

## networks

**There's More Online!**

- BIOGRAPHY** Eugene V. Debs
- BIOGRAPHY** Oliver Wendell Holmes
- IMAGE** Military Recruitment Poster
- IMAGE** Victory Garden Poster
- VIDEO** The Home Front
- INTERACTIVE SELF-CHECK QUIZ**



## LESSON 2

# The Home Front

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** • *Why do nations go to war?*

## IT MATTERS BECAUSE

*To fight World War I, the U.S. government used progressive ideas and new government agencies to mobilize the population and organize the economy.*

## Organizing the Economy

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What did Congress do to prepare the economy for war?*

When the United States entered the war in April 1917, progressives controlled the federal government. Their ideas about planning and management shaped how the government organized the war effort.

### Wartime Agencies

As part of the war effort, Congress created new agencies staffed by business executives, managers, and government officials to coordinate mobilization and ensure the efficient use of national resources. These agencies emphasized cooperation between big business and government.

The War Industries Board (WIB) coordinated the production of war materials. Early problems convinced President Wilson to expand the Board's powers. The WIB told manufacturers what they could produce, allocated raw materials, ordered new factory construction, and sometimes set prices.

The Food Administration, run by Herbert Hoover, was responsible for increasing food production while reducing civilian consumption. The agency encouraged families to conserve food and grow their own vegetables in **victory gardens**. “Eat more corn, oats and rye products—fish and poultry—fruits, vegetables and potatoes, baked, boiled and broiled foods. . . . Eat less wheat, meat, sugar and fats to save for the army and our allies,” urged Food Administration posters.

The Fuel Administration managed use of coal and oil. To conserve energy, it introduced the first usage of daylight saving time, shortened workweeks for civilian goods factories, and encouraged Heatless Mondays.

## Reading HELPDESK

### Academic Vocabulary

- migrate
- draft

### Content Vocabulary

- **victory garden**
- **espionage**

### TAKING NOTES:

#### Key Ideas and Details

**Organizing** As you read, use the major headings of this lesson to create an outline similar to the one below.

##### The Home Front

###### I. Organizing the Economy

- A.
  - B.
  - C.
- II.
- A.
  - B.

**victory garden** a garden planted by civilians during war to raise vegetables for home use, leaving more of other foods for the troops

By the end of the war, the United States had spent about \$32 billion. To fund the war effort, Congress raised income tax rates, placed new taxes on corporate profits, imposed an extra tax on the profits of arms factories, and borrowed over \$20 billion through the sale of Liberty Bonds and Victory Bonds. Americans who bought bonds were lending money to the government to be repaid with interest in a specified number of years.

### Mobilizing the Workforce

The war effort also required the cooperation of workers. To prevent strikes from disrupting the war effort, the government established the National War Labor Board (NWLB) in April 1918. The NWLB often pressured industry to improve wages, adopt an eight-hour workday, and allow unions the right to organize and bargain collectively. In exchange, labor leaders agreed not to disrupt war production with strikes or other disturbances. As a result, membership in unions increased by over one million between 1917 and 1919.

With so many men in the military, employers were willing to hire women for jobs traditionally held by men. Some 1 million women joined the workforce for the first time, and another 8 million switched to better industrial jobs. Women worked in factories, shipyards, and railroad yards and served as police officers, mail carriers, and train engineers. When the war ended, however, most women returned to their previous jobs or stopped working. Yet the changes demonstrated that women were capable of holding jobs that many had believed only men could do.

Desperate for workers, Henry Ford sent agents to the South to recruit African Americans. Other companies quickly followed suit. Promises of high wages and plentiful work convinced between 300,000 and 500,000 African Americans to move north. This massive population movement became known as the Great Migration. The racial makeup of such cities as Chicago, New York, Cleveland, and Detroit changed greatly. Eventually, so did politics in the Northern cities, where African Americans were able to vote.

The war also encouraged other groups to **migrate**. Between 1917 and 1920, more than 100,000 Mexicans migrated into the Southwest, providing

**migrate** to move from one location to another

### CHARTS/GRAPHS

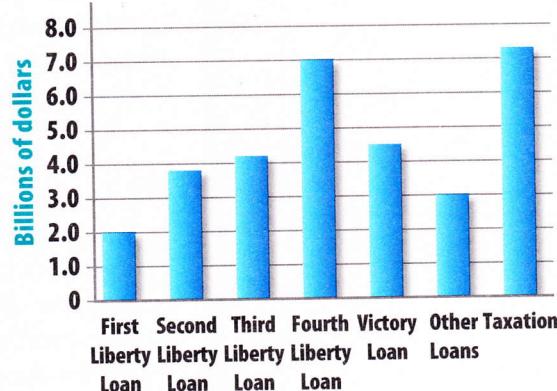
To pay for the war, the U.S. government raised taxes and issued bonds. The government printed posters, organized parades, and asked movie stars to help promote war bonds. Here, actor Douglas Fairbanks urges Americans to buy Liberty Bonds at a rally in New York City in 1918.

- 1 Making Inferences** What can you infer about government finances by the disparity between the amount of revenue raised through loans versus taxation?

- 2 Predicting Consequences** What consequence might result from the way the war was paid for?



### PAYING FOR WORLD WAR I



labor for farmers and ranchers. Mexican Americans also found new opportunities in factory jobs in Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha, and other American cities. Like other immigrant groups before them, they faced hostility and discrimination. Mexican Americans tended to settle in separate neighborhoods, called barrios, where they could support one another.

### Shaping Public Opinion

Progressives did not think that organizing the economy was enough to ensure the success of the war effort. They also believed the government needed to shape public opinion. Soon after Congress declared war, Wilson created the Committee on Public Information (CPI) to "sell" the war to the American people. Headed by journalist George Creel, the CPI recruited advertising executives, artists, authors, songwriters, entertainers, public speakers, and motion picture companies to help sway public opinion in favor of the war.

The CPI distributed pamphlets and arranged for thousands of "four-minute speeches" to be delivered at movie theaters and other public places. Some 75,000 speakers, known as Four-Minute Men, urged audiences to support the war in various ways, from buying war bonds to reporting draft dodgers to the authorities. Nongovernmental groups also helped raise awareness and funds for the war. For example, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee raised \$63 million in relief funds. The Jewish Welfare Board set up centers at home and abroad for Jewish servicemen.

In addition to using propaganda, the government passed legislation to limit opposition to the war and to fight **espionage**, or spying to acquire government information. The Espionage Act of 1917 made it illegal to aid the enemy, give false reports, or interfere with the war effort. The Sedition Act of 1918 made it illegal to speak against the war publicly. In practice, it allowed officials to prosecute anyone who criticized the government. These two laws led to more than 2,000 convictions.

Despite protests, the constitutionality of the Espionage and Sedition Acts was upheld in court. In *Schenck v. United States* (1919), Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote the unanimous opinion of the Court:

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

"The question . . . is whether the words used are . . . of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent. . . . When a nation is at war many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that their utterance will not be endured so long as men fight."

—from *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 1920

Wartime fears led to attacks on German Americans, labor activists, socialists, and pacifists. Ads urged Americans to monitor their fellow citizens. Some German Americans hid ties to their culture to avoid suspicion or abuse. Individuals and businesses changed their names, and many German-language newspapers ceased publication.

#### ✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Explaining** What were some new agencies that Congress established to help manage the wartime economy?



Eugene V. Debs, leader of the American Socialist Party, was arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison under the Espionage Act for giving an antiwar speech in Canton, Ohio.

#### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Interpreting** What did the sentencing of Debs and others show about wartime freedom?

**espionage** spying, especially to gain government secrets

# Building the Military

**GUIDING QUESTION** How were progressive ideals used in preparing the military for war?

Progressives did not abandon their ideas when it came to building up the military. Instead, they applied those ideas to develop a new system for recruiting a large army.

## Volunteers and Conscripts

When the United States entered the war in 1917, the army and the National Guard together had slightly more than 200,000 troops. Many men quickly volunteered, but many more were still needed.

Many progressives believed that forced military service was a violation of democratic and republican principles. Believing a **draft** was necessary, however, Congress, with Wilson's support, created a new system called selective service.

Instead of having the military run the draft from Washington, D.C., the Selective Service Act of 1917 required all men between 21 and 30 to register for the draft. A lottery randomly determined the order in which they were called before a local draft board in charge of selecting or exempting people from military service. The thousands of local boards were the heart of the system. The members of the draft boards were civilians from local communities. Progressives believed local people, understanding community needs, would know which men to draft and would do a far better job than a centralized government bureaucracy. Eventually, about 2.8 million Americans were drafted.

Not all American soldiers were drafted. Approximately 2 million men volunteered for military service. Some had heard stories of German atrocities and wanted to fight back. Others believed democracy was at stake. Many believed they had a duty to respond to their nation's call.

Although the horrors of war soon became apparent to the American troops, their morale remained high, helping to ensure victory. More than 50,000 Americans died in combat, and over 200,000 were wounded. Another 60,000 soldiers died from disease, mostly from the influenza epidemic of 1918 and 1919. The flu epidemic was not limited to the battlefield. It spread around the world and made more than a quarter of all Americans sick. The disease killed an estimated 25 to 50 million people worldwide, including more than 500,000 Americans.

**draft** to select a person at random for mandatory military service

The U.S. Army kept many African American soldiers from combat, assigning them to work as cooks, laborers, and laundrymen. The 369th Regiment, however, was assigned to the French Army and spent 191 days in the frontline trenches. The entire regiment was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for gallantry in combat.

### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Comparing and Contrasting** Why do you think the experiences of the 369th Regiment differed from those of other African American soldiers during World War I?

PHOTO: Library of Congress



### Women in the Military

Although women's roles in the military during World War I were limited, their entry into service paved the way for many advances. Today, about 5 percent of general officers in the U.S. Army, including the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard, are women. In 2008 Ann E. Dunwoody became the first female four-star general in army history.

Of the nearly 400,000 African Americans who were drafted, about 42,000 served overseas as combat troops. African American soldiers encountered discrimination and prejudice in the army, where they served in racially segregated units, almost always under the supervision of white officers. Despite these challenges, many African American soldiers fought with distinction. For example, the African American 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions fought in bitter battles along the Western Front. Many of the soldiers in those divisions won praise from the French commander, Marshal Philippe Pétain, and the United States commander, General John Pershing.

An estimated 12,000 Native Americans and about 20,000 Puerto Ricans served in the armed forces. Thousands of Mexican Americans also served in the war, volunteering for service more than any other minority group in the United States. Some Asian immigrants fought on the side of the United States even before they were citizens. Though they faced discrimination, many Asians served in the U.S. Army with distinction, being granted citizenship in recognition of their contributions.

### Women Join the Military

World War I was the first war in which women officially served in the armed forces, although they served only in noncombat positions. As the military prepared for war in 1917, it faced a severe shortage of clerical workers because so many men were assigned to active duty. Early in 1917, the navy authorized the enlistment of women to meet its clerical needs.

Women serving in the navy wore a standard uniform and were assigned the rank of yeoman. By the end of the war, more than 11,000 women had served in the navy. Although most performed clerical duties, others served as radio operators, electricians, pharmacists, chemists, and photographers. Unlike the navy, the army refused to enlist women. Instead, it began hiring women as temporary employees to fill clerical jobs. The only women to actually serve in the army were in the Army Nurse Corps.

Women had served as nurses in both the army and the navy since the early 1900s, but as auxiliaries. They were not assigned ranks and were not technically enlisted in the army or navy. More than 20,000 nurses served in the Army Nurse Corps during the war, including more than 10,000 overseas.

### ✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Synthesizing** How did progressive ideas influence the roles of women during World War I?

## LESSON 2 REVIEW



### Reviewing Vocabulary

- 1. Explaining** How did victory gardens help civilians contribute to the war effort?

### Using Your Notes

- 2. Summarizing** Use the notes you completed during the lesson to write a short summary of how World War I affected life on the home front.

### Answering the Guiding Questions

- 3. Making Generalizations** What did Congress do to prepare the economy for war?

- 4. Synthesizing** How were progressive ideals used in preparing the military for war?

### Writing Activity

- 5. NARRATIVE** Suppose that you are a woman entering the workforce for the first time during World War I. Write a letter to a friend in which you explain why you have decided to go to work and what type of job you are doing. Share your feelings about your new job.