

**February  
1917**  
*Literacy test  
for immigrants*

**June  
1917**  
*Espionage Act*

**August  
1917**  
*Lever Food and Fuel  
Control Act*

**September  
1917**  
*Police raids against  
IWW members*

**May  
1918**  
*Sedition Act*

**1917**

**1918**

**1919**

## 4 On the Home Front

### SECTION PREVIEW

#### Objectives

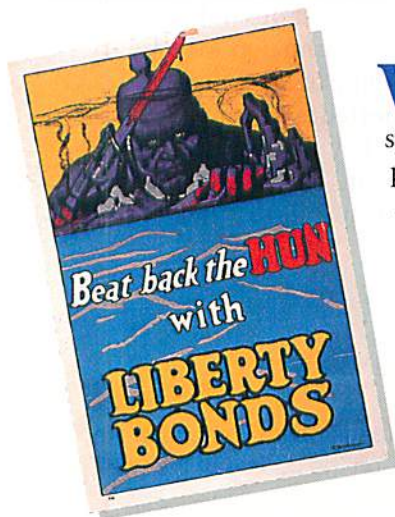
- 1 Explain how the government financed the war and managed the wartime economy.
- 2 Describe how efforts to enforce loyalty led to hostility and repression.
- 3 Describe how the lives of Americans on the home front changed during the war.
- 4 **Key Terms** Define: Liberty Bond; price controls; rationing; daylight saving time; sedition; vigilante.

#### Main Idea

Americans and their government took extraordinary steps at home to support the war effort.

#### Reading Strategy

**Reading for Evidence** As you read, look for evidence to support the following statement, which appears on this page: "Waging war required many sacrifices at home." On a sheet of paper, list as many kinds of sacrifices described as you can.



*The U.S. government used posters to whip up sentiment against the "Huns"—the Germans.*

**W**aging war required many sacrifices at home. Despite the efforts of the preparedness movement, the American economy was not ready to meet the demands of modern warfare. In this era, war required huge amounts of money and personnel. As President Wilson explained, now "there are no armies . . . ; there are entire nations armed."

### Financing the War

The government launched a vigorous campaign to raise money from the American people. It started offering **Liberty Bonds**, special war bonds sold to support the Allied cause. Like all bonds, they could later be redeemed for the original value of the bonds plus interest. Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo had the idea for Liberty Bonds. By selling war bonds to enthusiastic Americans, McAdoo raised more than \$20 billion. This allowed the United States to loan more than

\$10 billion to the Allies during and just after the war.

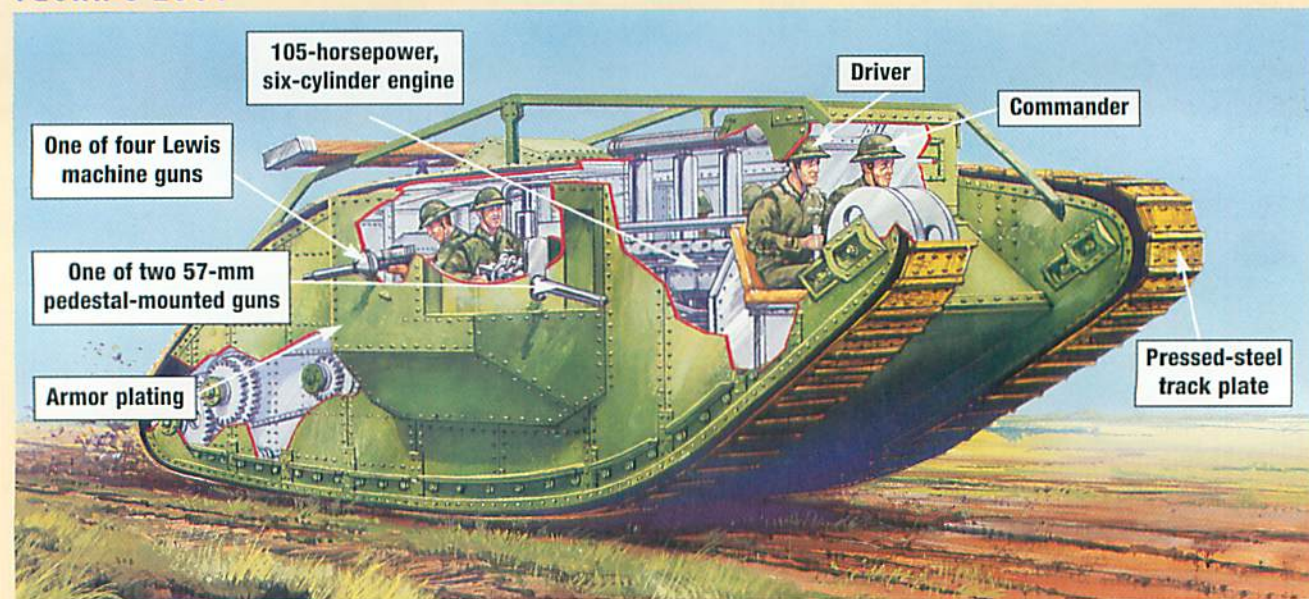
Responding to the slogan "Every Scout to Save a Soldier," Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts set up booths on street corners and sold bonds. The government hired popular commercial artists to draw colorful posters and recruited famous screen actors to host bond rallies. An army of 75,000 "four-minute men" gave brief (four-minute) speeches before movies, plays, and school or union meetings to persuade audiences to buy bonds.

### Managing the Economy

The government also called on industry to convert to the production of war goods. In 1918 Wilson won authority to set up a huge bureaucracy to manage this process. Business leaders flocked to Washington to take up posts in thousands of new agencies. Because they gave their service for a token salary, they were called "dollar-a-year" men and women.

**New Agencies** A War Industries Board, headed by financier Bernard Baruch, oversaw the nation's war-related production. The





The tank was another new weapon introduced in World War I. It was designed to cross rough terrain and trenches while remaining invulnerable to enemy fire. Tanks were used to launch assaults in advance of foot troops. **Science and Technology** How was the tank a response to trench warfare?

million war dead. Just under 900,000 British troops died. While most of the fighting and dying took place in Europe, there were battles in the Middle East and Africa as well.

The terrible slaughter extended beyond the battlefields. Millions of civilians died during and immediately after the fighting, from starvation, disease, or war-related injuries.

These deaths included hundreds of thousands of Armenian civilians. In a campaign of **genocide**, or the organized killing of an entire people, Ottoman forces deported and murdered Armenians, whom they suspected of disloyalty to the government. The killings of Armenians would continue into the early 1920s.

### SECTION 3 REVIEW

#### Comprehension

- 1. Key Terms** Define: (a) Selective Service Act; (b) American Expeditionary Force; (c) convoy; (d) armistice; (e) genocide.
- 2. Summarizing the Main Idea** What role did American troops play in World War I?
- 3. Organizing Information** Create a chart with three headings: *Preparing for Action*, *Turning the Tide*, and *Ending the War*. Fill in the chart with important details from the section.

#### Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Time Lines** Review the time line at the start of the section. How long did it take

for the American Expeditionary Force to make a significant impact on the course of the war? Explain.

- 5. Drawing Inferences** Long after Pershing's American Expeditionary Force arrived in Europe, French soldiers were still asking, "Where are the Americans?" Why do you think they asked that question?

#### Writing Activity

- 6. Writing an Expository Essay** Write an essay focusing on the number of war deaths suffered by the main combatants in World War I.



board had far-reaching powers. It doled out raw materials, told manufacturers what and how much to produce, and even fixed prices.

A War Trade Board licensed foreign trade and punished firms suspected of dealing with the enemy. A National War Labor Board, set up in April 1918 under former President Taft, worked to settle any labor disputes that might hinder the war effort. (Labor leader Samuel Gompers promised to limit labor strife in war-production industries.) A separate War Labor Policies Board, headed by Harvard law professor Felix Frankfurter, set standard wages, hours, and working conditions in the war industries. Labor unions won limited rights to organize and bargain collectively.

**Regulating Food and Fuel Consumption** In August 1917 Congress passed the Lever Food and Fuel Control Act. This act gave the President the power to manage the production and distribution of foods and fuels vital to the war effort.

Using the slogan “Food will win the war,” the government began regulating food consumption. Under the leadership of engineer and future President Herbert Hoover, the Food Administration worked to increase agricultural output and reduce waste. Hoover had the power to impose **price controls**, a system of pricing determined by the government, on food. He also could have begun a system of **rationing**, or distributing goods to consumers in a fixed amount. But he opposed both these approaches. Hoover hoped instead that voluntary restraint and increased efficiency would accomplish the Food Administration’s goals.

Women played a key role in Hoover’s program. Writing to women in August 1917, he preached a “Gospel of the Clean Plate.” He appealed:



“Stop, before throwing any food away, and ask “Can it be used?” . . . Stop catering to different appetites. No second helpings. Stop all eating between meals. . . . One meatless day a week. One wheatless meal a day. . . . No butter in cooking: use substitutes.”

—Herbert Hoover

“The American woman and the American home,” Hoover concluded, “can bring to a successful end the greatest national task that has ever been accepted by the American people.” Eager to take part in the war effort, women across the country responded to this patriotic challenge.

The Lever Food and Fuel Control Act also created an agency called the Fuel Administration. It sponsored gasless days to save fuel. This agency also began the practice of **daylight saving time**—turning clocks ahead one hour for the summer. This new policy increased the number of daylight hours available for activities. In this way daylight saving time lessened the need for artificial light, which lowered fuel consumption.

### Main Idea CONNECTIONS

*In what way did the Fuel Administration agency help in the war effort?*

**A Progressive Victory?** Thanks to the war, some hopes of progressive-era reformers had come to pass. Government now regulated American economic life to an extent most progressives had never dreamed possible. When regulation spilled over into more private areas of life, however, some progressives wondered if the growth in public power had gone too far.

In addition, to the dismay of all progressives, regulation had not lessened the power of the corporate world. Indeed, during the war the influence of business leaders grew, the government relaxed its pursuit of antitrust suits, and corporate profits tripled.

## Enforcing Loyalty

News and information also came under federal control during World War I. The government imposed censorship on the press and banned some publications from the mails.

In 1917 George Creel, a Denver journalist and former muckraker, was made head of the Committee on Public Information. His job was to rally popular support for the war. Creel’s office coordinated the production of short films, pamphlets explaining war aims, and posters selling recruitment and Liberty Bonds.

**Fear of Foreigners** As in all wars, the fear of espionage, or spying, was widespread. A few months after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, a staff member of the German embassy left his briefcase on an American train. In it were plans for weakening pro-Allied sentiment and disrupting the American economy.

The government feared that secret agents might try to undermine the war effort by destroying transportation or communication networks. The possibility of such acts of sabotage put the government on alert. It also generated calls for restrictions on immigration.



The National Security League, having won its battle for preparedness, began to preach “100 Percent Americanism.” Early in 1917 the League got Congress to pass, over Wilson’s veto, a literacy test for immigrants. This test excluded those who could not read English or some other language. As it turned out, relatively few immigrants failed the test. Still, the test set the stage for a vigorous revival of nativism.

**“Hate the Hun!”** Once the United States declared war, alertness for spies approached hysteria. The war also spurred a general hostility toward Germans. People began calling them Huns, in reference to an Asiatic people who brutally invaded Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries. German composers and musicians were banned from symphony concerts. German measles became “liberty measles,” and a hamburger (which was named after Hamburg, a German city) became a “liberty sandwich.”

Yet it was a mob of Americans who showed brutality and hatred in April 1918, when they lynched German-born citizen Robert Prager near St. Louis. Despite his German heritage,

Prager had in fact tried to enlist in the navy. His lynching was but one of numerous wartime attacks on people of German descent.

**Repression of Civil Liberties** In his message to Congress in 1917, calling for war on Germany, Wilson had claimed that the United States would be fighting for liberty and democracy. His claim offended those who suffered from wartime restrictions on their civil liberties.

In that same war message Wilson warned that disloyalty would be “dealt with with a firm hand of stern repression.” Accordingly, Congress in 1917 passed the Espionage Act, which made it illegal to interfere with the draft. The Espionage Act was amended in 1918 by the Sedition Act. (**Sedition** is speech or actions that encourage rebellion.) The Sedition Act made it illegal to obstruct the sale of Liberty Bonds or to discuss anything “disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive” about the American form of government, the Constitution, or the army and navy.

The government pursued more than 1,500 prosecutions and won more than 1,000 convictions. Socialist and former presidential candidate Eugene Debs drew a ten-year jail sentence for criticizing the American government and business leaders and urging people to “resist militarism.”

**Controlling Political Radicals** Socialists such as Debs argued that the war was merely a quarrel among imperialist capitalists. This view became a rallying point for antiwar sentiment. In the elections of 1917 in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, socialists made impressive gains.

The radical labor organization Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) also gained new supporters. Its membership of western miners, migrant farm workers, and other unskilled laborers supported the IWW’s goal of overthrowing capitalism.

The views of socialists and the IWW distressed moderate labor leaders like Samuel Gompers, who had pledged union cooperation with the war effort. The police hounded the IWW. Raids in September 1917 led to the conviction of nearly 200 members in trials held in Illinois, California, and Oklahoma. Groups of **vigilantes**, citizens who take the law into their own hands, lynched and horse-whipped others.



“I am afraid we are going to have a good many instances of people roughly treated on very slight evidence of disloyalty,” wrote Secretary of War Newton Baker. Indeed, as this 1917 photograph shows, anti-German feeling in the United States led to the arrest of many citizens of German descent.

**Government** How did government policies such as the Sedition Act contribute to nativist hatred?



## Changing People's Lives

American patriotism and war fever made military styles and activities more acceptable at home. Scouting programs for boys and girls, involving military-style uniforms, marching, and patriotic exercises, grew in popularity. Military drill became part of many school programs. By the summer of 1918, all able-bodied males in colleges and universities became army privates, subject to military discipline.

### Social Mobility for Minorities and Women

Americans turned away from military styles and activities after the war. But other social changes had more lasting effects. The war cut off the flow of immigrants from Europe, and the armed forces took many young men out of the labor pool. Businesses, especially war-related industries, suddenly needed workers. These wartime conditions propelled some people into higher paid jobs. Factories that used to discriminate against African Americans and Mexican Americans now actively recruited them.

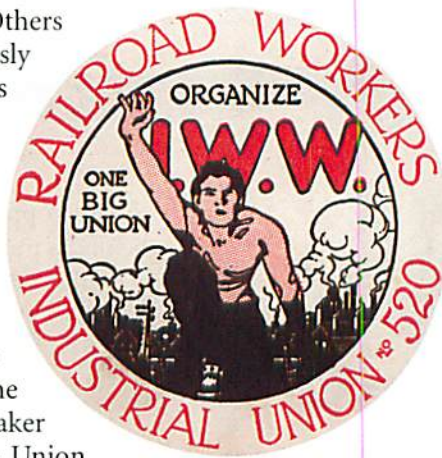
The African Americans who left the South to work in northern factories added to a steady stream of migrants that had started in the late 1800s. The stream turned into a flood during the war, when some 500,000 African Americans joined what came to be called the Great Migration.

Women, too, benefited from the diminished work force. Some women found jobs on farms, thanks to organizations such as the

Women's Land Army. Others moved into jobs previously closed to them, such as telegraph messenger, elevator operator, and letter carrier. A few earned management positions.

As a result of the war, about 400,000 women joined the industrial work force for the first time. In 1917 a speaker for the Women's Trade Union League proclaimed, "At last, after centuries of disabilities and discrimination, women are coming into the labor and festival of life on equal terms with men." Such pronouncements, while premature, celebrated what seemed like a major social change.

**Prohibition Finally Passes** In 1917 the temperance movement was almost a century old. In that year Congress proposed the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which made it illegal to manufacture, sell, or transport alcoholic beverages in the United States. Members of Congress backed the Eighteenth Amendment in part to show patriotism during wartime. The production of alcohol used a lot of grain, which was now needed to make the bread to feed people at home and overseas. The states ratified the Prohibition Amendment in 1919.



*The IWW gained strength during World War I. It also became the target of the government's effort to control political radicals.*

## SECTION 4 REVIEW

### Comprehension

- 1. Key Terms** Define: (a) Liberty Bond; (b) price controls; (c) rationing; (d) daylight saving time; (e) sedition; (f) vigilante.
- 2. Summarizing the Main Idea** What special powers did new government agencies have over industry and labor during the war?
- 3. Organizing Information** Create a chart to show the steps the government took to finance the war, manage the economy, and boost Americanism.

### Critical Thinking

- 4. Analyzing Time Lines** Review the time line at the start of the section. Which event do you think did the most to change Americans' lives? Explain.
- 5. Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** Do you think the Sedition Act was a good way to deal with critics during wartime? Explain.

### Writing Activity

- 6. Writing a Persuasive Essay** Write an essay in the form of a speech for one of the "four-minute men." Before you begin, decide who your audience is and craft your speech to persuade that audience to buy war bonds.





## Plow

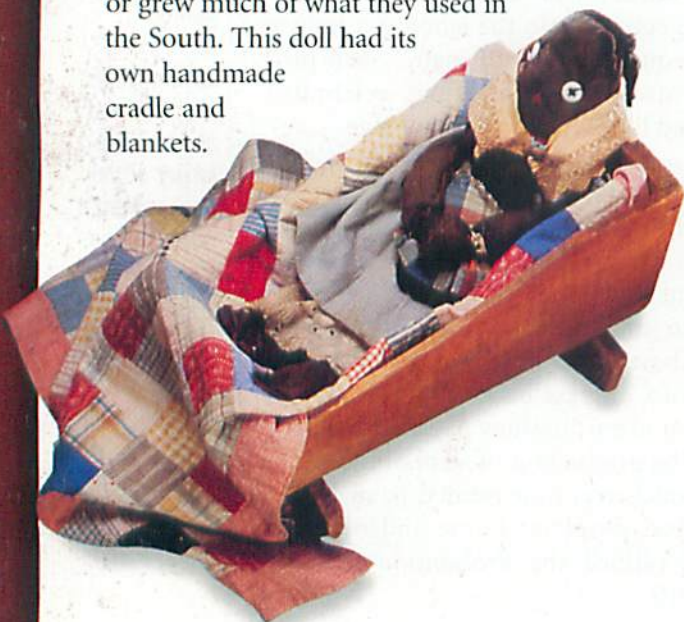
2

Sharecropping farmers walked behind a mule-drawn plow like this one to break the land.

1

## Handmade Doll

Cash-poor African Americans made or grew much of what they used in the South. This doll had its own handmade cradle and blankets.



3

## Store Owner's Record Book

The store owner kept track of sharecroppers' debts and payments in a ledger like this.



4

## Home Schooling

In the South, African American parents frequently served as their children's teachers.

5

## Suitcase and Bibles

African American families could only bring a limited number of items with them on their journey northward.

