

Japanese Internment During World War II

Not all Americans were included in the spirit of unity. The attack on Pearl Harbor also spread fear across America. The federal government began drafting policies aimed toward immigrants and aliens from the Axis nations. Aliens are foreign citizens living in the United States. All resident "enemy aliens" were required to register with the government, submit to fingerprinting, and list their organizational affiliations.

Executive Order 9066 Originally, laws made no distinction among nationalities. German, Italian, and Japanese aliens were subject to arrest or deportation if deemed dangerous to national security. Some 11,000 German immigrants and hundreds of Italian immigrants were held in camps; others faced curfews or travel restrictions. Federal orders also forced all three groups to vacate the West Coast temporarily in the winter of 1942. Once public fears subsided, FDR removed Germans and Italians from the enemy aliens list.

Japanese aliens and Japanese American citizens received no such respite. Believing people of Japanese ancestry to be inherently disloyal, West Coast leaders pressed FDR to address the "threat." In February 1942, the President issued Executive Order 9066, designating certain areas as war zones from which anyone might be removed for any reason.

By September, the government evacuated more than 100,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast. Evacuees—including both Issei, Japanese immigrants, and Nisei, native-born American citizens of Japanese descent—were forced to sell their property at a loss and allowed to take only necessary items.

Why did Japanese Americans generally face harsher treatment than Italian or German Americans? Several factors help explain the difference: racism, the smaller numbers of Japanese Americans, their lack of political clout, and their relative isolation from other Americans. In Hawaii, where Japanese Americans comprised one third of a multiracial society, they escaped a similar fate.

Japanese Americans Are Interned The first orders stipulated only that Japanese Americans must leave designated military zones, but leaders in interior states objected. The governor of Arizona insisted his state did not want to become a "dumping ground for enemy aliens." The War Department then initiated a policy of **internment**, or temporary imprisonment of members of a specific group. Japanese American men, women, and children were transported to camps

NOTICE TO ALIENS OF ENEMY NATIONALITIES

★ The United States Government requires all aliens of German, Italian, or Japanese nationality to apply at post offices nearest to their place of residence for a Certificate of Identification. Applications must be filed between the period February 9 through February 28, 1942. Go to your postmaster today for printed directions.

EARL G. HARRISON,
Special Assistant to the Attorney General.

FRANCIS BIDDLE,
Attorney General.

AVVISO

Il Governo degli Stati Uniti ordina a tutti gli stranieri di nazionalità Tedesca, Italiana e Giapponese di fare richiesta all' Ufficio Postale più prossimo al loro luogo di residenza per ottenere un Certificato d'Identità. Le richieste devono essere fatte entro il periodo che decorre tra il 9 Febbraio e il 28 Febbraio, 1942.

Andate oggi dal vostro Capo d'Ufficio Postale (Postmaster) per ricevere le istruzioni scritte.

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>> All German, Italian, and Japanese citizens in the United States had to register with the U.S. government. **Identify Supporting Details** Why was this notice printed in four languages?



>> This family from Washington state was sent to an internment camp in California. **Express Problems Clearly** What constitutional issues were raised by these evacuations?

Interactive Gallery



>> The Japanese American owner of this store had to sell his goods quickly and at a loss before he relocated. Few Japanese Americans were able to recover their property after the war.



>> Veterans of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team gather in Honolulu for the seventieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor. The group had been awarded the Congressional Gold Medal the month before.

Jerome. American... remained in the camps for the duration of the war... Families huddled into stark one-room shacks... single people were herded into drafty bunkhouses... Camp schools were hopelessly underfunded. Interns often suffered from food shortages and substantial medical care. The psychological effects could be as severe.

The resettlement center is actually a jail—armed guards in towers with spotlights and deadly tommy guns, fifteen feet of barbed-wire fences, everyone confined to quarters at nine... . . .

What really hurts [is being called] 'Japs.' 'Japs' are the guys we are fighting.

—Ted Nakashima, *The New Republic*, June 5, 1942

Japanese Americans Fight for Rights Since many of those interned in the camps were American citizens, the federal government's policy of internment raised constitutional issues. Some Japanese Americans went to court to seek their rights. In two cases, *Hirabayashi v. United States* (1943) and *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), the Supreme Court upheld the government's wartime internment policy. Not until 1988 did the government offer an apology and \$20,000 payments to surviving internees.

Japanese Americans also faced another form of discrimination. At first, they were not accepted into the armed forces. But after the government lifted the ban in early 1943, many eagerly enlisted. The all-Nisei **442nd Regimental Combat Team** fought in the Italian campaign and became the most decorated military unit in American history.

The 442nd helped counter the notion that Japanese Americans were not loyal citizens.

? CONSTRUCT Why were Japanese Americans interned during World War II?

Increased Opportunities in Employment

All over the United States, American industry quickly converted to war production to meet the nation's military needs. As the economic effects of World War II brought the Great Depression to an end, the millions of unemployed men who had been such a common sight during the 1930s seemed to vanish overnight. They either joined the military, worked to produce food for the world on the nation's rich farms, or labored in factories producing war materiel. Soon, factories needed to hire workers outside of their usual pool of mostly white men. To keep production going, more women and more African Americans found opportunity in defense industries, although they still faced significant obstacles to gaining and succeeding in those jobs.

Women Work in Defense Industries Government and industry launched an all-out publicity campaign urging women to do their part to meet wartime production quotas. The image of a strong, determined female worker, hair tucked under a kerchief, graced countless magazines and posters. The name "Rosie the Riveter" was first used in a 1942 song, and several real-life Rosies won national publicity. But "Rosie" was really a symbol for an army of women who made artillery shells, sewed uniforms, and welded planes.

Years later, one of them spoke about the contribution that women had made:

Our war effort . . . it was a good success and a good thing that we did it. It's a good thing that the women went in. It's a good thing that they showed the world that they can do things too. 'Oh, it's dirty work.' Well, making a pie can be dirty work.

—Meda Montana Hallyburton Brendall, Veterans History Project, Library of Congress

Despite the government's encouragement, there were still obstacles to women working in war industry. They were generally paid less than men for the same or similar work. Some new workers also faced hostility in their new workplaces. Still, by the end of the war, women made up more than one third of the wartime workforce.

A woman working outside the home was nothing new, but wartime pressures created two sharp breaks from the past. Many women found jobs, especially in heavy industry, that fell outside the traditional realm of women's work. The need for labor also weakened



>> Posters like this one sought to motivate women to take jobs in the defense industry. **Evaluate Sources** How does the artist convey the message that women should work for the war effort?

the common practice that a woman quit her job once she married. Three fourths of women working in war industries were married, and 60 percent were older than 35 years.

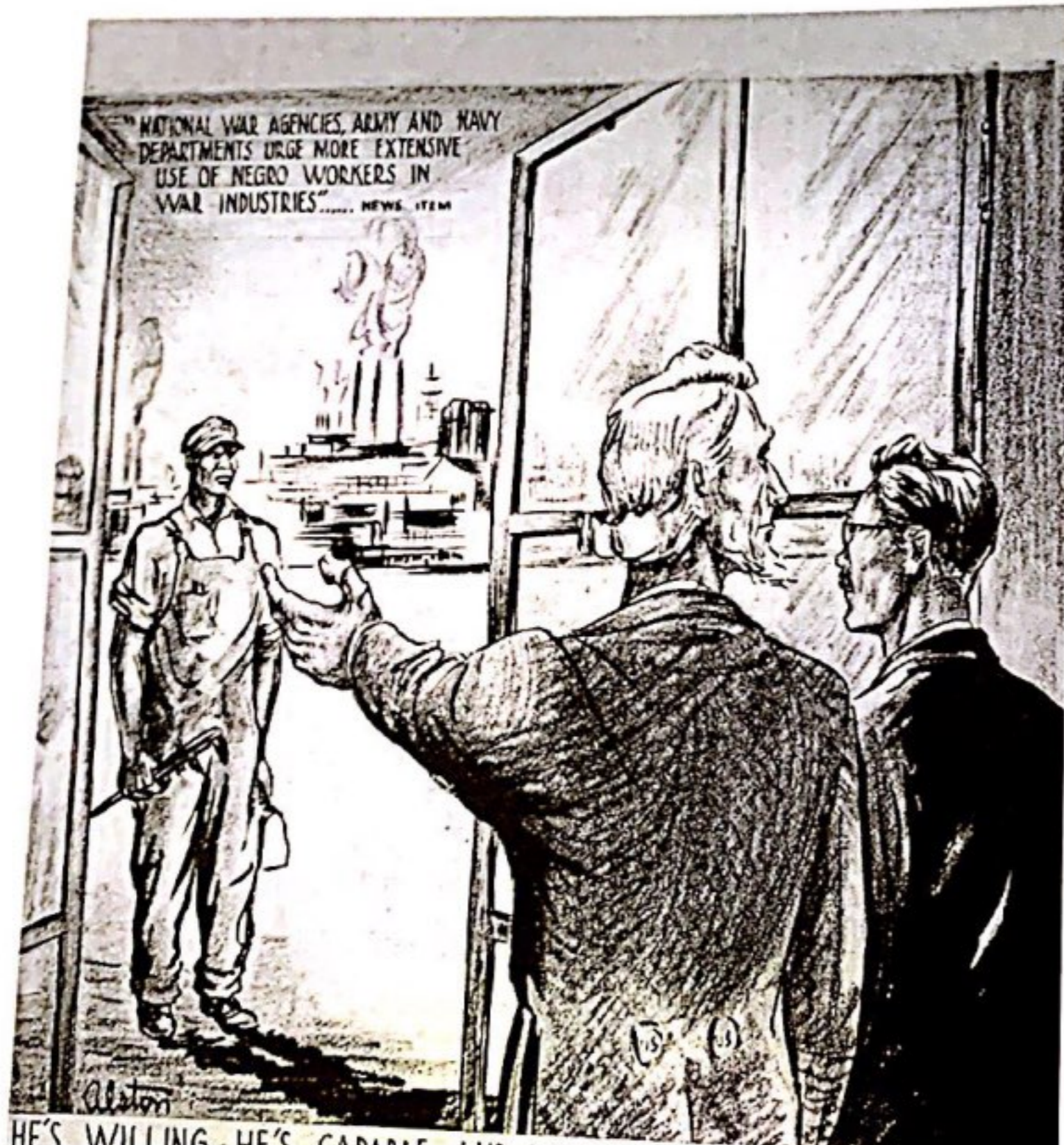
Wartime Work Changes Women's Lives Although the image of Rosie the Riveter working in a factory was widespread, women labored in both blue-collar and white-collar jobs. Most factory owners expected women to step aside once men returned home at war's end. In white-collar settings, however, the war accelerated long-term trends toward increased employment. During the 1940s, the number of women employed in secretarial and clerical work increased fivefold.

With fathers in the military and mothers in the workplace, children's lives began to change. The federal government spent \$50 million building day-care centers for children of working mothers. Still, only about 130,000 kids ended up in day-care centers and most were not filled to capacity. Many parents preferred to leave their children in the care of neighbors or relatives.

Wartime work helped women move closer to achieving the American Dream, gaining success through hard work and initiative. They benefited from the experience in several ways. They earned paychecks, some for the first time, formed new and



>> A. Philip Randolph was a leader in the campaign for civil rights for African Americans for decades. He was one of the key voices behind the influential March on Washington in 1963.



HE'S WILLING. HE'S CAPABLE AND WE NEED HIM - USE HIM!!

>> This cartoon is from 1943, two years after Executive Order 8802. **Analyze Political Cartoons** Who is the figure in the middle? Why do you think this cartoon was necessary in 1943?

different relationships, which gained organizational experience. "I decided that if I could learn to work like a man," noted one laborer, "I could do anything it took to make a living." The confidence and knowledge women developed enriched their postwar experiences and helped create opportunities for their daughters in the years ahead.

African Americans Seek Employment Opportunities

Many African American leaders hoped that the war might provide jobs and alleviate their difficult economic situations. However, few found meaningful employment with national defense employers before Pearl Harbor. Out of 100,000 Americans working in the aircraft industry in 1940, for example, only 200 were African Americans. Even jobs provided by the government and military remained segregated.

African American leaders stressed the need for a "Double V" campaign—victory against fascism abroad and victory against discrimination at home. The charismatic and savvy labor leader **A. Philip Randolph** asserted that African Americans would no longer accept second-class citizenship. "We loyal Negro American citizens demand the right to work and fight for our country," he proclaimed.

In June 1941, Randolph presented President Roosevelt a list of demands, including the end of discriminatory practices in government-funded training, employment, and the armed services. He also took steps to organize a massive protest march on Washington, D.C.

Roosevelt Issues Executive Order 8802

FDR had hoped to put civil rights reform on the back burner while war raged in Europe and Asia. But Randolph persisted in his plans. With the United States nearing involvement in the war, Roosevelt feared that the sight of a huge protest march on the nation's capital would undermine unity and fuel enemy propaganda. So, under pressure, he issued **Executive Order 8802**. This measure assured fair hiring practices in any job funded with government money and established the Fair Employment Practices Committee to enforce these requirements. By 1944, nearly 2 million African Americans worked in defense industries, although racist practices were still common.

Such victories encouraged African Americans to join organizations dedicated to promoting equal rights. The NAACP grew to 500,000 members. In 1942, civil rights leaders founded the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), an organization that sought to apply nonviolent protest as a means of fighting segregation. Although segregation still prevailed in the military, the South, and other parts of the nation, wartime developments