The World at War, 1937-1945
Chapter 24
The Road to War

- The Great Depression led to anti-democratic movements in Italy, Germany, Japan, and Spain (Mussolini, Hitler, Tojo, Franco).
- Fascism: disparaged parliamentary government, independent labor movements, and individual rights. Promoted strong nationalism and imperialism.

The Rise of Fascism

- Germany severely punished by Treaty of Versailles
- Japan and Italy undermined by Treaty

Japan and Italy

- Japan occupied Manchuria (1931); Full scale invasion in China (1937)
- Italy denied claim of lands after WW1. Invasion of Ethiopia

Hitler’s Germany

- Fear of communism, unemployment, and labor unrest fueled the Nazi Party
- Mein Kampf
- Hitler (1933) rearmed Germany; Rome-Berlin Axis, alliance with Japan
- No action by France or England
Isolationists versus Interventionists

- Republicans claimed that arms manufacturers influenced Wilson to enter WW1
- Neutrality Acts of 1935-
- Banned loans to belligerent nations in 1936
- “Cash and carry” 1937
- Conservative groups lead isolationist sentiment
- Some pacifist groups were isolationist

The Popular Front-
- American Communist Party (100,000) opposed fascism

The Failure of Appeasement

- Hitler annexed: Austria and Czechoslovakia (Munich Conference)
- France and England appeasement
- In 1939 Hitler launched “blitzkrieg” on Poland
  - Effect-
  - Reaction by Roosevelt-
- Germany annexed: Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Luxemburg, Belgium, and France
War Arrives

• Congress in 1939 allowed sale of arms to Allies
• Traded 50 destroyers from WW1 to England
• Defense spending and peacetime draft
• Lend and Lease Policy in 1941
• Axis threat to democracy
• Germany invaded Soviet Union in 1941
• In 1941 Nazi U-boats and American Navy were exchanging fire in Atlantic
The Attack on Pearl Harbor

• U.S. refused to intervene after “Rape of Nanking” in 1937
• Japanese troops occupied French-Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos)
  • Effect:
    • Japanese reaction in 1941…
    • U.S. declaration of war
Organizing for Victory

• Dramatic increase in federal power for the world effort
• War Powers Act (1941)
• Imperial presidency-

Financing the War

• Profits of American business nearly doubled
• Farm outputs grew one-third
• Revenue Act of 1942-
  • Paid for half of the war costs
• Borrowed 50% from wealthy and bonds
• Government employees grew x 4; more than New Deal
• War Production Board-
  • Deals with major corporations only
• Finances were important troops
• Suspension of anti-trust laws
Mobilizing the American Fighting Force

- Unprecedented number of enlisted men and women (15 million)
- They came from diverse backgrounds
- Black soldiers were segregated and given menial duties
- Native American and Mexican Americans were not segregated
  - “Code talkers” were very effective
- Women’s Army Corps (WAC)
- Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES)
- No combat duty, “women’s jobs”, and unequal pay
Workers and the War Effort

- Critical labor shortage led to opportunities for women and black people
- Unions had negotiation leverage

Rosie the Riveter

- “Longing won’t bring him back sooner…GET A WAR JOB!”
- Airplane riveters, ship welders, and drill-press operators
- Women were 36% of labor force in 1945
- Sexual harassment and lower wages
- After the war, guess what happened to those jobs?

Wartime Civil Rights

- Anti-Semitism and Jim Crow parallel
- A. Phillip Randolph’s march on Washington (1941)
- Reaction from FDR
  - Executive Order 8802
  - Segregation in military continued
  - Tuskegee Airmen
- NAACP grew 9x to 450,000 members in 1945
• Mexican Americans formed organizations to combat discrimination
• The U.S. used cheap Mexican labor to increase profit

Politics in Wartime
• “GI Bill”/Servicemen's Readjustment Act-
• FDR won election in 1944 with 53% popular vote
  • Harry Truman was added to Democrat ticket
  • VP Henry Wallace was dropped because he was “too liberal”
Life on the Home Front

“For the Duration”

- Office of War Information (OWI) disseminated news and promoted patriotism
- Shortage of consumer goods
- Meat, butter, sugar and other food regulations
- Higher wages for workers

Migration and the Wartime City

- About 15 million Americans migrated to different cities/states. Why?
  - California

Racial Conflict

- Migration of one million African Americans to the north and Midwest led to racial conflict, including race riots in more than a hundred cities.
  - CA, IL, MI, OH, and PA
  - Detroit riot (1943)- incited by Southern whites and Polish Americans, leaving 34 dead and hundreds injured
- “Zoot Suit” riot- four day riot between Mexican Americans and Anglo servicemen in Los Angeles (1943)
Gay and Lesbian Community Formation

• Widespread hostility toward the gay community kept them silent.
• Religious morality and social convention
• During the war, however, cities such as NY, San Francisco, LA, Chicago, and Kansas City, Dallas, and Buffalo developed vibrant gay neighborhoods

Japanese Removal

• After Pearl Harbor discrimination against Asian Americans intensified
• Japanese Americans had no political power
• Executive Order 9066 (1942)-
  • Two-thirds were Nisei
  • CA, AZ, UT, CO, WY, ID, AK
• Congress issued public apology and paid reparations in 1988 to 80,000 surviving Japanese Americans who were relocated
Fighting and Winning the War

Wartime Aims and Tensions

• Churchill (England) and Roosevelt agreed to open a second front in France within six months in return for Stalin’s promise to join the fight against Japan.

The War in Europe

D-Day

• Allied invasion of France D-Day, June 6, 1944
• 1.5 million soldiers liberated Paris by September
• Germany was on the defense for the rest of the war
• April 30, 1945, Russian troops surrounded Berlin, Hitler committed suicide; on May 7, Germany formally surrendered
The Holocaust

• Nazi genocide of 6 million Jews and 5 million Poles, Slavs, Gypsies, homosexuals and other “undesirables”

• Persecution began in 1930s, the U.S. was aware of the oppression, but anti-Semitism and anti-immigrant culture of U.S. restricted immigration (21,000)
  • SS St. Louis-

• War Refugee Board, established by FDR in 1944 helped 200,000 Jews move to safe havens in other countries

The War in the Pacific

• By 1942, Japan forced surrender of U.S. forces in the Philippines
  • Bataan “death march” caused the death of 10,000 U.S. POWs

• By 1945, victory over Japan was in sight after
  “island hopping” strategy, bombing of Japanese cities killing 330,000 civilians, and crippling economy

• FDR died of a cerebral hemorrhage in April 1945
  • VP Harry Truman became president
The Manhattan Project

- Harry Truman first learned of the Manhattan Project after the death of FDR.
- German scientists were also working on nuclear weapons
- Employed 120,000 people in 19 states
- Project hidden from VP, Congress, and American public
- Hiroshima (100,000) and Nagasaki (60,000) were bombed on August 6 and 9th of 1945. Why?
- Stalin’s spies knew about the project
- Japan official surrendered on August 10th and signed a formal surrender on September 2, 1945
Planning the Postwar World

- As victory was approaching, Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill met in Yalta.
- Friction between Roosevelt and Churchill over Indian independence
- Stalin insisted on control of Central and Eastern Europe (future Soviet Bloc)
- Division of Germany into 4 districts and partition of Berlin
- United Nations
  - Security Council- U.S., China, France, England, Soviet Union and six other rotating nations (General Assembly)
  - Five permanent members of the council have veto power over the others