Chapter 7 - The Great Depression and World War II

Introduction

The Great Depression was the worst economic downturn in American history. Most Americans believe that the great stock market crash of October 1929 started it all, but the crash simply exposed fundamental defects in America's "Return to Normalcy." The Great Depression is also synonymous with President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal polices to address the crisis, which, to be clear, was not only an economic crisis, but an emotional one too as many families lost their savings, jobs, and homes. The Depression was also an intellectual crisis as it cast a black cloud over the state of American capitalism and the role of government in not only the economy, but also in social and cultural life.

Ultimately, the legacies of Roosevelt's New Deal and the Depression can still be felt. Principal among such legacies, however, is disagreement about whether the New Deal aided or hurt the economic crisis. Specifically, many argue that it took World War II to pull America out of the Depression, especially thanks to a rise in employment correlating with war production, and that Roosevelt's New Deal did little to combat the enormity of the crisis.

These legacies and disagreements are at the heart of this chapter. They bleed into the more general course themes, as well as central questions and sub-themes, such as:

- "Modern America" whereby we will identify ways in which Roosevelt's New Deal helped redefine modern liberalism, built the modern federal welfare state, and extended regulation;
- "Triumph and Tragedy" whereby we will see the nation plunge into crisis amid a severe Depression that ravaged American families, but especially oppressed groups such as African Americans and Mexican Americans, then rise nobly to fight a war against totalitarianism and militarism against Germany and Japan;
- "Time, Continuity, and Change" whereby we will identify patterns of continuity, especially with the ongoing evolution of capitalism as well as the oppression of marginalized groups, and patterns of change, especially concerning how Roosevelt's New Deal played a key defining role in redefining American capitalism;
- "Diversity" whereby we will highlight the differing ramifications of the Depression, New Deal, and World War II for all residents, but especially African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, and women;
- "Identity" whereby central questions such as "Who is an American?," "What does it mean to be an American?," "What is freedom and liberty?," and "Who are they for?" characterize the effects of the Depression and World War II;
- "Society and Culture" whereby we will witness the effects of both Depression and World War II on American society and culture; and
- "Politics and Economy" whereby we will interrogate the political and economic causes and consequences of the Depression and America's entry into World War II.

Below is a brief outline for the chapter. We will begin our tour with understanding the causes of the Depression and its consequences. From there we will examine how Roosevelt attempted to address the crisis and how this affected different swathes of the American public. Finally, we will look at America's role in World War II, including its impact at home.

But before we continue, we must look at a few preliminary—but important—items:

- Chapter Goals;
- Chapter Themes and Central Questions/Sub-Themes;
- Chapter Objectives;
- Chapter Content Highlighted;
- Chapter Key Terms; and
- Chapter Outline.

Chapter Goals

In this chapter we are going to review the Depression in depth, from numerous causes to numerous consequences. Special attention will be given to how the crises affected marginalized groups, as well as how Roosevelt's New Deal attempted to fix the crisis but failed to offer meaningful relief to those most in need. We will conclude with highlighting America's role in World War II and how the war had a profound impact at home, especially on the economy.

Chapter Themes and Central Questions/Sub-Themes

- In what ways did America modernize/transform, or not? (Related to the General Course Theme of Modern America);
- In what ways can the legacies of the New Deal and World War II be interpreted as triumph? As tragedy? Does this alter based on race or gender? (Related to the General Course Theme of Triumph and Tragedy);
- What are some of the defining pieces of New Deal legislation; not only economic, but those that sought to reform American society and culture as well? (Related to the Course Central Question/Sub-Themes of Time, Continuity, and Change; Society and Culture; Politics and Economy; and the General Course Theme of Triumph and Tragedy);
- What were the ramifications of life in America during the Depression and World War II for African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, and women? (Related to the Course Central Question/Sub-Theme of Diversity; Identity; and Society and Culture; and the General Course Theme of Triumph and Tragedy); and
- Did America the New Deal provide more freedom for Americans? (Related to the Course Central Questions/Sub-Themes of Identity; Society and Culture; and Politics / Economy; and Diversity).

Chapter Objectives (Related to Core Values and Competencies)

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

- Identify correctly on a chapter quiz the causes and consequences of the Great Depression;
- Identify correctly on a chapter quiz key New Deal legislation and their effect upon the American people as much as on the American economy;
- Identify correctly on a chapter quiz America's entry in World War II and its effects domestically; and
- Participate in Module 7 activities and assessments that promote the course core values and competencies of Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, and/or Teamwork/Collaboration.

Chapter Content Highlighted

- Causes of the Great Depression
- Hoover and the Depression
- FDR and the New Deal
- New Deal Critics
- The Second New Deal
- Legacies of the New Deal
- World War II (Big Picture and Casualties)
- Lead Up to War (Fascism; War in Europe)
- U.S. Involvement
- The War at Home (Mobilization; Public Opinion; Women; African Americans; Mexican Americans; Japanese American Internment)

Chapter 7 Key Terms

- Stock Market
- Bear/Bull Market
- Great Crash
- Unemployment
- Unequal Distribution of Wealth and Income
- Overproduction
- Lack of Diversity in the American Economy
- Unequal Distribution of Corporate Power
- American Banking
- Speculation
- Margin
- International Trade
- Dawes Plan
- Changes to Family Life
- Hoovervilles
- Dust Bowl
- Okies/Arkies
- African Americans and the Depression
- Repatriation
- Asian Americans and the Depression
- Women and the Depression
- Voluntary Cooperation
- Bonus Army
- Fireside Chats
- 21st Amendment
- First Hundred Days
- Emergency Banking Act (1933)
- Economy Act 1933
- Federal Emergency Relief Act (1933)
- Civil Works Administration
- Federal securities Act
- Home Owners' Loan Act / Federal Housing Authority
- Banking Act of 1933
- Banking Act of 1935
- Alphabet Soup
- Civilian Conservation Corps
- Agricultural Adjustment Act
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- National Industrial Recovery Act
- Father Charles Coughlin
- Huey Long
- Second New Deal
- Social Security
- Works Progress Administration
- Court-Packing Plan
- Roosevelt Recession
- The Broker State
- African Americans and the New Deal
- Mexican Americans and the New Deal
- Women and the New Deal
- Frances Perkins
- Pearl Harbor
- Soviet Union Death Count
- Holocaust
- Firebombing
- The Atomic Bombs
- Fascism/Fascist Regimes
- Neutrality Acts
- Munich
- German-Soviet Pact
- Cash and Carry
- Lend-Lease
- Hemispheric Defense
- Europe First
- D-Day
- Island Hopping
- Office of Price Administration
- Rosie the Riveter
- Zoot Suit Riot
- Japanese American Internment

Chapter 7 Outline

I. Pretext for Depression
- A. Optimism and Prosperity
- B. That's Bull: From a Strong Market to a Weak Market
  - 1. Bull Market
  - 2. The Great Crash
  - 3. A Tumbling Economy

II. General Causes of the Great Depression
- A. Unequal Distribution of Wealth and Income
- B. Overproduction
- C. Too Big to Fail
  - 1. Lack of Diversification in the Economy
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- D. Bad Banking Policies and Practices
- E. International Trade

III. The Depression Escalates
- A. Some Stats
- B. Some Social Consequences
- C. Unemployment and Relief
- D. African American and the Depression
- E. Mexican Americans and the Depression
- F. Asian Americans and the Depression
- G. Women and the Depression

IV. Herbert Hoover and the Depression
- A. From Voluntary Cooperation to Intervention
- B. Protest
- C. The Election of 1932

V. FDR and the New Deal
- A. Basic Biography
- B. Restoring Confidence and Fixing Banking
- C. The Alphabet Soup
  - 1. Civilian Conservation Corps
  - 2. Agricultural Adjustment Act
  - 3. Tennessee Valley Authority
  - 4. National Industrial Recovery Act
- D. The New Deals
- E. The New Deal and its Critics
- F. The Second New Deal
  - 1. Social Security
  - 2. New Relief
- G. The New Deal Folding
  - 1. The Court Fight
  - 2. The Roosevelt Recession
- H. Legacies of the New Deal
  - 1. The Broker State

2. African Americans and the New Deal
3. Mexican Americans and the New Deal
4. Women and the New Deal
5. The New Deal and the National Economy
6. The New Deal and American Politics

VI. World War II

A. Big Picture
1. Timeline
2. Causalities
3. American Atrocities?

B. The Lead Up To War
1. Fascism
2. American Neutrality
3. The Failure of Munich

C. Fighting World War II
1. Before Pearl Harbor
2. After Pearl Harbor
3. American Involvement before Pearl Harbor
a. Neutrality-Lite
b. The Third Term Campaign
c. Neutrality Abandoned
4. American Involvement after Pearl Harbor
a. Europe First
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VII. The War at Home

A. The War Economy
B. Molding Public Opinion
C. Social Changes during the War
D. Women and World War II
E. African Americans and World War II
F. Mexican Americans and World War II
G. Japanese American Internment

VIII. Conclusion

A. Modern America
B. Triumph and Tragedy

Note that study guide terms are highlighted in red.

Hyperlinks are underlined and are usually highlighted in blue, but if they are a key term, then they are underlined as well but still appear in red.

Captions to images, maps, and other media are simply *italicized*.

I. Pretext for Depression

A. Optimism and Prosperity

The future looked rosy when Americans elected Herbert Hoover president in 1928. Most people believed that post World War 1 national prosperity would continue permanently. Hoover even said in his acceptance speech for the Republican nomination, "We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poorhouse is vanishing from among us." Others shared such optimism, because:

- Corporate profits had risen 62% between 1923 and 1929;
- Real GNP (Gross National Product) growth rose about 4.2% a year from 1920 to 1929;
- Prices fell about 11% from 1920 to 1921 and, minus a hiccup with the 1921 recession, stabilized throughout the 1920s; and
- The real weekly earnings from 1920 to 1929 for skilled and semiskilled male workers rose almost 12% (for female production workers more than 16%).

Hoover's prediction and these above stats proved temporary, however. The nation quickly fell into the worst economic crisis in its history. As a result, many faced unemployment with no prospect for a job. Many lost their homes, land, and other property. Many—too many—went homeless and hungry.

B. That's Bull: From a Strong Market to a Weak Market

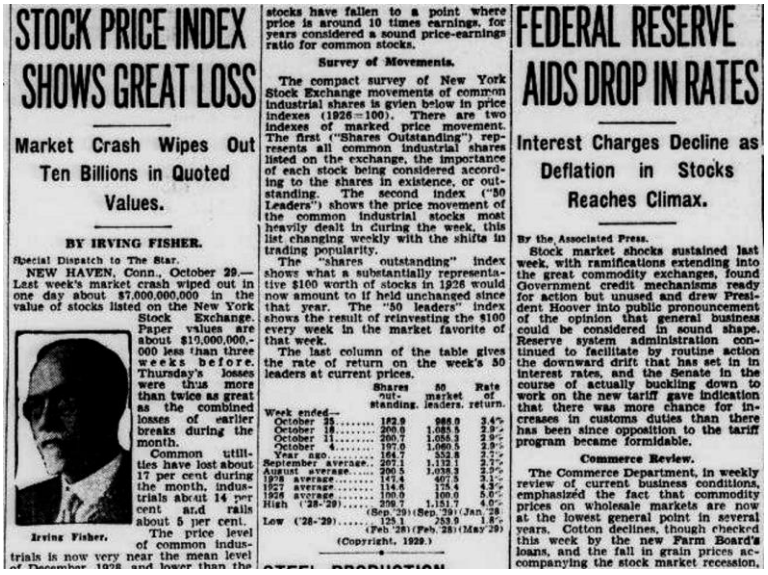
1. Bull Market

The 1920s saw stock prices reach new highs. The stock market, which is comprised of stock market exchanges, established a system for buying and selling shares of companies for money. This can be done by you and me, we can hire agents at a fee or percentage of profit, or it can be done by huge investors (stock buyers) and traders (share or stock traders). When the stock market experiences a long period of rising prices, which both feeds upon and feeds strong optimism, it's called a Bull Market. By the late 1920s, a prolonged bull market convinced many Americans to invest heavily in stocks. Millions lost out, however, when prices began to fall by late 1929. The great crash of October 1929, in fact, destroyed the great bull market as stock prices plummeted, creating a Bear Market (a market characterized by falling prices).

Chapter 7 - Figure 1: Photograph of the Floor of New York Stock Exchange, ca. January 1934. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USZ62-54055.

2. The Great Crash

Stock prices began a steady rise in early 1928 and continued for a year and a half. On Monday, October 20, 1929, however, the downward spiral to a bear market and Depression began. Stock prices declined sharply but recovered. It occurred again on Thursday, October 23 when a record 12.9 million shares exchanged hands. Another recovery took place, thanks to financier J. P. Morgan and other big banks who bought up stocks in hopes to restore public confidence. Then, on October 29, 1929, "Black Tuesday" hit and all efforts to save the healthy American stock market failed.



STOCK PRICE INDEX SHOWS GREAT LOSS

Market Crash Wipes Out Ten Billions in Quoted Values.

BY IRVING FISHER.

Special Dispatch to The Star.

NEW HAVEN, Conn., October 29.—Last week's market crash wiped out in one day about $7,000,000,000 in the value of stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Paper values are about $10,000,000,000 less than three weeks before. Thursday's losses were thus more than twice as great as the combined losses of earlier breaks during the month.

Common utilities have lost about 17 per cent during the month, industrials about 14 per cent and rails about 5 per cent.

The price level of common industrials is now very near the mean level

Irving Fisher.

stocks have fallen to a point where price is around 10 times earnings, for years considered a sound price-earnings ratio for common stocks.

Survey of Movements.

The compact survey of New York Stock Exchange movements of common industrial shares is given below in price indexes (1926=100). There are two indexes of marked price movement. The first ("Shares Outstanding") represents all common industrial shares listed on the exchange, the importance of each stock being considered according to the shares in existence, or outstanding. The second index ("50 Leaders") shows the price movement of the common industrial stocks most heavily dealt in during the week, this list changing weekly with the shifts in trading popularity.

The "shares outstanding" index shows what a substantially representative $100 worth of stocks in 1926 would now amount to if held unchanged since that year. The "50 leaders" index shows the result of reinvesting the $100 every week in the market favorite of that week.

The last column of the table gives the rate of return on the week's 50 leaders at current prices.

	Shares outstanding.	50 market leaders.	Rate of return.
Week ended—			
October 25	172.9	988.9	3.4%
October 18	200.0	1,085.5	2.9%
October 11	200.7	1,086.3	2.9%
October 4	197.0	1,060.5	2.9%
Year ago	164.7	852.8	2.7%
September average	207.1	1,122.1	2.7%
August average	200.5	1,038.3	2.5%
1928 average	147.4	807.5	3.1%
1927 average	114.6	575.4	4.3%
1926 average	100.0	500.0	5.0%
High ('28-'29)	206.7 (Sep. '29)	1,151.7 (Sep. '29)	4.0% (Jan. '28
Low ('28-'29)	125.1 (Feb '28)	753.9 (Feb. '28)	1.8% (May '29)

(Copyright, 1929.)

FEDERAL RESERVE AIDS DROP IN RATES

Interest Charges Decline as Deflation in Stocks Reaches Climax.

By the Associated Press.

Stock market shocks sustained last week, with ramifications extending into the great commodity exchanges, found Government credit mechanisms ready for action but unused and drew President Hoover into public pronouncement of the opinion that general business could be considered in sound shape. Reserve system administration continued to facilitate by routine action the downward drift that has set in in interest rates, and the Senate in the course of actually buckling down to work on the new tariff gave indication that there was more chance for increases in customs duties than there has been since opposition to the tariff program became formidable.

Commerce Review.

The Commerce Department, in weekly review of current business conditions, emphasized the fact that commodity prices on wholesale markets are now at the lowest general point in several years. Cotton declines, though checked this week by the new Farm Board's loans, and the fall in grain prices accompanying the stock market recession,

Chapter 7 - Figure 2: News about the Stock Market Crash in the Evening Star (Washington, D.C.), October 29, 1929, p. 12. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Library of Congress.

Black Tuesday was the single most devastating financial day in the history of the New York Stock Exchange. Prices collapsed within hours and wiped out all the financial gains of the previous year. About $14 billion was lost that day alone. Between October 29 and November 13 over $30 billion vanished.

3. A Tumbling Economy

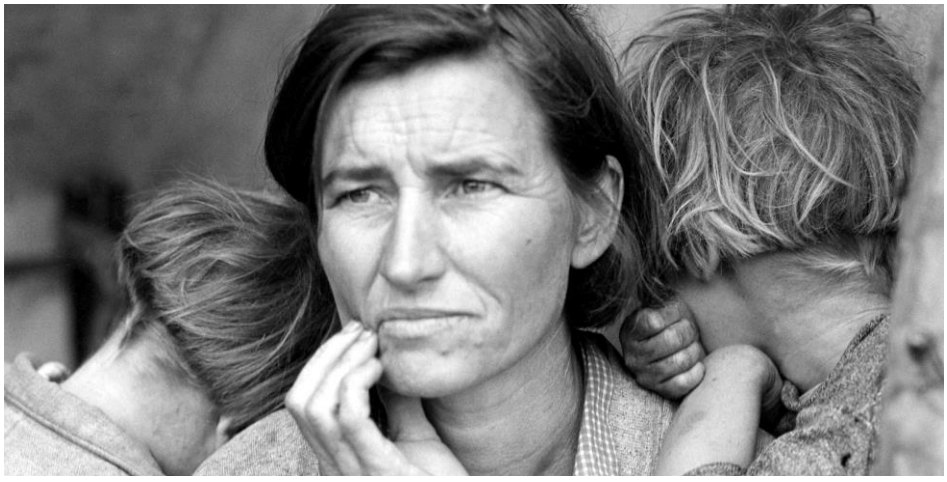
The market remained deeply depressed for more than four years and did not fully recover for over a decade. Not surprisingly, the Depression ended the boom in industrial production (it fell 46% by 1932) and construction, which helped fuel prosperity during the 1920s. Banking collapsed as well. During the first two years of the Depression more than 3,000 banks—about 10% of the nation's total—failed. Keep in mind, at that time, the government did not insure bank deposits; therefore, if a bank collapsed, you lost your money!

But, most of all, the Depression created massive unemployment. Unemployment rose at some points to nearly 25% of the work force and never fell much below 15% at any time between 1930 and the beginning of World War II:

1929 = 3.2%	1932 = 23.6%	1935 = 20.1%	1938 = 19.0%	1941 = 9.5%
1930 = 8.7%	1933 = 24.9%	1936 = 16.9%	1939 = 17.2%	1942 = 4.7 %
1931 = 15.9%	1934 = 21.7%	1937 = 14.3%	1940 = 14.6	1944 = 1.2%

II. General Causes of the Great Depression

Many people since 1929 have believed that the stock market crash caused the Depression. This is extremely misleading. This is precisely because the stock market has historically been used as the chief indicator of the nation's fiscal health. While the crash of 1929 undeniably contributed to the Depression, it was just one of several things that threw America into an economic tailspin. Most historians now agree that several factors account for the severity of the crisis, even if there is considerable disagreement about which was the most important.



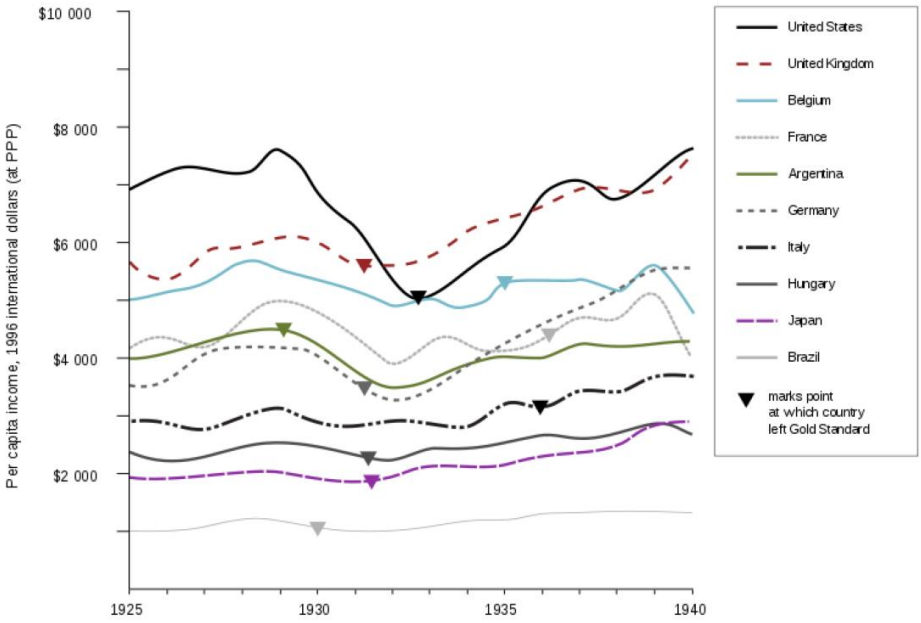
Chapter 7 - Figure 3: Famous 1936 photograph by Dorothea Lange of a destitute, thirty-two-year-old mother of seven that captures the agonies of the Great Depression. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-DIG-fsa-8b29516.

A. Unequal Distribution of Wealth and Income

A major cause of the Depression was the massive unequal distribution of wealth and income. Remember, rising wages defined the 1920s. But income distributed unequally. Recall that gaps in the share of national income had increased since the latter 19th century. The 1% of the population at the very top had incomes 650% greater than those 11% at the bottom. The top 10% of the nation's population received 40% of the nation's disposable income by 1929. This meant a tremendous concentration of wealth in the hands of only a few.

The economy needs a steady infusion of dollars and cents that come from spending. This ensures the consumption of goods and services, which in turn allows employers to hire (more). Laborers thus get paid (more) and can better participate in the economy. All this meant that continued prosperity largely depended upon the spending habits of the few wealthy. Spending, however, is susceptible to economic fluctuations. The wealthy are not immune. If anything, they were much less stable than people's expenses on daily necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. Indeed, the wealthy tended to make investments with their money rather than spend lavishly. They invested in the stock market and/or savings rather than spend on goods and services. Therefore, when the economy tumbled, both big spending and investments collapsed.

The gross misdistribution of purchasing power and a weakness in consumer demand resulted from the unequal distribution of income and wealth. Even in 1929, after nearly a decade of sustained economic growth, more than half the families in America lived on the edge of or below the minimum subsistence level. Simply too poor to buy the goods the industrial economy produced.



Chapter 7 - Figure 4: Graph charting income per capita throughout the Great Depression. Triangles mark points at which nations suspended gold convertibility and/or devalued their currency against gold. The Great Depression in Facts and Figures, Wikipedia Commons.

B. Overproduction

During the 1920s, while the economy seemed healthy, businesses continued to expand their facilities (factories, warehouses, equipment, and more) and ramped up production (i.e., overproduction). They assumed the surplus would eventually sell. They also continued to pour their profits into more facilities; not into labor or lower consumer prices. Overproduction and expanding facilities created a picture of a booming market for businesses and investors alike, however. Companies began publishing more stocks (not regulated) and investors kept buying them up (often on margin; discussed more below). Yet, by 1929, such investments in industry created more plant space than could profitably be used. Expanded factories consequently began producing even more goods than consumers could ever possibly purchase.

The market was being flooded. On the one hand, from businesses' point of view, they were now experiencing less demand for their products. They then began laying off workers, which depleted mass purchasing power further. On the other hand, even expanding industries often reduced their work forces because of new, less labor-intensive technologies. This, too, exhausted mass purchasing power further.

C. Too Big To Fail

1. Lack of Diversification in the Economy

Another major cause of the Depression was a lack of diversification in the American economy. Continued economic prosperity became dependent on only a few basic industries, notably construction and automobiles. For example, expenditures on construction fell from $11 billion to under $9 billion between 1926 and 1929. Automobile sales fell by more than a third in the first nine months of 1929 alone. Newer industries did emerge to offset some of the decline, however, such as petroleum, chemicals, plastics, and other products meant to service a consuming public. Nevertheless, these industries had not yet fully developed to compensate when construction and auto sales deteriorated. Without investments in viable new industries, recessions and depressions are difficult to avoid. This is what we mean by too big to fail. When one industry with so many investors, laborers, and sales suffers, the entire economy suffers too.

2. The Unequal Distribution of Corporate Power

You already know about the ongoing movement of business consolidations and mergers since the late 1870s. This was the era, recall, of massive monopolies and trusts. Even during World War I competitors merged into huge corporations such as General Electric. Such large corporations, however, eliminated competition. This is how we get companies that are too big to fail as well. In 1929, for instance, 200 of the biggest corporations controlled 50% of the nation's corporate wealth. So, remember, the concentration of corporate wealth meant that if just a few companies went under, the whole economy would suffer. So, between 1929 and 1933, 100,000 businesses failed. Corporate profits fell from $10 billion to $1 billon as, recall, unemployment skyrocketed to over 20%.

D. Bad Banking Policies and Practices

A bad and unregulated credit structure within American banking also triggered the Depression. Traditionally, how do banks make money?

- Fees for services;
- Later we will see them invest in other assets like land; and
- Interest on paybacks to lending your money to borrowers.

So here's the problem. Many farmers were deeply in debt. Their land mortgages were high, but their crop prices were too low to allow them to pay off what they owed. Small banks, especially those tied to the agricultural economy, were in constant financial trouble in the 1920s as their customers defaulted on loans and many of them failed.

Large banks were in trouble too. Some of the nation's biggest banks were investing recklessly in the stock market or making unwise loans to speculators buying on margin. When the stock market crashed, many of these banks suffered losses greater than they could absorb.

Side note: Speculation and Margin

Speculation in the stock market simply means someone (i.e., a speculator) is buying stock and selling quickly (whether it rises or falls). With an increase in speculation prior to the crash, this also meant more money in the market and, as such, a rise in stock prices generally—meaning they were often inflated above their real value.

Margin: Speculators took short term loans from banks, hoping to profit and, with such, pay back their loan and make money to boot. If they lost, then they lost, possibly not even paying back the bank and defaulting on their loans; hence they sold quickly to minimize potential losses. With the crash, however, they simply could not pay off their debts.

Keep in mind: speculators—via loans and buying on margin—are using other people's money. So, with the crash, millions of people, whether speculating or not, lost money.

So what?

Well, as mentioned, without any legal requirement to maintain enough money to cover the savings of their clients, if a bank failed, and the money disappeared, then your money disappeared too. Also, banks that don't exist or that are hurt severely can no longer make loans to small businesses or lend money to families seeking to survive till the next paycheck. Families and individuals without actual money or hopes for credit can't spend money.

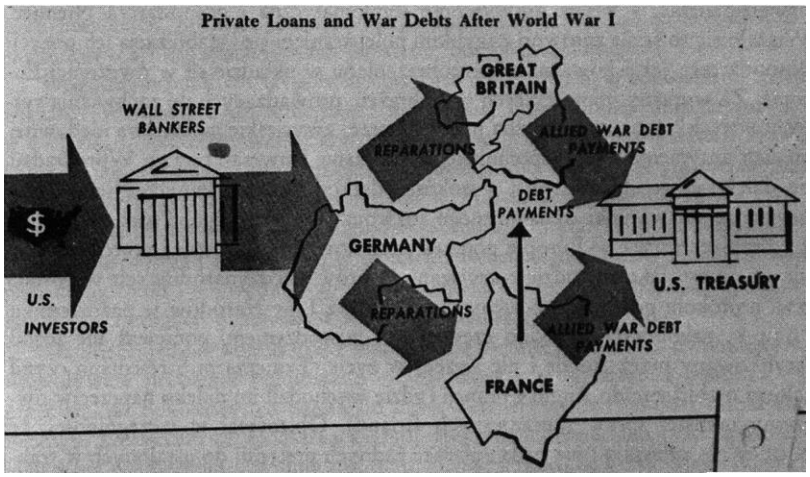
In 1929, 650 banks failed! In 1930, 1,350 more failed! In all, 9,000 banks failed between 1930 and 1933—4,000 came in 1933 alone! Also, by 1933, depositors had lost $140 billion.

E. International Trade

Another cause of the Depression was America's international trade practice. First, by the late 1920s, European demand for American goods began to decline. That was partly because European industry and agriculture finally became more productive after the destruction of World War I. Others (e.g., Germany) were having financial difficulties so severe that they could not afford to buy goods from overseas. For context, when World War I ended, European allies owed large sums of money to the U.S.— a total of $10 billion. (Britain owed the most at about $4.2 billion, France at about $3.4 billion, and Italy at about $1.6 billion.) These sums, of course, were simply too large to be repaid out of their shattered economies. That was one reason why the Allies had insisted on reparation payments from Germany and Austria—to the tune of about $33 billion (about $402 billion today). The logic is simple: they thought reparations would provide them with a way to pay off their own debts to the U.S.

Nevertheless, Germany and Austria were in financial trouble. They had no way to pay their reparations debt. Presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover also refused to forgive or reduce the debts owed America. Combined with high tariff policies (protectionism), other countries simply could not afford to pay their debts. This led to a collapse of many of their own markets.

In 1924, American banker Charles Dawes outlined what came to be known as the Dawes Plan. It was a reparations agreement under which Americans banks and financers issued bonds to private investors on behalf of Germany, which agreed to pay them back when the money became due. (So, American financiers loan to Germany so that Germany can pay European nations who could then pay the U.S. government!) But when the first batch of bonds came due in 1928, Germany defaulted. So in June 1929, a new plan was enacted, floating more American-backed bonds and reducing Germany's payments. But when Adolf Hitler rose to power in 1933, he cancelled all reparations. While Germany will repay its debts years later (2010), American banks and investors lost money, worsening the economic crisis.



Chapter 7 - Figure 5: Flow chart of loans and war debts payment from American banks via Germany, England, and France back to America after adopting Dawes' plan in 1924. Henryk Zieliński, Historia Polski [History of Poland], 1864-1939 *(Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawn: Naukowe, 1968), 127, available on Wikipedia Commons.*

III. The Depression Escalates

A. Some Stats

Clearly the stock market crash did not cause the Depression alone, it had plenty of help. And during the next four years, between 1930 and 1933, the crisis worsened. For instance, with so many banks failing, the total money supply fell by a third between 1930 and 1933. The declining money supply meant a decline in purchasing power and the devaluing of the dollar. As a result businesses cut back on production and laid off workers.

The GDP (value of all the finished goods and services produced within a country) plummeted from over $104 billion in 1929 to $76.4 billion in 1931 (a 25 % decline in just two years). The low came in 1933 with $56.4 million. In 1929, American businesses spent $16.2 billion for long-term assets such as land, machinery, and factories to be used in the operation of their businesses. In 1933, they invested only a third of a billion. And, recall, that by 1932, at least 25% of the American work force was unemployed. Another third of the work force received cuts in wages, hours, or both.

B. Some Social Consequences

The Depression also caused dramatic changes to family life as young couples, worried about their finances, put off having children (the fertility rate declined by nearly 20% from 1928 1935). The Depression also made couples somewhat less likely to divorce. People, especially women, remained in unhappy marriages rather than risk financial ruin by leaving their spouse. The average divorce rate (per 1,000 people) in the 1920s was 1.6. From 1930 to 1933 it dropped to 1.4 (worse years of Depression). Sadly, suicide rates, which averaged 12.1 per 100,000 people in the 1920s, jumped to 18.9 the year of the crash. The suicide rate remained higher than normal throughout the remainder of the Depression (15.4).

With so many out of work, homelessness skyrocketed. One estimate places the homeless at 1.5 million during the Depression. The homeless were not just out of work men, but entire families. Famously, homelessness during the Depression led to the emergence of shanty towns typically on the outskirts of cities, called Hoovervilles—derogatorily named after President Hoover. The homeless came together in these crude communities. They slept in tents or in shacks made out of cardboard or other flimsy materials.

Chapter 7 - Figure 6: Photograph of a Hooverville in Seattle, Washington between 1932 and 1937. Washington State Archives, State Library Photograph Collection, 1851-1990, AR-07809001-ph001225.

C. Unemployment and Relief

Unemployment was nothing new. Americans were used to periods of unemployment. Nevertheless, no one was prepared for the depth and length of unemployment. Remember the idea of rugged individualism as well—pick yourself up by the bootstraps? Many Americans believed that every individual was responsible for their own fate. Thus, and this is key, there was no larger federal safety net available to workers before New Deal legislation began to pass. In fact, unemployment and poverty were signs of personal failure (i.e., the Protestant Work Ethic).

An increasing number of families could turn to state and local public relief systems, however. They could at least get a meal. But that system traditionally only served a small number (and complicated by racism and bigotry favoring whites over nonwhites). So, when the Depression hit, they were ill-equipped to handle the demand. In many places, relief simply collapsed.

There was thus a lot of pressure to expand assistance to the unemployed as a result. But tax revenues declined and political leaders feared any more costs on already tight budgets.

Moreover, many public officials believed that an extensive welfare system would undermine the moral fiber of its clients. That is, as the argument goes and still goes, welfare created needy and lazy people. But with so many falling on hard times, some became desperate. Breadlines stretched for blocks. People even pillaged garbage cans to find food. Then there were the hoboes! About two million men (and some women) hit the so-called road, mostly illegally jumping freight trains from city to city, looking for quick jobs and a meal.

Chapter 7 - Figure 7: Photograph of an unemployed homeless man dressed in a worn coat lying on a pier in New York City, ca. 1935, by Lewis Hine. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Public Domain Photographs, 1882 - 1962, 195914.

Chapter 7 - Figure 8: Photograph of a New York City breadline with a long line of people waiting to be fed, ca. 1932. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Franklin D. Roosevelt Library Public Domain Photographs, 1882 - 1962, 196499.

In the rural countryside, things grew bad too. Farm income declined by 60% between 1929 and 1932. If not enough, Mother Nature turned foe—the Dust Bowl. Beginning in 1930, from Texas to the Dakotas, rainfall declined and a drought hit with extreme rises in heat. The drought lasted a decade and virtually transformed a once fertile farm region into an empty desert.

With that said, it is impressive that despite all these troubles, farmers continued through the 1930s to produce far more than American consumers could afford to buy. But, of course, overproduction lead to lower prices, which, as the cycle goes, led to declining incomes for farmers. Farm prices fell so low that few growers made any profit at all. As a result, many farmers left their homes in search of work. Thousands of families from the Dust Bowl (often known as "Okies" and "Arkies" since many came from Oklahoma and Arkansas) traveled to California and other states, where they found conditions little better than those they had left. (This is the story of John Steinbeck's American classic, *The Grapes of Wrath*.)

Chapter 7 - Figure 9: Buried machinery in barn lot in Dallas, South Dakota during the Dust Bowl, 1936. United States Department of Agriculture, 00di0971, available on Wikipedia Commons.

Chapter 7 - Figure 10: Photograph by Dorothea Lange of people living in miserable poverty, Elm Grove, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma, August 1936. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USF34-009694-E.

D. African Americans and the Depression

Save the wealthiest top percent, the problems of the Depression affected virtually every group of Americans. But no group was hit harder than African Americans. For example, by 1932, approximately 50% of the African American workforce was unemployed (90% in Texas!). Black wages were at least 30% below those of white workers, themselves barely at subsistence level. In some Northern cities, whites called for African Americans to be fired if there were whites out of work. Violence escalated as well. In Atlanta in 1930, for example, an organization calling itself the Black Shirts organized a campaign with the slogan "No Jobs for Niggers Until

Every White Man Has a Job!" In other areas, whites used intimidation and violence to drive African Americans from jobs. If not enough, lynchings, which had declined to eight in 1932, surged to 28 in 1933. In 1935, another race riot broke out, this time in Harlem, killing three and causing over $200 million in property damage.

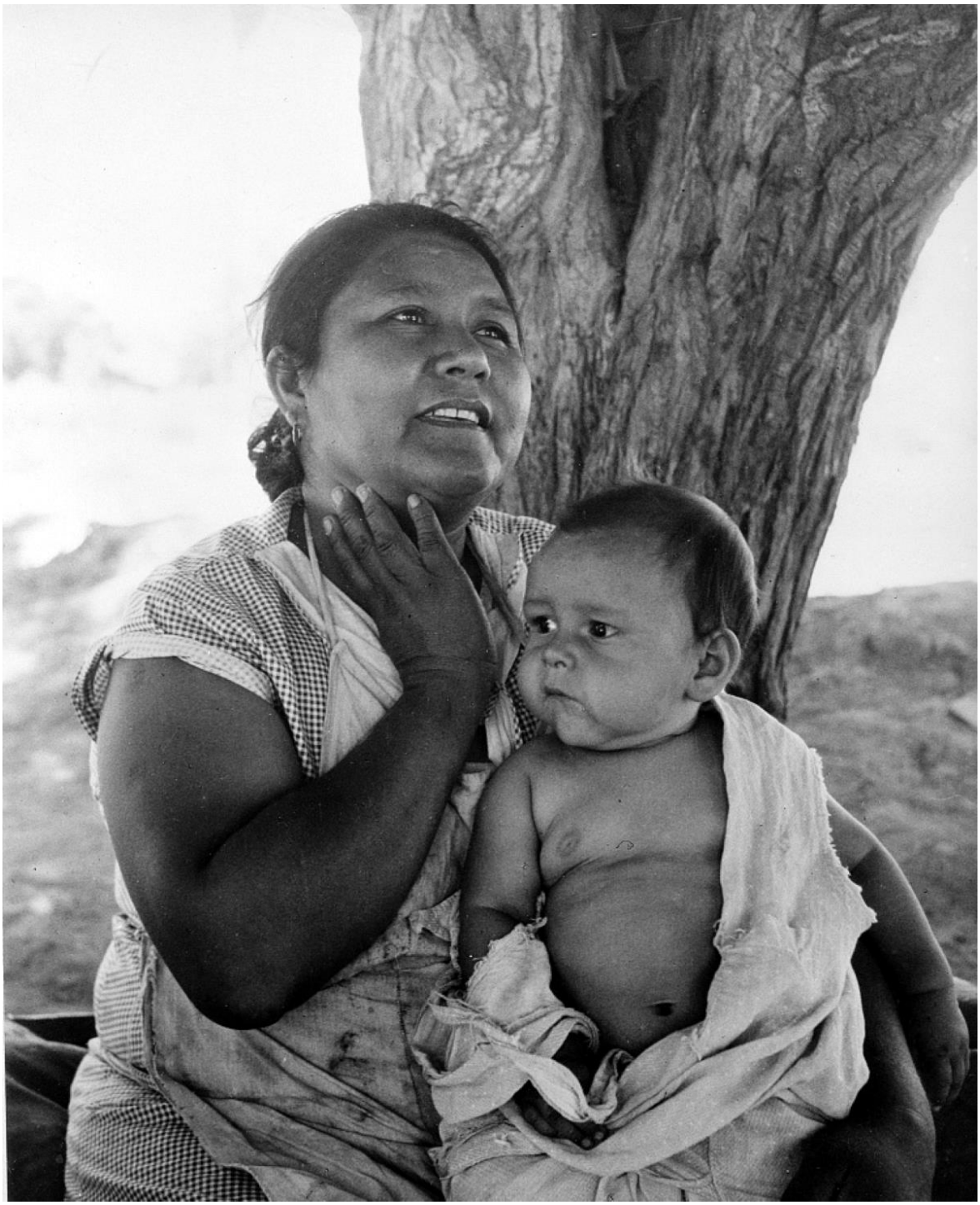
Chapter 7 - Figure 11: Photograph of the families of evicted African American sharecroppers of the Dibble plantation in Parkin, Arkansas. Legally, they were evicted the week of January 12, 1936. The plantation owners charged that by their membership in the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union (an interracial organization founded in Arkansas by sharecroppers with the help of the Socialist party) they were engaging in a conspiracy. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USF34-014009-E.

E. Mexican Americans and the Depression

Discrimination also plagued a growing Mexican and Mexican American population, which numbered approximately two million in the 1930s. Mexican Americans also labored in unskilled and tedious jobs, primarily in the West and Southwest. Some farmed small lands, but many became agricultural migrants working from region to region and harvest to harvest. Most lived in cities though—primarily in California, New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona.

Many Mexicans and Mexican Americans were deported by government officials who arbitrarily removed them from relief rolls (called repatriation). Or, they simply rounded them up and transported them across the border. That is, mostly bowing to union pressure hostile to labor competition during the crisis, federal, state, and local authorities "repatriated" more than 400,000 to 500,000 people of Mexican descent to prevent them from applying for relief. Since this group

included many American citizens, the deportations constituted a gross violation of their civil liberties "guaranteed" by the Constitution.



Chapter 7 - Figure 12: A 1935 photograph by Dorothea Lange of a Mexican mother in California facing repatriation, who stated, "Sometimes I tell my children that I would like to go to Mexico, but they tell me 'We don't want to go, we belong here.'" Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USF34- 000825-ZC.

Those who stayed faced dogged discrimination. As with African Americans, unemployed whites demanded that jobs held by Mexicans and Mexican Americans go to whites. Mexican Americans unemployment skyrocketed. Most relief programs also excluded them or offered benefits far below those available to whites. Likewise, Mexicans and Mexican Americans had little to no access to American schools. If not enough, many hospitals refused them admission for vital care.

F. Asian Americans and the Depression

For Asian Americans, too, the Depression hit hard and worsened already existent discrimination and bigotry. For example, in California, where the largest Japanese American and Chinese American populations lived, even the most educated could never break the class ceiling of race and enter mainstream society, yet alone find quality jobs. Japanese American college graduates, for example, had to resign to work in family fruit stands. Indeed, 20% of all Nisei (second generation [or first generation born in the U.S. and thus citizens]) in Los Angeles worked at such stands at the end of the 1930s. For those who found jobs in the industrial or service economy were poorly paid—and job security never a reality. They also lost jobs to whites who were now willing to do work they shunned years before. Chinese Americans did not really do any better. Like those before them, many worked in Chinese-owned laundries as well as restaurants in Chinatowns. Ultimately, Chinese Americans could rarely find jobs outside their segregated Chinatowns. If they did, as with other marginalized peoples, the jobs were lowly and tedious.

G. Women and the Depression

Not surprisingly, the Depression also effected women. Of prominence was the focus on the traditional notion of a woman's proper place as in the home. Most men, and even many women (mostly upper class white women), argued that women had an obligation to stay home. At the very least, they argued that if a husband was employed, then the wife should not work. Nevertheless, given the economic calamity, many women, including married women, still worked (precisely because their families needed the money). In fact, the largest new group of female workers during the Depression were wives and mothers.

By the end of the 1930s, the female workforce grew by 20%. As with other oppressed groups, work opportunities decreased for women as unemployed men, particularly white men, began to work in historically "female" jobs such as teaching and nursing. Moreover, female workers were more likely to be either laid off or to receive drastic wage/hour cuts.

Of course, white women enjoyed an advantage over their nonwhite sisters. For example, white women typically found work as salesclerks, stenographers, and in retail. These jobs did not disappear as much as factory and farm work more prevalent among nonwhites who were blocked out of jobs in sales and retail. Likewise, many men, including unemployed white men, rarely sought out this type of work—be it the result of a corrupt racial bargain or lacking the intellectual skills to do it compared to the physical labor of the factory.

African American women and other women of color, though, enjoyed no white privilege. This was particularly true in the South. African American women experienced a major unemployment crisis because of the disappearance of domestic jobs like housekeeping, cooking, and childcare. About 50% of African American women lost their jobs during the Depression. Yet, while this might sound paradoxical, by the end of the 1930s, 38% of African American women were employed—while only 24 % of white women were employed.

Why?

Well, African American women, regardless of marriage status, have always had to find work to help themselves or their families survive in America. The Depression was just the continuation of a historical theme.

IV. Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression

A. From Voluntary Cooperation to Intervention

Herbert Hoover came to the White House in March 1929 but the bottom dropped out with the crash by the fall. As the nation plunged into the Depression, Hoover called upon business leaders and farm landlords to support voluntary cooperation. Specifically, because he did not support government regulation, he asked businesses "please"; please, voluntarily, do not to reduce production and, in hand, fire workers. Meanwhile, Hoover met with labor unions to try and get them to, voluntarily, stop demands for higher wages.

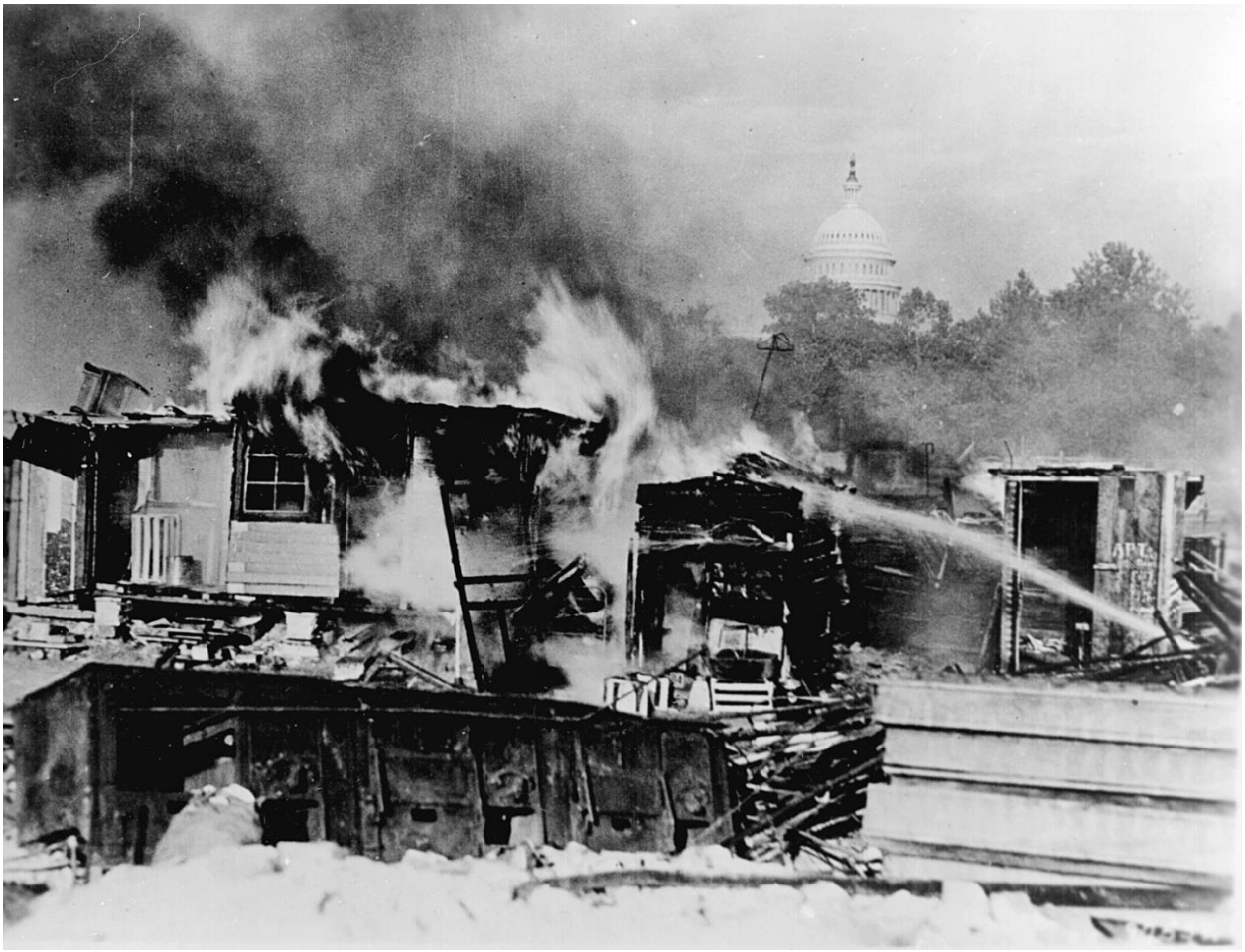
By mid-1931, however, the crisis deteriorated and voluntary cooperation collapsed. Hoover then turned to government spending to try and spark the economy. He called for a government spending increase of $423 million for federally-sponsored public works programs. He also called upon state and local governments to do the same. Still, the increased spending offered was not nearly enough in the face of such devastating problems.

Not surprisingly, Hoover's popularity plummeted, hurting the GOP in the general election. For example, in the fall 1930 congressional elections, the first time since 1916, Democrats won back control of the House. It also was the first time Republicans did not control both chambers of congress since 1919. In fact, in the search for blame, many Americans held Hoover responsible for the economic crisis.

B. Protest

For the first several years of the Depression few Americans besides the communists and some laborers mobilized for change. By the summer of 1932, however, angry voices of protest emerged. The most well-known protest of the Hoover years was launched by America's war veterans. In 1924, Congress approved the payment of a $1,000 bonus to all those who had served in World War I. The money was to be paid in 1945. By 1932, however, many veterans demanded the bonus be paid immediately to get through the Depression. Hoover rejected this. In June 1932, more than 20,000 veterans, members of the self-proclaimed Bonus Expeditionary Force, or "Bonus Army," marched into Washington, D.C. They built crude camps around the city. They

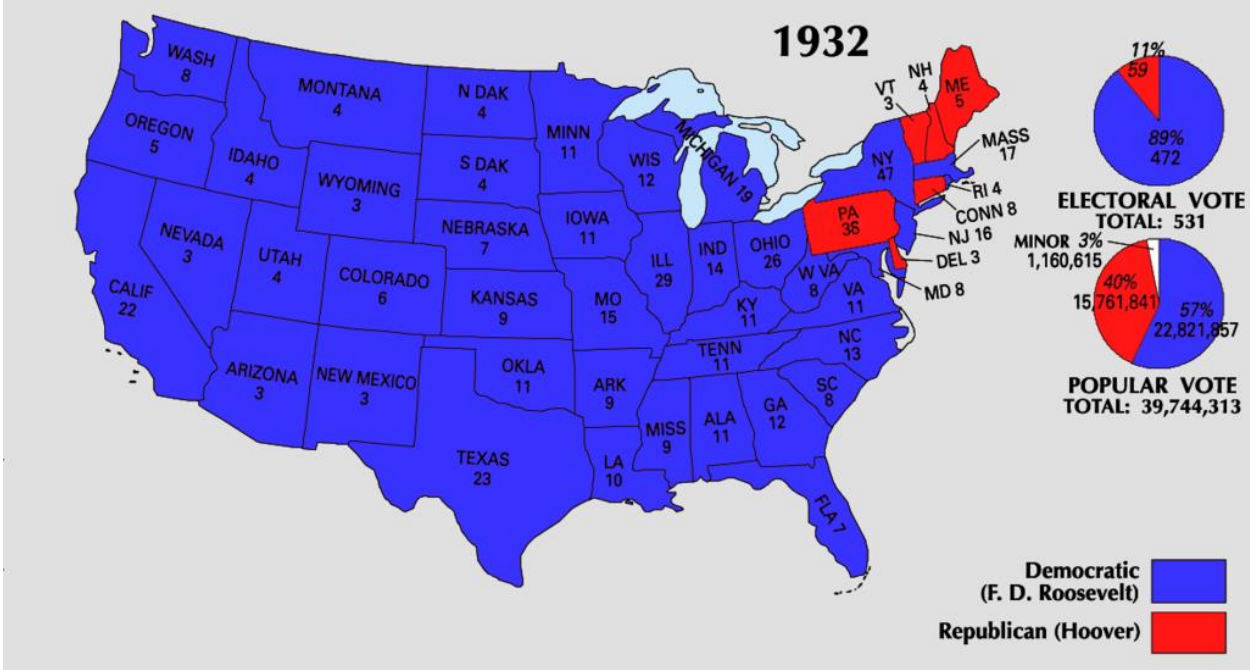
promised to stay until Congress approved legislation to pay the bonus. Their presence, unquestionably, embarrassed Hoover. In mid-July, Hoover ordered, first, the police, and, then, the U.S. Army to clear the marchers (i.e., war veterans). It was none other than General Douglas MacArthur who carried out the mission. He was assisted by his top aide Dwight D. Eisenhower and he also utilized the Third Cavalry (under the command of one George S. Patton). The incident served as perhaps the final blow to Hoover's already battered political standing.



Chapter 7 - Figure 13: Photograph of shacks, put up by the Bonus Army in Washington, DC, burning after the assault by the military, 1932. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860 - 1985, 531102.

C. The Election of 1932

Few people believed Hoover could win the 1932 presidential election. Despite this, with Hoover a sitting president, the GOP nominated him. The Democrats nominated the governor of New York, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR). While Hoover continued support for prohibition and FDR advocated for the return of booze, the pressing issue was the economy. FDR supported a strong government and use of federal money to stimulate the economy. In end, the American public either trusted him or despised Hoover as FDR won by a landslide. He received 57.4% of the popular vote to Hoover's 39.7%; and 472 Electoral College votes to Hoover's 59. Democrats also won majorities in both houses of Congress.



Chapter 7 - Figure 14: Map of the 1932 Election, showing both the popular vote and Electoral College votes. The University of Texas at Austin, Perry-Castañeda Library, Map Collection, The National Atlas of the United States of America (1970), Election Results.

Though not required, you can view a video of FDR and the 1932 election here.

V. FDR and the New Deal

A. Basic Biography

Franklin D. Roosevelt was born in Hyde Park, New York on January 30, 1882. He was the son of James Roosevelt and Sara Delano Roosevelt. James was a successful New York businessman who also inherited wealth. Sara, too, came from a wealthy family. Young Franklin grew up privileged and wealthy. He attended Groton (1896-1900), a prestigious preparatory school in Massachusetts, and he earned a BA degree in history from Harvard (1903). Roosevelt then studied law at Columbia University.

FDR entered politics for the first time in 1910 and was elected to the New York State Senate as a Democrat. Meanwhile, back in 1905, he had married his distant cousin, Anna Eleanor Roosevelt. The couple had six children, five of whom survived infancy. Anyways, FDR was re-elected to the State Senate in 1912. Then President Wilson appointed him Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1913, a position he held until 1920. By all accounts, FDR was good at being an administrator, especially during wartime. This made him popular. He was nominated for vice president by the Democratic Party in 1920 to run with James Cox (they lost to Harding).

In the summer of 1921, FDR and Eleanor went on vacation with their kids to Campobello Island, New Brunswick in Canada. On August 9, FDR fell into the still cold waters while boating

off the island. He recovered and went out again the next day. He complained that night of lower back pain and chills, however, which lasted through the night. He awoke on the 11th with a weak leg. By August 12, FDR could not stand. By August 13, FDR was paralyzed from the chest down and his hands, arms, and shoulders were weak. Finally, after more than a week, doctors diagnosed FDR with polio.

Chapter 7 - Figure 15: Photograph of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt, August 1932, Hyde Park, New York. Wikipedia Commons.

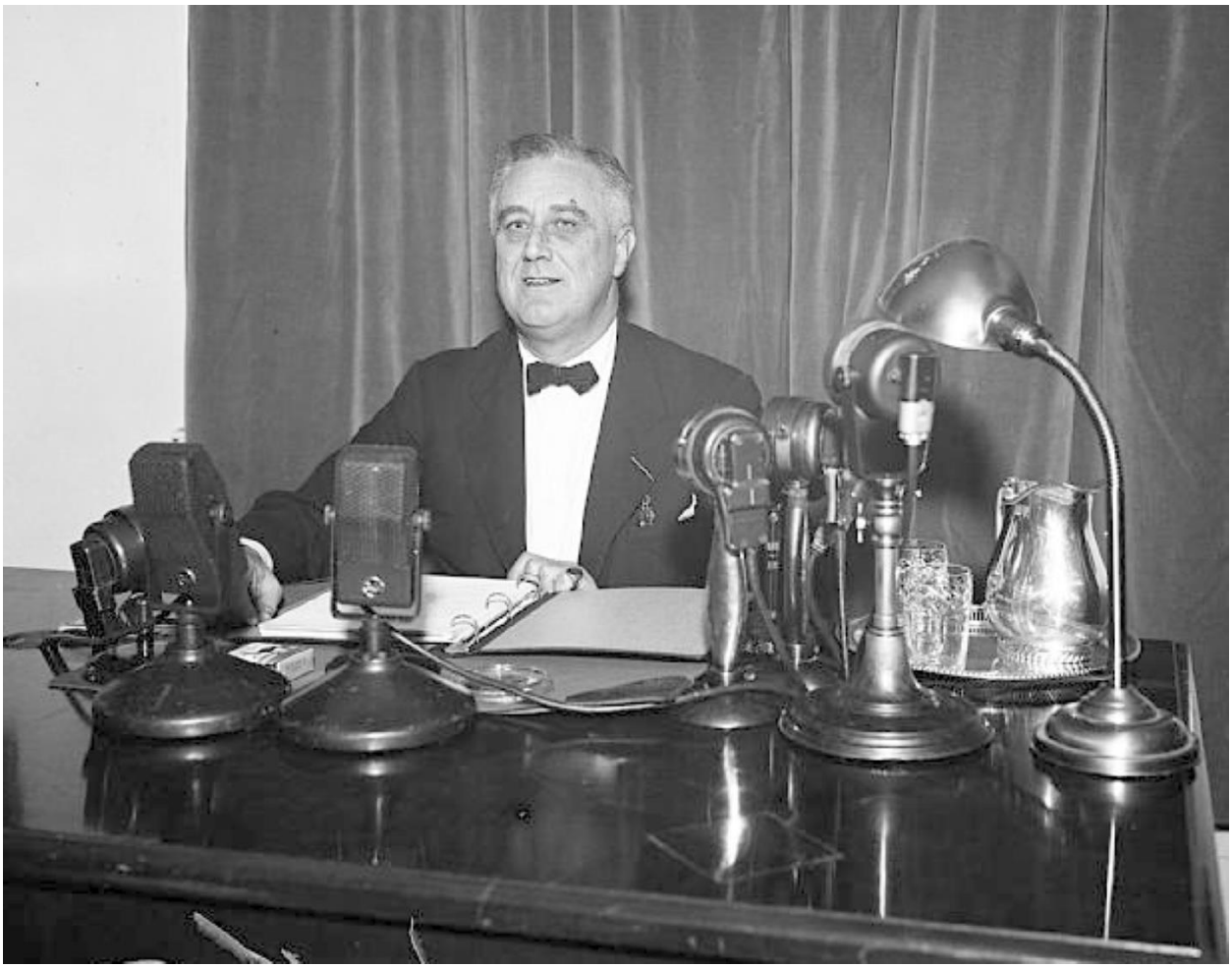
Paralyzed, FDR withdrew from politics. He established a foundation to help other polio victims, and inspired, as well as directed, the March of Dimes program that eventually funded the polio vaccine. While still paralyzed, after a few years FDR began to feel stronger and better about himself. In 1924 he returned to politics to nominate Al Smith for President for the Democrats. In 1928, Smith, governor of New York, ran again. Meanwhile, FDR ran for governor and won.

Chapter 7 - Figure 16: This is one of only three known photographs of Franklin D. Roosevelt in a wheelchair. Photograph taken in February 1941 at Top Cottage in Hyde Park, New York (a private retreat designed by and for Franklin D. Roosevelt). Wikipedia Commons.

B. Restoring Confidence and Fixing Banks

Roosevelt's first task upon taking office as president was to alleviate the economic crisis. Much of Roosevelt's success, it should be noted, was a result of his exuberant personality (i.e., he was simply likeable); something he learned to be conscious about after he was stricken with polio. FDR began with his inaugural address. He told the American people that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (click the link to read and hear FDR's speech).

FDR was also both politically and media savvy. He was the first president to make regular use of the radio. He hosted "fireside chats" in which he explained his New Deal programs and plans; helping to build more public confidence and support. He held frequent informal press conferences as well and won the respect and friendship of most reporters, who then did not report or photograph his disability.



Chapter 7 - Figure 17: Photograph of Franklin D. Roosevelt delivering a Fireside Chat about the Supreme Court in 1937. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-DIG-hec-47304.

Roosevelt could not rely on image alone however; he had to act. Within in days of assuming office, he sought to settle one of the biggest issues of the day: booze! He supported and then signed a bill to legalize the manufacture and sale of beer with 3.2% alcohol content. The 21st Amendment was then ratified later in 1933 to end prohibition.

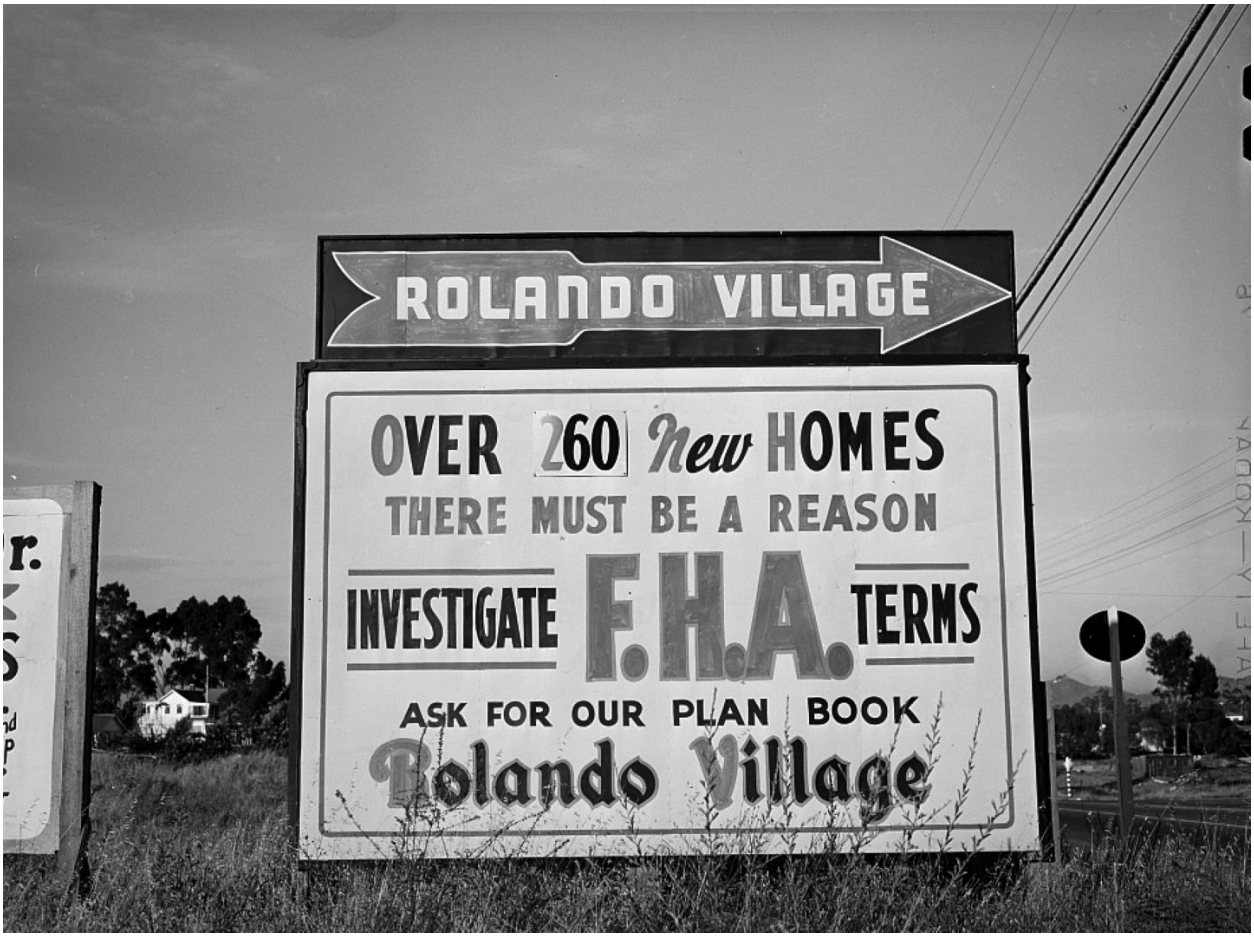
In Roosevelt's first hundred days in office, he pushed 15 major bills through Congress. These bills reshaped every aspect of the economy, from banking to industry and agriculture, and, of course, welfare. He attacked the bank crisis first—two days after taking office in fact. He declared a national bank holiday, which closed all banks. In just four days, his aides drafted the Emergency Banking Act. This permitted solvent banks to reopen under government supervision.

It also allowed the government to buy the stock of troubled banks and to keep them open until they could be reorganized. The law also gave the president broad powers over the Federal Reserve System, which then pumped money into the banks. When the banks reopened after only eight days, people demonstrated their faith by making more deposits than withdrawals! This, in turn, helped to make the banks more solvent! One of Roosevelt's key advisors then bragged of FDR, "Capitalism was saved in eight days." (Though not required, you can listen to FDR's first ever Fireside Chat about the Banking Crisis here.)

FDR swiftly pushed ahead on other fronts. Amid the banking moves, he pushed through the Economy Act of 1933, which cut the salaries of federal workers and reduced veteran benefits. This was done in hopes of reducing the federal deficit. In April 1933, FDR then took the U.S. off the gold standard to allow inflation to rise. As with the populist and farmers of decades ago, the idea was to stimulate the economy. By May 1933, FDR pushed through the Federal Emergency Relief Act as well, which pumped $500 million into state-run welfare programs and public works projects, providing work to thousands. Actually, when that $500 million wasn't doing enough, a second relief program was established: the Civil Works Administration (CWA). Between November 1933 and April 1934, it put more than four million people to work on temporary projects (e.g., roads, schools, and parks). The important thing was pumping money into an economy badly in need of it and providing assistance to people.

Chapter 7 - Figure 19: Photograph of Civil Works Administration workers applying cement with a power gun on a construction project in Phoenix, 1934. Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records. History and Archives Division, 98-3571.

But back to May 1933. The same month congress passed the Federal Emergency Relief Act, they passed the first of a Federal Securities Act (then another in 1934) to regulate Wall Street. The act required companies to register with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). This mandated companies to provide the SEC and potential investors with all relevant information about their company, guarding against fraudulent claims and finances. In June, the Home Owners' Loan Act (HOLA) passed and provided the first federal-backed mortgages and loans to homeowners or would-be homeowners (a National Housing Act would also pass in 1934, creating the Federal Housing Authority [FHA], which also made loans). By the end of Roosevelt's first term, the HOLA provided more than one million loans totaling $3 billion, while by the end of the 1930s an estimated 12 million people had been enabled to improve their housing standards and conditions under the FHA. Yet, both the HOLA and FHA favored whites over African Americans and others and led to the creation of redlining, which furthered segregation in America.



Chapter 7 - Figure 20: Photograph of a sign of Federal Housing Administration housing in San Diego, California, May 1941. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USF34-039306-D.

In June the Banking Act of 1933 passed (also known as the Glass-Steagall Act) and authorized the government to curb irresponsible speculation by banks. It also established the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which guaranteed all bank deposits up to $2,500.

And, to finish off banking, in 1935, another banking act (Banking Act of 1935) transferred much of the authority of regional Federal Reserve banks to the Federal Reserve Board in Washington.

C. The Alphabet Soup

While FDR pushed major bills to deal with banking and money, most of the bills he proposed set up new government agencies. These were often called the "alphabet soup" agencies because of their array of acronyms.

Chapter 7 - Figure 21: 1935 cartoon in the Chicago Daily News *by Vaugh Shoemaker parodying the New Deal. Wikipedia Commons.*

1. Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)

Roosevelt's first relief project (the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC]) passed immediately in March 1933. It was a public works project operated under the control of the Army. Designed to promote environmental conservation while getting young, unemployed men off city streets, recruits planted trees, built wildlife shelters, stocked rivers and lakes with fish, and cleared beaches and campgrounds. By 1935 the CCC had housed about 500,000 young men, fed them, and paid them $30 a month ($25 of which they had to send home to their families). Over three million served in the CCC and they built more than 800 parks and planted nearly three billion trees nationwide. Of course, because the Army controlled the CCC camps, its policy of racial segregation transferred over and most of the CCC's quarter million African American recruits served in segregated companies.

Chapter 7 - Figure 22: WPA Poster showing a young man's opportunity for work, play, study and health, by Albert Bender, ca. 1941. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-DIG-ppmsca-12896.

2. Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA)

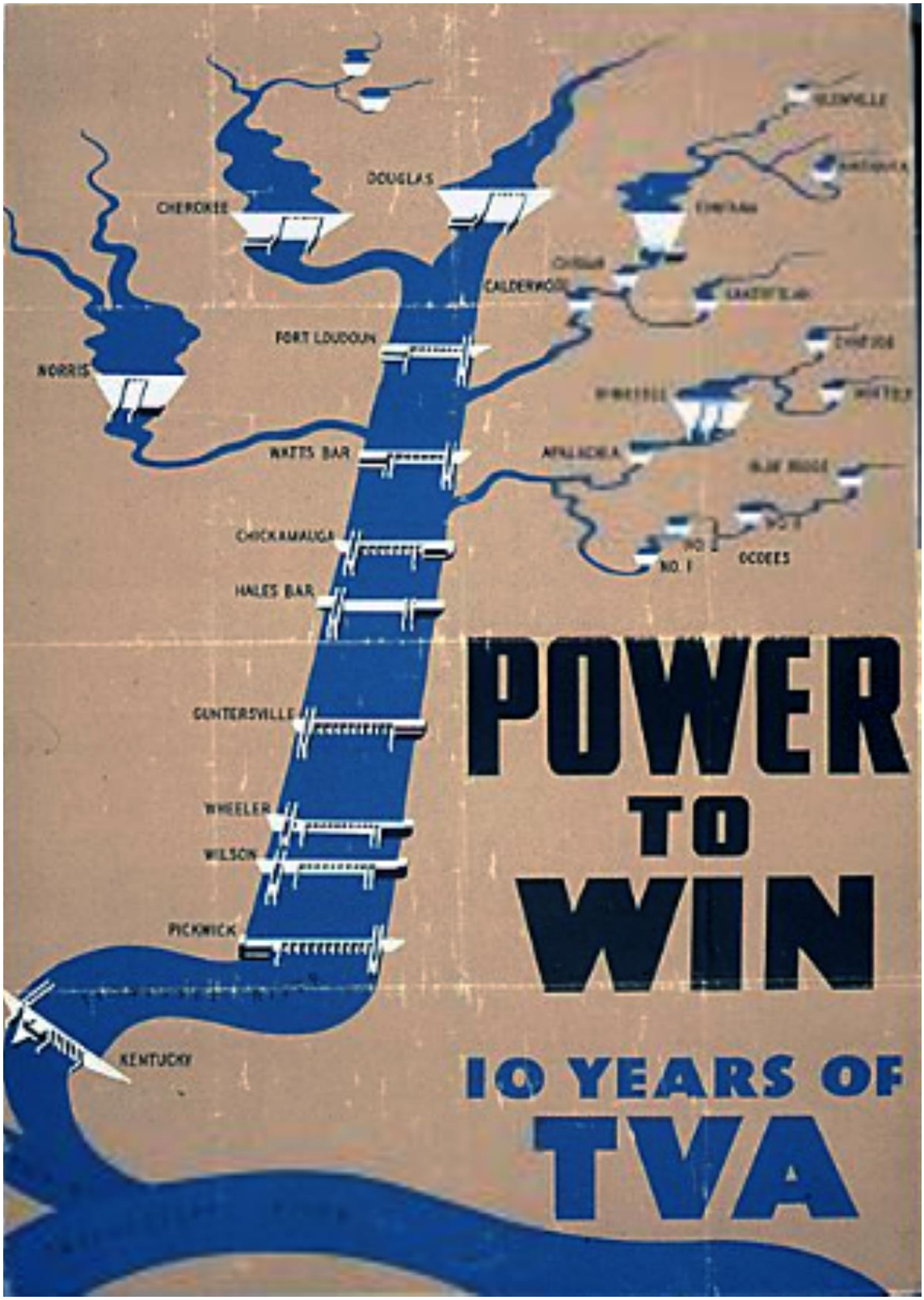
Passed in May 1933, the Agricultural Adjustment Act's most important feature was its provision for reducing crop production. Thus, with less in the market, crop prices would rise and help lift farmers out of debt. Under the provisions of the act, the government also told farmers how much they should produce. They would then pay them subsidies for not planting on some land and help them out as the anticipated rise on prices occurred and they climbed out of debt.

The AAA did indeed help bring about a rise in crop prices. Gross farm income increased by half in the first three years. The AAA did, however, favor larger farmers over smaller ones. It did little to discourage planters who were reducing their acreage from evicting tenants and sharecroppers and firing field hands, most of whom were African American and Hispanic.

In January 1936, the Supreme Court struck down the crucial provisions of the AAA. They ruled that the federal government had no constitutional authority to require farmers to limit production. But within a few weeks the administration had secured passage of new legislation: The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act, which permitted the government to pay farmers to reduce production as well. In addition, to help farmers, the administration passed the Resettlement Administration, established in 1935, and its successor, the Farm Security Administration, created in 1937, to provide loans to farmers. The Rural Electrification Administration, created in 1935, also worked to make electric power available for the first time to thousands of farmers. Finally, a new version of the AAA was passed in 1938, ending in 1942 as America entered World War II.

3. Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

Passed in May 1933, the Tennessee Valley Authority is one of the most celebrated accomplishments of the New Deal. Yet, it was one of the most ambitious and controversial when it began. The TVA proposed building dams and power plants along the Tennessee River to bring electric power to rural areas in seven states. Indeed, the TVA provided many Americans with electricity for the first time. It improved water transportation. It virtually eliminated flooding in the region as well. It provided jobs to thousands of unemployed construction workers. It developed fertilizers and employees taught farmers how to improve crop yields and helped replant forests. They even helped control forest fires and improve habitat for wildlife and fish. Still, the damning and other projects displaced about 15,000 people. More seriously, it outraged conservatives who thought it reeked of socialism. That is, the TVA was and still is a federally-backed power company.



Chapter 7 - Figure 23: TVA Poster boasting of the "Power to Win," after ten years of operation, ca, 1942-45. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Records of the Office of Government Reports, 1932 – 1947, [515880](#).

4. National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA)

Passed in June 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act established the NRA (National Recovery Administration [NRA]) to stimulate production. The idea was to have American industries set up a series of codes meant to regulate prices, industrial output, and general trade practices. The federal government, in turn, would agree to enforce these codes. In return for their cooperation, federal officials also promised to suspend anti-trust legislation. Also, the NIRA said that the cooperating businesses had to recognize the rights of labor to organize and to collective bargaining with management.

The NIRA was a controversial piece of legislation, perhaps the most controversial to come out of the first hundred days. Many of its opponents charged it with being un-American, socialist, and even communist because it recognized the rights of labor and called for regulation. Still, of course, to be fair, it did not violate the sanctity of private property or alter the American wage system. It called for businesses to regulate themselves.

Ultimately, the NIRA failed. First off, it assumed businesses would police themselves. The codes, established in the interest of protecting workers and consumers, were ultimately drawn up by large companies. This hurt small businesses. Second, corporations rarely respected the rights of labor to organize. Because of the number and complexity of the codes as well, the federal government rarely enforced labor's right to collective bargaining. Within two years, the Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional.

On the positive side, the NRA codes abolished child labor. It also established the precedent of federal regulation of minimum wages and maximum hours. In addition, the NRA boosted the labor movement by drawing large numbers of unskilled workers into unions. On the negative side, the NRA codes set wages in most industries well below what labor demanded. Also, large occupational groups, such as farm workers, fell outside the codes' coverage.

Chapter 7 - Figure 24: NRA label/poster displayed by businesses to show support for the government program, ca. 1934. National Archives, Washington, D.C., [195507](#).

D. The New Deals

We can roughly divide Roosevelt's first years in office into two periods: (1) a first New Deal (1933-1935) characterized by relief and recovery of the immediate problems of unemployment; and (2) a second New Deal (1935-1937) characterized by both relief *and* reform.

E. The New Deal and its Critics

The second New Deal came about, in part, because of the social concerns of the president and his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, but also because of mounting criticism. Father Charles Coughlin, for example, mounted vocal opposition. A conservative Catholic priest and political activist, Coughlin broadcast his weekly radio show ("Golden Hour of the Little Flower") from Detroit, which reached an audience of 30 to 40 million weekly. At first, he supported the New Deal, but he became increasingly upset at the slow pace of reform. He then railed against some of the tactics used under the AAA to limit production. He was more worried, however, with inflation and what he saw as policies designed to help banks and bankers—not the "common man." He decried the various banking acts and even the NIRA. Eventually, as Coughlin's backers pleaded with him not to muddy the waters with a presidential run as a third party candidate, he withdrew his bid. By 1938, his anti-Semitic diatribes became evermore robust and, in 1942, he went off the air and his Bishop ordered him to cease political activities.

Chapter 7 - Figure 25: Time Magazine *cover of Huey Long, 1935, at the height of his national popularity.* Time Magazine *25, no. 13 (April 1, 1935), Wikipedia Commons.*

The most powerful New Deal critic was Huey Long (1893-1935), Democratic governor of Louisiana and later a United States Senator. Long became the most powerful, adored, and, well, corrupt governor in Louisiana's history. Still, he used his power to expand Louisiana's underdeveloped infrastructure and helped build new hospitals, schools, highways, bridges, and the state's university. His ideas on the redistribution of wealth were very popular among the lower and middle classes of Louisiana. At first, Long supported the New Deal, but, coupled with his own political ambitions, he soon found it too conservative. Long thus established the Share-Our-Wealth Society, an organization that advocated the redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor. He found followers not only in Louisiana, but among low-income, rural families across the country, too. By mid-1935, Long talked openly about challenging Roosevelt in the upcoming presidential election. His presidential aspirations, however, came to an abrupt and tragic end in September 1935 when he was assassinated by the son-in-law of a ruined political opponent.

FDR was pragmatic. FDR summed up his style of political action when he stated: "Do something. And when you have done that something, if it works, do it some more. And if it does not work, then do something else." That "something else" turned out to be the second New Deal, and much of it was inspired by his mounting critics.

F. The Second New Deal

Perhaps the most conspicuous change from the first to second new deal was FDR's attitude toward big business. Symbolically at least, he was now willing to attack corporate interests. For example, he subjected the great utility holding companies to federal regulation with the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935. He also pushed series of tax reforms in 1935 that established the highest peacetime tax rates (79%) in history (the Revenue Act of 1935, sometimes called the Wealth Tax Act; the Revenue Act of 1937 cracked down on tax evasion). With the failure of the NIRA, the administration and Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (aka, Wagner Act), which ultimately compelled employers to recognize and bargain with unions. Later, in 1938, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act that banned oppressive child labor and set the minimum hourly wage at 25 cents, and the maximum workweek at 44 hours. Indeed, labor, by the 1930s and 1940s, was growing, like it or not. FDR thus needed to court their favor with laws like these.

1. Social Security

One of the most famous New Deal polices came out of the second New Deal: Social Security. Passed in August 1935, this act created a cooperative federal-state system to provide unemployment compensation and old-age insurance. Workers who paid Social Security taxes out of their wages would receive benefits upon retirement at age 65. Employee and employer contributions would cover the costs of these benefits. On the one hand, Social Security seemed a radical piece of reform legislation. Government committed itself to help the elderly. In reality, however, it was a conservative program. Workers themselves and their employers, and not the government, were footing the bill. In addition, the initial Social Security Act did not include provisions for farm workers, domestic workers, employees of the restaurant and service industries, or health-care providers. Still, the act was a milestone in American history because it

acknowledged the responsibility of society at large to take care for the less fortunate and established a system for retirees to have money and for disabled workers to receive benefits.

2. New Relief

Social Security was designed primarily to fulfill long-range goals. But millions of unemployed Americans had immediate needs. To help them, FDR continued with relief programs. He established, in 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (later renamed the Work Projects Administration). Similar to the CWA and other earlier relief efforts, the WPA established a system of work relief for the unemployed. But it was much bigger than the earlier agencies, both in the size of its budget ($5 billion at first) and its operations. The WPA promoted both economic relief *and* socio-cultural reform. They paved streets and highways, built bridges (e.g., the Golden Gate Bridge), airfields, and post offices, and restored forests and extended electrical power to rural areas. Over its seven-year history, the WPA employed about 8.5 million workers. The WPA also funded unemployed artists and authors to promote American culture. The Federal Theater, Arts, Music, Dance, and Writers' Projects brought music and drama to small town and big cities alike. It sponsored public sculptures and murals in post offices and libraries across the country. The WPA also commissioned noted writers such as John Steinbeck, Richard Wright, and Claude McKay to write regional guidebooks and histories of the American people.

Chapter 7 - Figure 26: WPA Poster advertising an art project aimed at children in New York City, 1940. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., 98516112.

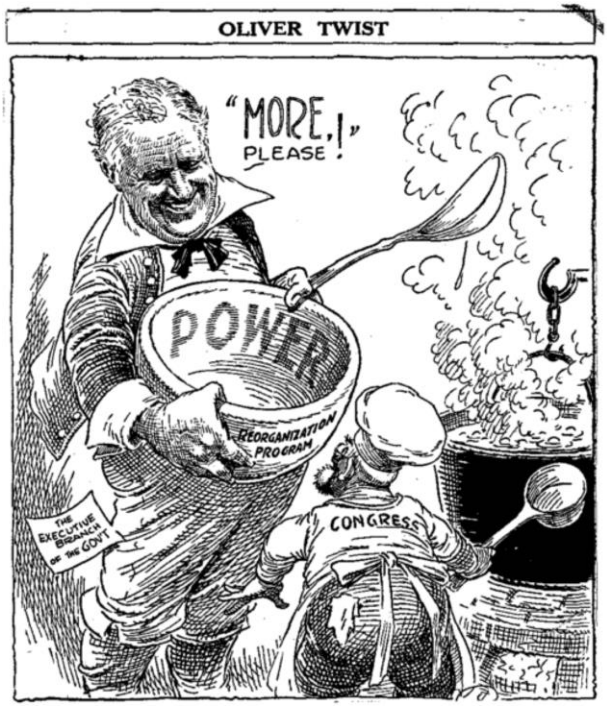
The efforts of the WPA marked a robust time that the federal government tried to support and promote actively American art and culture. Other relief agencies emerged alongside the WPA. The National Youth Administration (NYA), for instance, provided work and scholarship assistance to high-school and college-age people. The Emergency Housing Division of the Public Works Administration began federal sponsorship of public housing.

G. The New Deal Folding

Roosevelt won reelection by a landslide in 1936 with 61% of the vote (the second largest margin of victory by popular vote ever!). He also won 523 of 531 Electoral College votes (98.49%), making it the largest Electoral College victory in history. Roosevelt obviously emerged from the election at the height of his popularity. Within months, however, he faced new difficulties, some of which were his own fault.

1. The Court Fight

The 1936 landslide victory made FDR think he could do something about a Supreme Court that had struck down two of his agencies (NRA and AAA) and threatened others. In February 1937, Roosevelt sent a message to Congress proposing an overhaul of the federal court system. It included a provision to add up to six new Supreme Court justices! While claiming the courts were "overworked," he really wanted new justices and change the ideological balance of the Court. Conservatives, of course, were outraged. They called it the "Court-packing plan." They, and many liberals, saw this as an unprecedented power grab by the executive branch.



Chapter 7 - Figure 27: Cartoon lampooning FDR as Oliver Twist asking for more power from Congress by Joseph Parrish, Chicago Tribune, *January 16, 1937. Wikipedia Commons.*

Still, with so much popularity, Congress seemed as if they were going to pass it. The Court flinched. They promised to regularly favor some new legislation, and uphold the Wagner Act and Social Security. Whether or not for that reason, the Court's newly moderate position made the Court-packing plan seem unnecessary and Congress defeated it. On one level, it was a victory for FDR. The Court was no longer an obstacle to the New Deal. On another level, it hurt him politically, especially as many Southern Democrats began the long march away from the party in large measure thereafter.

2. The Roosevelt Recession

By the summer of 1937, the national income, which had dropped from $82 billion in 1929 to $40 billion in 1932, had risen to nearly $72 billion. FDR, wrongly, thought the worse days were behind. As a result he sought to balance the budget. He began to slash spending, including New Deal programs. Between January and August 1937, for example, he cut the WPA in half. Not surprisingly, a few weeks later, the bottom fell out of the economy again. Industrial production dropped dramatically, four million additional workers lost their jobs, and economic conditions soon mirrored the bleakest days of 1932-33. So in April 1938, FDR asked Congress for an emergency appropriation of $5 billion for public works and relief programs. Within a few months, another tentative, but not full, recovery was underway.

Despite FDR's achievements, however, by the end of 1938, the New Deal had essentially come to an end. Congressional opposition, particularly now from Southern Democrats, or Dixiecrats, made it difficult for the president to enact major programs. Likewise, as war loomed in Europe and broke out in 1939, Dr. New Deal started to transform into Dr. Win-the-War and grew more concerned with persuading the nation to prepare for war itself.

J. The Legacies of the New Deal

In the 1930s, Roosevelt's principal critics were overwhelmingly conservative. They accused him of skirting the Constitution and establishing a tyrannical state. Yet, some of the more recent outspoken critics have come from the left, who say the New Deal did not do enough and, most tragically, it failed to aid most minority groups and help ensure a legacy of racism and sexism in America. A full understanding of the New Deal requires coming to terms with the sources of both critiques, and by seeing both achievements and failures—triumph and tragedy!

1. The "Broker State"

While FDR's administration sought to create a new capitalistic order that thrived on mutual voluntary cooperation and regulation among business, labor, and government, they created something different: the "broker state." Instead of creating a harmonious unit of labor, business, government, and other groups, the New Deal successfully elevated and strengthened new interest groups to allow them to compete more effectively in the national marketplace. The federal government thus became a mediator in the continuous competition between groups. Indeed, prior to the New Deal, only corporate power really wielded any true national power. The New Deal unquestionably enhanced the power and ability of labor, however. In later years, the

"broker state" embraced other groups as well: racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; women; and many others.

Hence, one of the enduring legacies of the New Deal was to make the federal government a protector of smaller interest groups. But, of course, what determines which interest group receives government assistance in a "broker state"? The New Deal tells us it goes largely to those able to exercise enough political or economic power to demand it (i.e., a powerful voting bloc). Accordingly, in the 1930s, farmers and the labor movement won many protections as did other groups who, while perhaps not so organized, represented powerful voting blocs because of their numbers (e.g., imperiled homeowners, the unemployed, and the elderly).

With that said, the broker state will not pay as much attention to those groups either too weak to demand assistance or not visible enough to arouse widespread public support. But, of course, these groups needed the help the most! Therefore, a serious critique of the New Deal and the broker state is their failure to record major victories for marginalized social groups, such as African Americans, Mexican Americans, and women.

2. African Americans and the New Deal

The New Deal has a shoddy record when it comes to civil rights. Most New Deal programs actually discriminated against African Americans. The NIRA, for example, not only crafted codes that offered whites the first crack at jobs, but also authorized lower pay scales for African Americans. Furthermore, the Social Security Act excluded those job categories African Americans traditionally filled. Also, when hired, African American workers were often segregated (recall the CCC). Likewise, recall that the AAA wound up forcing thousands of African Americans off the land. Too, the HOLA and FHA established loan polices that both locked out African Americans and facilitated evermore segregation. FDR even failed to support an anti-lynching bill and a bill to abolish the poll tax (essentially a voting fee that many African Americans and the poor could not afford—meaning democratic, civic responsibility cost).

Also, initially, it didn't seem FDR could do much. The political reality was that he was a Northeast aristocratic-like president who needed the support of Southern Democrats. To push civil rights would risk his political survival.

Here's the kicker, in 1936, one of the greatest electoral shifts in American history took place: 75% of African Americans voted for Roosevelt. Before this, black voters, when able to even vote, cast their ballot for the party of Lincoln: the GOP. This shift in allegiance changed the face of the two political parties whereby, even to this day, African Americans vote overwhelmingly for Democratic candidates.

So how did this happen?

Well, many African Americans turned to FDR because of simple pocketbook politics. That is, while New Deal agencies weren't perfectly equal and fair, they did provide jobs. In fact, the PWA set up a quota for African Americans. Also, again while not equitable, FDR's federal relief programs helped African Americans. Also, to be fair, the president did record a few gains

in civil rights. First, he appointed civil rights activist Aubrey Williams to direct the NYA that focused on providing education and work opportunities for older teens and early 20-year olds. Second, he named Mary McLeod Bethune, an African American educator, to the advisory committee of the NYA. African Americans thus got a fair share of NYA funds and jobs—more than in any other New Deal agency. Other programs also benefitted African Americans, such as Federal Music Project (1935), which funded performances of black composers, along with the Federal Theatre and Writing Projects, which hired and featured the work of hundreds of African American artists. The New Deal's educational programs helped teach over one million illiterate African Americans learn to read and write and boosted school attendance.

3. Mexican Americans and the New Deal

As shared earlier, in a shameful episode in our nation's history, federal, state, and local authorities rounded up anywhere from 400,000 to 500,000 Mexican immigrants and naturalized Mexican American citizens and shipped them to Mexico to reduce relief roles and open up jobs for whites. Still, the New Deal offered Mexican Americans some help. The Farm Security Administration, for example, established camps for migrant farm workers in California, and the CCC and WPA hired unemployed Mexican Americans on relief jobs. Still, agricultural workers were not eligible for benefits under workers' compensation, Social Security, and the National Labor Relations Act.

4. Women and the New Deal

The New Deal did little to help women. There were still some important symbolic gestures however. Roosevelt appointed the first female cabinet member in the nation's history: Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. He also named more than 100 women to positions at lower levels of the federal bureaucracy. But New Deal support for women operated within limits, partly because New Deal women and feminists disagreed over what the aims should be. Specifically, Perkins and other feminists born out of the progressive tradition believed in the need for special protections for women; they were less concerned with sexual/gender equality. Other more "radical" feminists, such as Alice Paul and Charlotte P. Gillman, fought for equality before the law and advocated a National Women's Party and an Equal Rights Amendment. In end, the New Deal mostly supported the belief that, in hard times, women should withdraw from the workplace to open up more jobs for men.

5. The New Deal and the National Economy

The most frequent criticisms of the New Deal involve its failure to revive the American economy. The economic boom sparked by World War II (i.e., massive government spending), not the New Deal, finally ended the crisis. Nor did the New Deal substantially alter the distribution of power within American capitalism. Though, again, it did elevate some groups up more than they had previously been, such as labor and larger-scale farmers.

Nevertheless, the New Deal did contribute to the enormous economic development of the West and the South (the Sunbelt) that would balloon following World War II. It increased the regulatory functions of the federal government that helped stabilize the economy overall: the

stock market and the banking system. The New Deal also established the basis for promoting economic growth. The New Deal also created the basis of the federal welfare state. Still, of course, whether through conservative attack or the New Dealers' own inhibitions, the welfare system they helped create had, and still has, a limited impact (at least in comparison with those of other industrial, democratic nations), it reinforced some traditional patterns of gender and racial discrimination, and, of course, it is expensive and cumbersome to administer. Still, for all its limits, the new system marked a historic break with the federal government's traditional reluctance to offer public assistance to its neediest citizens.

6. The New Deal and American Politics

Perhaps the most dramatic effect of the New Deal was on the structure and behavior of American government itself. Roosevelt enhanced the power of the federal government. After FDR, state and local governments were clearly of secondary importance to Washington. FDR also established the presidency as the center of authority within the federal government. Congress would never wield as much power as it had in the past. Finally, the New Deal had a profound impact on how the American people defined themselves politically. It made the Democratic Party, for a time, a mighty coalition that dominated nationally for well over 40 years. Perhaps most significantly, it created among the American people a greatly increased expectation of government to offer help.

But whatever the case, by the end of the 1930s, the New Deal was over as the nation turned toward the war in Europe and Asia.

VI. World War II

A. Big Picture

1. Timeline

From 1939 to 1945 the world was engulfed in war. This included Europe and Russia, but also North Africa and Asia, as well as naval battles in the Caribbean and off the coast of Latin America. Most of you recall that America entered the war following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. In early December 1941, a Japanese convoy secretly traveled toward Hawaii, stopping about 250 miles of the islands. At 6 am, December 7, the Japanese launched two consecutive waves of attacks, sinking or damaging 18 U.S. ships and killing 2,405 Americans. Most of these were military casualties, but 68 civilians died too. The next day, the U.S. declared war on Japan and, on December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on America.

Chapter 7 - Figure 28: Photograph of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii showing a small boat rescuing a seaman as the 31,800 ton USS West Virginia burns in the foreground. Smoke rolling out amidships shows where the most extensive damage occurred. Note the two men in the superstructure, December 7, 1941. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USW33-018433-C.

War in Europe had already begun in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland, bringing a declaration of war from Britain and France. The war lasted five-and-a-half years until the German army surrendered on May 7, 1945. War in the Pacific, however, challenges any Eurocentric views and chronology of World War II. Most westerners accept the end of World War II as when Japan surrendered following the dropping of weapons of mass destruction in August 1945, but few know when war started in Asia. Japan first attacked China in 1931, taking Manchuria and establishing a puppet state for extracting resources. In 1937, Japan then invaded China, unleashing a brutal war that lasted eight years and claimed more than six million Chinese lives.

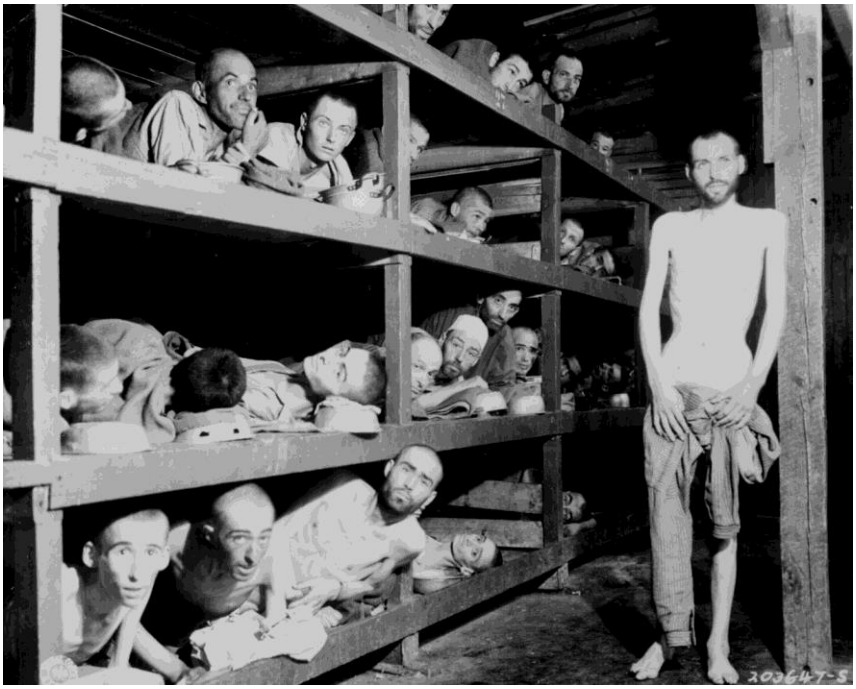
2. Casualties

World War II was brutal. Anywhere from 50 to 60 million people died. This included about 15 million on the battlefield, but about 45 million civilians living on the front lines, from starvation or disease, or from atrocities such as the Holocaust. The U.S., as well as Britain, lost about 400,000 soldiers each. The Chinese lost about six million (half of which were civilian casualties). The military loses for the Axis powers of Germany and Japan were high as well. Germany lost five million and Japan lost two-and-a-half million.

The Soviet Union death count is staggering: about 24 million people. Keep in mind, however, about 10 million of these were the result of war crimes at home against civilians. As for the Red Army itself, it lost nine to 10 million soldiers. This means the Red Army is the one that bled the most in the defeat of Hitler and the Nazis. In Russia, in fact, the war is celebrated as a high moment is Russian history.

Other death counts are staggering as well, especially the Holocaust, what Jews often call the Shoah, a Hebrew word meaning catastrophe, destruction, and/or devastation.

The Holocaust claimed the lives of 11 million people, including six million Jews, but also the disabled, homosexuals, gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, political prisoners, and others deemed unfit to live in Adolf Hitler's Third Reich for the Master Race. Between 1933 and 1945 Nazi Germany and its allies had established more than 40,000 camps and other incarceration sites. The sites were used for a range of purposes, including forced labor, detention of people thought to be enemies of the state, and, of course, mass murder.



Chapter 7 - Figure 29: Photograph of Holocaust survivors at the Buchenwald concentration camp near Weimar, Germany; many had died from malnutrition when U.S. troops of the 80th Division entered the camp, April 16, 1945. National Archives, Washington, D.C., 535560.

Before the War, however, most camps between 1933 and 1939 were holding centers or labor camps, which expanded more as the war began in Europe in 1939. Death still came by way of overwork and exhaustion, starvation, and physical brutality. The first killing centers appeared with the so-called Final Solution of the "Jewish problem" in December 1941.

Auschwitz, in Southern Poland, is perhaps the most infamous concentration camp. At Auschwitz, 1.1 million people were killed. Auschwitz had two main areas: Auschwitz I contained a gas chamber and crematoria, as well as a medical experimentation station (one experiment involved seeing how long babies survived without food!); and Auschwitz II contained four gas chambers and a crematoria. Guards directed each new arrival to the left or to the right. The healthy and strong went to the right. The weak, the elderly, and the very young went up a ramp to the left to the gas chambers, disguised as showers. Guards pumped cyanide through openings in the ceilings and walls, then cremated the bodies. At its height, 6,000 people were gassed a day.

3. American Atrocities?

But Hitler was not the only one to target civilians. Remember that Stalin killed about 10 million civilians in the USSR. In China, as well as Korea, the Japanese inflicted great civilian casualties as well.

But what about the U.S. of A.?

We already know that many Americans turned a blind eye to the mass murder of citizens within its borders, such as thousands of lynchings and race riots against African Americans and other oppressed groups. But what about during the war? Following the lead of the British, the U.S. first turned to firebombing in Japan following the surrender of the German Army. Firebombing, to be clear, is a bombing technique designed to damage a target, generally an urban area, through the use of fire, caused by incendiary devices, that spreads rapidly and uncontrollably. On the night of March 9-10, 1945, for example, American B-29 bombers attacked Tokyo, a city of six million people. Nearly 600 bombers dropped 1,665 tons of firebombs, destroying 16 square miles. The resulting firestorm killed 100,000 people, most of whom were women, children, and the elderly. The B-29 crew members put on oxygen masks to keep from vomiting at the smell of burning human flesh. American planes continued firebombing Tokyo and more than 60 other Japanese cities in the following months. The idea was that the war would end quickly by destroying Japan's economy and crushing the morale of the Japanese people.

This is the context for dropping weapons of mass destruction (i.e., the atomic bombs) in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which remains controversial to this day. As historian Mark Selden reminds us, "The targeting for destruction of entire populations, whether indigenous peoples, religious infidels, or others deemed inferior, threatening or evil, may be as old as human history, but the forms it takes are as new as the latest technologies of destruction and strategic innovation, of which firebombing and nuclear weapons are particularly notable in defining the nature of war and power in the long 20th century."

On August 6, 1945, one B-29 dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, creating a firestorm that wiped out 70% of the city and killed 70,000 Japanese. The atomic bomb attack on Nagasaki three days later was somewhat less destructive due to the geographical features of the city. In all, by 1950, it is estimated that almost 300,000 people (mostly civilian) died of the attacks and subsequent radiation poisoning. After some hesitation, Japan finally surrendered.

Chapter 7 - Figure 30: Photograph showing the effects of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, 1945. Wikipedia Commons.

B. The Lead Up to War

1. Fascism

The atomic bombs ended the war, but what started it? During the 1920s and 1930s, the world seemed unsafe for democracy as rightwing fascist regimes sprouted up across Europe. Benito Mussolini rose to power in the 1920s and launched an invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. António de Oliveira Salazar consolidated power by 1932 and became the fascist prime minister of Portugal. Hitler, of course, rose to power in Germany in 1933. The fascist General Francisco Franco launched a civil war in Spain in 1936 and took control in 1939.

Chapter 7 - Figure 31: Photograph of Benito Mussolini (left) and Adolph Hitler (right) in Munich, Germany, ca. 1940. National Archives, Washington, D.C., 540151.

Most people know that Hitler turned Germany into a fascist state under Nazi control. He established a dictatorship with a government that glorified the state as an apparatus for sustaining the master race and the expulsion and extermination of all others. Of course, widespread economic suffering from the Treaty of Versailles through the Depression fueled his rise, especially as he and other white Germans scapegoated Jews and other marginal groups as the ones to blame. They reasoned, once racially purified, Germany would regain its greatness. Other fascists, such a Italy's Mussolini, also saw the state as beneficial to society. That is, let's be

clear: fascism, which is an umbrella term with a lot of nuance and difference, ultimately calls for a strong state, like socialism, but does so in the name of sustaining and empowering the state itself, typically the elites of the state, not for fostering equality for all workers and among all segments of society. Said differently, fascism prioritizes the nation over the individual, who exist to serve the nation and not vice versa.

Chapter 7 - Figure 32: German Propaganda Poster titled, "He is to blame for the war!" By Mjölnir [a.k.a. Hans Schweitzer], 1943. Poster shows a hand extending from above with finger pointing accusingly at a man wearing a top hat and with a yellow Magen David labeled "Jude" on his coat. The Nazis sought to provoke hatred of Germany's Jews by transforming the popular perception of them from ordinary neighbor into internal enemy guilty of warmongering and betraying Germany from within. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC., LC-DIG-ppmsca-18612.

2. American Neutrality

The U.S., for their part, attempted to remain neutral as fascists powers arose. Congress subsequently passed legislation—known collectively as the Neutrality Acts—designed to keep America out of war.

- The Neutrality Act of 1935: Prohibited shipment of American weapons to any belligerent nation (that is, any nation at war). Against the wishes of FDR, however, this act did not differentiate between "the good guys" and "the bad guys"—nations defending themselves and nations on the attack.
- The Neutrality Act of 1936: Forbade American loans to any belligerent nation, again, without distinguishing between aggressors and victims.
- The Neutrality Act of 1937: Made the two previous laws a permanent part of American national policy and forbade citizens from traveling on the ocean-going vessels of warring nations.

The American stance of neutrality gained support in October 1935 when Mussolini attacked Ethiopia. When the League of Nations protested, Italy simply resigned and formed an alliance (the "Axis") with Nazi Germany. Most Americans responded to the news with renewed determination to isolate themselves. Americans even flocked to popular movies and plays and read books that depicted the horrors of war to assure themselves of the need for isolation. Margaret Mitchell's Civil War-era novel, for example, *Gone with the Wind* was a national bestseller, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1936, and became a hit movie in 1939.

Isolationist sentiment showed again in 1936 through 1937 in response to the civil war in Spain as the fascist leader Francisco Franco, with help from Italy and Germany, emerged victorious. The United States joined with Britain and France in an agreement to offer no assistance to either side.

Alarmed by world events, however, FDR began moving slowly to challenge the grip of the isolationists. Yet, America seemed unable to do much more than watch the world slip closer to war. Particularly disturbing was the deteriorating situation in Asia. Japan's aggression in China escalated further as they launched a massive assault of China's Northern provinces in 1937, starting the second Sino-Japanese War. FDR believed this could not go unchecked. In a speech in October 1937, he warned of the dangers that Japanese aggression posed to world peace. He argued Japan should be "quarantined" to prevent war from spreading. Though he was deliberately vague about what he meant, the public response was hostile.

So, Roosevelt drew back.

Then tragedy struck for the U.S.; seemingly confirming FDR's beliefs. In December 1937, Japan bombed a U.S. gunboat as it sailed the Yangtze River in China. The attack was almost undoubtedly deliberate. Even so, isolationists seized eagerly on Japanese protestations that it had been an accident. They pressured FDR to accept Japan's apologies; he did.

3. The Failure of Munich

Hitler's determination to expand German power became fully visible in 1936. He moved the German army into the Rhineland (a region in western Germany bordering France, Belgium, and part of the Netherlands), violating the Versailles Treaty, and remilitarized an area controlled by France. In March 1938, Hitler annexed Austria and proclaimed a union between them and Germany. Neither in America nor in Europe was there much more than a murmur of opposition.

But now, Hitler occupied territory surrounding three sides of western Czechoslovakia, a region he dreamed of annexing to provide Germany with the *Lebensraum* ("living space"). In September 1938, he demanded that Czechoslovakia cede to him part of that region, the Sudetenland, an area on the Austro-German border. But Czechoslovakia was prepared to fight. But it knew it had no shot without help from the rest of Europe or the U.S. Yet, most of Europe and the U.S. wanted to avoid another large world war and were willing to pay almost any price to settle the crisis peacefully. On September 29, Hitler met with the leaders of France and Great Britain at Munich in an effort to resolve the crisis.

The French and British agreed to accept the German demands in Czechoslovakia in return for Hitler's promise to expand no farther—what is now called "appeasement," to which the word Munich is now often a synonym for. And it's a bad synonym because the policy was a failure. In March 1939, Hitler occupied the remaining areas of Czechoslovakia, violating the Munich agreement, and destroyed the Czech state. In April, he began issuing threats against Poland. At that point, both Britain and France finally gave assurances to Poland and the world that they would come to its assistance in case of an invasion. They then tried to get Stalin to come aboard, but it was too late. Having not been invited to Munich, Stalin did not feel he could trust the Western nations. He then signed a nonaggression pact with Hitler in August 1939 (i.e., the German-Soviet Pact). This, of course, freed Germany (for the moment) from the potential of a two-front war (Russia = East; Europe = West).

For a few months, Hitler had been trying to frighten the Poles into submitting to German demands. When that failed, he staged an incident on the border in August 1939 to allow him to claim that Germany had been attacked (known as the Gleiwitz incident). On September 1, 1939, he launched a full-scale invasion of Poland. Britain and France, true to their pledges, declared war on Germany two days later. World War II had begun in Europe and the Atlantic.

Chapter 7 - Figure 33: Political cartoon titled "Rendezvous," by David Low, Evening Standard *(London, England), September 20, 1939. The German-Soviet Pact of August 1939 stunned the world. Two ideological regimes that had for years seen the other as the true enemy had come together to sign a non-aggression pact. Unknown to the rest of the world, the Germans and Russians also signed a secret protocol that allowed them to divide Poland between them; hence Hitler tipping his hat to Stalin, stating, "The scum of the Earth, I believe?" with Stalin replying, "The bloody assassin of the workers, I presume?" Wikipedia Commons.*

C. Fighting World War II

1. Before Pearl Harbor

Fighting in Asia and Europe took place for years before American involvement. We already saw Japanese belligerence in China and, again, on September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. The invasion lasted a month and claimed over 65,000 Polish lives. Notably, the Soviet Union also invaded Poland on its east later in September. While not allies with Nazi Germany, the non-aggression pact between the two freed the Soviet Union to take military action as much

as Germany. Stalin used the time to seize control of Eastern Europe with invasions into Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and parts of Romania.

As for Hitler, by the spring of 1940, he began his assault into Western Europe by invading Norway and Denmark. He then marched through Luxembourg, Holland, and Belgium. He set his eyes on France next. In May 1940, the Nazi Blitzkrieg (lightning war) punched holes into the French defenses. By June Hitler posed for the cameras next to the Eifel Tower in Paris. With Italy and other Axis powers (Germany, Italy, Japan, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria), most of western and eastern Europe laid conquered.

Chapter 7 - Figure 34: Photograph of Hitler with his officers posing in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, June 23, 1940. National Archives, Washington, D.C., National Archives Collection of Foreign Records Seized, 1675-1958, 540179.

Britain held out!

For a full year, Britain took on the Axis all by themselves.

This included surviving the infamous Battle of Britain, a massive bombing campaign that lasted for over three months from late July 1940 to October 1940, and cost the British numerous military losses, but also 40,000 civilian deaths. Despite not taking Britain, however, Hitler did manage to push the British forces off the European mainland and back to their little island.

He then set his sights on Russia and he invaded in June 1941. Indeed, despite a non-aggression pact, Hitler always saw Russia as a source of agriculture, slave labor, oil, and other raw materials. The Nazi blitz failed, however, as the German advance could not cut quickly through the eastern front to Moscow, though they reached the communist capital by the fall of 1941. Still, Moscow held out through 1942, but not before 800,000 troops were killed, 3,000,000 wounded, and over 3,000,000 captured, many of whom were sent to Nazi concentration camps.

2. After Pearl Harbor

By that summer (of 1942), just as America was getting involved militarily, the Germans and Soviets fought the bloodiest battle in known human history: the Battle of Stalingrad, which claimed a total of two million lives, both military and civilian losses combined. Indeed, Russians consider it to be the greatest battle of their "Great Patriotic War," and most historians consider it to be the greatest battle of all of World War II. Essentially, it stopped the German advance into the Soviet Union and marked the turning of the tide of war in favor of the Allies as it led to the liberation of Russia and the Red Army's long march toward Berlin.

3. American involvement Before Pearl Harbor

a. Neutrality-Lite

As events developed in Asia and Europe, FDR and many American people continued to oppose going to war. Still, FDR knew that the U.S.: (a) had to support the Allies; and (b) was going to get dragged into the war eventually. Regarding the first, by 1939, FDR amended the neutrality acts to allow for a "cash and carry policy," authorizing the sale of materials to belligerents, as long as they arranged for the transport using their own ships and paid immediately in cash, assuming all risk. On the one hand, this was simply a way to help Britain survive. On the other hand, it opened the door for the sale of weapons.

FDR also prepared to resist a possible Nazi invasion. On May 16, 1940 he asked and received $1 billion for defense. He was able to do so, in part, because of a major shift in American public opinion finally took place following the invasion of France during the summer of 1940. Americans for the first time feared Germany and considered Hitler a real threat to America. In September 1940, Congress approved the Burke-Wadsworth Act, inaugurating the first peacetime military draft in American history.

But the forces of isolation were far from dead. Debate between the isolationists and interventionists was loud and bitter. Through the summer and fall of 1940, it was complicated further by a presidential campaign.

Chapter 7 - Figure 35: Political cartoon by Jerry Costello, ca. July 7, 1939, Albany (New York) Knickerbocker News. *Cartoon shows Uncle Sam exclaiming "Franklin! You're inclined to get in too deep!!" as he leans out from shore, with one hand gripping a pier labeled "Reasonable Neutrality" and the other grasping President Roosevelt by the hand trying to prevent him from getting into deep water labeled "Europe's Troubles." As Europe plunged into war, isolationists decried Roosevelt's attempt to alter neutrality legislation. In 1939, Roosevelt, wanting to better arm the Allies against German aggression, asked Congress to eliminate the arms embargo in the "cash-and-carry" provision of the Neutrality Act of 1937. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-DIG-ppmsca-38554.*

b. The Third-Term Campaign

For many months, the politics of 1940 revolved around the question of FDR's intentions. Would he break with tradition and run for a third term? He was deliberately coy and never publicly revealed his wishes. But by refusing to withdraw, however, he made it nearly impossible for any rival Democrat to come forward. Just before the Democratic Convention in July, he let it be known that he would accept a "draft" from his party.

The Republicans faced a far more difficult task. Roosevelt effectively straddled the center by favoring neither the extreme isolationists nor interventionists. The Republicans had few viable alternatives. Their solution was to compete with the president on his own terms. They nominated a dynamic and attractive, but politically inexperienced, businessman: Wendell Willkie. He and the GOP then took positions little different from FDR's: they would keep the country out of war but would extend generous assistance to the Allies. Willkie was left, therefore, with the unenviable task of defeating Roosevelt in a personality contest.

He got his butt kicked.

Though closer than either 1932 or 1936, FDR won decisively. He received 55% of the popular vote and won 449 Electoral College votes to Willkie's 82.

c. Neutrality Abandoned

With the election behind him, FDR began to make subtle but profound changes in the American role in the war at the end of 1940. In December 1940, Great Britain was virtually bankrupt. They simply could not afford the cash-and-carry requirement. But England needed help if it were to survive. FDR thus created a new system called "lend-lease." It would allow the government not only to sell weapons, but also to lend or lease them to any nation deemed "vital to the defense of the United States." In other words, America could send weapons to England based on no more than their promise to return or pay for them when the war was over.

But Roosevelt now faced another problem: how to ensure the weapons got there. Shipping lanes in the Atlantic had become extremely dangerous. German submarines were deadly and plentiful. FDR decided to rely instead on the concept of "hemispheric defense." Specifically, the American Navy would defend transport ships only in the western Atlantic—what he argued was a neutral zone to keep Germany from saying it was all an act of war. Yet, by July 1941, American ships were patrolling the ocean as far east as Iceland. American ships also radioed information to British vessels about the location of Nazi submarines.

At first, Germany did little to challenge American actions. By the fall of 1941, however, events in Europe changed its position. Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June. Roosevelt then persuaded Congress to extend lend-lease to the Soviets. Now American industry was providing crucial assistance to Hitler's foes on two fronts. And the U.S. Navy was providing protection to convoys and radioing help to British ships.

The Nazis got mad.

In September 1941, Nazi submarines began a campaign against American vessels. A German submarine fired on the American destroyer *Greer* (which was radioing the sub's position to the British at the time). Roosevelt responded by ordering American ships to fire on German submarines "on sight." In October, Nazi submarines hit two American destroyers and sank one of them, killing many American sailors in the process.

Congress now voted approval of a measure allowing the United States to arm its own merchant vessels and to sail all the way into belligerent ports. The United States had, in effect before Pearl Harbor, launched a naval war against Germany. By the fall of 1941, then, it seemed only a matter of time before America became an official belligerent. But FDR knew it would take a bit more for the American public to overwhelming support the war. That something else was Pearl Harbor.

4. American Involvement after Pearl Harbor

a. Europe First

Despite calls for revenge against Japan, FDR decided to concentrate on "Europe First." He ordered the American Pacific Fleet to do its best to contain Japanese expansion, while placing emphasis on confronting Hitler. Roosevelt thought Nazi-controlled Europe would be far more difficult to attack as compared to Japan and their Pacific holdings—that is, Japan would not advance easily. Moreover, American scientists worried that Germany was developing weapons of mass destruction as well. Therefore, FDR decided to focus on Europe first, then, once Hitler was defeated, the U.S. and the Allies could collectively defeat Japan with ease.

At first, American military leaders wanted to confront the Germans more aggressively than the British wanted (or had) and attack directly into mainland Europe. The British Prime Minister Winston Churchill feared that would fail and would cost too many lives, military resources, and British morale. Roosevelt and Churchill eventually agreed to blockade German supply routes and bomb German cities and munitions centers. From there, the Allied forces would attack German troops at their weakest points first and then slowly advance toward Germany itself. The plan was known as "closing the ring."

In December 1941, FDR and Churchill agreed to attack German holdings in North Africa first and launched an attack in November 1942 where the Germans controlled the Mediterranean Coast (Operation Torch). Numbers and positioning soon forced a German surrender and the Allies achieved their first important joint victory. At the same time, the Soviets turned the tide against the Nazi advance into the Soviet Union by defeating the German forces at Stalingrad.

Chapter 7 - Figure 36: Map showing the Allied Invasion of North Africa in Operation Torch in November 1942. Wikipedia Commons.

With North Africa secured, the Allies took the next step toward Germany by launching invasions of Sicily and Italy. The Allies believed that if the Italian people faced an occupation of their homeland, they would rise up and overthrow Mussolini. Fearing that the Allies would have a free road up to the border of Austria, German forces began to entrench themselves in Italy after the fall of Sicily. Despite German presence in Italy, however, Mussolini was eventually arrested, and the Italians surrendered to the Allies on September 3, 1943, subsequently declaring war on Nazi Germany in October, though the German presence lasted there until the end of the war.

Chapter 7 - Figure 37: Photograph of U.S. Army troops wading ashore Omaha Beach in Normandy during the D-Day landings, June 6, 1944. The Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C., 26-G-2343.

There was no easy road to Germany. In June of 1944 the Allies invaded Normandy in Northern France (D-Day). By July 1944, some one million Allied troops, mostly American, British, and Canadian, were entrenched in Normandy. The occupation of Normandy was crucial for the Western Allies to bring the war to the western border of Germany and by the end of August, the Allies liberated France and marched through Eastern France through the fall and winter of 1944 and 1945. By the spring, they were on their way toward Berlin, just as the Soviets were closing the ring from the east.

Thanks to the Yalta Conference, which saw the Allies finalize agreements to carve post-war Germany into four zones (Russian, American, French, and British), the Americans and British halted just shy of Berlin as the Red Army closed in on the city that was now going to be in their zone. On April 16, 1945, the Red Army attacked Berlin, taking the city on May 2, two days after Hitler committed suicide. The war in Europe ended.

b. The War against Japan

Again, FDR decided to focus most of America's attention on the war in Europe. Still, the U.S. did move against Japan. The Navy provided the main strength for an offensive strategy in the Pacific; although the Army devoted at least one-third of its resources to the Pacific as well. Ultimately, the U.S. was able to successfully conduct a two-pronged war—one in Europe and one in the Pacific, which the Japanese had counted against.

Chapter 7 - Figure 38: Photograph of the original American flag raising at Iwo Jima, February 23, 1945. Naval History and Heritage Command, Washington, D.C., NH 104150.

In a nutshell, the American strategy narrowed on confronting Japan's Navy in the Pacific with the idea of advancing close enough to Japan itself to, first, bomb it, then invade. Keep in mind, prior to far-flying and speedy jet planes, American propeller-planes had limited range, hence they could not reach Japan itself unless relatively nearby. Thus, the U.S. adopted a strategy known as "island hopping," conquering small islands throughout the Pacific and closer and closer to Japan. So, from Hawaii, the U.S. advanced from Midway to Micronesia, the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and then Japan. Of course, rather than invading Japan, President Truman, who became President following FDR's death in April 1945, approved the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ending the war against Japan by September 1945.

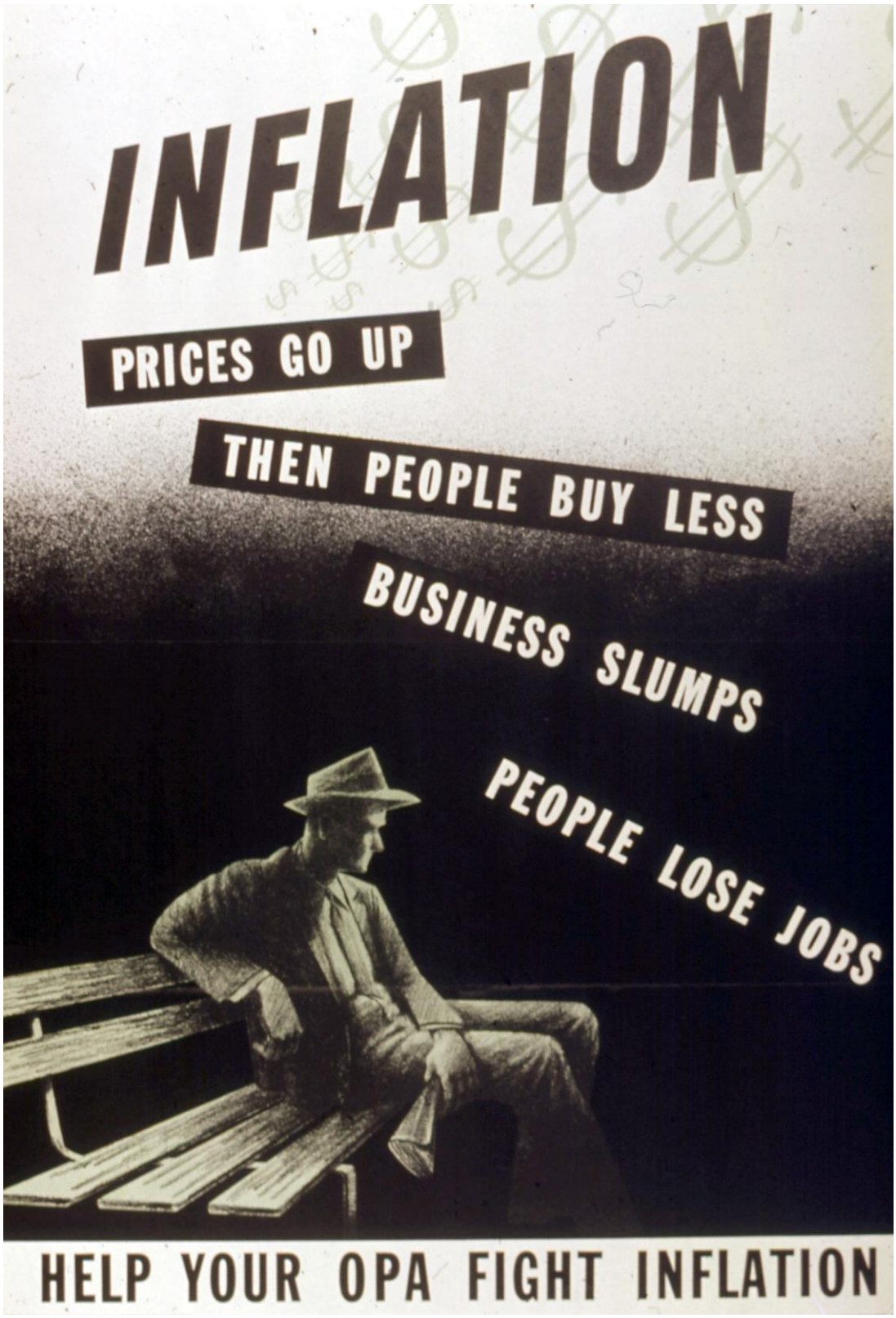
VII. The War at Home

A. The War Economy

World War II cost America one million casualties and over 400,000 deaths. In both domestic and foreign affairs, its consequences were far-reaching. First, it had an immediate impact on the economy by ending Depression-era unemployment. The war also accelerated corporate mergers and the trend toward large-scale agriculture. Labor unions also grew during the war as the government adopted pro-union policies, continuing the New Deal's sympathetic treatment of organized labor.

Overall, the war brought unprecedented prosperity to Americans. Per capita income rose from $373 in 1940 to $1,074 in 1945. Rising incomes, however, created shortages of goods and high inflation. Prices soared 18% between 1941 and the end of 1942. Many goods were unavailable regardless of price. Altogether, production of nearly 300 items deemed nonessential to the war effort was banned or curtailed, including steel, glass, rubber, coat hangers, beer cans, and toothpaste tubes.

Congress responded to surging prices by establishing the Office of Price Administration (OPA) in January 1942, with the power to freeze prices and wages, control rents, and institute rationing of scarce items. The OPA quickly rationed food stuffs. Every month each man, woman, and child in the country received two ration books—one for canned goods and one for meat, fish and dairy products. Rationing was soon extended to tires, gasoline, and shoes.



Chapter 7 - Figure 39: War poster of the OPA boasting of its fight against inflation to aid American workers and families. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Records of the Office of Government Reports, 1932-1947, 514468.

B. Molding Public Opinion

Given isolationist sentiments, FDR realized he had to mold public opinion to favor involvement in the war. On the one hand, he had hoped to avoid the crude propaganda campaigns that had stirred ethnic hatred during World War I. On the other hand, anti-Japanese propaganda was intense. Movies, comic strips, newspapers, books, and advertisements caricatured Japanese by portraying them with thick glasses and huge buckteeth.

Motion pictures emerged as the most important instrument of propaganda during World War II. After Pearl Harbor, in fact, Hollywood quickly enlisted in the war cause. Hollywood's greatest contribution to the war effort was morale. Combat films produced during the war emphasized patriotism, group effort, and the value of sacrifice for a larger cause.

Of course, as with World War I, Propaganda Posters appeared (view some here and here).

C. Social Changes during the War

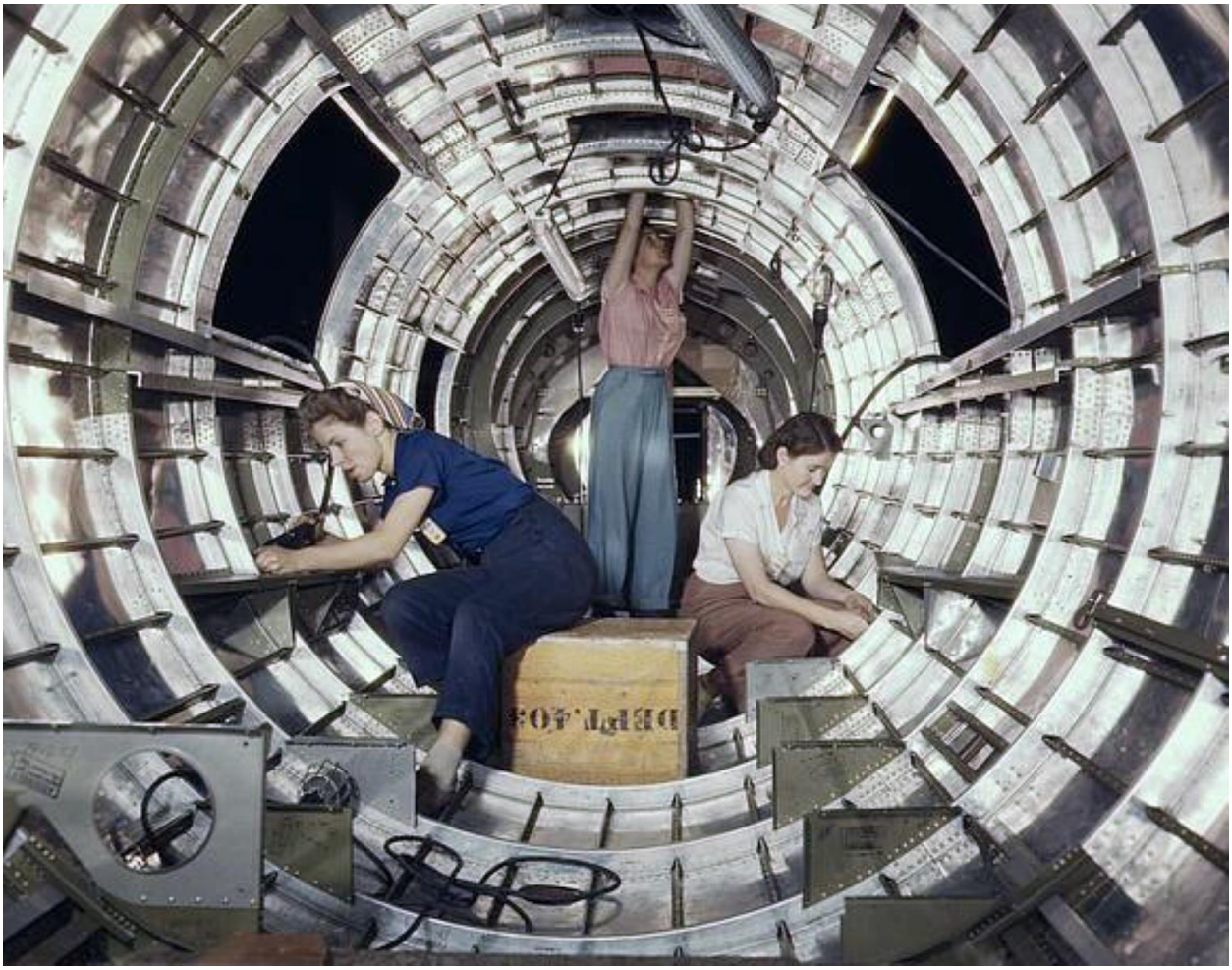
World War II produced important changes in American life. One striking change involved fashion. To conserve wool and cotton, dresses became shorter and vests and cuffs disappeared, as did double-breasted suits, pleats, and ruffles. Even more significant was the tremendous increase in mobility. The war set families in motion, pulling them off farms and out of small towns and packing them into large urban areas. Urbanization had virtually stopped during the Depression, but the war saw the number of city dwellers leap from 46% to 53%. War industries sparked this urban growth.

D. Women and World War II

The war had a dramatic impact on women. The sudden appearance of large numbers of women in uniform was easily the most visible change. The military organized women into auxiliary units with special uniforms, their own officers, and even equal pay. By 1945, more than 250,000 women had joined the Women's Army Corps (WAC) (who came to SFA!), the Army Nurses Corps, Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES), the Navy Nurses Corps, the Marines, and the Coast Guard. Most women who joined the armed services either filled traditional women's roles, such as nursing, or replaced men in non-combat jobs.

Women also substituted for men on the home front. For the first time in history, married working women outnumbered single working women as 6.3 million women entered the work force. The war challenged the conventional image of female behavior, as "Rosie the Riveter" became the popular symbol of women who abandoned traditional female occupations to work in defense industries. (Note: we will cover Rosie the Riveter in more detail in a module assignment.)

Chapter 7 - Figure 40: Photograph of two women welders at the Landers, Frary, and Clark plant in New Britain, Connecticut, June 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USW3-034282-C.



Chapter 7 - Figure 41: Photograph of three women workers installing fixtures and assemblies to a tail fuselage section of a B-17 bomber at the Douglas Aircraft Company plant, Long Beach, CA, October 1942. Better known as the "Flying Fortress," the B-17F is a later model of the B-17, which distinguished itself in action in the south Pacific, Germany and elsewhere. It is a long range, high altitude, heavy bomber, with a crew of seven to nine men, and with armament sufficient to defend itself on daylight missions. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-DIG-fsac-1a35337.

E. African Americans and World War II

In 1941, most of the nation's African American population still lived in the South. During the war, more than one million African Americans migrated to the North and more than two million found work in defense industries. Still, during the war, the Marines excluded African Americans, the Navy used them as servants, and the Army created separate African American regiments commanded mostly by white officers.

The Red Cross even segregated blood plasma.

As urban areas swelled with defense workers, housing and transportation shortages exacerbated racial tensions. In 1943, a race riot broke out in Detroit in a federally-sponsored

housing project when whites wanted African Americans barred from the new apartments named, ironically, in honor of Sojourner Truth. Similar conflicts and riots erupted across the nation exposing, in each instance, the same jarring contradiction: white Americans espoused equality abroad but practiced discrimination at home.

Chapter 7 - Figure 42: Photograph captioned "Cautiously advancing through the jungle, while on patrol in Japanese territory off the Numa-Numa Trail, this member of the 93rd Infantry Division is among the first Negro foot soldiers to go into action in the South Pacific theater," May 1, 1944. National Archives, Washington, D.C., Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, 1860-1985, 531184.

F. Mexican Americans & World War II

Almost 400,000 Mexican Americans served in the armed forces during the war. For many Mexican Americans, jobs in industry provided an escape hatch from the desperate poverty

of migratory labor. In New Mexico, about one-fifth of the rural Mexican American population left for war-related jobs. The need for farm workers rose dramatically after Pearl Harbor. To meet the demand, the United States established the Bracero (work hands) Program in 1942, and by 1945, several hundred thousand Mexican workers had immigrated to the Southwest. Commercial farmers welcomed them; labor unions, however, resented the competition, leading to animosity and discrimination against Mexicans and Mexican Americans alike.

In Los Angeles, ethnic tensions erupted into violence. White society feared and resented newly formed Mexican American youth gangs, whose members celebrated their ethnicity by wearing flamboyant "zoot suits" (hence, the incident is often called the Zoot Suit Riot). In June 1943, hundreds of white sailors, on leave from nearby naval bases, invaded downtown Los Angeles. Eager to put down the Mexican American youths, they attacked the zoot suiters, and a riot broke out for several nights. The local press blamed Mexican Americans and the riot did not end until military police ordered sailors back to their ships.

Chapter 7 - Figure 43: Photograph of American Navy sailors carrying clubs during the Zoot Suit Riot, June 1943. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C., LC-USZ62-75515.

G. Japanese American Internment

We are going to cover Japanese American Internment in more detail in a module assignment. But here are the basics. On December 7, 1941, the day of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, more than 110,000 people of Japanese descent lived on the West Coast. Within a few months, this population was gone. Out of fears of espionage and sabotage along the Pacific, the government removed Japanese American men, women, and children from their homes and placed them in internment camps. Two-thirds of the internees were U.S. citizens. None of them was ever charged with a crime. And neither were any U.S. officials.

VIII. Conclusion

A. Modern America

As soon as the nation modernized and grew into a consumer-capitalist society, it painfully plunged into its worst economic crisis in history, reminding us how cruel and cold the modern capitalist system could be in addition to all its triumphs. Out of this Depression, however, FDR helped to reorganize and restructure capitalism in America, inserting both big government and big labor alongside big business as major players in the economy. He forged the modern welfare state, too. Government oversight and regulation worked in tandem with government spending and services to quickly establish the federal government as a primary agent of change and relief in America. In doing so, FDR helped to redefine what many Americans came to expect from government. Dating to the progressive era, not to mention the demands of laborers, farmers, immigrants, and African Americans, the federal government, for better or worse, now loomed large in modern American life. FDR also set about to build a Democratic base that would go on to dominate the American political scene for the next 40 years. But FDR also sought to destroy, specifically totalitarianism and militarism across the globe as the U.S. entered the Second World War, which set the stage for much of the Cold War to follow. In other words, as British Prime Minister Winston Churchill said in 1945, “It would be a great tragedy if they [statesmen], through inertia or carelessness, let it [peace] slip from their grasp. History would never forgive them if it did.” But peace did slip through their grasp! World War II was followed by a Cold War that pitted the United States and its allies against the Soviet Union and its supporters. It was called a Cold War, but it would flare into violence in Korea and Vietnam and in many smaller conflicts.

B. Triumph and Tragedy

Any talk about the Great Depression and war is certainly going to lead to talk about tragedy. And, sadly, much tragedy did indeed occur, from a tumbling economy to the dire consequences it reaped, measured in long bread lines, homelessness, suicide, the destruction of families, and the loss of livelihoods. It is difficult to overstate the dire and horrible impact the Depression had on the lives of millions of Americans. Moreover, it is painful to review just how much harder it hurt the already marginalized in society, especially African Americans, Mexican Americans, and women. For all that said, if there is triumph to be had, it is indeed the triumph of surviving the worst. FDR and the New Deal, too, continued in the Reconstruction-era and progressive mold of working to build a more compassionate and responsive government, even if

that compassion and response did not go as far as it should have and helped as many people as it could have. Finally, for all the horrors and tragedy of World War II, the U.S. did enter the war to defeat fascism in Europe and militarism in Japan, even while the conduction of the war, both abroad and at home, included, again, much in which to be ashamed, from Japanese American internment to the firebombing of civilian targets.