

World War II fears and tensions tested civil liberties, but the war also provided new opportunities for women and minorities. Many women found jobs, especially in heavy industry. They gained confidence, knowledge, organizational experience, and a paycheck. However, few African Americans found meaningful employment with defense employers. In response, African American labor leader **A. Philip Randolph** planned a massive march on Washington, D.C., to protest employment discrimination. Under pressure, FDR issued **Executive Order 8802**. It assured fair hiring practices in any job funded with government money.

Wartime needs encouraged people to move to the South and Southwest to find jobs in defense industries. To alleviate the rural population drain, the United States initiated the **bracero program**. This program brought Mexican laborers to work on American farms. Although they often faced discrimination, braceros contributed greatly to the war effort.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the federal government moved 100,000 Japanese Americans living on the West Coast to camps in isolated locations under a policy of **internment**. There, they were held in jail-like conditions for the duration of the war. Some Japanese Americans went to court to seek their rights. In the 1944 case of **Korematsu v. United States**, the Supreme Court upheld the government's wartime internment policy. When the government lifted a ban on Japanese Americans serving in the armed forces, many enlisted. The Japanese American **442nd Regimental Combat Team** fought in the Italian campaign and became the most decorated military unit in American history.

The war cost Americans \$330 billion. To help pay for it, Congress levied a tax on all working Americans. To ensure that there would be adequate raw materials, such as oil and rubber, for war production, **rationing** was instituted. The federal **Office of War Information (OWI)** worked with the media to encourage support of the war effort. Millions of Americans bought war bonds and contributed to the war effort in many other ways, large and small.

Review Questions

1. How did World War II change women's lives?

2. How did World War II affect Japanese Americans?

READING CHECK

What was the bracero program?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *initiated* mean in the underlined sentence? Read the underlined sentence and the sentence that follows aloud, but leave out the word *initiated*. Think about what word could be used in its place. Use this strategy to help you figure out the meaning of *initiated*.

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas How did the workplace change as a result of World War II?
