected the men and women who served in the armed forces during the course of the Second World War. The frame of reference of many GIs was broadened by associations with fellow soldiers from backgrounds and cultures different than their own. Many endured horrors in combat that they would not forget for the rest of their lives. As GIs returned to civilian life, they quickly realized that life at home had continued without them; many felt a sense of loss and alienation.

In the last section of the chapter, "Winning the War," the authors discuss the decision to open the second front and an examination of the war's final years. After a glance at D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge, we look at decisions made at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. The Yalta Conference is often described as the high point of the Grand Alliance. The agreements reached there are explained in the context of the suspicions among the Allies, the goals of each of the Allies, and the positions of each of the Allied armies. Upon Roosevelt's death in April 1945, Harry S. Truman ascended to the presidency, and less than a month later Germany surrendered. As the war continued in the Pacific, allied leaders met once again at the Potsdam Conference. Unlike the Yalta Conference, the Potsdam Conference revealed a crumbling alliance in which any sense of cooperation had given way to suspicions among competitive nation-states. These suspicions, so obvious at Potsdam, were a portent concerning the post-war world. Within this context, the authors discuss the final battles in the Pacific theater, the Potsdam Declaration, and President Truman's decision to use atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Truman's rejection of alternatives to the atomic bomb and the strategic, emotional, psychological, and diplomatic reasons for his decision to use it are explained at chapter's end.

## IDENTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

After studying Chapter 27 of *A People and a Nation*, you should be able to identify *and* explain fully the historical significance of each item listed below.

- Identify each item in the space provided. Give an explanation or description of the item. Answer the questions *who*, *what*, *where*, and *when*.
- Explain the historical significance of each item in the space provided. Establish the historical context in which the item exists. Establish the item as the result of or as the cause of other factors existing in the society under study. Answer this question: *What were the political, social, economic, and/or cultural consequences of this item?*

1. the Battle of Midway

2. the “Europe first” strategy
3. Winston Churchill
4. Josef Stalin
5. the second-front controversy
6. the War Production Board
7. wartime government-business interdependence
8. the Manhattan Project
9. the March on Washington Movement
10. Executive Order No. 8802

11. women's wartime work
12. Rosie the Riveter
13. the no-strike/no-lockout pledge
14. the National War Labor Board
15. the Office of Price Administration
16. the Office of War Information
17. the internment of Japanese Americans
18. *Korematsu v. United States*
19. the Teheran Conference

20. Operation Overlord

21. D-Day

22. the Battle of the Bulge

23. the Yalta Conference

24. Harry S. Truman

25. the Potsdam Conference

26. the “island-hop” strategy

27. the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa

28. the firebombing of Tokyo

29. the Potsdam Declaration

30. Hiroshima and Nagasaki

## IDEAS AND DETAILS

### Objective 2

1. As a result of the Battle of Midway,
  - a. the United States destroyed Japan's merchant marine.
  - b. Japanese momentum in the Pacific was broken.
  - c. American naval losses made Hawai'i more vulnerable to attack.
  - d. President Roosevelt began to harbor private fears of Japanese victory in the Pacific.

### Objective 3

2. The task of the War Production Board was to
  - a. vigorously enforce the nation's antitrust laws.
  - b. minimize the cost of the war by ensuring competitive bidding on government contracts.
  - c. allocate resources and coordinate production among U. S. factories in the conversion of industry from civilian to military production.
  - d. analyze the military situation in order to determine what weapons needed to be produced and in what quantity.

### Objective 3

3. The Second World War affected American industry in which of the following ways?
  - a. To increase competition, the government broke up large manufacturing units.
  - b. The trend toward the consolidation of manufacturing into the hands of a few corporate giants continued.
  - c. The withdrawal of government money from the economy brought a restructuring of industry.
  - d. Heavy industry was virtually nationalized to ensure the availability of war materiel.

### Objective 4

4. During the Second World War, African Americans
  - a. continued to move to industrial cities in the North and West.

- b. experienced equal opportunity in housing and employment.
- c. experienced a deterioration of their economic position.
- d. steadfastly refused to participate in the war effort.

#### Objective 4

- 5. Did Rosie the Riveter accurately portray women in the American work force during the Second World War? Why?
  - a. No, because women were not allowed to work in defense plants during the Second World War.
  - b. No, because only a small percentage of working women held jobs in defense plants and an even smaller percentage held jobs classified as “skilled.”
  - c. Yes, because women in the work force filled almost all of the skilled jobs in heavy industry previously held by men.
  - d. Yes, because women monopolized jobs in the shipbuilding industry during the war.

#### Objective 3

- 6. The Smith-Connally Act
  - a. reduced the powers of the National War Labor Board.
  - b. prohibited strikes and lockouts.
  - c. guaranteed cost-of-living increases to workers in defense-related industries.
  - d. authorized the president to seize and operate any strike-bound plant deemed necessary to the national security.

#### Objective 4

- 6. What impact did the Second World War have on American families?
  - a. There was a significant decline in the number of babies born out of wedlock.
  - b. There was a significant decline in the number of marriages.
  - c. There was a more restrictive sexual-morality code throughout the nation.
  - d. There was a significant increase in the divorce rate.

#### Objective 5

- 7. Which of the following is the major reason for the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War?
  - a. Criminal behavior
  - b. Evidence of disloyalty to the government of the United States
  - c. Their ethnic origin
  - d. Their economic challenge to white businesses

#### Objective 5

- 8. In response to Nazi persecution of the Jews, the United States
  - a. did not act in a decisive manner until the creation of the War Refugee Board in 1944.
  - b. relaxed immigration requirements in the mid-1930s in order to allow Jewish refugees free entry into the United States.
  - c. cooperated closely with the British in opening Palestine to Jewish refugees.
  - d. bombed the gas chambers at Nordhausen toward the end of the war.

**Objective 6**

9. Those who served in the U.S. armed forces during the Second World War
  - a. often became less prejudiced and less provincial because of associations with people of differing backgrounds.
  - b. found that the technical training they received in the military was useless in civilian life.
  - c. usually received no training before being sent into combat.
  - d. were given no background information on the history and culture of the places to which they were sent.

**Objectives 2 and 7**

10. As a result of the Teheran Conference, the Allies
  - a. reached agreement on launching Operation Overlord.
  - b. agreed to launch an attack against North Africa.
  - c. reluctantly decided to recognize the pro-Nazi Vichy French regime in North Africa.
  - d. made plans for the battle for Stalingrad.

**Objective 7**

11. A major factor that influenced the agreements at Yalta was
  - a. Roosevelt's ill health.
  - b. dissension between Roosevelt and Churchill over German reparations.
  - c. the military positions of the Allies.
  - d. Stalin's insistence that China be recognized as a major power.

**Objective 8**

13. Which of the following is true concerning President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan?
  - a. Truman believed it was the only way the United States could win the war in the Pacific.
  - b. Truman believed that a quick American victory against Japan would allow the United States to concentrate on defeating Hitler.
  - c. In the meeting of the Allies at the Potsdam Conference, Truman convinced Churchill and Stalin that use of the atomic bomb was the quickest and most humane way to defeat Japan.
  - d. Truman's decision fit into the U.S. strategy of using machines rather than men to wage the war.

**Objective 9**

14. Which of the following countries suffered the most casualties as a result of the Second World War?
  - a. Great Britain
  - b. the United States
  - c. Japan
  - d. the Soviet Union

**Objective 9**

15. Which of the following countries emerged from the Second World War more powerful than it had been when it entered the war?
  - a. Great Britain
  - b. the United States

- c. Japan
- d. Russia

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

### Objective 3

1. Discuss the various responsibilities assumed by the federal government as coordinator and overseer of America's war effort and evaluate its performance.

### Objective 3

2. Discuss the trend toward increased size in American industry during the course of the Second World War.

### Objective 4

3. Discuss the impact of the Second World War on women in American society.

### Objectives 4 and 5

4. Discuss the impact of the Second World War on nonwhite Americans.

### Objective 5

5. Discuss the nature and purpose of the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War. How did the Supreme Court respond to the policy?

### Objective 5

6. Explain the response of the United States to the persecution of European Jews during the Second World War.

### Objective 6

7. Explain the impact of military life and wartime experiences on American service people.

### Objective 8

8. Examine and assess President Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb.

## ANSWERS

### Multiple-Choice Questions

1.
  - b. Correct. As a result of Operation Magic, American experts deciphered the secret Japanese code. With prior knowledge of Japanese plans, American forces sank four of Japan's aircraft carriers in the Battle of Midway and broke the enemy's momentum in the Pacific.
  - a. No. The United States did not destroy Japan's merchant marine as a result of the Battle of Midway.
  - c. No. The Battle of Midway did not make Hawai'i more vulnerable to attack.
  - d. No. The Battle of Midway did not cause Roosevelt to harbor fears of Japanese victory.
2.
  - c. Correct. Factories had to be converted from production of consumer goods to production of war materiel. The War Production Board successfully oversaw this task and in doing so was responsible for allocating resources and coordinating production among U.S. factories.
  - a. No. Cooperation between government and business was essential for successful execution of the war effort. As a result, the government guaranteed that companies would be exempt from antitrust prosecution during the war.
  - b. No. Since the government had to produce war materiel in the shortest time possible, competitive bidding was usually not possible. Although some attempts were made to award contracts to small businesses, most government contracts were awarded to big businesses.
  - d. No. The WPB was not responsible for analyzing the military situation. The WPB concentrated its efforts on the home front rather than on the military front.
3.
  - b. Correct. Since most government contracts were awarded to big corporations, the dominance of those corporations increased. Furthermore, the trend toward consolidation in agriculture also accelerated during the war because the expense of farm machinery led to a decline in the number of family farms.
  - a. No. The U.S. government had to produce war materiel as quickly as possible and, in doing so, did not attempt to increase competition among American industries. Furthermore, the government exempted companies from antitrust prosecution during the war; and therefore the government did not break up large manufacturing units.
  - c. No. During the Second World War the government poured massive sums of money into the economy. This may be seen in the increase of the national debt from \$49 billion in 1941 to \$259 billion in 1945.
  - d. No. Heavy industry remained in private hands.

4.
  - a. Correct. Some 1.5 million African Americans moved to industrial cities in the North and West during the war. Having moved into areas where they could exercise the right to vote, the political power of blacks in national, state, and local elections increased.
  - b. No. Blacks continued to experience political, economic, and social discrimination during World War II.
  - c. No. Overall, the economic position of African Americans improved during World War II.
  - d. No. African Americans eagerly participated in and supported the American war effort.
5.
  - b. Correct. “We Can Do It!” read the caption on the most famous Rosie the Riveter poster distributed during the Second World War. Therefore, women were encouraged to help the war effort by taking jobs that men in the service left behind. In fact, many women did take advantage of new employment opportunities during the war. However, the Rosie the Riveter image does not accurately portray women in the work force because only 16 percent of working women held jobs in defense plants, and they held only 4.4 percent of jobs classified as “skilled.”
    - a. No. Women were allowed to work in defense plants during the Second World War.
    - c. No. Women in the workforce held only 4.4 percent of jobs classified as “skilled” during the war years.
    - d. No. Women did not monopolize jobs in the shipbuilding industry during the war.
6.
  - d. Correct. This act, passed over President Roosevelt’s veto, broadened the power of the president in handling labor disputes in war-related industries.
    - a. No. Under the Smith-Connally Act, the NLRB’s powers were broadened to include the legal authority to settle labor disputes until the end of the war.
    - b. No. Although the act established a mandatory thirty-day cooling-off period before a strike could be called in a war-related industry, it did not prohibit strikes and made no reference to lockouts (the shutdown of a plant to bring workers to terms).
    - c. No. The Smith-Connally Act did not guarantee cost-of-living increases to workers in defense-related industries.
6.
  - d. Correct. The divorce rate increased from 16 divorces per 1,000 marriages in 1940 to 27 divorces per 1,000 marriages in 1944.
    - a. No. During the war the number of babies born out of wedlock increased from .7 percent of all births to 1 percent of all births.
    - b. No. The number of marriages increased during the war from 73 per 1,000 unmarried women in 1939 to 93 per 1,000 unmarried women in 1944.
    - c. No. If anything, there seemed to be a relaxation of sexual morality on the home front during the war. As the text says, “Many young men and women, caught up in the emotional intensity of war, behaved in ways they never would have in peacetime.”

7. c. Correct. Japanese Americans, most of whom were native-born citizens, were interned in “relocation centers” because of their Japanese descent.
- a. No. The evidence does not support the conclusion that Japanese Americans were interned because of criminal behavior. Charges of criminal behavior were never brought against any Japanese Americans; none was ever indicted or tried for espionage, treason, or sedition.
- b. No. Japanese Americans were not engaged in treasonable activities and did not display disloyalty toward the U.S. government.
- d. No. Although many of those who were engaged in economic competition with Japanese Americans spoke in favor of internment, this competition was not the major reason for that action.
8. a. Correct. Both U.S. immigration policy and the voyage of the *St. Louis* (see Chapter 26) indicate reluctance by the United States to deal decisively with the Jewish refugee problem. Decisive action was not taken until 1944, when Roosevelt created the War Refugee Board.
- b. No. The United States refused to relax its immigration rules and restrictions. As a result many Jewish refugees were turned away because they did not have the legal documents required.
- c. No. The British refused to open Palestine to Jewish refugees.
- d. No. The death camp at Nordhausen was not bombed by U.S. forces.
9. a. Correct. Many soldiers who had never seen the world beyond their own cities, farms, or neighborhoods came into contact with other Americans and with peoples from other cultures. As a result of these new associations, many became less prejudiced and less provincial.
- b. No. In many instances, the technical training that soldiers received in the military served to foster their ambitions and to give them skills that made them more employable in the postwar years.
- c. No. Soldiers went through basic training in which they learned combat skills. In addition, many received advanced training in specialty areas through the military’s technical schools.
- d. No. Many soldiers were given orientation lectures and booklets that introduced them to the historical backgrounds and social customs of the foreign nations in which they served.
10. a. Correct. Meeting at Teheran in December 1943, the Allies agreed, at the insistence of Roosevelt and Stalin, to open the long-delayed second front. In return, Stalin agreed that Russia would enter the war in the Pacific once Germany was defeated.
- b. No. The North Africa campaign began in November 1942 and ended in Allied victory in May 1943. The Teheran Conference was held in December 1943.
- c. No. Although it is true that General Eisenhower recognized the pro-Nazi Vichy regime in French North Africa, he did so at the time of the Allied invasion of North Africa, which was some thirteen months prior to the Teheran Conference.
- d. No. The battle for Stalingrad ended in Russian victory in January 1943, eleven months before the Teheran Conference.
11. c. Correct. Because of the military positions of the Allied armies, the United States and Great Britain still needed the Soviet Union to win the war. This, and the fact that Russia occupied Eastern Europe, greatly affected decisions at Yalta.
- a. No. Although Roosevelt was physically ill while attending the Yalta Conference, the evidence indicates that he was mentally alert and that his health was not a factor in the decisions reached.

- b. No. Stalin, rather than Churchill, argued in favor of setting a precise figure for German reparations. Roosevelt and Churchill wanted to determine Germany's ability to pay before agreeing on a figure. Ultimately, the United States and Russia, without British acceptance, agreed to a rough figure of \$20 billion as a basis for discussion in the future.
- d. No. Recognition of China as a major power was an American demand, not a Russian demand.

13. **Error! Reference source not found.** d. Correct. The United States preferred to use machinery to wage the war because doing so usually kept American casualties to a minimum. Beyond the fact that the use of machines was part of U.S. war strategy, Truman decided to drop the bomb for several reasons: (1) it would save American lives by ending the war quickly; (2) it might deter future aggression; (3) it might prevent Soviet entry into the war in the Pacific, thus preventing the Soviet Union from having a role in the reconstruction of postwar Asia; and (4) in the face of U.S. power, it might cause the Soviet Union to make concessions in Eastern Europe.

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Comment: DAG--fix numbering

- a. No. Truman knew that victory over Japan was virtually assured and did not totally depend on use of the atomic bomb.
- b. No. Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, three months before the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6.
- c. No. The decision to use the atomic bomb was made unilaterally by the United States. Not only did the United States not consult the Allies, but at Potsdam Truman chose not to tell the Soviet Union of the successful atomic test in the New Mexico desert.
14. d. Correct. The Soviet Union lost some 21 million people in the Second World War. As a result, security was Russia's primary interest in the postwar era.
- a. No. About 357,000 Britons died as a result of the Second World War, but the British did not suffer the highest number of casualties in the war.
- b. No. About 405,000 Americans died as a result of the Second World War, but this figure was far lower than the number of war dead in other countries.
- c. No. Although the Japanese lost some 2 million people in the war, this loss was ten times less than the casualties experienced by the country with the highest number of war dead.
15. b. Correct. The United States was the only power to emerge from the Second World War more powerful than when it entered.
- a. No. Great Britain came out of the Second World War with far less power than when it entered the war. As a result, the British Empire was quite vulnerable.
- c. No. Japan lay in ruins at the end of World War II.
- d. No. The Soviet Union suffered enormously as a result of the war and emerged less powerful than when it entered.