

Unit 5. From Isolation to World War II (1930-1945)

Learning Target 21

- Analyze the reasons for American isolationist sentiment in the interwar period.



During the 1930s, the U.S. government attempted to distance the country from earlier interventionist policies in the Western Hemisphere as well as retain an isolationist approach to events in Europe and Asia until the beginning of World War II.

Following World War I, the United States was reluctant to become entangled in overseas conflicts that would lead to another war. The U.S. previously had used the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary to justify intervention into Latin American affairs. However, the U.S. retreated from these policies during the 1930s with the Good Neighbor Policy. Under this policy, the U.S. emphasized cooperation and trade rather than military force to maintain stability in the Western Hemisphere.

By the mid-1930s, signs in Europe and Asia pointed to a new world war. The U.S. passed laws asserting U.S. neutrality to prevent the country from being entangled in a foreign war. The Neutrality Acts of 1935 and 1937 banned export and transportation of arms to nations at war. The Neutrality Acts were attempts to isolate the country from the problems erupting in Asia and Europe.

The U.S. tried to maintain its isolationist approach when war broke out in Europe. But the U.S. aided countries fighting against fascist aggression. The U.S. introduced the "cash and carry" policy, negotiated the destroyer-for-bases deal and enacted Lend-Lease, all of which supported Britain and France in their fight against the Axis powers. The U.S. also helped write the Atlantic Charter in 1941, a document that established goals for the post-war world.

The expansionist policies of Japan and the bombing of Pearl Harbor ended U.S. isolationist policies. The U.S. declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941, one day after Japan bombed the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



SOURCE: Library of Congress

How does this cartoon reflect the reasons for isolationist sentiment in the 1930s?

Learning Target 22

Identify and explain changes American society experienced with the mobilization of its economic and military resources during World War II.



The United States' mobilization of its economic and military resources during World War II brought significant changes to American society. Mobilization is the act of assembling and making both soldiers and supplies ready for war.

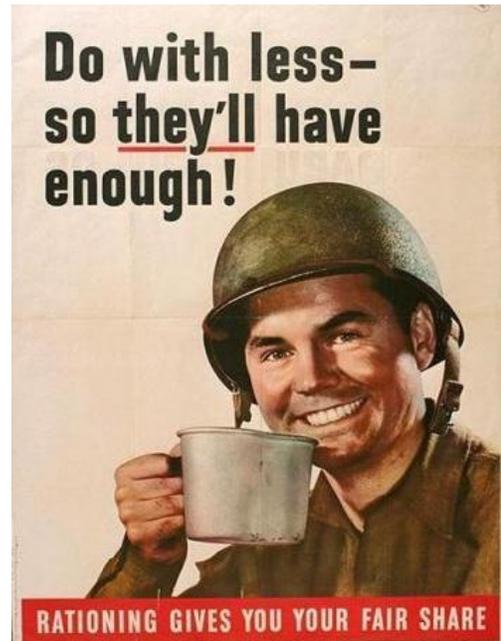
The mobilization of the United States to a wartime economy during World War II was massive. The federal government reorganized factories, converting them from producing consumer goods and services to making materials to support the war effort.

As factories shifted to making war materials, consumer goods were in short supply. The federal government needed to control supply and demand. A rationing program was established to regulate the amount of commodities that consumers could purchase. Rationing affected the purchase of food, clothing, shoes, gasoline, tires and gasoline. Americans received coupon books that allowed the purchase of the rationed items. Regulations were also imposed on some wages and prices.

Mobilization had major effects on the lives of Americans. A peacetime draft was instituted in 1940 to supplement military enlistments. Every man between the ages of 21 and 35 was required to register.

Scrap drives were conducted to reuse materials for the production of war goods. Citizens also raised victory gardens to supplement food supplies and purchased war bonds to help fund the war. Some labor unions signed no-strike pledges, so that production of war goods would continue.

Job opportunities in the civilian workforce and in the military opened for women and minorities. Women went to work in factories that had previously been open only to men. They also worked in support units in the military. African Americans organized to end discrimination and segregation so that they could contribute to the war effort. More than a million African Americans served in the U.S. military during the war. Although Japanese Americans were interned in relocation camps by the U.S. government, many enlisted in the armed services.



*What mobilization action is shown above?
What other forms of mobilization did the U.S. take to support the war?*

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Unit 5. Checking for Understanding

1. Which policy below reflects the isolationist sentiment in the United States prior to entering World War II?
 - A. using the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary to justify intervention in Latin America
 - B. banning arms sales to nations at war in the Neutrality Acts
 - C. aiding countries that fought fascist aggression through cash and carry policies
 - D. exchanging American destroyers for British naval and air bases

2. During World War II, the U.S. government created a system to ration the distribution of certain resources such as petroleum.

How did this new system of regulation affect the distribution of resources in the United States?

- A. It granted more privileges to wealthy business owners.
 - B. It provided more goods and services to the working class.
 - C. It limited the number of goods and services individuals could purchase.
 - D. It supplied members of the upper class better quality goods.
3. Explain two ways wartime mobilization impacted the domestic lives of citizens in the United States during World War II.