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