

### The impact of the war on Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians

#### Japanese Americans

- USA concerned about Japanese espionage, arrested 3000 shortly after Pearl Harbor attack
- February 1942: Executive Order 9066 – Japanese Americans interned
- About 100,000 interned; lost property and most of belongings
- Yet, 30,000 Japanese served in the US Army
- December 1944: slow release of internees began

#### Japanese Canadians

- Japanese Canadians moved from the west coast areas
- Interned – had to work to pay for their upkeep
- Property sold; bank accounts appropriated
- 6000 deported after the war

#### SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The impact of the war on Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians

## 2 The impact of the war on other minority groups

**Key question:** How did the war affect other minority groups?

Such was the power of the USA that it was able to determine how South American countries dealt with their own Japanese immigrants, especially in Peru.

### Japanese citizens in South America

What was the situation like for those of Japanese ancestry in South America?

#### The treatment of Japanese Peruvians

At the time of Pearl Harbor, there were about 26,000 people of Japanese descent living in Peru. The USA had been concerned about the possibility of Japanese spies in Latin America before 1941 and moved quickly after Pearl Harbor to ask neighbouring governments to help prevent possible espionage and sabotage.

The US State Department made an agreement with Peru about potential troublemakers and 1800 Japanese Peruvians were arrested and sent to internment camps in the USA. The camps were run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. On internment, the Japanese Peruvians had their passports confiscated and became stateless people.

The USA also asked Peru to prevent Japanese officials from leaving the country.

As in the USA and Canada, Japanese Peruvians lost their property and other belongings. Only 79 internees returned to Peru at the end of the war.

#### The treatment of Japanese Brazilians

Brazil entered the Second World War in August 1942. At the time there were about 200,000 Japanese Brazilians. As soon as war was declared, there were a number of punitive restrictions placed on the Japanese community. Japanese Brazilians could not travel the country without permission and were not allowed to drive cars, and drivers employed by Japanese Brazilians had to have permission from the police.

In July 1943, in a move similar to that of the Canadian government, large numbers of Japanese (and German) immigrants were removed from the Brazilian coast.

Both Japanese Peruvians and Japanese Brazilians suffered restrictions in their movement and lives during the war, and their civil rights were severely infringed.

### Native Americans

#### The position of Native Americans in society

The war had a significant impact on **Native American** people in the USA. They played their part in the war by joining in combat and the general war effort. This involvement began to lead to a greater demand for equal rights.

There were about 350,000 Native Americans living in the USA at the beginning of the Second World War. Most lived on **tribal reservations**. It was as late as 1924 that most Native Americans had finally been granted US citizenship. Life on the reservations had been difficult. Native Americans were marginalized and suffered poverty, poor education and poor health provision. Nevertheless, when war was declared in 1941, they volunteered for military service on a large scale.

#### The participation of Native Americans in the war

At the beginning of the conflict, there were some 5000 Native Americans serving in the US military and by the end a further 40,000 had enlisted. The number involved was more than ten per cent of the Native American population. However, some who tried to enlist were rejected because they were unfit due to years of poverty, illiteracy and ill health.

One important contribution to the military was the use of 400 members of the Navajo tribe as code talkers, serving in all six Marine divisions, Marine Raider battalions and Marine parachute units. They transmitted coded messages by telephone and radio in their native language, a code that the Japanese never broke.

How did the war affect the Native Americans?

#### KEY TERM

**Native Americans** The indigenous people of the USA.

**Tribal reservations** Areas of land managed by Native American tribes.

In addition, several hundred Native American women served as WACS, WAVES, and in the Army Nurse Corps (see page 141).

### The impact of the war

For many Native Americans, the income from a permanent post in the military and work in the war industries meant that their standard of living dramatically improved. By 1944, the annual income of the average Native American was two and a half times greater than that of 1940. During the war, leaders of various tribes came together and formed the National Congress of American Indians, which sought to establish equal rights in areas such as education and health.

At the end of the war, many Native Americans who had served in the war moved to live in urban America; on their return to the reservations, some began to campaign for improved rights.

How did the war affect people of Hispanic origin?

## Hispanic Americans

### Hispanic migrants on the west coast of America

There was racial tension during the war between whites and **Hispanic Americans**, the descendants of Mexican migrants and who had settled in the USA, mainly in California, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There were also issues with those who came to work in the USA during the war under the Bracero Agreement (see below).

Southern California became a place of conflict in 1942 and 1943. In 1942, there were clashes between members of the armed forces and members of Mexican youth gangs. The area between San Diego and Los Angeles had several military bases and at weekends, as many as 50,000 servicemen could be found in Los Angeles. The servicemen saw the Hispanic Americans as delinquents who spoke and dressed differently, and challenged US values and customs.

The young Hispanics had their own fashion uniform called the **zoot suit**, although many young whites also wore these clothes. The intermittent clashes between the zoot suiters and members of the armed services broke out into continued rioting in June 1943. Police only arrested zoot suiters even though sailors had been known to start the trouble. The mayor of Los Angeles declared the city off limits to US sailors and gradually the rioting subsided.

#### SOURCE F

**Excerpt from 'Strong measures must be taken against rioting' in the Los Angeles Times, 9 June 1943, page 4 (from [http://invention.smithsonian.org/centerpieces/whole\\_cloth/u7sf/u7materials/cosgrove.html](http://invention.smithsonian.org/centerpieces/whole_cloth/u7sf/u7materials/cosgrove.html)).**

*To preserve the peace and good name of the Los Angeles area, the strongest measures must be taken jointly by the police, the Sheriff's office and Army and Navy authorities, to prevent any further outbreaks of 'zoot suit' rioting. While members of the armed forces received considerable provocation at the hands of*

*the unidentified miscreants, such a situation cannot be cured by indiscriminate assault on every youth wearing a particular type of costume. It would not do, for a large number of reasons, to let the impression circulate in South America that persons of Spanish-American ancestry were being singled out for mistreatment in Southern California. And the incidents here were capable of being exaggerated to give that impression.*

The Governor of California ordered the creation of a citizens' committee to investigate the cause of the riots. In 1943, the committee issued its report; it determined racism to be a central cause of the riots. At the same time, the mayor of Los Angeles said that the riots were caused by juvenile delinquents and by white southerners, and that racial prejudice was not a factor.

Rioting was just one of the ways in which the war made an impact on Hispanic Americans. Employment was also affected.

### Mexican migrant workers

There had been substantial emigration from Mexico to the USA in the early twentieth century as people came to look for work in the border states of California and Texas. They had sought work mainly in agriculture and despite low wages, life in the USA was an improvement on that in Mexico. However, because of the lack of work during the Depression of the 1930s, immigration had stopped and almost 500,000 returned to Mexico. Nevertheless, a 1940 census indicated that there were almost 400,000 people who had been born in Mexico living in the USA. They were called *chicanos* in a derogatory manner by white Americans.

When the USA became involved in the war, farmers soon began to complain that there was a shortage of labour as a result of workers joining the armed forces. In June 1942, the USA and Mexico signed the Bracero Agreement (which stood until 1964) by which Mexican citizens were allowed to work temporarily in the USA. The agreement meant that Mexican workers could be employed in agriculture and on the railroads. It was hoped that this emergency measure would stem the labour shortage. One key point of the agreement stated that Mexicans working in the USA would not experience discriminatory acts of any kind (Executive Order 8802).

Despite this, the Bracero workers did experience discrimination. Many had to long work hours and received poor pay, and lived in run-down, unsanitary housing. Mexican workers went on strike in California because of the low pay and farmers eventually agreed to increase wages.

The Bracero Agreement had an unintended consequence. Prospective workers brought their families with them and this increased pressure on local areas for housing, education and hospitals. By the end of the war, more than 100,000 Braceros were working in the USA and many more had worked temporarily during 1942–5 and returned to Mexico.

#### KEY TERM

#### Hispanic American

A person of Spanish ancestry, particularly Latin American, living in the USA.

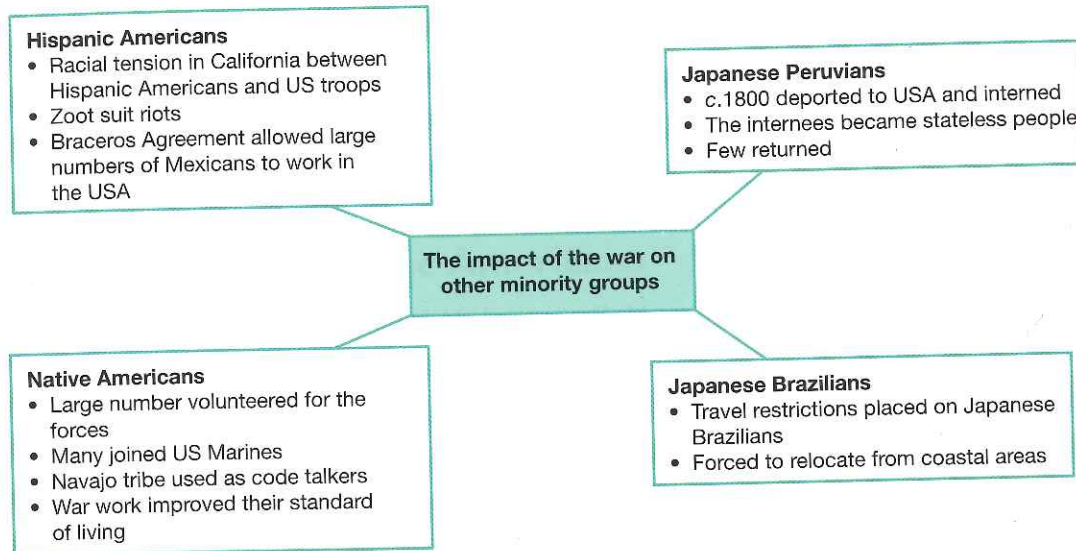
**Zoot suit** A suit with a long jacket that reached to the fingertips, heavily padded shoulders, pleated trousers tapered at the turn-ups and long key chains, occasionally with a wide-brimmed hat.



Look at Source F, why was there concern about the treatment of those of Spanish American ancestry?

### Conclusion

The war had an impact on several ethnic groups, including Japanese Peruvians, Japanese Brazilians, Hispanic Americans and Mexicans. Other groups, such as women and African Americans, were also severely affected by the war.



#### SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The impact of the war on other minority groups

## 3 The impact of the war on women

**Key question:** How did the position of women change during the war?

This section will look at the changing employment patterns of women during the war and how they were able to work in the armed services.

How did the role of women in work change?

### The impact of the war on female employment

During the 1940s, the traditional role of a woman was still seen as a wife and mother. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the Second World War, there were about 13 million female workers and at the height of the war in 1944, this figure had increased to 19 million. Many did take on the jobs of men but many employers and male workers considered them inferior colleagues.

Eleanor Roosevelt, the First Lady, was a powerful spokeswoman for female workers during the war.

#### SOURCE G

An excerpt from an article by Eleanor Roosevelt published in the *Reader's Digest* in January 1944.

*Some of the married women workers are not doing their best because we haven't taken into consideration their personal problems. Their homes must still go on. Their children must be cared for. Day nurseries are now being established, but they are not always properly organized. Sometimes they are not located conveniently for the mothers – I was told of one nursery which was five blocks from a bus stop, which meant that a woman had to walk 20 blocks every day. To a tired woman carrying a child, those blocks seem very long.*

What does Source G suggest about the treatment of women during the war?

It is clear that women did make a tremendous contribution to the war but there were constant attempts to trivialize their role by the press, male soldiers and those who thought that a woman's place was in the home.

#### SOURCE H

US servicewomen photographed in 1944, who were in a contest to find the most attractive woman in the US armed forces.



How useful is Source H as evidence of attitudes towards women during the war?

### Women and the war effort

Many new jobs during the war were in traditionally 'male' occupations such as the shipyards, aircraft factories and munitions. One in three aircraft workers and half of those working in electronics and munitions were women. Indeed, the pay in munitions work could be double that normally paid to women in 'female' occupations.

In 1942, a poll showed that 60 per cent of Americans were in favour of women helping with the war industries, yet there was a degree of ambivalence to the employment of women throughout the war.

## SOURCE I

**Excerpt from an interview with a female worker at the Douglas Aircraft factory in Los Angeles. Quoted from *Rosie the Riveter Revisited*, by Sherna Gluck, published by Twayne, USA, 1987, page unknown.**

*The men really resented the women very much, and in the beginning it was a little bit rough ... The men that you worked with, after a while, they realized that it was essential that the women worked there. Because there wasn't enough men and the women were doing a pretty good job, the resentment eased. However, I always felt that they thought it wasn't your place to be there.*

### Wartime changes

Some US states made equal pay between men and women (for the same role) compulsory, while others tried to protect women from workplace discrimination. However, racial discrimination continued, for instance African American women were, by and large, almost always the last to be hired. There were also many 'hate strikes' such as the ones at the Packard car factory in Detroit as a result of the employment of African American women.

At the end of the war, the majority of women willingly gave up their wartime jobs and returned to their traditional pre-1941 'female' roles. In 1945, despite some progress in the position of women, there were still problems:

- They were generally excluded from the top, well-paid jobs.
- On average, women earned 50–60 per cent of the wage that men earned for doing the same job. In 1944, the average weekly wage for working women was \$31.21 and for men it was \$56.65.
- A woman could still be dismissed from her job when she married.

How did women serve the USA in the armed forces?

### The role of women in the US military during the war

By 1945, the numbers of women serving in the various forces were as follows:

- army: 140,000
- navy: 100,000
- marines: 23,000
- coastguard: 13,000
- air force: 1000
- army and navy nurse corps: 74,000.

### The army

The Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) was set up in 1941, but there was antipathy from senior members of the army who did not want to accept women directly into its ranks. The WAAC allowed women to contribute to the US war effort directly by carrying out non-combatant military jobs for which they were already trained, such as clerical work. Thus, to some degree,

this perpetuated the female employment stereotype and did not create a situation for barriers to be removed or broken.

The Women's Army Corps (WAC) was formed in 1943 and most WAACS transferred across. The creation of the corps was a clear recognition of the work that women had carried out. From a position of being in groups which assisted the army when and where necessary, soldiers of the WACs were now an integral part of the army.

However, there was no improvement in the poor esteem in which the women were held, not only by their male counterparts, but also by much of US society in general. WACs were regularly accused of being promiscuous, something which deterred many women from joining up.

### The navy

In 1942, Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (or WAVES) became a female-only division of the US Navy. The WAVES could not serve aboard ships that went into combat and did not serve in any theatres of war. They were instead involved in clerical, medical, communications, intelligence and technical work. African American women were not accepted into the WAVES until 1944.

### The air force

The US Army Air Force (USAAF) established the Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) to teach women to fly. At the same time, the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron (WAFS) was set up in September 1942 to fly aircraft within the USA. Both of these merged to become the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs).

More than 25,000 women applied to join the WASPs in 1943. Almost 2000 were accepted into WASP training and more than 1000 graduated. The WASP was never a full part of the USAAF, and those who served as WASPs were considered civil service employees. The WASPs were disbanded in December 1944.

### Army nurse corps

Army nurses received little training, except in general military matters. Members of the army nurse corps served in theatres all over the world. The importance of nurses can be seen in the changing status of the profession. In June 1944, the army granted its nurses **officers' commissions** and full retirement privileges, dependants' allowances, and significantly, equal pay.

The army nurse corps accepted only a small number of African American nurses during the Second World War – there were only 479 African American nurses serving when the war ended. The army authorities argued that the appointment of African American nurses was limited because they were only allowed to care for black troops in black wards or hospitals.

#### KEY TERM

##### Officers' commission

Being granted the position of an officer.

### Impact of the war on women

#### Role in the war

- Female workforce grew from 13 million to 19 million
- Worked in all of the forces: army (WACS), navy (WAVES), air force (WASPs), coastguard, marines
- Nurse corps (few African American women joined)
- Large numbers worked in the munitions industry
- Took on traditional male roles: welders, lathe operators

#### Issues for women in the war

- Male resentment continued
- Unequal pay
- Hate strikes
- Poor facilities for women with children

#### SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The impact of the war on women

## 4 The impact of the war on African Americans

**Key question:** How did the war change the position of African Americans?

This section will consider the changing position of African Americans and their contribution to the war both at home and abroad. Before the Second World War, African Americans experienced segregation and discrimination in all walks of life. When war broke out, there was increased optimism that things would change. After all, if the USA was fighting fascism and racism, how could it continue to discriminate and deny civil rights to large sections of its own population?

How did the war change employment for African Americans?

### Employment and African Americans

In 1940, there were 12.9 million African Americans in the USA. The census of that year showed that there were almost 5.4 million employed, of whom 3.5 million were male. The vast majority of those employed had menial jobs which were low paid. The average annual wage was \$537 for men in 1939 and \$331 for women. Both earned less than half that of their white counterparts. When the war broke out in Europe, unemployment among whites was 14 per cent and as war-related industries began to seek workers, whites were taken on immediately. Unemployed African Americans did not benefit from this initial boom.

A survey conducted by the US Employment Office in 1940 among the defence industries indicated that more than half would not employ African Americans. In some cases, it was not simply the companies' owners who were propounding discrimination, it was their workers. The owners did not wish to fall foul of their employees.

#### SOURCE J

**Excerpt quoting the president of the North American Aviation Company in 1942 from Mr. Black Labor, by D. Davis, published by E.P. Dutton, USA, 1972, page unknown.**

*While we are in complete sympathy with the Negro, it is against company policy to employ them as aircraft workers or mechanics, regardless of their training, but there will be some jobs as janitors for Negroes.*

What does Source J tell you about attitudes to African American workers at the beginning of the war?

### The March on Washington Movement

A. Philip Randolph, one of the most prominent leading African American activists and trade unionists, was appalled at the discrimination not only in the war industries but also in the US armed forces. Randolph called for immediate action and sought to shame the government into action and bring an end to the inequality. He was unwilling to follow the legal and political route that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) followed (see page 149); he wanted **direct action** and organized the March on Washington Movement. He used the slogan 'We loyal Americans demand the right to work and fight for our country' and proposed a demonstration, a mass march on Washington, DC, together with a possible strike to try to make the government bring an end to discrimination in the workplace.

It was expected that the march would include up to 100,000 demonstrators and, if this were publicized across the world, then it could do little to sustain the USA's image of the upholder of liberty and democracy.

Roosevelt was concerned that the march would discredit and embarrass not only the government, but the USA as a whole. Senior government members and Eleanor Roosevelt were sent to meet Randolph in an attempt to persuade him to call off the march. Even though President Roosevelt openly condemned job discrimination, Randolph refused. Eventually they came to a compromise. Randolph called off the march and Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 and set up the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to prevent discrimination at work.

However, Randolph did not completely disband the March on Washington Movement. He continued to encourage African Americans to go on protest rallies to ensure that the issue of discrimination remained firmly in the public view. He also encouraged acts of **civil disobedience** to show opposition to laws which permitted unfair and unequal treatment.

#### KEY TERM

**Direct action** The use of acts, such as strikes, marches and demonstrations, to achieve a political or social end.

**Civil disobedience** A non-violent way of protesting in order to achieve political goals.

**SOURCE K****President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, 25 June 1941.**

1. *All departments and agencies of the Government of the United States concerned with vocational and training programs for defense production shall take special measures appropriate to assure that such programs are administered without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin.*
2. *All contracting agencies of the Government of the United States shall include in all defense contracts hereafter negotiated by them a provision obligating the contractor not to discriminate against any worker because of race, creed, color, or national origin.*

**Fair Employment Practices Commission**

As a result of Executive Order 8802, the FEPC was set up. Paragraph 3 of order 8802 permitted the FEPC to investigate complaints and take action against alleged employment discrimination. As jobs in the defence industries increased, many African Americans migrated from the south in search of employment. They were joined by those in the north who sought better paid jobs. However, when African Americans were hired for jobs most were still given menial posts.

A standard argument in the defence industry was that if African Americans were hired as caretakers or similar, employers would be forced to integrate their workforce. This would not only be expensive but would also be opposed by large numbers of white workers.

By 1943, the FEPC had become aware of widespread discrimination within a number of companies. Roosevelt then issued Executive Order 9346 which gave the commission greater powers, and increased its budget to nearly half a million dollars.

**The work of the commission**

The FEPC investigated about 8000 instances of discrimination and was successful with 66 per cent of its cases in the north-east, 62 per cent in the mid-west and 55 per cent in the west. There was general failure in the south because of a lack of co-operation from employers and local organizations and only 20 per cent of cases were upheld. During the war, the committee never asked President Roosevelt to revoke any employer's contract because of employment discrimination.

By the end of the war, as a result of the FEPC's work, the number of jobs held by African Americans was at an all-time high. They accounted for eight per cent of defence-industry jobs, whereas before the war they had held only three per cent, and 200,000 were employed by the government, more than three times the number before the war. However, despite this progress, the majority of those employed in all industries still held menial jobs and their average wages was just above half that of white workers.

Why were Roosevelt's instructions in Source K important for African Americans?

Trade union involvement increased and African American membership rose from 15,000 in 1935 to 1.25 million in 1945. Members were able to fight for improved working conditions and wages.

The war also meant a broadening of opportunities for African American women. The number who worked in domestic service fell from 75 per cent to less than 45 per cent by 1945. As aviation worker Fanny Christina Hill said, 'The war made me live better. Hitler was the one that got us out of the white folks' kitchen.' Many became nurses but were only permitted to help African American soldiers (see page 141).

However, gains made in the war were small. Increased wages and improved opportunities had to be measured against similar and greater ones made by whites. Opportunities in education and employment prospects were still poor and segregation and discrimination continued. It was only when legislation was passed in the 1950s and 1960s that significant strides were made in achieving civil rights.

**SOURCE L**

**Female workers in the arms industry during the war. This photograph, which is undated but thought to be from about 1940, shows Luedell Mitchell and Lavada Cherry at the El Segundo Plant of the Douglas Aircraft Company, USA.**



Why was this photograph shown in Source L published in many US newspapers?

How did the role of African Americans in the armed forces change during the war?

## → African Americans and the armed forces

### The army

In order to win the African American vote in the 1940 presidential election, Roosevelt promised that the army would comprise the same ethnic mix of society, that is, 90 per cent white and ten per cent African American. Nevertheless, African Americans were still underrepresented by early 1942 and at the end of the war accounted for less than three per cent of all men assigned to combat duty.

The war highlighted the racism and discrimination in the armed forces. Many African Americans enlisted in what became known as the **Jim Crow army**. On occasions, African American soldiers were given inferior training, had few recreational facilities, and endured racial slurs and even serious physical mistreatment. Moreover, many white officers thought that African American soldiers were undisciplined, morally wanting, mentally deficient and even cowardly in battle.

They performed the menial non-combat tasks such as cooking, guarding prisoners, delivering supplies, and building camps and roads. They found promotion difficult and the highest rank most reached was first lieutenant. As late as the spring of 1943, only 79,000 out of a total of 504,000 black soldiers were overseas, simply because white army commanders did not want them.

General Eisenhower supported integrated combat units in the Battle of the Bulge but only because he was short of replacements for white soldiers. The 761st Tank Battalion won acclaim in the Battle of the Bulge (see pages 79–80) and received praise from General Patton, a leading US army general. The battalion's nickname was the 'Black Panthers'.

By the end of 1944, there were almost three-quarters of a million African Americans in the US Army and hundreds of officers. Many now fought in integrated combat units. However, the number of African Americans in the army never reached the planned ten per cent of 1940.

Similar to their experience in the army, African American recruits faced discrimination in the air force and navy.

### The air force

African Americans had not been allowed to enlist in the developing air force. However, in 1940, President Roosevelt ordered the air corps to recruit an all-African American flying unit. By the end of 1945 more than 600 pilots had been trained, although they were not allowed to fly in the same groups as whites. The all-African American squadron was based in Tuskegee, Alabama. It became known as the Tuskegee Airmen (332nd Fighter Group) and won great acclaim acting as fighter escorts for US bombers.

### The navy

Discrimination was worst in the navy with African American sailors given the most dangerous job of loading ammunition on ships bound for war zones. For example, in July 1944 a horrific accident occurred at Port Chicago in California when ammunition that was being loaded on to two vessels detonated, killing 323 people – most of them African American sailors. Hundreds of African American sailors went on strike the following month in protest at the dangerous working conditions. This was called the Port Chicago Mutiny and 50 sailors were arrested and imprisoned. The navy examined its treatment of African Americans in the light of events at Port Chicago and began to effect changes which would help lead to desegregation in the force in 1946.

### Marine corps

The US Marine Corps started enlisting African Americans on 1 June 1942 but before 1944 did not allow them into combat. Initially, as in the army, African American **marines** were employed as cooks, labourers and guards.

### Racial tension and the African American armed forces

There were many instances of race-related acts of violence within the USA and in the various theatres of war. There were riots at nine African American army-training camps during 1943–4, where the soldiers resented their unequal treatment, and sometimes people were killed:

- An African American soldier was shot by the Little Rock police in 1942.
- An African American soldier was killed in a race riot in Centreville, Mississippi, in 1943.
- Two African American soldiers were killed in riots in El Paso, Texas, in 1943.
- A fire at Camp Stewart, Georgia, left five injured and one dead in 1943.

The treatment of African Americans abroad, by host nations, was often far better than that given by their own country.

#### SOURCE M

**This 'prayer' appeared in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, 16 January 1943, a weekly newspaper founded in 1842 and published in Baltimore, Maryland, USA.**

Draftee's prayer  
*Dear Lord, today  
 I go to war:  
 To fight, to die  
 Tell me what for  
 Dear Lord, I'll fight,  
 I do not fear  
 Germans or Japs,  
 My fears are here.  
 America!*

#### KEY TERM

**Marines** Originally a branch of the US armed forces using the navy to deliver combined forces.

Study Source M. What is the message of this 'prayer'?



## SOURCE N

Excerpt from a letter written in April 1944 by Corporal Rupert Timmingham to the magazine *Yank* about travelling in Texas with other black soldiers. Quoted in *Citizen Soldiers*, by Stephen Ambrose, published by Simon & Schuster, UK, 1997, pages 345–6.

*We could not purchase a cup of coffee at a Texas railroad depot but the lunchroom manager said we black GIs could go on around the back to the kitchen for a sandwich and coffee. As we did, about two dozen German prisoners of war, with two American guards, came to the station. They entered the lunchroom, sat at the tables, had their meals served, talked and smoked. I stood on the outside looking on, and I could not help but ask myself why are they treated better than we are? Why are we pushed round like cattle? If we are fighting for the same thing, if we are to die for our country, then why does the Government allow such things to go on?*

On 26 July 1948, President Harry Truman signed Executive Order 9981 ending segregation in the US armed forces. This order was a clear indication to the people of the USA that the government was challenging segregation. It had come about because of the fight against fascism in Europe and the contribution of African Americans to the war effort. The fact that President Truman established a Committee on Civil Rights just after the war was another indication that the war had raised awareness of inequalities in US life.

## US navy

- Menial jobs completed by African Americans
- Mutiny at Port Chicago after explosion
- Some improvements and first service to be desegregated in 1946

## African Americans at the beginning of the war

- Discrimination widespread in all walks of life
- No boom in jobs when the European war began in 1939
- Randolph began the March on Washington Movement – sought direct action
- Huge march to the Capitol planned

## US air force

- Discrimination
- Only 600 pilots by the end of the war
- Tuskegee pilots won great acclaim

## Impact of the war on African Americans

## Government reaction

- Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802
- Fair Employment Practices Commission set up
- Numbers of African Americans employed by Federal government increased greatly

## US army

- Roosevelt wanted African Americans to be 10% of the army, failed to reach this
- Many did not serve overseas because white commanders did not want African Americans
- Some race riots near training camps
- Some units integrated at the Battle of the Bulge

1948: all US armed forces desegregated

## SUMMARY DIAGRAM

The impact of the war on African Americans

## 5 The impact of the war on civil rights

▶ **Key question:** What were the effects of the war on civil rights?

During the war many African Americans became more active in campaigning for civil rights. New employment opportunities did not always bring improvements in the quality of life, and many pointed out the paradox of fighting fascist nations yet at the same time living in a country which denied equality to many of its own citizens.

### African Americans and activism

#### Increasing activism

Some African Americans cited the Atlantic Charter (see pages 44–5) in their demands for better treatment, although many did not wish to challenge the *status quo* too much, for fear of a white backlash. In addition, they did not wish to be seen as unpatriotic or troublemakers. Yet there was some gradual change. It was noticeable that the number of registered African American voters increased during the war, showing a greater political awareness. In the south, among African Americans the numbers of registered voters rose from three to 12 per cent in the years 1940–7. In the north, activists such as Adam Clayton Powell Jr led the way. He was the first African American elected from New York state and, in 1944, the first elected to the House of Representatives in post-Reconstruction USA from any northern state except for Illinois.

Activism was also more clearly seen through the work of key organizations such as the NAACP and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

#### The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The NAACP had been founded in 1909 by a group of leading African American intellectuals. The main aim of the NAACP was 'to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination'. The NAACP sought to use all legal means to achieve equality. One case was *Smith v. Allwright* in 1944, where the Supreme Court stated that it was unconstitutional for states to prevent African Americans from voting in the Democratic **primaries**.

Throughout the war, growing awareness of discrimination, its injustice and a willingness to challenge it led to a growth in NAACP membership, from 50,000 in 1940 to 450,000 by 1945. Many of these were professionals, although there were also many new urban workers (whose wages now enabled them to afford subscriptions). The NAACP began to play an important part in the **civil rights movement** after the war because it raised

How and why did the status of African Americans change because of the war?

#### KEY TERM

**Status quo** A Latin term meaning the existing state of affairs.

**Primaries** Preliminary elections in which the voters of a state choose a political party's nominee for president.

**Civil rights movement** A movement that attempts to secure equality in social, economic and political rights.



the profile of issues not only within the African American community but also within the white community, and encouraged activism.

### The Congress of Racial Equality

CORE was founded by James Farmer, a civil rights activist, in 1942. CORE was inspired by the non-violent tactics of Mohandas Gandhi in India. Gandhi had confronted British authorities without reverting to violence and had mobilized mass support for his campaign of independence. CORE members felt that putting pressure on the government in wartime might bring about change because it would not wish to be seen to be too harsh on its own citizens. They used non-violent protest to achieve civil rights for African American and started to organize **sit-ins** against segregated restaurants and theatres, which led to the end of segregation in some northern cities in the years 1943–5. CORE continued to grow in importance and was crucial in the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

As activism against racial discrimination increased, so did racial tension, especially regarding employment, housing and education.

#### The Double V campaign

Despite the valuable contribution that African Americans made to the war effort, they continued to be treated poorly. An African American newspaper, *Pittsburgh Courier*, created the Double V Campaign after readers began commenting on the second-class status of African American workers during wartime. Double V meant victory at home in terms of improved civil rights as well as victory abroad against fascism and dictatorship. The newspaper promoted the campaign by publishing numerous articles, letters and photographs. The effect was immediate and black newspapers across the USA began to support the campaign, thereby raising the profile of civil rights.

### Increasing racial tension

There was increased racial tension as a result of the war. With thousands of African Americans migrating from the south to the north, pressure was placed on existing infrastructure. In urban areas such as Chicago, there was a shortage of housing and insufficient schools. Many whites felt that not only jobs but also houses were being taken away from them. The National Housing Agency estimated that the internal migration of US workers amounted to nine million workers who had to be housed. An example of this was Detroit, where 60,000 African Americans had migrated to in order to find work in the car industries in the years 1940–3. The Detroit housing commission indicated that most African American workers' houses were sub-standard.

The rapid growth and overcrowding of African American districts, discrimination in the armed forces and employment, demands for economic and social equality, and African American activists raising public awareness are all factors which contributed to riots during the war.

In Detroit, a riot broke out on 21 June 1943. The army had to be called in to end the disorder. By the time peace had been restored, 34 people had been killed, more than 600 injured and more than 1800 arrested. Damage to property was estimated at \$2 million. German and Japanese propaganda broadcasts used the riots to criticize the US government's hypocrisy and encouraged African Americans not to fight for the white, racist 'democracy'. Troops occupied Detroit for six months until President Roosevelt felt it was safe to pull them out in January 1944.

Riots also erupted in Harlem, New York, in August 1943. The immediate cause was the intervention of a black soldier in the arrest of a black woman. In the ensuing fracas, the soldier was shot. Rumours quickly spread that he had been killed and this began the riot. Violence continued for two days during which six African Americans were killed, 300 people were injured and about 500 were arrested. It took 6000 police officers, 8000 state guardsmen and 1500 civilian volunteers to bring the rioting to an end.

There was also rioting in Philadelphia in 1944 when white streetcar workers refused to work with African Americans. Roosevelt had to deploy several thousand federal troops to restore order.

The impact of the war was to make visible many issues and tensions which had previously simmered under the surface. By the end of the war, many things had changed for African Americans.

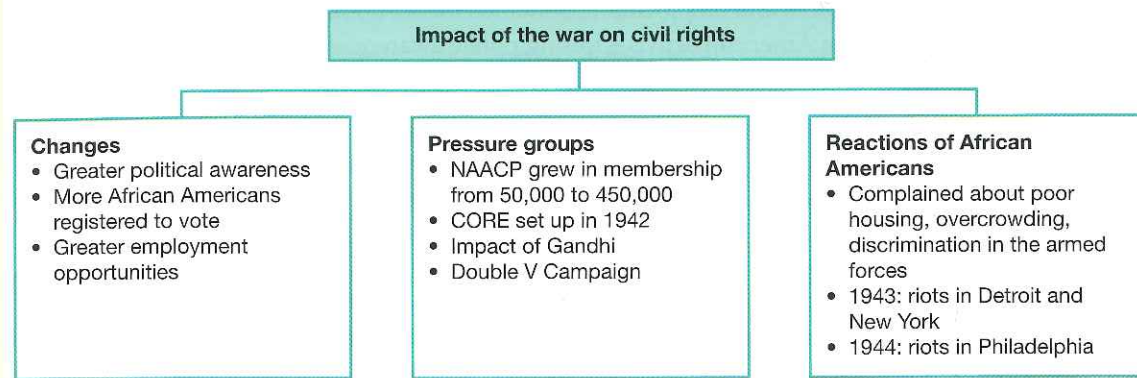
### The situation at the end of the war

By 1945, there had been some progress in employment and the armed forces, and many African Americans had become more active in campaigning for civil rights. On the other hand, discrimination and segregation remained a way of life in the southern states, while the migration of many African Americans to the industrial cities of the north had created greater racial tension. Yet, the work of NAACP, CORE and individuals such as Randolph had ensured that the position of African Americans would be under constant scrutiny and that efforts would continue to bring about further and far-reaching changes.

How had the status of African Americans changed by 1945?

#### KEY TERM

**Sit-in** A form of civil disobedience in which demonstrators occupy a public place and refuse to move as a protest.

**SUMMARY DIAGRAM**

The impact of the war on civil rights

## 6 The impact of the war on everyday life

**Key question:** How did the war change the lives of US people?

All sections of US society became involved in the country's quest for victory. President Roosevelt urged Americans to join the war effort by 'out-producing and overwhelming the enemy'. To prosecute the war expeditiously, the government had to introduce measures which had a dramatic impact on the everyday life of all its citizens. The introduction of conscription (see page 38) resulted in more than 12 million men joining the armed forces, which meant that most families had someone serving. Employment opportunities saw large numbers people move to where there were jobs – the industrial north and California, where more than 1.4 million moved. Women became involved in industry and also joined the armed forces (see pages 140–1); however, for those who remained at home life also changed through the implementation of government programmes.

**In what ways did the war affect everyday life?**

### Government programmes and the war

#### Rationing

The Food Rationing Program was introduced in the spring of 1942 and did not end until 1947. Coupons were needed to buy goods such as meat, cheese, butter, sugar, milk, eggs, coffee and canned goods. This came as quite a shock for a country used to a plentiful supply of such items. Shopping became difficult as goods became scarce. Housewives grew used to queuing.

The Office of Price Administration (OPA) set up local rationing boards which issued a family's coupons based on the number of people in a household and also their needs. The ration books limited purchases of certain goods by assigning points to goods and allowing each person a certain number of points per year. The number of ration points required for certain items fluctuated each week, which made the task of shopping even more difficult. The OPA was able to control food distribution and prevent shortages. Non-foods such as clothing, car tyres, petrol and oil were also rationed. A speed limit of 35 mph (56 km/hour) (the 'victory speed') was imposed to ensure that petrol was used sparingly and that tyres were preserved.

The government asked people to restrict their consumption of red meat and fats and this resulted in healthier eating. There were even training sessions to teach women how to conserve food and shop wisely. The government also printed recipe books describing how to prepare home-grown vegetables from the 'victory gardens' (see below) to make nutritional and tasty meals. Advertisers encouraged Americans to use less – a popular slogan was 'use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without'.

Rationing also had a serious side effect, the introduction of the black market, where people could secretly buy rationed items but at higher prices in violation of the specified controls.

#### Victory gardens

In 1941, the Secretary for Agriculture asked the American people to plant 'victory gardens' and to begin growing their own vegetables. This was to permit farmers to concentrate on producing food for the armed forces. The food would also supplement the foods they could buy with their ration stamps. Almost 20 million victory gardens were planted and it was estimated that they produced about 10 million tons of vegetables, which was about 40 per cent of all the vegetables grown in the USA during the war. For many ordinary people planting a victory garden became the most patriotic thing they could do.

Victory gardens were planted in any available space. If people lived in apartment buildings, then the rooftops were used, and if people had no outdoor space, then window boxes were used. People came together and worked co-operatively, pooling their resources and planting a wide range of foods.

There were victory gardens in some unusual places: the prison at Alcatraz, **Ellis Island** and the lawn of the White House. Many schools planted victory gardens on their grounds and used their produce in school lunches. This ensured that the children received nutritious food but the gardens also involved them in doing something positive to help win the war.

#### KEY TERM

**Ellis Island** The immigration processing centre in New York from 1892 to 1954.