

US History

World War II - Europe

Learning Target:

I can analyze how WWII impacted the American economy, government, civilian life, and produced discrimination.

2. Life at Home

World War II & The Economy

US economy switched from a peacetime economy to a wartime economy

Examples of this switch:

- Increased industrial production
- No labor strikes
- War bonds sold to raise money

Major area of growth in the US economy was industrial production

Factories:

- People migrated to cities to find work
- Popular destinations included shipyards on the Gulf and Pacific coasts
- Car production suspended to build items needed for war (planes, tanks, etc . . .)
- Increased production led to a massive economic boom ending the depression

Farms:

- Produced record amounts of food to supply Americans at home and Allies overseas
- Farm production increased despite losing labor to the factories

World War II & The Government

The US government greatly expanded by creating numerous agencies to coordinate the war

Office of War Mobilization:

- Coordinated all government agencies
- Diverted resources from consumer goods to the military (Nylon for parachutes)

War Production Board:

- Converted existing factories to wartime production and built new factories when needed
- Assigned raw materials to industries that needed them the most

World War II & Civilian Life

Media was often used to keep morale high on the home front

- Movie stars produced war movies and advertised for war bonds
- Office of War Information kept war news positive
- Music was patriotic and sentimental (God Bless America & White Christmas)

Americans were often asked to limit their consumption of consumer goods for the war

- Less luxuries and necessities were consumed
- Victory gardens grown to help limit food consumption
- Cars not produced and women's nylons limited for nylon for parachutes

World War II and Women (Rosie the Riveter)

Women who had been discouraged from working were now asked to replace men in the factories

- 1940-1944 the number of women working increased by 6 million
- Work seen as temporary until the men came home from war - patriotic duty
- First chance for many women to work outside the home
- Gave many women pride and satisfaction and many would not want to give up their jobs

World War II & Discrimination

African American discrimination continued in the workplace and military

Workplace:

- Increased opportunity but lower pay and bad working conditions

Military:

- Openly segregated armed forces
- Not allowed to serve in Navy as soldiers when war started (eventually changed)

Japanese Americans faced discrimination through internment camps

Internment:

- The forced relocation and imprisonment of Japanese Americans on the West Coast
- About 119,000 Japanese Americans lived on West Coast after Pearl Harbor
- Due to strong anti-Japanese sentiment the government issued orders to remove Japanese Americans from the West Coast to detention camps in the Midwest
- Internment lasted for many to the end of the war
- No evidence of disloyalty ever existed during the war

Japanese American Soldiers:

- Patriotism and desired to prove accusations of disloyalty wrong inspired many to enlist
- The 442nd - a Japanese American unit, became one of the most decorated units in Europe