American Home Front Notes

WWII has a positive effect on American society

 -end to GD

 -creates 19 million new jobs

 -doubles average family income

 -companies recruit women and minorities to work (white men are soldiers)

Women

 -during GD, few married women worked (took away jobs from men trying to support a family)

 -working women were young, single, and employed in traditional female jobs

 -wartime labor shortage forces factories to recruit marries women to do industrial jobs

 -4 million women in clerical jobs

 -Rosie the Riveter image from a song leads to 2.5 million women working in shipyards, aircraft factories, and other manu plants

African Americans in the Workplace

 -resistance in hiring AA

 -A. Philip Randolph (head of a major union) organized a march on Washington to protest this

 -FDR issues Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941: “no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or govt because of race, creed, color, or national origin”

 Fair Employment Practices Commission-first civil rights agency established by federal govt since Reconstruction

Mexicans Become Farmworkers

 -labor shortage in Southwest

 -Bracero Program 1942-1964: migrant farm workers from Mexico help to harvest fruit and vegetables/continue to build and maintain railroads

A Nation on the Move

 -migration west and south during mobilization

 -Sunbelt (manufacturing and urbanization in the west and south)

Housing Crisis

 -new cities had to decide where to put the thousands of new workers

 -tents and tiny trailers

 -federal govt allocated $1.2 billion to build public housing, schools, and community centers

 -2 million people lived in govt-built housing (which had tiny rooms, thin walls, poor heating, and almost no privacy)

Racism Explodes into Violence

 -Great Migration slowed during the GD but resumes when jobs in war factories open up

 -suspicion and intolerance towards African Americans can lead to violence

 -worst racial war on June 20, 1943 in Detroit between gangs of teenage girls that ends up in a riot

Zoot Suit Riots

 -Southern California-racial tension between whites and Mexicans due to increased crime and perception that the crime was perpetrated by young Mexicans

 -zoot suit worn by young Mexicans that requires lots of fabric

 -whites wore “victory suit” which required less fabric for the war effort (zoot suit seems unpatriotic)

 -rumor that zoot suiters attacked sailors, 2500 soldiers stormed Mexican American neighborhoods, and attacked; police did not intervene and city outlaws zoot suits

 -despite this, 50,000 Hispanics join armed forces

Japanese American Relocation

 -anger towards the Japanese as a result of Pearl Harbor

 -concern about Japanese American loyalty; refuse to serve

 -February 19, 1942 Executive Order 9066: order that allows any part of the US to be declared a military zone and remove anyone from that zone

 -Japanese relocated to internment camps

 -Korematsu vs. the United States 1944: relocation based on “military urgency”

 -no official apology until Reagan

 -all-Japanese 100th Battalion (442nd Regimental Combat Team) was the most highly decorated unit in WWII

 -Japanese American Citizens League gets Reagan to grant $20,000 to each surviving American who had been interned

Daily Life in Wartime America

 -prices rose, materials in short supply, and question of how to pay for war

Wage and Price Controls

 -inflation is a concern because of wages/prices rising because of high demand for workers and raw materials

 -Office of Price Administration created to stabilize wages and prices

 -“no strike pledges” War Labor Board mediated concerns between employers and workers

Blue Points, Red Points

 -rationing (meat, sugar, gasoline, rubber, coffee, sugar, blue coupons controlled processed foods, red coupons controlled meat, fat, and oil)

 -driving restricted-35 mph speed limit

Victory Gardens and Scrap Drives

 -collection of spare tin, rubber, aluminum, and steel

 -fat-collection stations

Paying for the War

 -raised taxes but not too high-covered 45% of war’s cost

 -war bonds (e bond which cost $18.75 and redeemed for $25 after 10 years)

End of the War

Third Reich Collapses

 -1942: Americans hear of Hitler’s plan to exterminate the Jews

 -Americans had known about Nuremberg Laws, Kristallnacht, etc.

 -1943: Allies officially declared that they would punish the Nazis for their crimes after the war

 -FDR believes that destroying the Nazi regime will liberate the Jews by freeing France and taking Germany

 -once the hedgerows are cleared in July 1944, they are close to Germany border

Battle of the Bulge

 -Allies win by January 1945

V-E Day

 -Soviets have driven Germans out of Russia

 -March 1945: Soviets and Americans attack western and eastern borders of Germany

 -April 21: Russians reach Berlin

 -April 30: Hitler kills himself

 -May 7, 1945: Germans surrender unconditionally

Japan is Defeated

 -Roosevelt dies on April 12, 1945

 -Truman becomes VP

 -war in Asia continues to intensify

Iwo Jima

 -Nov 24, 1944 bombs drop on Tokyo for the first time since Doolittle Raids, but planes cannot reach there fast enough

 -need an island by Japan so bombers can refuel, so decide to invade Iwo Jima (ashy, full of cliffs, and caves/bunkers)

 -February 19, 1945: 60,000 Marines land in amphtrac but fall in the ash and Americans get attacked by Japanese artillery

 -bravery, Americans slowly get there

 -while this is happening, bombers begin to drop napalm which starts fires, so the desired target catches fire

 -many Japanese cities firebombed

Invasion of Okinawa

 -Japanese still not ready to quit

 -new place to invade is Okinawa to prepare for invasion of Japan

 -April 1, 1945 invaded and captured on June 22

 -Japanese still won’t surrender unconditionally

Manhattan project

 -Albert Einstein asked Roosevelt to research splitting uranium atoms, as Germans were able to do so

 -start building an atomic bomb

 -Leslie R. Groves in charge with Dr. Oppenheimer leading the team

 -July 16, 1945: first atomic bomb detonated in New Mexico

 -debate over how to use it (kills civilians but want unconditional surrender)

 -Truman drops bomb on August 6, 1945 (Little Boy) on Hiroshima

 -Three days later, Fat Man dropped on Nagasaki

 -August 15, 1945: Japan surrendered

Building a New World

 -1944: United Nations meeting in Washington DC

 -has General Assembly and Security Council with 11 members (5 permanent: Britain, France, China, Soviet Union, and US) with veto power

 -responsible for international peace and security

Putting the Enemy on Trial

 -International Military Tribunal tried certain German leaders suspected of war crimes in Nuremberg