

The First World War

Chapter 8

The Home Front

Section 3



MAIN IDEA

The United States mobilized a variety of resources to wage World War I.



HSS 11.4

Students trace the rise of the United States to its role as a world power in the twentieth century.

Key Terms and People

Liberty bonds a form of loan to the government to pay for the war

Bernard Baruch head of the War Industries Board during World War I

National War Labor Board organization to settle disputes between workers and management during the war

Committee on Public Information organization to promote American support for the war

George Creel head of the Committee on Public Opinion

propaganda posters, newspaper stories, and other materials designed to influence people's opinions

Schenck v. United States Supreme Court decision explaining limits of free speech

Section Summary

MOBILIZING THE ECONOMY

Going to war was a huge and expensive thing to do. Congress passed the War Revenue Act to pay for the war. The act established very high taxes. The government also borrowed money. Much of the money was borrowed from Americans who bought **Liberty Bonds**. The War Industries Board was formed to regulate all materials needed for the war effort. **Bernard Baruch** headed the board. American industrial production increased 20 percent.

The Food Administration was formed to manage and increase food production. Americans planted vegetables in "victory gardens." There were "meatless Mondays" and "wheatless Wednesdays." Since alcohol used up grain, people were encouraged not to drink it. In 1918 the Eighteenth Amendment banned the manufacture, sale, or transportation of alcoholic beverages. The Fuel Administration made sure that military needs for fuel would be met. Supplies from America were vital to the struggling Allies. The power of manufacturing and farming gave a needed boost to the American economy as well.

What were two ways the government raised money to pay for the war?

How did the Eighteenth Amendment help the war effort?

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MOBILIZING WORKERS

Profits of many corporations rose sharply during the war. Prices went up. Workers' wages did not go up enough to make up for the higher prices. Workers had to work longer hours, sometimes in dangerous conditions. These conditions led many workers to join labor unions. The **National War Labor Board** was formed to help prevent strikes. The Board judged disputes between workers and management. It also set policies to improve working conditions. Many women took jobs that men had left to go into the military. They made great contributions to the war effort.

In 1918 and 1919 there was a severe flu epidemic. About half of the American troops who died in the war died from influenza. The disease killed 600,000 Americans.

Why did many workers join labor unions during the war?

INFLUENCING PUBLIC OPINION

Wilson had to change the minds of those Americans who had been against the war. He created the **Committee on Public Information**. It was headed by **George Creel**, a former reporter. Creel used **propaganda** to promote American support of the war. Propaganda is material designed to influence people's opinions. Movie stars and artists encouraged people to support the war.

Americans began to distrust anything that was German. Anti-German feelings grew after German secret agents planted a bomb in New York. Congress passed laws that limited Americans' freedom. They punished people for speaking out against the war or refusing military duty. Charles Schenck was one of many people jailed for violating the new laws. In *Schenck v. United States*, the Supreme Court ruled that freedom of speech could be limited if it caused danger for the country.

Why did Wilson form the Committee on Public Information?

What was the result of *Schenck v. United States*?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Engage Thinking Contrast In 1918, the U.S. Espionage Act was passed. This act gave the government the power to suspend the freedom of speech during World War I. Write two paragraphs contrasting this act with the laws limiting freedom of speech during World War I.

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Vocabulary Builder

Section 3

Committee on Public Information

Liberty bonds

National War Labor Board

propaganda

Schenck v. United States

DIRECTIONS Answer each question by writing a sentence that contains at least one word from the word bank.

1. What organization created materials designed to influence people's opinions?

2. What organization judged disputes between workers and management?

DIRECTIONS Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word in the word pair that best completes the sentence.

3. To help pay for the costs of fighting World War I, Americans loaned money to the federal government by purchasing _____.

(propaganda/Liberty bonds)

4. The _____ encouraged Americans to support the war.

(National War Labor Board/Committee on Public Information)

5. _____ can be newspaper stories, posters, speeches, or other materials. **(Liberty bonds/Propaganda)**

6. The _____ was created to keep disruptions at work to a minimum. **(Committee on Public Information/National War Labor Board)**

7. In _____, the Supreme Court interpreted the First Amendment and explored the limits of free speech.

(National War Labor Board v. Washington/Schenck v. United States)