



▲ Girl Scouts collect peach pits to be used in gas-mask filters.

Supporting the War

While soldiers trained to fight in the war, Americans on the home front supported the war by working in war industries, lending money to the government, and conserving food to feed the troops abroad.

“Perhaps it will not be long before we will read each day long lists of American boys killed or wounded in the trenches of France. There will be boys in those lists that you know, boys that I know. And as our eyes fill over with tears it will be at least some comfort to us to be able to say, ‘I am helping too. I am saving food for the boys who are fighting.’”

—Committee on Public Information bulletin, July 1917

The Home Front

Objectives

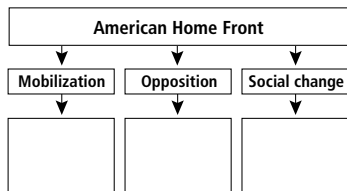
- Analyze how the American government mobilized the public to support the war effort.
- Describe opposition to the war.
- Outline significant social changes that occurred during the war.

Terms and People

Selective Service Act	conscientious objector
Bernard Baruch	Espionage Act
CPI	Great Migration
George Creel	

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Summarize As you read, summarize the key points made in the section in a chart like the one below.



Why It Matters Before the war, the federal government played a minor role in the daily lives of most Americans. But during World War I, the government assumed new powers. It regulated industrial and agricultural production, worked to shape public opinion, and established a new military draft. While war required sacrifice, it also brought new economic opportunities and many Americans migrated to other parts of the country in search of these opportunities. The war permanently changed Americans' relationship with their government. **Section Focus Question:** How did the war affect Americans at home?

America Mobilizes for War

War affects many things, but its greatest impact is on the lives of ordinary people. People fight, sacrifice, and sometimes die in war. People work to produce the food that soldiers eat and the guns that soldiers fire. People shape the information that others receive about the war. War may be the result of conflicts between nations, but it touches the lives of millions of individuals.

Building an Army When the United States entered World War I, the United States Army was only a fraction of the size of European armies. To build the army, President Wilson encouraged Americans to volunteer for service and pushed Congress to pass the **Selective Service Act**. The act, which Congress passed in May 1917, authorized a draft of young men for military service in Europe. On the

first day of its enactment, June 5, 1917, more than 9.6 million Americans registered for the draft and were assigned a number. The government held a “great national lottery” in July to decide the order in which the first draftees would be called into service. Blindfolded, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker pulled number 258 out of a jar. The group of men assigned that number became the very first draftees.

Over the course of the war, more than 24 million Americans registered for the draft. Of these, about 2.8 million were actually drafted into the armed forces. Including volunteers, the total number of American men in uniform during World War I reached nearly 4.8 million. More than 4 million of these were sent to help the Allies in France.

Constructing a War Economy While the Selective Service Commission raised an army, President Wilson worked to shift the national economy from peacetime to wartime production. This process proved slow and frustrating. First, the Council of National Defense, which was formed in August 1916, created an array of new federal administrative agencies to oversee different phases of the war effort. Individual agencies regulated food production, coal and petroleum distribution, and railway use. In practical terms, this meant that the government determined what crops farmers grew, what products industries produced, and how supplies moved around on the nation’s trains.

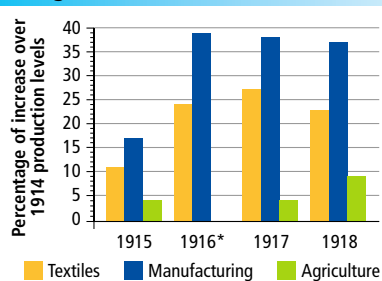
Problems and administrative overlap soon led to the creation of the War Industries Board (WIB). The WIB eventually became independent of the Council of National Defense. Headed by **Bernard Baruch** (buh ROOK), an influential Wall Street investment broker who reported directly to the President, the WIB regulated all industries engaged in the war effort. Baruch’s agency determined what products industries would make, where those products went, and how much they would cost. The system of free enterprise was curtailed to fulfill the nation’s acute need for war materials. Americans realized that they had to cooperate rather than compete in order to defeat the Central Powers.

What Baruch did for industry, future U.S. President Herbert Hoover achieved for agriculture. As head of the Food Administration, he set prices high for wheat and other foodstuffs to encourage farmers to increase production. He also asked

Wartime Production

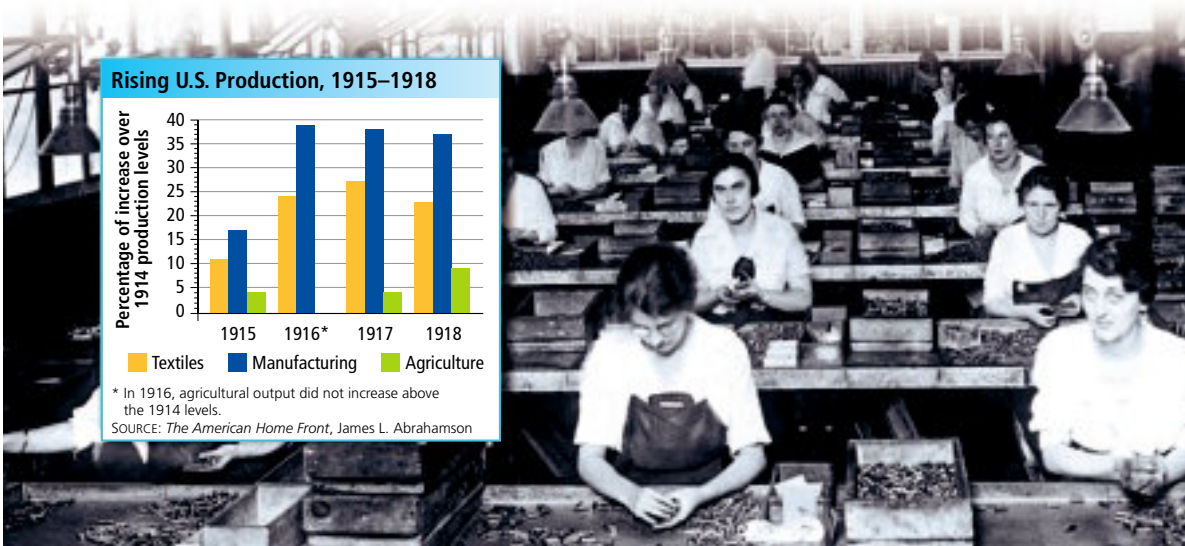
These women worked during the war inspecting bullets for rifles. *According to the graph, by what percentage did manufacturing increase between 1915 and 1918?*

Rising U.S. Production, 1915–1918



* In 1916, agricultural output did not increase above the 1914 levels.

SOURCE: *The American Home Front*, James L. Abrahamson



Vocabulary Builder

conserve—(kuhn SERV) *v.* to keep from wasting

Americans to conserve food as a patriotic gesture. If the American people ate less, then more food could be shipped to American and other Allied soldiers fighting the war overseas. To this end, Hoover instituted wheatless Mondays and Wednesdays, meatless Tuesdays, and porkless Thursdays and Saturdays.

Shaping Public Opinion Hoover's efforts would have been fruitless if the American people did not believe in supporting the war. Most Americans did not understand the reasons for the war in 1914, and many questioned why the United States became involved in 1917. It was the job of the **Committee on Public Information (CPI)** to educate the public about the causes and nature of the war. The CPI had to convince Americans that the war effort was a just cause.

Wilson appointed **George Creel** as the director of the CPI. A former journalist and a passionate admirer of American institutions, Creel combined education and a widespread advertising campaign to "sell America." The CPI distributed 75 million pamphlets and 6,000 press releases, and it assembled an army of 75,000 speakers who gave lectures and brief speeches on America's war aims and the nature of the enemy. In addition, the CPI designed, printed, and distributed millions of posters that dramatized the needs of America and its allies. The CPI also stressed the cruelty and wickedness of the enemy, particularly Germany, which in some cases aggravated resentment toward German Americans. Still, using these methods, Creel and the CPI earned widespread support for the American war effort.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did the United States ready its military, economy, and people for war?

Opposition and Its Consequences

The CPI's work was important because Americans did not always peacefully agree with one another about the war. Members of two large ethnic groups, German Americans and Irish Americans, tended to oppose the Allies for different reasons. Swept up in patriotic fervor, some people treated German Americans with prejudice, or intolerance. Other Americans were pacifists who opposed war for any reason. To quiet dissent, or differing opinions, the government acted in ways that sometimes trespassed on individual liberties.

Resistance to the Draft Without a doubt, the draft created controversy. Some Americans believed it was an illegal intrusion of the federal government into their private lives. Some men refused to cooperate with the Selective Service process. They were often court-martialed and imprisoned. Others simply tried to avoid the draft. Perhaps as many as 12 percent of men who received draft notices never responded to them.

Another group resisted the draft by becoming **conscientious objectors**, people whose moral or religious beliefs forbid them to fight in wars. In theory, the Selective Service Act exempted from combat service members of "any well recognized religious sect or organization . . . whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war." In practice, this policy was widely ignored. Some conscientious objectors were treated badly by their local draft boards, and others were humiliated in training camps. As America's participation in the war increased, however, the government improved its treatment of conscientious objectors.

Noble Goals

Postcards like this one emphasized Wilson's goal of making the world "safe for democracy."





HE'S IN THE ARMY NOW!

While the presence of millions of American soldiers in France helped the Allies, their absence at home had dramatic consequences. Families lived in constant fear for their fathers, husbands, brothers, or sons overseas, some of whom would never return. Many people had to take on the jobs of the absent soldiers. Meanwhile, the government encouraged Americans to go to work in war industries, conserve food and other goods, and buy Liberty bonds to support the war effort.

Effects of the War on the Workforce

Workers Lost

In addition to the millions of workers who went into the military, immigrants from Europe, who had swelled the workforce in the early 1900s, dropped from one million in 1914 to only 31,000 in 1918.

Workers Gained

Nearly 500,000 women joined the workforce for the first time, 400,000 African Americans left the rural South for industrial jobs in the North, and nearly 240,000 Mexicans immigrated to the United States, filling mainly agricultural jobs in the Southwest.

Result: Despite gains, the United States still faced a shortage of workers when it joined the war in 1917.

SOURCE: *The American Home Front*, James L. Abrahamson

Private T. P. Loughlin says goodbye to his family (above right). A poster with a stirring message urges Americans to buy Liberty bonds (far right). Two women deliver ice, a job formerly done by men (left).



Women Work for Peace Some American women also opposed the war. Before the war, a number of leading American feminists, including reformer Jane Addams, formed the Women's Peace Party and, with pacifist women from other countries, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, voted against the declaration of war. After America joined the Allies, some women continued to oppose the war, but most supported American war efforts. For example, the influential National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) dropped its initial peace initiatives and supported America's war objectives. After adopting this new policy, NAWSA doubled in size.

Thinking Critically

- 1. Draw Conclusions** How did conserving food on the home front help the war effort?
- 2. Predict Consequences** What do you think will happen to the women and African Americans who took new jobs during the war when the war ends?

Vocabulary Builder

objective—(uhb JEHK tihv) *n.*
something worked toward; goal

The Government Cracks Down on Dissent The work of the CPI created a mood in America that did not welcome open debate. Some felt the CPI stifled the free expression of controversial opinions and worried about the impact of a rigorous military campaign on democracy. They did not want the freedoms that Americans held most dear to become victims of the conflict. As in previous and future wars, the government navigated a difficult path between respecting and restricting individual rights. Authorities tended to treat harshly individuals who worked against the goal of winning the war.

In June 1917, Congress passed the **Espionage Act**, allowing postal authorities to ban treasonable or seditious newspapers, magazines, or printed materials from the mail. It also enacted severe penalties for anyone engaged in disloyal or treasonable activities. Anyone found obstructing army recruiters, aiding the enemy, or generally interfering with the war effort could be punished with up to a \$10,000 fine and 20 years of imprisonment.

In 1918, Congress limited freedom of speech even further with the passage of the Sedition Act. The act made it unlawful to use “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive language” about the American form of government, the Constitution, or the military forces. The government employed the Sedition Act to prosecute socialists, political radicals, and pacifists. Eugene V. Debs, the leader of the Socialist Party in America, was imprisoned under the act. For his crime—giving a mildly antiwar speech to a convention of socialists in Canton, Ohio—he was sentenced to a 10-year term in a federal prison.

The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Sedition Act in the case of *Schenck v. United States* (1919). The Court ruled that there are times when the need for public order is so pressing that First Amendment protections of speech do not apply. The Debs case and others like it show that the war did lead to some suppression of personal freedoms and individual rights.

Prejudice Against German Americans Sometimes, the war enthusiasm created by the CPI and other groups took an ugly turn. Some German Americans were treated harshly during the war. Americans regarded Germany—with its arrogant kaiser, ruthless generals, and spike-helmeted soldiers—as the primary foe among the Central Powers. Popular movies, such as *The Kaiser*; *the Beast of Berlin*, as well as some CPI posters and speeches intensified this feeling by portraying Germany as a cruel enemy. Some Americans wrongly generalized that if Germany was cruel, then all German people were cruel.

As a result, Americans stopped teaching German in public schools and discontinued playing the music of Beethoven and Brahms. They renamed German measles “liberty measles,” cooked “liberty steaks” instead of hamburgers, and walked their “liberty pups” instead of dachshunds. German Americans were pressured to prove their loyalty to America by condemning the German government, giving up speaking German and reading German-language newspapers, and participating enthusiastically in any patriotic drive. Occasionally, hatred of the German enemy boiled over into violence against German Americans. Some German Americans were harassed, others were beaten, and a few were killed for no other reason than they were born in Germany or spoke with a German accent.



Checkpoint Compare and contrast the reasons some Americans did not support the war.

Eugene V. Debs Protests

In June 1918, Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs was arrested for making an antiwar speech in Canton, Ohio (below). While in prison, Debs accepted the Socialist Party's nomination for President and won more than 900,000 votes in the 1920 election.





The War Changes American Society

The war not only changed the economic and political lives of Americans, but it also brought substantial social changes. New opportunities opened up for women, African Americans, and Mexican Americans. Some left their homes to seek new ones where they could take advantage of these opportunities.

Women Embrace New Opportunities Before the war, some American women campaigned for women's suffrage. They won the vote in several western states and still hoped to gain the franchise nationally. Many feared that the war would draw attention away from their efforts. In fact, the war gave women new chances and won them the right to vote.

As men entered the armed forces, many women moved into the workforce for the first time. Women filled jobs that were vacated by men who had gone to fight. They worked in munitions factories, on the railroads, as telegraph operators and trolley conductors, and in other jobs that were previously open only to men. Others labored on farms. Some joined the Red Cross or the American Women's Hospital Service and went overseas. They worked as doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers, and clerks. Thousands enlisted when the Army Corps of Nurses was created in 1918. Women proved that they could succeed in any type of job, regardless of difficulty or risk.

By their efforts and sacrifices during the war, women convinced President Wilson to support their suffrage demands. He contended that granting the vote to women was "vital to winning the war." If women could do the work of men, they certainly deserved the same voting privileges as men. Finally, in 1919, Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment giving the vote to women. The required two thirds of states ratified the amendment in the summer of 1920, a victory more than 70 years in the making.



Nursing the Wounded

Red Cross workers were a symbol of caring in the midst of fear during World War I. About 18,000 American Red Cross nurses cared for wounded soldiers and civilians during the war. Their job was difficult and often dangerous—nearly 300 nurses lost their lives.

Focus On Geography

The Great Migration During World War I and after, several push factors caused thousands of African Americans to decide to move away from their homes in the South. A handful of pull factors drew them to new homes in the North.

Pushed from the South by...

- Jim Crow segregation laws
- Lynchings and other racial violence
- Low-paying jobs as sharecroppers or servants
- Ruined cotton crops due to boll weevil infestation

Pulled to the North by...

- Economic prosperity in northern cities
- Job openings due to reduced immigration
- Aid from African Americans in the North

Geography and History How did World War I contribute to the prosperity and labor shortage that caused migration?

The Great Migration



African Americans Follow Opportunity North The war similarly presented new opportunities to African Americans. From the outset, most African American leaders supported the war. “If this is our country, then this is our war,” wrote African American leader W.E.B. Du Bois. He viewed the struggle as an excellent opportunity to show all Americans the loyalty and patriotism of African Americans. Thousands of them enlisted or were drafted into the army and sailed for the battlefields of France. On the battlefield, they fought in segregated units under the command of white officers. Altogether, 367,000 African Americans served in the military. Hundreds died for their country.

Meanwhile, a great movement of African Americans from the rural South to the industrial North was taking place. This movement to the “Land of Hope,” as many African Americans referred to the North at that time, is called the **Great Migration**. African Americans left their homes in the South for many reasons. Some hoped to escape the violent racism of the South. Others desired better jobs and a chance for economic advancement, which wartime industry in the North offered. Still others dreamed of a better future for their children. Between 1910 and 1920, more than 1.2 million African Americans moved to the North.

Some whites in the South tried to get blacks to stay in the region of their birth, using methods that ranged from persuasion to violence. Meanwhile, African

Americans who already lived in the North encouraged migration. Newspapers in the North, such as the *Chicago Defender*, an African American newspaper that was widely read in the South, pushed home this point:


Primary Source “I beg you, my brother, to leave the benighted land. . . . Get out of the South. . . . Come north then, all you folks, both good and bad. . . . The *Defender* says come.”

—*Chicago Defender*

African Americans moved to Chicago, as the *Defender* encouraged, where they found work in meatpacking plants. They migrated to Detroit, where they obtained jobs in auto factories. They traveled to smaller industrial towns in the Midwest and to the giant cities of the Northeast. Millions eventually made the exodus, and although they did not entirely escape discrimination, many did forge better futures. The Great Migration was one of the most important episodes in African American history.

Mexican Americans Move North Some of the same reasons that led African Americans to move north caused Mexicans to cross the border into the United States. Many Mexicans also faced violence and desperate poverty, and they also wanted better lives for themselves and their children. Most immigrated to the American West, where they sought work on large ranches and farms in Texas and along the Pacific Coast. Increased demands for food and a decrease in American farmworkers created jobs that Mexican migrants filled.

Some of the Mexican migration was seasonal. Many workers crossed the border to harvest fruits or grains or to pick cotton while each crop was in season, then crossed back into Mexico. But others stayed and made the United States their home. Some Mexican workers migrated first to the Southwest and then to the northern states in search of factory jobs, but a large population stayed in California. They formed *barrios* (BAHR ee ohz), or Hispanic neighborhoods, in Los Angeles and in smaller cities in California’s Imperial Valley. California had always had a rich Hispanic heritage, but these new immigrants added an important economic dimension to that heritage.

 **Checkpoint** How did the war provide new opportunities for women, African Americans, and Mexican Americans?

SECTION

2

Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: nea-0604

Comprehension

- 1. Terms and People** For each item below, write a sentence explaining how it affected the American home front during World War I.
 - Selective Service Act
 - Bernard Baruch
 - CPI
 - George Creel
 - conscientious objector
 - Espionage Act
 - Great Migration

2. **NoteTaking** Reading Skill

Summarize Use your chart to answer the Section Focus Question: How did the war affect Americans at home?

Writing About History

- 3. Quick Write: Identify Multiple Effects** Write a paragraph describing three effects that World War I had on the American home front. Think about economic and social changes caused by the war. Be sure to include at least one example of each effect to support your statements.

Critical Thinking

- 4. Categorize** In what ways did Americans support the war effort?
- 5. Identify Point of View** How did the Supreme Court justify the restrictions of the Sedition Act?
- 6. Predict Consequences** How do you think returning soldiers reacted to changes at home when the war ended?