



CHAPTER

11

THE NEW DEAL AND WORLD WAR II

U.S. battleships *West Virginia* and *Tennessee*, following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

“We must be the great arsenal of democracy.”

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1941

ROOSEVELT AND THE NEW DEAL

In 1933 the new president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, brought an air of confidence and optimism that quickly rallied the people to the banner of his program, known as the New Deal. “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” the president declared in his inaugural address to the nation.

In one sense, the New Deal merely introduced social and economic reforms familiar to many Europeans for more than a generation. Moreover, the New Deal represented the culmination of a long-range trend toward abandonment of “laissez-faire” capitalism, going back to the regulation of the railroads in the 1880s, and the flood of state and national reform legislation introduced in the Pro-

gressive era of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson.

What was truly novel about the New Deal, however, was the speed with which it accomplished what previously had taken generations. Many of its reforms were hastily drawn and weakly administered; some actually contradicted others. Moreover, it never succeeded in restoring prosperity. Yet its actions provided tangible help for millions of Americans, laid the basis for a powerful new political coalition, and brought to the individual citizen a sharp revival of interest in government.

THE FIRST NEW DEAL

Banking and Finance. When Roosevelt took the presidential oath, the banking and credit system of the nation was in a state of paralysis. With

astonishing rapidity the nation’s banks were first closed — and then reopened only if they were solvent. The administration adopted a policy of moderate currency inflation to start an upward movement in commodity prices and to afford some relief to debtors. New governmental agencies brought generous credit facilities to industry and agriculture. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insured savings-bank deposits up to \$5,000. Federal regulations were imposed upon the sale of securities on the stock exchange.

Unemployment. Roosevelt faced unprecedented mass unemployment. By the time he took office, as many as 13 million Americans — more than a quarter of the labor force — were out of work. Bread lines were a common sight in most cities. Hundreds of thousands roamed the country in search of food, work, and shelter. “Brother, can you spare a dime?” was the refrain of a popular song.

An early step for the unemployed came in the form of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a program that brought relief to young men between 18 and 25 years of age. CCC enrollees worked in camps administered by the army. About two million took part during the decade. They participated in a variety of conservation projects: planting trees to combat soil erosion and maintain national forests; eliminating stream pollution; creating fish, game, and

bird sanctuaries; and conserving coal, petroleum, shale, gas, sodium, and helium deposits.

A Public Works Administration (PWA) provided employment for skilled construction workers on a wide variety of mostly medium- to large-sized projects. Among the most memorable of its many accomplishments were the Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dams in the Pacific Northwest, a new Chicago sewer system, the Triborough Bridge in New York City, and two aircraft carriers (*Yorktown* and *Enterprise*) for the U.S. Navy.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), both a work relief program and an exercise in public planning, developed the impoverished Tennessee River valley area through a series of dams built for flood control and hydroelectric power generation. Its provision of cheap electricity for the area stimulated some economic progress, but won it the enmity of private electric companies. New Dealers hailed it as an example of “grass roots democracy.”

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), in operation from 1933 to 1935, distributed direct relief to hundreds of thousands of people, usually in the form of direct payments. Sometimes, it assumed the salaries of schoolteachers and other local public service workers. It also developed numerous small-scale public works projects, as did the Civil Works Administration (CWA) from late 1933 into the spring of 1934. Criticized as “make

work,” the jobs funded ranged from ditch digging to highway repairs to teaching. Roosevelt and his key officials worried about costs but continued to favor unemployment programs based on work relief rather than welfare.

Agriculture. In the spring of 1933, the agricultural sector of the economy was in a state of collapse. It thereby provided a laboratory for the New Dealers’ belief that greater regulation would solve many of the country’s problems. In 1933, Congress passed the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) to provide economic relief to farmers. The AAA proposed to raise crop prices by paying farmers a subsidy to compensate for voluntary cutbacks in production. Funds for the payments would be generated by a tax levied on industries that processed crops. By the time the act had become law, however, the growing season was well under way, and the AAA paid farmers to plow under their abundant crops. Crop reduction and further subsidies through the Commodity Credit Corporation, which purchased commodities to be kept in storage, drove output down and farm prices up.

Between 1932 and 1935, farm income increased by more than 50 percent, but only partly because of federal programs. During the same years that farmers were being encouraged to take land out of production — displacing tenants and sharecroppers — a severe drought hit the Plains states. Violent wind

and dust storms during the 1930s created what became known as the “Dust Bowl.” Crops were destroyed and farms ruined.

By 1940, 2.5 million people had moved out of the Plains states, the largest migration in American history. Of those, 200,000 moved to California. The migrants were not only farmers, but also professionals, retailers, and others whose livelihoods were connected to the health of the farm communities. Many ended up competing for seasonal jobs picking crops at extremely low wages.

The government provided aid in the form of the Soil Conservation Service, established in 1935. Farm practices that damaged the soil had intensified the impact of the drought. The service taught farmers measures to reduce erosion. In addition, almost 30,000 kilometers of trees were planted to break the force of winds.

Although the AAA had been mostly successful, it was abandoned in 1936, when its tax on food processors was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Congress quickly passed a farm-relief act, which authorized the government to make payments to farmers who took land out of production for the purpose of soil conservation. In 1938, with a pro-New Deal majority on the Supreme Court, Congress reinstated the AAA.

By 1940 nearly six million farmers were receiving federal subsidies. New Deal programs also provided loans on surplus crops, insurance for

wheat, and a system of planned storage to ensure a stable food supply. Economic stability for the farmer was substantially achieved, albeit at great expense and with extraordinary government oversight.

Industry and Labor. The National Recovery Administration (NRA), established in 1933 with the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), attempted to end cut-throat competition by setting codes of fair competitive practice to generate more jobs and thus more buying. Although welcomed initially, the NRA was soon criticized for over-regulation and was unable to achieve industrial recovery. It was declared unconstitutional in 1935.

The NIRA had guaranteed to labor the right of collective bargaining through labor unions representing individual workers, but the NRA had failed to overcome strong business opposition to independent unionism. After its demise in 1935, Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act, which restated that guarantee and prohibited employers from unfairly interfering with union activities. It also created the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to supervise collective bargaining, administer elections, and ensure workers the right to choose the organization that should represent them in dealing with employers.

The great progress made in labor organization brought working people a growing sense of common interests, and labor’s power increased

not only in industry but also in politics. Roosevelt’s Democratic Party benefited enormously from these developments.

THE SECOND NEW DEAL

In its early years, the New Deal sponsored a remarkable series of legislative initiatives and achieved significant increases in production and prices — but it did not bring an end to the Depression. As the sense of immediate crisis eased, new demands emerged. Businessmen mourned the end of “laissez-faire” and chafed under the regulations of the NIRA. Vocal attacks also mounted from the political left and right as dreamers, schemers, and politicians alike emerged with economic panaceas that drew wide audiences. Dr. Francis E. Townsend advocated generous old-age pensions. Father Charles Coughlin, the “radio priest,” called for inflationary policies and blamed international bankers in speeches increasingly peppered with anti-Semitic imagery. Most formidably, Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana, an eloquent and ruthless spokesman for the displaced, advocated a radical redistribution of wealth. (If he had not been assassinated in September 1935, Long very likely would have launched a presidential challenge to Franklin Roosevelt in 1936.)

In the face of these pressures, President Roosevelt backed a new set of economic and social measures. Prominent among them were mea-

tures to fight poverty, create more work for the unemployed, and provide a social safety net.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA), the principal relief agency of the so-called second New Deal, was the biggest public works agency yet. It pursued small-scale projects throughout the country, constructing buildings, roads, airports, and schools. Actors, painters, musicians, and writers were employed through the Federal Theater Project, the Federal Art Project, and the Federal Writers Project. The National Youth Administration gave part-time employment to students, established training programs, and provided aid to unemployed youth. The WPA only included about three million jobless at a time; when it was abandoned in 1943, it had helped a total of nine million people.

The New Deal's cornerstone, according to Roosevelt, was the Social Security Act of 1935. Social Security created a system of state-administered welfare payments for the poor, unemployed, and disabled based on matching state and federal contributions. It also established a national system of retirement benefits drawing on a "trust fund" created by employer and employee contributions. Many other industrialized nations had already enacted such programs, but calls for such an initiative in the United States had gone unheeded. Social Security today is the largest domestic program administered by the U.S. government.

To these, Roosevelt added the National Labor Relations Act, the "Wealth Tax Act" that increased taxes on the wealthy, the Public Utility Holding Company Act to break up large electrical utility conglomerates, and a Banking Act that greatly expanded the power of the Federal Reserve Board over the large private banks. Also notable was the establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration, which extended electricity into farming areas throughout the country.

A NEW COALITION

In the 1936 election, Roosevelt won a decisive victory over his Republican opponent, Alf Landon of Kansas. He was personally popular, and the economy seemed near recovery. He took 60 percent of the vote and carried all but two states. A broad new coalition aligned with the Democratic Party emerged, consisting of labor, most farmers, most urban ethnic groups, African Americans, and the traditionally Democratic South. The Republican Party received the support of business as well as middle-class members of small towns and suburbs. This political alliance, with some variation and shifting, remained intact for several decades.

Roosevelt's second term was a time of consolidation. The president made two serious political missteps: an ill-advised, unsuccessful attempt to enlarge the Supreme Court and a failed effort to "purge"

increasingly recalcitrant Southern conservatives from the Democratic Party. When he cut high government spending, moreover, the economy collapsed. These events led to the rise of a conservative coalition in Congress that was unreceptive to new initiatives.

From 1932 to 1938 there was widespread public debate on the meaning of New Deal policies to the nation's political and economic life. Americans clearly wanted the government to take greater responsibility for the welfare of ordinary people, however uneasy they might be about big government in general. The New Deal established the foundations of the modern welfare state in the United States. Roosevelt, perhaps the most imposing of the 20th-century presidents, had established a new standard of mass leadership.

No American leader, then or since, used the radio so effectively. In a radio address in 1938, Roosevelt declared: "Democracy has disappeared in several other great nations, not because the people of those nations disliked democracy, but because they had grown tired of unemployment and insecurity, of seeing their children hungry while they sat helpless in the face of government confusion and government weakness through lack of leadership." Americans, he concluded, wanted to defend their liberties at any cost and understood that "the first line of the defense lies in the protection of economic security."

WAR AND UNEASY NEUTRALITY

Before Roosevelt's second term was well under way, his domestic program was overshadowed by the expansionist designs of totalitarian regimes in Japan, Italy, and Germany. In 1931 Japan had invaded Manchuria, crushed Chinese resistance, and set up the puppet state of Manchukuo. Italy, under Benito Mussolini, enlarged its boundaries in Libya and in 1935 conquered Ethiopia. Germany, under Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, militarized its economy and reoccupied the Rhineland (demilitarized by the Treaty of Versailles) in 1936. In 1938, Hitler incorporated Austria into the German Reich and demanded cession of the German-speaking Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. By then, war seemed imminent.

The United States, disillusioned by the failure of the crusade for democracy in World War I, announced that in no circumstances could any country involved in the conflict look to it for aid. Neutrality legislation, enacted piecemeal from 1935 to 1937, prohibited trade in arms with any warring nations, required cash for all other commodities, and forbade American flag merchant ships from carrying those goods. The objective was to prevent, at almost any cost, the involvement of the United States in a foreign war.

With the Nazi conquest of Poland in 1939 and the outbreak of

World War II, isolationist sentiment increased, even though Americans clearly favored the victims of Hitler's aggression and supported the Allied democracies, Britain and France. Roosevelt could only wait until public opinion regarding U.S. involvement was altered by events.

After the fall of France and the beginning of the German air war against Britain in mid-1940, the debate intensified between those in the United States who favored aiding the democracies and the antiwar faction known as the isolationists. Roosevelt did what he could to nudge public opinion toward intervention. The United States joined Canada in a Mutual Board of Defense, and aligned with the Latin American republics in extending collective protection to the nations in the Western Hemisphere.

Congress, confronted with the mounting crisis, voted immense sums for rearmament, and in September 1940 passed the first peacetime conscription bill ever enacted in the United States. In that month also, Roosevelt concluded a daring executive agreement with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The United States gave the British Navy 50 "overage" destroyers in return for British air and naval bases in Newfoundland and the North Atlantic.

The 1940 presidential election campaign demonstrated that the isolationists, while vocal, were a minority. Roosevelt's Republican opponent, Wendell Wilkie, leaned

toward intervention. Thus the November election yielded another majority for the president, making Roosevelt the first, and last, U. S. chief executive to be elected to a third term.

In early 1941, Roosevelt got Congress to approve the Lend-Lease Program, which enabled him to transfer arms and equipment to any nation (notably Great Britain, later the Soviet Union and China) deemed vital to the defense of the United States. Total Lend-Lease aid by war's end would amount to more than \$50,000 million.

Most remarkably, in August, he met with Prime Minister Churchill off the coast of Newfoundland. The two leaders issued a "joint statement of war aims," which they called the Atlantic Charter. Bearing a remarkable resemblance to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, it called for these objectives: no territorial aggrandizement; no territorial changes without the consent of the people concerned; the right of all people to choose their own form of government; the restoration of self-government to those deprived of it; economic collaboration between all nations; freedom from war, from fear, and from want for all peoples; freedom of the seas; and the abandonment of the use of force as an instrument of international policy.

America was now neutral in name only.

JAPAN, PEARL HARBOR, AND WAR

While most Americans anxiously watched the course of the European war, tension mounted in Asia. Taking advantage of an opportunity to improve its strategic position, Japan boldly announced a "new order" in which it would exercise hegemony over all of the Pacific. Battling for survival against Nazi Germany, Britain was unable to resist, abandoning its concession in Shanghai and temporarily closing the Chinese supply route from Burma. In the summer of 1940, Japan won permission from the weak Vichy government in France to use airfields in northern Indochina (North Vietnam). That September the Japanese formally joined the Rome-Berlin Axis. The United States countered with an embargo on the export of scrap iron to Japan.

In July 1941 the Japanese occupied southern Indochina (South Vietnam), signaling a probable move southward toward the oil, tin, and rubber of British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The United States, in response, froze Japanese assets and initiated an embargo on the one commodity Japan needed above all others — oil.

General Hideki Tojo became prime minister of Japan that October. In mid-November, he sent a special envoy to the United States to meet with Secretary of State Cordell Hull. Among other things, Japan demanded that the United

States release Japanese assets and stop U.S. naval expansion in the Pacific. Hull countered with a proposal for Japanese withdrawal from all its conquests. The swift Japanese rejection on December 1 left the talks stalemated.

On the morning of December 7, Japanese carrier-based planes executed a devastating surprise attack against the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Twenty-one ships were destroyed or temporarily disabled; 323 aircraft were destroyed or damaged; 2,388 soldiers, sailors, and civilians were killed. However, the U.S. aircraft carriers that would play such a critical role in the ensuing naval war in the Pacific were at sea and not anchored at Pearl Harbor.

American opinion, still divided about the war in Europe, was unified overnight by what President Roosevelt called "a day that will live in infamy." On December 8, Congress declared a state of war with Japan; three days later Germany and Italy declared war on the United States.

MOBILIZATION FOR TOTAL WAR

The nation rapidly geared itself for mobilization of its people and its entire industrial capacity. Over the next three-and-a-half years, war industry achieved staggering production goals — 300,000 aircraft, 5,000 cargo ships, 60,000 landing craft, 86,000 tanks. Women workers, ex-

emplified by “Rosie the Riveter,” played a bigger part in industrial production than ever before. Total strength of the U.S. armed forces at the end of the war was more than 12 million. All the nation’s activities — farming, manufacturing, mining, trade, labor, investment, communications, even education and cultural undertakings — were in some fashion brought under new and enlarged controls.

As a result of Pearl Harbor and the fear of Asian espionage, Americans also committed what was later recognized as an act of intolerance: the internment of Japanese Americans. In February 1942, nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans residing in California were removed from their homes and interned behind barbed wire in 10 wretched temporary camps, later to be moved to “relocation centers” outside isolated Southwestern towns.

Nearly 63 percent of these Japanese Americans were American-born U.S. citizens. A few were Japanese sympathizers, but no evidence of espionage ever surfaced. Others volunteered for the U.S. Army and fought with distinction and valor in two infantry units on the Italian front. Some served as interpreters and translators in the Pacific.

In 1983 the U.S. government acknowledged the injustice of internment with limited payments to those Japanese-Americans of that era who were still living.

THE WAR IN NORTH AFRICA AND EUROPE

Soon after the United States entered the war, the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union (at war with Germany since June 22, 1941) decided that their primary military effort was to be concentrated in Europe.

Throughout 1942, British and German forces fought inconclusive back-and-forth battles across Libya and Egypt for control of the Suez Canal. But on October 23, British forces commanded by General Sir Bernard Montgomery struck at the Germans from El Alamein. Equipped with a thousand tanks, many made in America, they defeated General Erwin Rommel’s army in a grinding two-week campaign. On November 7, American and British armed forces landed in French North Africa. Squeezed between forces advancing from east and west, the Germans were pushed back and, after fierce resistance, surrendered in May 1943.

The year 1942 was also the turning point on the Eastern Front. The Soviet Union, suffering immense losses, stopped the Nazi invasion at the gates of Leningrad and Moscow. In the winter of 1942-43, the Red Army defeated the Germans at Stalingrad (Volgograd) and began the long offensive that would take them to Berlin in 1945.

In July 1943 British and American forces invaded Sicily and won control of the island in a month.

During that time, Benito Mussolini fell from power in Italy. His successors began negotiations with the Allies and surrendered immediately after the invasion of the Italian mainland in September. However, the German Army had by then taken control of the peninsula. The fight against Nazi forces in Italy was bitter and protracted. Rome was not liberated until June 4, 1944. As the Allies slowly moved north, they built airfields from which they made devastating air raids against railroads, factories, and weapon emplacements in southern Germany and central Europe, including the oil installations at Ploesti, Romania.

Late in 1943 the Allies, after much debate over strategy, decided to open a front in France to compel the Germans to divert far larger forces from the Soviet Union.

U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in Europe. After immense preparations, on June 6, 1944, a U.S., British, and Canadian invasion army, protected by a greatly superior air force, landed on five beaches in Normandy. With the beachheads established after heavy fighting, more troops poured in, and pushed the Germans back in one bloody engagement after another. On August 25 Paris was liberated.

The Allied offensive stalled that fall, then suffered a setback in eastern Belgium during the winter, but in March, the Americans and British were across the Rhine and the Rus-

sians advancing irresistibly from the East. On May 7, Germany surrendered unconditionally.

THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC

U.S. troops were forced to surrender in the Philippines in early 1942, but the Americans rallied in the following months. General James “Jimmy” Doolittle led U.S. Army bombers on a raid over Tokyo in April; it had little actual military significance, but gave Americans an immense psychological boost.

In May, at the Battle of the Coral Sea — the first naval engagement in history in which all the fighting was done by carrier-based planes — a Japanese naval invasion fleet sent to strike at southern New Guinea and Australia was turned back by a U.S. task force in a close battle. A few weeks later, the naval Battle of Midway in the central Pacific resulted in the first major defeat of the Japanese Navy, which lost four aircraft carriers. Ending the Japanese advance across the central Pacific, Midway was the turning point.

Other battles also contributed to Allied success. The six-month land and sea battle for the island of Guadalcanal (August 1942-February 1943) was the first major U.S. ground victory in the Pacific. For most of the next two years, American and Australian troops fought their way northward from the South Pacific and westward from the Central Pacific, capturing the Solomons, the Gilberts, the Mar-

shalls, and the Marianas in a series of amphibious assaults.

THE POLITICS OF WAR

Allied military efforts were accompanied by a series of important international meetings on the political objectives of the war. In January 1943 at Casablanca, Morocco, an Anglo-American conference decided that no peace would be concluded with the Axis and its Balkan satellites except on the basis of “unconditional surrender.” This term, insisted upon by Roosevelt, sought to assure the people of all the fighting nations that no separate peace negotiations would be carried on with representatives of Fascism and Nazism and there would be no compromise of the war’s idealistic objectives. Axis propagandists, of course, used it to assert that the Allies were engaged in a war of extermination.

At Cairo, in November 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill met with Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek to agree on terms for Japan, including the relinquishment of gains from past aggression. At Tehran, shortly afterward, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin made basic agreements on the postwar occupation of Germany and the establishment of a new international organization, the United Nations.

In February 1945, the three Allied leaders met again at Yalta (now in Ukraine), with victory seemingly secure. There, the Soviet Union se-

cretly agreed to enter the war against Japan three months after the surrender of Germany. In return, the USSR would gain effective control of Manchuria and receive the Japanese Kurile Islands as well as the southern half of Sakhalin Island. The eastern boundary of Poland was set roughly at the Curzon line of 1919, thus giving the USSR half its prewar territory. Discussion of reparations to be collected from Germany — payment demanded by Stalin and opposed by Roosevelt and Churchill — was inconclusive. Specific arrangements were made concerning Allied occupation in Germany and the trial and punishment of war criminals. Also at Yalta it was agreed that the great powers in the Security Council of the proposed United Nations should have the right of veto in matters affecting their security.

Two months after his return from Yalta, Franklin Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage while vacationing in Georgia. Few figures in U.S. history have been so deeply mourned, and for a time the American people suffered from a numbing sense of irreparable loss. Vice President Harry Truman, former senator from Missouri, succeeded him.

WAR, VICTORY, AND THE BOMB

The final battles in the Pacific were among the war’s bloodiest. In June 1944, the Battle of the Philippine Sea effectively destroyed Japanese naval air power, forcing the resignation of

Japanese Prime Minister Tojo. General Douglas MacArthur — who had reluctantly left the Philippines two years before to escape Japanese capture — returned to the islands in October. The accompanying Battle of Leyte Gulf, the largest naval engagement ever fought, was the final decisive defeat of the Japanese Navy. By February 1945, U.S. forces had taken Manila.

Next, the United States set its sight on the strategic island of Iwo Jima in the Bonin Islands, about halfway between the Marianas and Japan. The Japanese, trained to die fighting for the Emperor, made suicidal use of natural caves and rocky terrain. U.S. forces took the island by mid-March, but not before losing the lives of some 6,000 U.S. Marines. Nearly all the Japanese defenders perished. By now the United States was undertaking extensive air attacks on Japanese shipping and airfields and wave after wave of incendiary bombing attacks against Japanese cities.

At Okinawa (April 1–June 21, 1945), the Americans met even fiercer resistance. With few of the defenders surrendering, the U.S. Army and Marines were forced to wage a war of annihilation. Waves of Kamikaze suicide planes pounded the offshore Allied fleet, inflicting more damage than at Leyte Gulf. Japan lost 90–100,000 troops and probably as many Okinawan civilians. U.S. losses were more than 11,000 killed and nearly 34,000 wounded. Most Americans saw the fighting as

a preview of what they would face in a planned invasion of Japan.

The heads of the U.S., British, and Soviet governments met at Potsdam, a suburb outside Berlin, from July 17 to August 2, 1945, to discuss operations against Japan, the peace settlement in Europe, and a policy for the future of Germany. Perhaps presaging the coming end of the alliance, they had no trouble on vague matters of principle or the practical issues of military occupation, but reached no agreement on many tangible issues, including reparations.

The day before the Potsdam Conference began, U.S. nuclear scientists engaged in the secret Manhattan Project exploded an atomic bomb near Alamogordo, New Mexico. The test was the culmination of three years of intensive research in laboratories across the United States. It lay behind the Potsdam Declaration, issued on July 26 by the United States and Britain, promising that Japan would neither be destroyed nor enslaved if it surrendered. If Japan continued the war, however, it would meet “prompt and utter destruction.” President Truman, calculating that an atomic bomb might be used to gain Japan’s surrender more quickly and with fewer casualties than an invasion of the mainland, ordered that the bomb be used if the Japanese did not surrender by August 3.

A committee of U.S. military and political officials and scientists had considered the question of targets for the new weapon. Secretary of

War Henry L. Stimson argued successfully that Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital and a repository of many national and religious treasures, be taken out of consideration. Hiroshima, a center of war industries and military operations, became the first objective.

On August 6, a U.S. plane, the *Enola Gay*, dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima. On August 9, a second atomic bomb was dropped, this time on Nagasaki. The bombs destroyed large sections of both cities, with massive loss of life. On August 8, the USSR declared war on Japan and attacked Japanese forces in Manchuria. On August 14, Japan agreed to the terms set at Potsdam. On September 2, 1945, Japan formally surrendered. Americans were relieved that the bomb hastened the end of the war. The realization of the full implications of nuclear weapons' awesome destructiveness would come later.

Within a month, on October 24, the United Nations came into existence following the meeting of representatives of 50 nations in San Francisco, California. The constitu-

tion they drafted outlined a world organization in which international differences could be discussed peacefully and common cause made against hunger and disease. In contrast to its rejection of U.S. membership in the League of Nations after World War I, the U.S. Senate promptly ratified the U.N. Charter by an 89 to 2 vote. This action confirmed the end of the spirit of isolationism as a dominating element in American foreign policy.

In November 1945 at Nuremberg, Germany, the criminal trials of 22 Nazi leaders, provided for at Potsdam, took place. Before a group of distinguished jurists from Britain, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States, the Nazis were accused not only of plotting and waging aggressive war but also of violating the laws of war and of humanity in the systematic genocide, known as the Holocaust, of European Jews and other peoples. The trials lasted more than 10 months. Twenty-two defendants were convicted, 12 of them sentenced to death. Similar proceedings would be held against Japanese war leaders. ◇

THE RISE OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONS

While the 1920s were years of relative prosperity in the United States, the workers in industries such as steel, automobiles, rubber, and textiles benefited less than they would later in the years after World War II. Working conditions in many of these industries did improve. Some companies in the 1920s began to institute "welfare capitalism" by offering workers various pension, profit-sharing, stock option, and health plans to ensure their loyalty. Still, shop floor environments were often hard and authoritarian.

The 1920s saw the mass production industries redouble their efforts to prevent the growth of unions, which under the American Federation of Labor (AFL) had enjoyed some success during World War I. They did so by using spies and armed strikebreakers and by firing those suspected of union sympathies. Independent unions were often accused of being Communist. At the same time, many companies formed their own compliant employee organizations, often called "company unions."

Traditionally, state legislatures, reflecting the views of the American middle class, supported the concept of the "open shop," which prevented a union from being the exclusive representative of all workers. This made it easier for companies to deny unions the right to collective bargaining and block unionization through court enforcement.

Between 1920 and 1929, union membership in the United States dropped from about five million to three-and-a-half million. The large unskilled or semi-skilled industries remained unorganized.

The onset of the Great Depression led to widespread unemployment. By 1933 there were over 12 million Americans out of work. In the automobile industry, for example, the work force was cut in half between 1929 and 1933. At the same time, wages dropped by two-thirds.

The election of Franklin Roosevelt, however, was to change the status of the American industrial worker forever. The first indication that Roosevelt was interested in the well-being of workers came with the appointment of Frances Perkins, a prominent social welfare advocate, to be his secretary of labor. (Perkins was also the first woman to hold a Cabinet-level position.) The far-reaching National Industrial Recovery Act sought to raise industrial wages, limit the hours in a work week, and eliminate child labor. Most importantly, the law recognized the right of employees "to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing."

John L. Lewis, the feisty and articulate head of the United Mine Workers (UMW), understood more than any other labor leader what the New Deal meant for workers. Stressing Roosevelt's support, Lewis engineered a major

unionizing campaign, rebuilding the UMW's declining membership from 150,000 to over 500,000 within a year.

Lewis was eager to get the AFL, where he was a member of the Executive Council, to launch a similar drive in the mass production industries. But the AFL, with its historic focus on the skilled trade worker, was unwilling to do so. After a bitter internal feud, Lewis and a few others broke with the AFL to set up the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO), later the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The passage of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935 and the friendly attitude of the National Labor Relations Board put the power and authority of the federal government behind the CIO.

Its first targets were the notoriously anti-union auto and steel industries. In late 1936 a series of sit-down strikes, orchestrated by the fledgling United Auto Workers union under Walter Reuther, erupted at General Motors plants in Cleveland, Ohio, and Flint, Michigan. Soon 135,000 workers were involved and GM production ground to a halt.

With the sympathetic governor of Michigan refusing to evict the strikers, a settlement was reached in early 1937. By September of that year, the United Auto Workers had contracts with 400 companies involved in the automobile industry, assuring workers a minimum wage of 75 cents per hour and a 40-hour work week.

In the first six months of its existence, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC), headed by Lewis lieutenant Philip Murray, picked up 125,000 members. The major American steel company, U.S. Steel, realizing that times had changed, also came to terms in 1937. That same year the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the NLRA. Subsequently, smaller companies, traditionally even more anti-union than the large corporations, gave in. One by one, other industries — rubber, oil, electronics, and textiles — also followed suit.

The rise of big labor had two major long-term impacts. It became the organizational core of the national Democratic Party, and it gained material benefits for its members that all but erased the economic distinction between working-class and middle-class America. ◆

In the depths of the Great Depression, March 1933, anxious depositors line up outside of a New York bank. The new president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had just temporarily closed the nation's banks to end the drain on the banks' reserves. Only those banks that were still solvent were permitted to reopen after a four-day "bank holiday."



TURMOIL AND CHANGE

A PICTURE PROFILE

For the United States, the 20th century was a period of extraordinary turmoil and change. In these decades, the nation endured the worst economic depression in its history; emerged triumphant, with the Allies, in World War II; assumed a role of global leadership in the century's twilight conflict known as the Cold War; and underwent a remarkable social, economic, and political transition at home. Where once the United States transformed itself over the slow march of centuries, it now seemed to reinvent itself almost by decades.



Men and women strikers dance the time away on March 11, 1937, during a strike at the Chevrolet Fisher Body Plants in St. Louis, Missouri. Strikes such as these succeeded in winning union recognition for industrial workers throughout the country in the 1930s.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs perhaps the most far-reaching legislation of the New Deal: the Social Security Act of 1935. Today, Social Security, one of the largest government programs in the United States, provides retirement and disability income to millions of Americans.



World War II in the Pacific was characterized by large-scale naval and air battles. Here, a Japanese plane plunges down in flames during an attack on a U.S. carrier fleet in the Mariana Islands, June 1944. U.S. Army and Marine forces' "island hopping" campaign began at Guadalcanal in August 1942 and ended with the assault on Okinawa in April 1945.



Top, General Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Commander in Europe, talks with paratroopers shortly before the Normandy invasion, June 6, 1944. Above, General Douglas MacArthur (center) had declared, "I shall return," when he escaped from advancing Japanese forces in the Philippines in 1942. Two years later, he made good on his promise and waded ashore at Leyte as American forces began the liberation of the Philippines.



Assembly line of P-38 *Lightning* fighter planes during World War II. With its massive output of war materiel, the United States became, in the words of President Roosevelt, "the arsenal of democracy."



Japanese Americans await relocation to internment camps in the worst violation of human rights that occurred inside the United States during World II.



Meeting of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, President Roosevelt, and Soviet leader Josef Stalin at Yalta in February 1945. Disagreements over the future of Europe anticipated the division of the European continent that remained a fixture of the Cold War.



U.S. troops witness a nuclear test in the Nevada desert in 1951. The threat of nuclear weapons remained a constant and ominous fact of life throughout the Cold War era.



In perhaps the most famous photograph in American political history, President Harry Truman holds aloft a newspaper wrongly announcing his defeat by Republican nominee Thomas Dewey in the 1948 presidential election. Truman's come-from-behind victory surprised all political experts that day.



U.S. infantry fire against North Korean forces invading South Korea in 1951, in a conflict that lasted three painful years.



At a congressional hearing in 1954, Senator Joseph McCarthy points to a map purportedly showing Communist Party influence in the United States in 1950. His chief antagonist at the hearing, lawyer Joseph Welch, sits at left. Welch successfully discredited McCarthy at these hearings, which were among the first to be televised across the country.



Portrait of President Dwight Eisenhower, whose genial, reassuring personality dominated the decade of the 1950s.



Jackie Robinson, sliding home in a 1948 baseball game. Robinson broke the color barrier against black professional baseball players when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers and became one of the stars of the game.



America's first star of rock and roll, Elvis Presley, performing on television's "Ed Sullivan Show," September 9, 1956. Today, years after his death, he is still revered by legions of his fans as "The King."



Lucille Ball (second from left) with her supporting cast, including husband Desi Arnaz (standing), on one of the most popular television comedy shows of the 1950s, *I Love Lucy*. The show established many of the techniques and conventions shared by hundreds of the televised "situation comedies" that followed.



Above, Rosa Parks sits in one of the front seats of a city bus following the successful boycott of the bus system in 1955-56 by African-American citizens of Montgomery, Alabama. The boycott was organized to protest the practice of segregation in which African Americans were forced to sit in the back of the bus. The Supreme Court agreed that this practice was a constitutional violation a year after the boycott began. The great leader of the civil rights movement in America, Martin Luther King Jr., gained national prominence through the Montgomery bus boycott.

Opposite page, right, Martin Luther King Jr. escorts children to a previously all-white public school in Grenada, Mississippi, in 1966. Although school segregation was outlawed in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of the Supreme Court in 1954, it took decades of protest, political pressure, and additional court decisions to enforce school desegregation across the country.

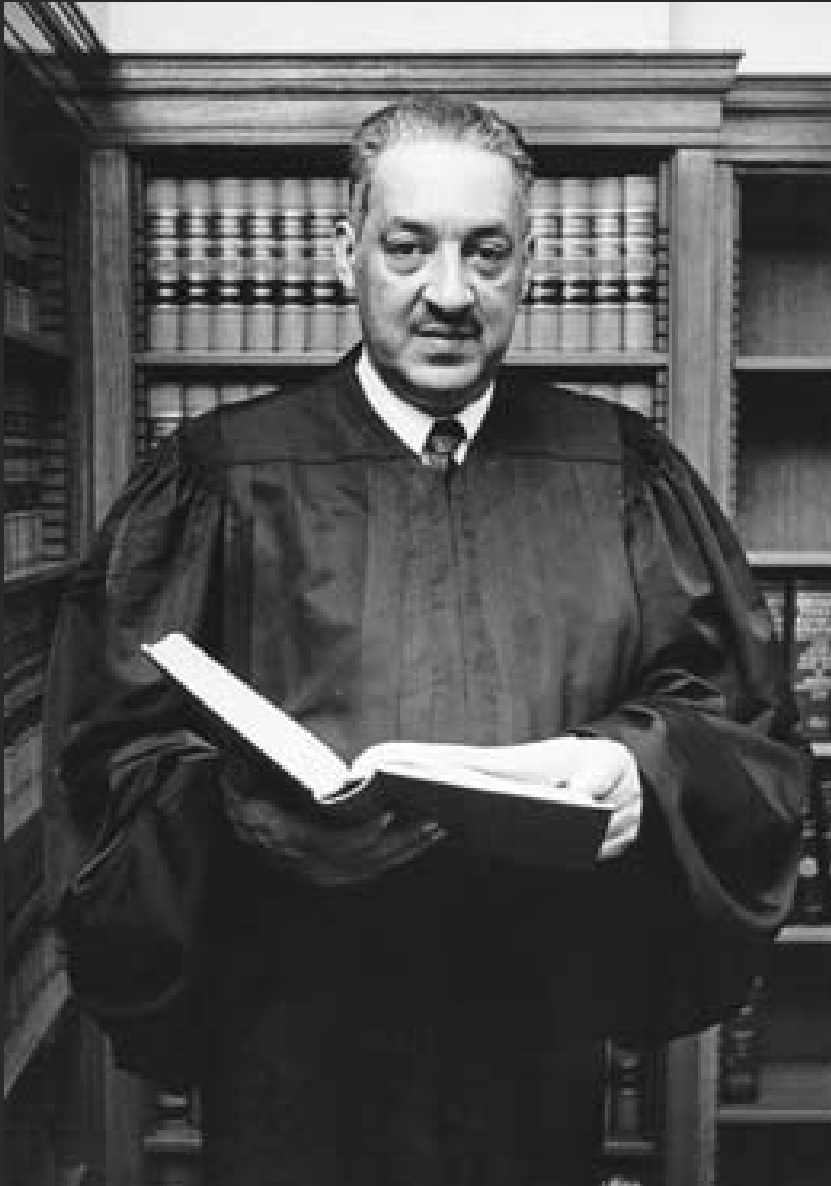




President John F. Kennedy addresses nearly a quarter of a million Germans in West Berlin in June 1963. Honoring the courage of those living in one of the flash points of the Cold War, he said, "All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words, 'Ich bin ein Berliner' (I am a Berliner.)"



Ratification document for the 1963 Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, one of the first arms control agreements between the West and the Soviet bloc, which ended atmospheric nuclear testing.



Thurgood Marshall, one of the champions of equal rights for all Americans. As a counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Marshall successfully argued the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case before the Supreme Court, which outlawed segregation in public schools. He later served a distinguished career as a justice of the Supreme Court.



President Lyndon B. Johnson, born in Texas, was Senate majority leader in the Eisenhower years and vice president under John F. Kennedy before becoming president. One of the most powerful political personalities to serve in Washington, Johnson engineered the most ambitious domestic legislative agenda through Congress since Roosevelt's New Deal. The Vietnam War ended his presidency, however, since it divided the nation.

A U.S. Army unit searches for snipers while on patrol in South Vietnam in 1965. From 60,000 troops in 1965, U.S. forces grew to more than 540,000 by 1969, in a conflict that divided the nation more bitterly than any other in the 20th century. The last U.S. combat forces left Vietnam in 1973.





Antiwar demonstrators and police clash during violent protests at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. Antiwar candidates at the convention lost the presidential nomination to Lyndon Johnson's vice president, Hubert Humphrey.



Two of the leaders of the women's movement in the 1960s: Kate Millett (left), author of a controversial book of the time, *Sexual Politics*, and journalist and activist Gloria Steinem.



The crest of the counterculture wave in the United States: the three-day 1969 outdoor rock concert and gathering known as Woodstock.



Mexican-American labor activist César Chávez (center) talking with grape pickers in the field in 1968. Head of the United Farm Workers Union in California, Chávez was a leading voice for the rights of migrant farm workers, focusing national attention on their terrible working conditions.



President Richard M. Nixon, with his wife Pat Nixon and Secretary of State William Rogers (far right), walks along a portion of the Great Wall of China. Nixon's 1972 opening to the People's Republic of China was a major diplomatic triumph at a time when U.S. forces were slowly withdrawing from South Vietnam.



Participant in a demonstration by Native Americans in Washington, D.C., in 1978. They also have sought to assert their rights and identity in recent decades.



Civil rights leader and political activist Jesse Jackson at a political rally in 1984. For more than four decades, Jackson has remained among the most prominent, politically active, and eloquent representatives of what he has termed a "Rainbow Coalition" of the poor, African Americans, and other minorities.



Oil fires burn behind a destroyed Iraqi tank at the conclusion of the Gulf War in February 1991. The United States led a coalition of more than 30 nations in an air and ground campaign called Desert Storm that ended Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.



A launch of a space shuttle, the first reusable space vehicle. The versatile shuttle, which has been used to place satellites in orbit and conduct wide-ranging experiments, is indispensable in the assemblage (beginning June 1998) and running of the International Space Station.



President George H.W. Bush with Poland's Lech Walesa (center) and First Lady Barbara Bush in Warsaw, July 1989. That remarkable year saw the end of the Cold War, as well as the end to the 40-year division of Europe into hostile East and West blocs.



President William (Bill) J. Clinton, delivering his inaugural address to the nation, January 21, 1993. During his administration, the United States enjoyed more peace and economic well-being than at any time in its history. He was the second U.S. president to be impeached and found not guilty.