

World War II and the Shaping of Postwar America: Politics, Domestic Policy, and the Political Economy

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The journalist Marquis Childs recalled visiting with friends after hearing of the attack on Pearl Harbor “and all of us saying, ‘Nothing will ever be the same again.’” A quarter-century later, Childs concluded that “. . . it never was the same. It never will be.” But Childs also offered another, different, perspective on the impact of World War II on the United States. He spent much of the war overseas, and “when you came back,” he said, “you felt things were still so normal here, that we hadn’t been touched by the war.”¹ In those ostensibly inconsistent observations, Childs provided two sides of what has for some time been the principal analytical framework for assessing the impact of World War II on American life: the degree to which the war was a “watershed” — a crucial turning point that made postwar America significantly different from prewar America.

The understanding of the Second World War as a major historical divide is widely accepted among scholars and the public alike. Textbooks typically emphasize the pivotal impact of the war. A special 1995 issue of *Life* called 1945 “a hinge of history, a time of turning . . . when . . . a new America” was born.² From restoring prosperity and triggering new opportunities and expectations, to challenging old roles and norms and catalyzing the postwar civil rights and women’s movements, to launching the baby boom and the rise of the Sunbelt, to expanding the power of the federal government, the war is credited with having profound effects at home as well as on the global role and power of the United States.

Barely sketched here, the case is powerful, often compelling. Clearly World War II had a large and lasting impact on American life.

There is, however, an alternative perspective, one stressing important continuities in the era and maintaining that the watershed interpretation oversimplifies or exaggerates the war’s impact in shaping postwar America. Such analyses hold that much of the apparent wartime change had been underway for some time and was confirmed, or reinforced, or accelerated — but not necessarily produced — by the war; or, from another angle, that many changes ascribed to the war were far from complete by 1945 and owed their ultimate trajectories as much or more to postwar as to wartime events and circumstances. Some accounts argue not just that wartime developments must be understood in a long-term continuum but that the extent of homefront change has been much exaggerated. Cross-national comparative studies echo Marquis Childs’ observation that World War II affected the United States much less than it did the other combatants. And in addition to the now considerable literature debating the war’s impact on women, on African Americans, and on other aspects of American life as well, challenges to the watershed thesis have been extended to such established views as the war’s transforming impact on California — even to the seemingly incontrovertible evidence of wartime prosperity.³

The analytical issues involved go beyond assessing the impact of the Second World War, important as that question is. They go also to explaining fundamental trends and the interaction of change and continuity in modern American history. They go to the more general issue of the impact of war on soci-

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eties and politics and its role as a primary agent of change. They go indeed to the very nature and process of historical change.

The issue of the war's impact on American life is connected as well to what has become the second dominant framework for probing the meaning of the wartime experience: the idea of World War II as the "Good War." Understandings of the Good War rest to a significant degree on ways in which the war was a salutary turning point for the nation and its people. But as scholars have challenged the notion of the Good War,⁴ they have often stressed patterns — racism, gender discrimination, disparities of wealth and power, for example — that point to continuities rather than change. To be sure, the watershed and Good War frameworks are by no means entirely congruent. The former tends to be more ana-

lytical, the latter more judgmental. Nor are the arguments supporting or challenging the Good War and the watershed interpretations simply mirror images of one another. But in this connection, too, assessing the impact of World War II on the United States bears upon a significant related matter.

The question of how far the Second World War was a major turning point in American history is complicated as well as important. It is difficult if not impossible to come to agreement on how to define and calculate the type, extent, and rate of change that constitute an historical watershed. Historians emphasizing change and the dramatic impact of the war do not deny significant continuities, nor do those challenging the watershed thesis ignore important wartime change. Any examination of the war's impact must remember the nation's het-



World War II is widely seen as having wrought dramatic changes on the American home front; however, many aspects of postwar life seemed untouched. (CHS Photograph Collection)

erogeneity, the varieties of wartime experiences, and the many different aspects of American life. One recent analysis thus maintains that wartime America had "many different home fronts;" another suggests that "the war's varying impacts on American society and culture" formed "a patchwork quilt."⁵ But for all the problems and perils, the watershed framework remains a useful one in probing the impact of World War II.

Examination of the American political system — voting patterns and party strength, domestic policy and policymaking; the political culture and institutional structure; the political economy and the nature of the American state — provides important perspectives on the domestic impact of the war. Politics and policy involve social patterns and economic circumstances, public attitudes and aspirations, shared and competing values and priorities, national decisions and directions. Much of the recent "war and society" literature stressing the powerful

effects of war, especially modern war, on societies, economies, and cultures focuses on the impact of war on political systems.⁶ The political history of the home front can thus illuminate the impact of the Second World War and its role in shaping postwar America.

World War II dramatically changed the context of American politics and policymaking that had produced the New Deal and the new Democratic majority of the 1930s. Politics in the Depression decade had turned above all on the domestic issues of hard times and the New Deal. The war restored prosperity, gave a new salience to foreign affairs and foreign policy, and raised a host of social, ethnic, and economic issues different from those of the 1930s. Such changes threatened the New Deal and the new majority Roosevelt coalition, based as they were on Depression era domestic issues.

Yet despite some change and erosion in both the New Deal and the Roosevelt coalition, World War II deepened rather than redrew the new channels of the 1930s and thus made them more permanent features of the political order. Indeed, what seems especially striking about wartime politics is the degree to which the term "politics as usual" — the pejorative phrase that both parties hurled at each other in the 1942 congressional elections — aptly characterized the homefront. Not only did the normal political rhythms prescribed by the American constitution continue during the war — often replete with narrow partisanship and self-seeking — but party issues and images, voting patterns, and domestic policymaking were remarkably consistent with those of the 1930s.

Because of the war in Europe and its ramifications, the 1940 election was really the first of the wartime elections in the United States. The war helped induce Franklin D. Roosevelt to seek an unprecedented third term and the public to change its mind about breaking that long-standing American tradition. The international situation also contributed powerfully to darkhorse candidate Wendell Willkie's successful campaign for the Republican nomination. Foreign policy figured in the autumn campaign as it had not for some two decades, and Democratic sup-



Both parties charged the other with "business as usual." President Franklin Roosevelt, a Democrat, and Senator Robert A. Taft, a conservative Republican from Cincinnati, were elected in

the 1930s and re-elected in the 1940s. (CHS Photograph Collection)

FDR's re-election to a third term demonstrates the continuities in political issues and voting patterns from the 1930s into the 1940s. (CHS Photograph Collection)

1942, the returns revealed the vulnerability of the Democrats to changed circumstances and concerns, but they did not reflect fundamental electoral or ideological change.⁸

The issues and outcome of the 1944 presidential election demonstrated that. Roosevelt won a fourth term with 53.5 percent of the vote, and voting

riding public concern was postwar prosperity, jobs in particular. And with respect to the economy as well as to the secondary political issues of victory and foreign policy, Roosevelt and the Democrats had a significant edge in public confidence.⁹ Again in 1944, the presidential election turned on Roosevelt and his record over his entire tenure in office, his domestic record and his image as the champion of the common man and economic security especially.

There were, to be sure, new and different issues and emphases in 1944, some of them reflecting the impact of the war. Democrats warned against changing presidents before victory had been achieved and against entrusting global affairs to the young and inexperienced Thomas Dewey. Both parties tried to reassure the public about an effective postwar internationalist policy to keep the peace. Republicans warned, sometimes stridently, about communism at home and abroad in ways that anticipated important postwar issues — though the GOP had accused the New Deal of being radical and un-American for a decade by 1944.

The politics of 1944 also reflected a continued ebbing, which had begun in the late 1930s, of the reform impulse of the early New Deal years. In nominating Harry Truman rather than Henry Wallace for vice-president on the Democratic ticket and Dewey rather than Willkie for president on the GOP's, each party chose the more moderate over the more liberal candidate — though Truman was a reliable supporter of the New Deal, and Dewey accepted its core programs. Roosevelt at the end of the campaign advocated a far-reaching "economic bill of rights" as well as full-employment prosperity, but he was reelected not as the champion of new reform but as the symbol of jobs and security and the apparent architect of the double victory over the Axis and the Great Depression.¹⁰

In the continued salience of 1930s domestic issues, the consensus to maintain (but not expand) the New Deal, and the diminished but still potent Democratic majority, the election of 1944 served as a kind of bridge linking pre-war and postwar politics. Politics reflect the culture, and most home-front Americans visualized the postwar era as a more



patterns were remarkably consistent with previous New Deal elections. With nearly nine of every ten repeat voters casting their ballots as they had in 1940, there was in fact less change from 1940 to 1944 than in any pair of elections in the New Deal-Fair Deal era. The Roosevelt coalition, smaller but fundamentally intact after a half decade of global war, had swept to another victory.

Opinion surveys, more important to politics in 1944 than ever before, showed why. The over-

Roosevelt's success in the 1940 election rested, in large part, on his anti-Depression policies. He remained a hero to working men. (CHS Photograph Collection)

prosperous version of pre-war America; they wanted good times, not hard times, jobs and economic security above all, but not major changes in domestic policy or the fabric of national life. One study of the election concluded that "the 1944 results were almost exactly the same as in 1940 primarily because the political structure of the country remained fixed during the war."¹¹

The 1948 presidential election then provided a good indication of how fundamental patterns of prewar politics would persist into the postwar era. Despite Cold War foreign policy concerns, despite charges of domestic communism, despite continuing prosperity, despite the temporary GOP capture of Congress in 1946, Truman won his stunning upset victory in an election where domestic issues predominated, 1930s party images resonated, economic security remained the chief concern, class lines were fundamental to voting, and the core of the Roosevelt coalition remained intact. The presidential candidacies of Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond and Progressive Henry

Wallace, both of them partly reflecting wartime strains in the Democratic party that postwar events would exacerbate, were not sufficient in 1948 to disrupt the new electoral order.¹²

In the parlance of political historians and political scientists, the elections of 1940, 1944, and 1948, were, despite the changed circumstances in wartime and early postwar America, classic "maintaining" elections. They maintained — indeed reinforced and ratified — the new electoral system forged in the Depression decade. Democrats remained the majority party, the Roosevelt coalition endured, and voting patterns continued to fall out along socioeconomic, ethnic, geographical, and racial lines. The New Deal party system created in the 1930s would persist into the 1950s and beyond.¹³

For domestic policy and the political economy, too, a picture emerges of fundamental continuity overlaid with change. Here there are two related issues, with sundry subthemes: what happened to the New Deal and liberal reform in the new circum-



In 1944 as Democrats warned against changing presidents before victory had been won and Republicans warned against communism, President Franklin D. Roosevelt — here with Stalin

and Churchill at Tehran — was elected to a fourth term. (National Archives photo)

stances of World War II, and what happened to the size and reach of the American state and the contours of the political economy because of wartime economic mobilization.

In terms of domestic policy and policy-making, pre-war dynamics and patterns persisted strongly during the war. Congress, especially the 78th Congress elected in 1942, was controlled by the conservative coalition of Republicans and anti-New Deal Democrats that had emerged in the late 1930s to prune the New Deal and prevent its growth. FDR continued to shift his energies and priorities from domestic policy to the war. In 1942 and 1943, such holdover

especially because of wartime strikes, it did not amount to a crippling blow to unions. By the war years, as the 1940 and 1944 presidential elections showed, the New Deal had become central to the political order and its major programs had large, politically powerful, and protective clienteles.

But if the New Deal would not be much reduced, neither would it be expanded. Efforts to enlarge the New Deal continued as in FDR's second term to run afoul of the conservative Congress. The liberal National Resources Planning Board, which in 1943 released a far-reaching postwar program for full-employment prosperity, rising standards of living, and



New Deal agencies as the Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, National Youth Administration, and Farm Security Administration, programs with small or politically weak clienteles or which seemed unnecessary during wartime mobilization and prosperity, were killed or sharply cut. But the heart of the New Deal regulatory-welfare state — programs such as Social Security, banking regulation, and farm price supports — was not seriously challenged. The anti-labor Smith-Connally Act did supplement the Wagner Act and augur the postwar Taft-Hartley Act. However while it reflected a growing animus against organized labor,

economic security, not only saw its recommendations dismissed by the Congress but was itself terminated. Wartime measures on behalf of women, African Americans, and children expired at war's end. The only major new social program enacted during the war was the GI Bill, and that was a special case of reward more than reform.¹⁴

With respect to the New Deal regulatory-welfare state, then, the war years largely confirmed and reinforced the dynamics of the late 1930s. After FDR's first term, the individualist anti-statism of the American political culture and the structural, institutional, and political constraints of the American polit-

Civilian Conservation Corps workers found themselves out of work as Congress drastically reduced New Deal agencies during 1942-1943. (CHS Photograph Collection)

ical system on a powerful reformist state had reasserted themselves.¹⁴ Wartime priorities and prosperity reinforced such traditional obstacles to reform and strengthened the increasingly assertive congressional coalition in Congress. The core of the New Deal remained intact, but peripheral programs and new initiatives could not overcome the forces combining to blunt liberal reform.

Nor indeed did most Democratic liberals advocate such extensions of the regulatory-welfare state as they once had. Before the war, many had wanted thoroughgoing national planning and economic controls in a more powerful administrative state and had wanted a much-enlarged social-welfare state as well. By the end of the war, however, most New Dealers embraced the "compensatory state" where government used its fiscal powers of spending and taxing to achieve a full-employment economy of abundance and security. The prodigious wartime expansion had demonstrated the remarkable capacity of the American economy and the ability of fiscal policy to achieve full-employment prosperity in a way that seemed more practicable politically and more effective economically than micro economics planning and controls or a full-blown welfare state.

But like the strength of wartime conservatism and so much else in the war years, the new liberal program was not simply a result of the war. Important New Deal economists and policymakers were convinced by 1940 that Keynesian fiscal policy could produce both recovery and reform, and the National Resources Planning Board had largely worked out its ambitious liberal Keynesian postwar program before Pearl Harbor. Wartime developments corroborated Keynesian analysis and enlarged the growing consensus, but they did not initiate or by themselves produce the new liberal agenda and the Keynesian revolution in American policy.¹⁶

While domestic programs and policy-making thus showed substantial continuity from the 1930s, the federal government expanded to dimensions and powers far beyond those of the New Deal state in mobilizing the nation for war. The number of federal civilian employees quadrupled, from some 950,000 in 1939 to 3.8 million in 1945. Expenditures

soared elevenfold from not quite \$9 billion to over \$98 billion, from about one-tenth to nearly one-half of the Gross National Product. The power of the executive branch expanded enormously, as the government managed production, materials, and labor; rationed goods and set prices, conscripted men and money, controlled information, spent and taxed more than it ever had before. In what has been termed the "ratchet" effect of war, moreover, the government did not revert to its pre-war dimensions; in 1950, for example, Washington spent less than half what it had in 1945 — but more than four times what it had in 1940.

Such spending was enabled in part by the war's impact on tax policy. To help finance the war, the income tax was extended far more broadly than before; the number of taxable tax returns rose from some four million in 1939 to nearly forty-three million in 1945. Personal income tax receipts became the largest source of federal revenues, and the withholding tax initiated during the war not only provided a broadened tax base for underwriting federal expenditures but also enabled postwar government to affect economic activity by raising or lowering taxes.¹⁷

Beyond enlarging the size and power of the federal government, the processes and successes of mobilizing the American economy for war contributed to the increased power and prestige of the large, centralized, bureaucratic organizations, public and private, basic to the modern American political economy. According to the historian Gerald Nash, World War II both "greatly hastened the development of a more highly organized society in the United States" and "strengthened the faith of millions of Americans in the role of big government, big business, agriculture, and labor unions in dealing with the nation's major problems."¹⁸

Certainly big business profited greatly from World War II. Not only did it command the lion's share of war contracts and in other ways benefit from mobilization and reconversion policy, but because of the "miracles of production" and the publicized role of the dollar-a-year businessmen in the mobilization agencies, it regained public prestige and political clout lost in the Great Depression. Big agribusiness also gained from the war, and organized

labor grew in size and influence and won a new foothold in Washington decision-making — though as a distinctly junior partner and with the growing realization that Congress would be much less partial to labor than had been the case in the 1930s.

The war thus brought shifts in the dynamics of policy-making, enhancing not only the influence of anti-New Deal conservatives but the role of business and the military in policymaking. The power of the “military-industrial complex” was evident in the role of businessmen and military procurement officers in wartime mobilization and in the processes of managing the wartime and postwar economy. Rather than the liberal Keynesian program of

deficit spending to underwrite reform, prosperity, and economic security, postwar fiscal policy was more an amalgam of national security “military Keynesianism” and cautious, tax-cutting “commercial Keynesianism.” Like the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, the watered-down Employment Act of 1946 reflected important patterns of postwar policy-making.⁴⁹

In this, World War II was clearly an important but not truly a transforming period. The war enhanced the power of the state, gave somewhat different form to the political economy and organizational society, and strengthened conservative opposition to the liberal agenda. But an increasingly power-



Democrats, though the majority party, could not control politics; Cincinnati and millions of other Americans liked “Ike,” General Dwight D.

Eisenhower in the 1952 presidential election. (CHS Marsh Photograph Collection)

ful central government and the modern organizational society and political economy of countervailing powers long predated World War II.²⁰ The New Deal regulatory-welfare state had never really surmounted the constraints of the American political culture and political system. The "military industrial complex" had been developing at least since World War I. Businessmen had taken important parts in New Deal economic agencies — and in opposition to the New Deal. And if the liberal conversion to Keynesianism had begun before the war, so had the realization of some influential businessmen that fiscal policy was central to the performance of the economy.

What then does investigation of the political system reveal about the domestic impact of World War II and the shaping of postwar America? To a large extent, the story is one of continuity in which major patterns of postwar politics, policy, and political economy antedated the war. Though eroded at the margins and more vulnerable in the new age of affluence and global power, the Roosevelt coalition and the New Deal remained essentially intact, the twin foci of the nation's politics and domestic policymaking, well into the postwar era. Building in part upon the new capacity of the federal government under the New Deal, the political economy of wartime and postwar America reflected the long-term development of the organizational society and the countervailing powers of the mixed economy of modern American capitalism. Long-standing ideological and systemic constraints, asserted again in the late 1930s and represented by the conservative coalition in Congress, continued until briefly in the 1960s to stymie efforts to expand the liberal state.

But this is scarcely to gainsay the impact of World War II on postwar politics and government. Though still the majority party, Democrats could not dominate politics, as the 1946 election and then the 1952 election demonstrated. Politics and policy veered in more conservative directions, and policymaking reflected not only the altered dynamics of power and the new significance of fiscal policy but also changing priorities brought on by prosperity and national security concerns. The postwar liberal agen-

da — emphasizing full-employment prosperity and increasingly, partly because of the war, civil rights — was different in significant ways from the 1930s. The federal government was larger and more powerful than it had been before 1940, as were big business, big farming, and big labor. And World War II had such diverse and sometimes diffuse effects on American politics as increasing the size and strategic importance of the non-Southern black vote²¹ and propelling the GI generation to political activism and ultimately national leadership. Postwar politics were not simply a reprise of pre-war politics, though that was because of postwar as well as wartime events.

Above all, perhaps, the political history of wartime America underlines the complexity of the past and of historical interpretation. Both change and continuity, often intertwined, marked homefront and postwar America, and where one places the balance might depend as much upon the historian as upon the history. Inextricably connected though it surely was to other aspects of wartime American life and culture, moreover, the political system made up only part of the "patchwork quilt" of the American homefront. But surely the story of wartime politics suggests the need for caution in embracing the watershed thesis and for care in attempting to sort out and synthesize the complicated and often ambiguous effects of the Second World War on American life.

1. Roy Hoopes, *Americans Remember the Home Front: An Oral Narrative* (New York, 1977), 21, 79.

2. *Life*, June 5, 1995, 12, *passim*.

3. The watershed issue is explored in Allan M. Winkler, *Home Front U.S.A.: America During World War II* (Arlington Heights, IL, 1986) and John W. Jeffries, *Wartime America: The World War II Homefront* (Chicago, 1996). On California, see essays in "Special Issue: Fortress California at War," *Pacific Historical Review*, 63 (August 1994); on wartime prosperity, see Robert Higgs, "Wartime Prosperity? A Reassessment of the U.S. Economy in the 1940s," *Journal of Economic History*, 52 (March 1992): 41-60. Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons, eds., *The Home-Front War: World War II and American Society* (Westport, CT, 1995) provides a comprehensive bibliography of the burgeoning literature on the World War II home front.

4. See, for example: Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York, 1989); Richard Polenberg, "The Good War? A Reappraisal of How World War II



Affected American Society," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 100 (July 1992): 295-322; Michael S.S. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (Baltimore, 1994); Roger Daniels, "Bad News from the Good War: Democracy at Home During World War II," in O'Brien and Parsons, eds., *Home-Front War*, 157-172. Howard Zinn provided an early alternative to the idea of the Good War in *Postwar America: 1945-1971* (Indianapolis, IN, 1973), as did John Morton Blum in a more understated way in *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture During World War II* (New York, 1976).

5. Roger W. Lotchin and Martin Schiesl, "Introduction," *Pacific Historical Review*, 63 (August 1994): 283; Kenneth Paul O'Brien and Lynn Hudson Parsons, "Introduction: The Home-Front War," in O'Brien and Parsons, eds., *Home-Front War*, p. 9.

6. On this issue, see, for example, Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State: The Military Foundations of Modern Politics* (New York, 1994) and Arthur A. Stein, *The Nation at War* (Baltimore, 1980). Bartholomew Sparrow makes a strong case for the large impact of World War II on the American state in *From the Outside In: World War II and the American State* (Princeton, NJ, 1996).

7. On the politics of 1940, see Herbert S. Parmet and Marie B. Hecht, *Never Again: A President Runs for a Third Term* (New York, 1968); John W. Jeffries, *Testing the Roosevelt Coalition: Connecticut Society and Politics in the Era of World War II* (Knoxville, TN, 1979) 51-92; Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* 3rd. rev. ed. (New York, 1965) esp. 63-68; V.O. Key, Jr., *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-1960* (Cambridge, MA, 1966); Paul F. Lazarsfeld, et al., *The People's Choice* 3rd. ed. (New York,

1968); Robert E. Burke, "Election of 1940" in Arthur M. Schlesinger, ed., *History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968*, vol. IV (New York, 1971), pp. 2917-3006.

8. On the 1942 election, see Jeffries, *Testing the Roosevelt Coalition*, 93-141, and Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-45* (Philadelphia, 1972), 184-92.

9. On wartime public opinion, see the superb study by Jerome S. Bruner, *Mandate from the People* (New York, 1944) and the invaluable compendium of opinion surveys ed. by Hadley Cantril, *Gauging Public Opinion, 1935-1946* (Princeton, NJ, 1951).

10. On the politics of 1944, see Blum, *V Was for Victory*, pp. 255-300; Polenberg, *War and Society*, pp. 199-214; Jeffries, *Testing the Roosevelt Coalition*, pp. 142-205; Key, *Responsible Electorate*, *passim*; Michael J. Anderson, "The Presidential Election of 1944," (Ph.D. diss, University of Cincinnati, 1990).

11. Leon Friedman, "Election of 1944," in Schlesinger, ed., *American Presidential Elections*, p. 3037.

12. On 1948 and postwar politics, see especially Lubell, *Future of American Politics*.

13. Angus Campbell, et al., *The American Voter* (New York, 1960); Everett C. Ladd, Jr., with Charles D. Hadley, *Transformations of the American Party System: Political Coalitions from the New Deal to the 1970s* 2nd rev. ed. (New York, 1978); Key, *Responsible Electorate*; James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C., 1983).

14. See Blum, *V Was for Victory*, pp. 221-54; Polenberg *War and Society*, pp. 73-98, 154-83; Richard N. Chapman, *Contours of*

Public Policy, 1939-1945 (New York, 1981); Roland Young, *Congressional Politics in the Second World War* (New York, 1956); John W. Jeffries, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the 'America of Tomorrow'," in David M. Kennedy and Michael E. Parrish, eds., *Power and Responsibility: Case Studies in American Leadership* (San Diego, 1986), pp. 29-66; David Brody, "The New Deal and World War II," in John Braeman et al., eds., *The New Deal, I* (Columbus, OH, 1975) 267-309; Edwin Amenta and Theda Skocpol, "Redefining the New Deal: World War II and the Development of Social Provision in the United States," in Margaret Weir, et al., *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), pp. 81-122; Davis R.B. Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses: Politics and Veterans During World War II* (New York, 1969).

15. Barry D. Karl, *The Uneasy State: The United States from 1915 to 1945* (Chicago, 1983); James T. Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal* (Lexington, KY, 1967); James Holt, "The New Deal and the American Anti-Statist Tradition," in John Braeman, et al., eds., *The New Deal, I*, 27-49; David L. Porter, *Congress and the Waning of the New Deal* (Port Washington, NY, 1980).

16. For the redirection of American liberalism, see Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York, 1995), and John W. Jeffries, "The 'New' New Deal: FDR and American Liberalism, 1937-1945," *Political Science Quarterly* (Fall 1990): pp. 397-418.

17. Harold G. Vatter, *The U.S. Economy in World War II* (New York, 1985); Peter Fearon, *War, Prosperity, and Depression: The U.S. Economy, 1917-45* (Lawrence, KN, 1987), pp. 261-90; Stein, *Nation at War*; Sparrow, *From the Outside In*; *The Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present* (Stamford, CT, 1965), pp. 139, 710-715.

18. Gerald D. Nash, *The Crucial Era: The Great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945*, 2nd. ed. (New York, 1992), 142, 151.

19. Bruce Catton, *The War Lords of Washington* (New York, 1948); Paul A. C. Koistinen, *The Military Industrial Complex: A Historical Perspective* (New York, 1980); Gregory Hooks, *Forging the Military-Industrial Complex: World War II's Battle of the Potomac* (Urbana, IL, 1991); Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (New York, 1982); Howell John Harris, *The Right to Manage: Industrial Relations Policies of American Business in the 1940s* (Madison, WI, 1982); Stephen Kemp Bailey, *Congress Makes a Law: The Story Behind the Employment Act of 1946* (New York, 1950); Robert M. Collins, *The Business Response to Keynes, 1929-1954* (New York, 1981).

20. In his classic account of the modern American political economy published not long after World War II, John Kenneth Galbraith did not assign the war a major role in creating the new American capitalism of countervailing powers. In his view, the Depression and the New Deal were much more important, though trends could be traced back decades earlier. Galbraith's account dovetails nicely with the "organizational" historians who have stressed the importance of large, centralized, bureaucratic organizations in modern America — and who would agree that the Second World War did not create but rather confirmed and crystallized the organizational society, reinforcing trends and patterns underway for a half-century and more and accelerated in the New Deal years. See Galbraith, *American Capitalism: The Concept of Countervailing Power* (Boston, 1952, 1956), and Nash, *Crucial Era*.

21. Henry Lee Moon, *Balance of Power: The Negro Vote* (Garden City, NY, 1948); Richard P. Young and Jerome S. Burstein, "Federalism and the Demise of Prescriptive Racism in the United States," *Studies in American Political Development*, 9 (Spring 1995): esp. 22-32.



The federal government's success in mobilizing the country for war strengthened millions of Americans' faith in the role of big government in dealing with national problems. (CHS Photograph Collection)