

# The Impact of the Second World War on Los Angeles

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“The War.” Two simple words that are often still uttered with deep emotion. For millions of Americans, the Second World War was the most transformative event of their lives. In the swirl of the most devastating conflict in human history, many Americans found that their participation in the war effort had a redemptive impact upon their lives. In sharp contrast to the faith shattering years of the Great Depression, they emerged from the war with a renewed sense of confidence in themselves and in the nation’s democratic institutions. The popular description of World War II as the “Last Good War” gives testament to the conflict’s mixed legacy of national unity and shared purpose in the face of the hundreds of thousands wounded and killed.

Nowhere was the war’s mixed legacy seen more graphically than in the nation’s cities. While bread lines gave way to crowded factory gates, municipal authorities frequently found themselves nearly overwhelmed by the magnitude of changes unprecedented in their scope and impact. The legacy of these changes often proved to be completely transforming. Most dramatically, the war spelled prosperity for many urban centers as aging, rust-ridden factories gave way to new modernized manufacturing plants, whose design and assembly technologies were often the envy of the world. In addition, the industrial production demands of the war created record numbers of new jobs that

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served to lift millions of Americans out of poverty and into a middle-class existence.

While the impact of the Second World War was felt throughout the American homefront, no other American urban center was so transformed by the war as was Los Angeles. Once perceived as a distant western outpost, isolated and separated by 3,000 miles from the nation's industrialized East, Los Angeles, bolstered by massive federal defense spending, emerged in the war as an industrial giant whose production of vital defense goods, such as warships and planes, helped turn the war in the Allies' favor.

Yet the war proved to be a mixed legacy. Los Angeles paid for its rise to industrial greatness largely at the expense of its environment and quiet, "small town" prewar character. In addition, wartime Los Angeles struggled with acute racism, most notable of which was the widespread support for the forced removal and internment of the city's large Japanese-American community. Blacks, Mexican Americans, and Mexican nationals also suffered, struggling under the burden of racially restrictive housing covenants, widespread job discrimination, and segregated public facilities such as pools and beaches. Yet the war also provided new opportunities for women and minorities. Access to jobs in the previously closed high-paying defense industries helped to encourage a renewed and stronger civil rights movement.

The Second World War's impact on Los Angeles proved to be nothing short of a social and industrial revolution. While it is true that the war greatly accelerated several social and economic forces already in motion, it is this article's contention that the Second World War brought forth a new, substantially different, and much more economically powerful Los Angeles than the one that would have developed without the war.<sup>1</sup> Once in the shadow of its Gold Rush neighbor to the north, Los

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1. The leading proponent of the Second World War's transformative power on the development of the American West is Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington, 1985); and Nash, *World War II and the West: Reshaping the Economy* (Lincoln, 1990). In contrast to what has become known as the "Nash thesis" is the seminal work of Roger W. Lotchin. Lotchin makes a strong case for the "evolution, rather than revolution," school of thought in *Fortress California, 1910-1961: From Warfare to Welfare* (New York, 1992).

Angeles emerged unchallenged from the Second World War as the leading urban center of not only California, but also of the new American West.<sup>2</sup>

On the eve of the Second World War Los Angeles was moving from its rural past into its urban future. Physically, large open spaces and vacant city lots checkered much of the Los Angeles basin. The city known today as the “freeway capital of the world” did not have a single mile of freeway in 1939. Visitors to prewar Los Angeles often described it in romantic terms, deeming it “The land of sunshine,” “A Tourist’s Mecca,” or quite simply, “Small town Los Angeles.”<sup>3</sup> Several professional surveyors of the region’s prewar industrial and manufacturing capacity concurred. Their 1939 report observed “that characteristically Los Angeles is a small plant town.”<sup>4</sup>

The physical appearance of prewar Los Angeles, however, was as deceptive as one the region’s carefully crafted movie sets. For beneath the small town veneer was a large and blossoming economy. As early as 1937, Los Angeles was successfully competing with the nation’s more established eastern seaboard cities. That year, Los Angeles ranked third among American cities in the number of manufacturing establishments and fifth in the value of manufactured output.<sup>5</sup> By 1939, Los Angeles County led the nation in the number of predominant industries, ranking first in the production of aircraft, motion pictures, sportswear, oil well equipment, and food products.<sup>6</sup>

Much of the city’s economic success by 1939 can be traced to farsighted investment of eastern manufacturers who built

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2. Los Angeles, in fact, had surpassed San Francisco in population by 1920 and had, by 1939, some 172,000 industrial workers within its metropolitan corridor as compared to 101,000 for the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan district. Still, a strong argument can be made that on the eve of the Second World War, Los Angeles was often perceived by many Americans, and particularly by federal authorities in Washington, D.C., as California’s second city.

3. Willard F. Motley, “Small Town Los Angeles,” *Commonweal* (June 1939), 251-252.

4. Phillip Neff, Lisette C. Baum, and Grace E. Heilman, *Favored Industries in Los Angeles: An Analysis of Production Costs* (Los Angeles, 1948), 7.

5. John Parke Young, “Industrial Background,” in George W. Robbins and L. Deming Tilton, eds., *Preface to a Master Plan* (Los Angeles, 1941), 61.

6. Los Angeles County Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Department, “Economic Background of Los Angeles County,” in *Collection of Eight Studies on the Industrial Development of Los Angeles County* (Los Angeles, n.d.), 6.

branch plant operations in southern California. Eastern manufacturers such as R.C.A. Victor, Firestone Tire, and Bethlehem Steel were attracted to Los Angeles because of the region's near perfect climate, its large tracts of vacant affordable land, a rapidly growing population, and strong local petroleum industry that offered inexpensive power. Further, after locating operations in Los Angeles, several manufacturers took advantage of the city's strategic Pacific Coast location. Lying on the Pacific Rim, Los Angeles served as an ideal distribution point for Asian and Latin American destinations.<sup>7</sup>

The geographic potential of Los Angeles was not lost on the United States Navy. Following the First World War, Los Angeles had become the home port of the Pacific Fleet in 1919. Since naval authorities considered the port of San Diego too shallow for the fleet's largest ships, such as battleships and newly developing aircraft carriers, naval leaders selected the ports of San Pedro (Los Angeles Harbor) and Long Beach as the fleet's new home.<sup>8</sup> By 1936, San Pedro Bay was headquarters to one of the world's greatest naval armadas in history. (Included in the fleet's two hundred plus ships was the legendary "battleship row" which later fell prey to the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor.)<sup>9</sup>

With much of the fire power of the United States Navy berthed within San Pedro, an already interdependent relationship between Los Angeles and the federal government deepened. It had earlier increased significantly with the onset of the Great Depression as local Angelenos looked past City Hall and towards Washington, D.C., for needed relief assistance. Subsequent federal intervention had an important twofold effect. First, federal expenditures helped create local jobs which, in turn, eased Los Angeles's historic feeling of separation and isolation from the nation's capital. Second, these depression-era public works programs did much to improve the physical infrastructure of the city. Key among them were the building of Hoover Dam and the Colorado River Aqueduct, without whose electricity and water the southland could not substantially expand, and completion of the Union Railroad Station, which

7. Young, "Industrial Background," 69-72.

8. Harvey M. Beigel, *Battleship Country: The Battle Fleet at San Pedro-Long Beach, California, 1919-1940* (Missoula, 1983), 1.

9. *Ibid.*, 71.

would serve as the central transit point for rapid railroad service between the West and eastern sections of the country.<sup>10</sup>

With the onset of the Second World War, in September 1939, cooperative interdependence between the federal government and Los Angeles heightened. Although local aircraft producers relied on foreign defense contracts to expand their operations in the early days of the war, the massive infusion of federal defense spending in 1939 almost caused the city to explode. Nowhere was the pressure of expansion more impressive than in the aircraft industry. Employment in Los Angeles soared from 15,930 at the end of 1938 to over 120,000 in December 1941 when the United States entered the war.<sup>11</sup>

Though aircraft expansion was impressive, it was not the sole beneficiary of America's defense buildup. Since World War I the area's shipbuilding industry had been inactive, but as defense orders arrived, the shipyards of Los Angeles embarked on a remarkable expansion program. The industry, which averaged a thousand employees in 1939, grew to 22,000 by October 1941.<sup>12</sup>

The continued influx of defense orders after 1939 caused the Los Angeles industrial area to grow at a startling pace, earning it distinction as the nation's fastest growing region.<sup>13</sup> Not everyone was pleased with the unprecedented growth. Local writer Sarah Comstock complained: "Towns do not develop here, they are instantly created, synthetic communities of a strangely artificial world."<sup>14</sup>

The rapid industrial growth of Los Angeles continued to accelerate following the surprise Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. While military authorities in Washington rushed troops and supplies to the West Coast, the city's "Big Six" aircraft companies—Douglas, Lockheed, North American,

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10. Leonard Leader, *Los Angeles and the Great Depression* (New York, 1991), 266-269.

11. The aircraft industry went from employing five percent of industrial workers in Los Angeles County in 1937 to employing more than forty percent in 1942. Arthur G. Coons and Arjay R. Miller, *An Economic and Industrial Survey of the Los Angeles and San Diego Areas* (Sacramento, 1941), 184.

12. *Ibid.*, 198.

13. *Ibid.*, 125.

14. Carey McWilliams, *Southern California Country: An Island on the Land* (New York, 1946), 233.

Northrup, Vega, and Vultee—quickly expanded their operations through an increased inflow of federal defense dollars. One federal agency that played a key role in governing these defense investment dollars was the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). Given the need for rapid wartime response, and the blessing of cheap available land, the RFC encouraged the expansion of existing facilities over the construction of new ones. Through its subsidiary, the Defense Plant Corporation (DPC), it oversaw the expenditure in Los Angeles of more than \$312 million in plant expansion efforts between 1939 and 1944. The DPC also spent 142 million dollars on the construction of new plants. In all, more than a thousand plants expanded in Los Angeles County during the war years while, during the height of the war from 1942 to 1944, 479 new defense plants joined the region's manufacturing base.<sup>15</sup>

The beneficiaries of this massive wartime federal investment ranged from the already large aircraft plants to small manufacturing concerns. The Defense Plant Corporation supplied the capital for 71 percent of the aircraft factories, 58 percent of the aluminum plants, and 96 percent of new rubber plants for the western region of the United States. Further, it financed fourteen of the fifteen largest aircraft plants built during the Second World War.<sup>16</sup>

Los Angeles's proximity to the Pacific war and its growing industrial capacity created fears among many Angelenos that the city would become the target of Japanese attacks. Actor and writer Buck Henry humorously recalls the city's then trepidation: "We imagined parachutes dropping. We imagined the hills of Hollywood on fire. We imagined hand-to-hand combat on Rodeo Drive."<sup>17</sup> Yet given the city's strategic value and its emotional ties to the heavily damaged fleet at Pearl Harbor, the fear remains understandable. Within nine months of the attack on Pearl

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15. Created by Congress in August 1940, the DPC became the largest investor in the defense industries of Los Angeles. Within the first two years of its existence, the agency invested nearly a third of a billion dollars constructing not only aircraft plants but shipyards, aluminum plants, steel mills, and other industrial facilities throughout southern California as well. Security-First National Bank of Los Angeles, *Monthly Summary of Business Conditions in Southern California* (Los Angeles, Jan. 1945).

16. Nash, *American West Transformed*, 19.

17. *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 1, 1992.

Harbor, more than 165,000 volunteers, nearly one in ten of the city's residents, had become active members of the Citizen's Defense Corps. Trained by the city's police and fire departments, these resident volunteers took positions as air raid wardens, fire reporters, messengers, and auxiliary police officers.<sup>18</sup>

While Los Angeles did not have to contend with an actual Japanese attack, Japanese submarines did operate effectively off the West Coast. On December 23, 1941, Japanese submarines sank the Los Angeles-based Union Oil tanker *Montebello* off the California central coast.<sup>19</sup> The next day, on Christmas Eve 1941, the American lumber carrier SS *Absaroka* was torpedoed just off the coast of Los Angeles by a Japanese submarine operating in the Catalina Channel. The attack, which was witnessed by onlookers from White Point in San Pedro, killed one crewman, but failed to sink the ship.<sup>20</sup>

These offshore attacks not only served to panic the local populace but also stirred increasing resentment towards the city's Japanese-American community. Even the respected *Los Angeles Times*, whose lead articles on the day following the attack on Pearl Harbor had assured readers that many local Japanese Americans were "loyal Americans," began reversing its posture. The paper, in heated competition with the Hearst Newspaper Corporation, soon took to calling these same Japanese American residents "Japs" and "Nips."

Los Angeles's normally stoic mayor, Fletcher Bowron, also became swept up in the anti-Japanese American hysteria. Playing to local sentiments, Bowron demanded that the federal government take immediate action against the local Japanese American community before, in his words, "it is too late." In a February 5, 1942, radio address, Bowron stated that Los Angeles, with the nation's largest concentration of Japanese, had become "the hotbed, the nerve center of the spy system, of planning for sabotage." Warning his listeners that "each of our little Japanese friends will know his part in the event of any possible attempted invasion or air raid," Bowron argued in support of removing all persons of Japanese descent from the city. Otherwise, he told

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18. "Civilian Defense in Los Angeles," *Western City*, XVIII (Sept. 1942), 30.

19. *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 24, 1941.

20. *Torrance Daily Breeze*, Feb. 23, 1992.

his radio audience, "We are the ones who will be the human sacrifices."<sup>21</sup>

In response to continued public pressure and demands for a complete removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast by such political leaders as California Governor Culbert Olsen and California Attorney General Earl Warren, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt took action. On February 19, 1942, he issued Executive Order 9066 which authorized the forcible evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast. As a result, an estimated 60,000 Los Angeles Japanese American residents were quickly forced out of their homes and businesses. The misery of many of them increased during the two months they had to live in horse stables at both Santa Anita and Hollywood Park race tracks while the permanent internment camps were being constructed.<sup>22</sup>

As if to justify the forced evacuation, the *Los Angeles Times* continued to print news stories claiming that the local Japanese American community was still in deep alliance with the Japanese war machine. On February 23, 1942, the paper carried news of weekend raids that broke up "secret societies organized as espionage centers" and resulted in the capture of "scores of alien reserve officers, particularly Japanese." The raids, described as "the first triumphs of the war in the Pacific Coast states," were alleged to have "ended the careers of many saboteurs before they began." Unfortunately for Los Angeles's Japanese-American community, a Japanese submarine shelled the oil storage area of Ellwood, twelve miles north of Santa Barbara, only hours after the article appeared. Although the attack inflicted little damage, it substantially heightened citizen fears of a Japanese attack and it unfortunately served to increase the credibility of those favoring the removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast.<sup>23</sup> Lampooning any remaining doubters, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an editorial cartoon showing a complacent citizen

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21. Radio speech given on February 5, 1942. Congressman John Costello inserted the speech in the *Cong. Rec.*, 77 Cong., 2 sess. (1942), 457-459. For a more thorough examination of Fletcher Bowron's role in the events leading up to the evacuation of the Japanese, see Morton Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed: Politics and the Japanese Evacuation* (Chicago, 1949), 100-106.

22. An excellent study of America's decision to evacuate the Japanese is Roger Daniels, *The Decision to Relocate the Japanese* (Malabar, 1975).

23. Bert Webber, *Silent Siege: Japanese Attacks against North America in World War II* (Fairfield, 1984), 105-111.



being shelled from offshore and carrying the words "It could happen here" emblazoned on the projectile's trail.<sup>24</sup>

On February 25, two nights after the submarine's shelling of Ellwood, army officials warned Los Angeles civil defense authorities that enemy aircraft were seen approaching the city. At 2:25 a.m. the region's defenses went into full alert, with anti-aircraft guns firing into searchlight-swept skies. Many witnesses to the event believe that the authorities mistook a wayward weather balloon for a Japanese plane. Although the raid's authenticity became a source of debate among military officials, no bombs were dropped and no planes were shot down.<sup>25</sup> However, the event, known today as the "Battle of Los Angeles," gave the city's residents a genuine feeling of being at war.<sup>26</sup>

Although the only shells that actually fell on Los Angeles that night were from the city's own anti-aircraft guns, local residents felt that they were beginning to experience the full impact of the war. City streets became increasingly crowded with sailors, marines, and soldiers. The once nearly empty newspaper "Help Wanted" ad sections became filled with job advertisements as defense plants sought to fill vacancies continually being created by the nation's military draft. Increasing the demand for war workers was the widespread resistance of many of the city's war industries to the hiring of women and minorities. Several plant operators in the early months of the war claimed that females would prove inept at war production work. Several others argued that women on the assembly line would distract male workers from the work at hand. There was also large-scale resistance to women workers from males in the work force. With the Depression still fresh in their minds, many males perceived women workers as potential threats to fair wages and job security.<sup>27</sup>

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24. *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 25, 1942.

25. Webber, *Silent Siege*, 111-115; *Jack Smith's L.A.* (New York, 1980), 90-94.

26. It also gave "locals" a story that is still recounted as a now fond wartime memory. Comedian Bob Hope recalled that during the "attack," two air-raid wardens in Beverly Hills, the Austrian born movie director Otto Preminger and German-born producer Henry Blake, ran up and down Rexford Drive screaming, "Close de windows! Close de windows!" In response, a frightened movie star ran out of his front door yelling, "Run for your lives! The Germans are here!"

27. James Richard Wilburn, "Social and Economic Aspects of the Aircraft Industry in Metropolitan Los Angeles during World War II" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971), 203.

But the demands of fighting a two-front war necessitated dramatic societal change. As one War Department official bluntly told a gathering of southern California defense officials, "Women are as capable and productive as men and they must be so used. Prejudice, convenience and inertia can no longer bar their full employment."<sup>28</sup> With large contracts and federal defense dollars dangling before them, many aircraft and ship building companies suddenly saw the "light" and began actively recruiting women for war production jobs. Minorities in wartime Los Angeles, in contrast, did not fare as well.

While the war effort brought forth a spirit of cooperation and participation among Los Angeles citizens, serious undercurrents of racial tension continued to plague the region. Despite its long history as a migratory center, Los Angeles remained a city divided and segregated along racial lines. According to Floyd C. Covington, director of the Los Angeles Urban League, the city's racial divisions hardened with the arrival of thousands of white southerners, who had come to Los Angeles in search of war work.<sup>29</sup> "The southernizing of California," one observer noted, "is becoming a real factor in mitigating against employment opportunities for the Negro.... On all sides," he concluded, "can be sensed a general change of attitude toward the Negro, due to the impress of this southern influence on almost every activity within the community."<sup>30</sup>

The failure of most Los Angeles defense plants to hire blacks can be traced to the attitudes of both organized labor and management. By restricting its initiation ritual to whites only, the aircraft industry's principal union, the AFL International Association of Machinists, barred blacks from membership until 1942.<sup>31</sup> Management policies were equally restrictive. When members of the Los Angeles Council of the National Negro Congress inquired about the racial policies of Vultee Aircraft in August 1940, Gerald Tuttle, manager of industrial relations for

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28. *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 11, 1941.

29. Carnegie-Myrdal Study, "Survey of the Negro," Los Angeles Urban League Papers, form 1, 2, collection 203, box 1, Department of Special Collections, University Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

30. *Ibid.*, form 4.

31. Lawrence Brooks de Graaf, "Negro Migration to Los Angeles, 1930 to 1950" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1962), 167.

the company, sent a curt reply: "I regret to say that it is not the policy of this company to employ people other than of the Caucasian race, consequently, we are not in a position to offer your people employment at this time."<sup>32</sup>

In Pasadena, the director of the California State Employment Service declared that his office was continually approached by competent black mechanics desiring work in the aircraft industry. Although the black mechanics often possessed the very skills the firms were looking for, the vast majority could not be placed. The personnel representative of a large aircraft plant admitted that although the company had hired many thousands of men in the previous year and was still in desperate need of skilled workers, "there isn't a Negro in the entire plant." The company maintained its restrictive racial policy, he wrote, because "many of the white men would object to working with a Negro."<sup>33</sup> In the spring of 1941 J. H. Kindelberger, president of North American Aviation, took an equally hard line. "While we are in complete sympathy with the Negroes," he declared, "it is against the Company policy to employ them as mechanics or aircraft workers.... There will be some jobs as janitors for Negroes." He insisted, however, that "Regardless of their training as aircraftworkers, we will not employ them in the North American plant."<sup>34</sup>

For blacks in Los Angeles and for that matter throughout the nation, the incongruity of fighting a war for democratic ideals abroad while maintaining segregationist policies at home led to large-scale protests. Ironically, the most successful of these was a march that never took place. The proposed march, organized by A. Philip Randolph, was to have brought to Washington, D.C., on July 1, 1941, more than 100,000 blacks demanding equal rights. The march was called off when President Franklin D. Roosevelt met with Randolph and agreed to issue an executive order outlawing discrimination. Roosevelt's Executive Order 8802, issued June 25, 1941, forbade "discrimina-

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32. As quoted in National Negro Congress, Los Angeles Council, *Jim Crow in National Defense* (Los Angeles, 1940), 13.

33. James E. Crimi, "The Social Status of the Negro in Pasadena, California" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1941) 38-39.

34. Lester B. Granger, "Negroes and War Production," *Survey Graphic*, XXXI (Nov. 1942), 470.

tion in the employment of workers in defense industries or government because of race, creed, color or national origin." The President then created the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to enforce the order.

In Los Angeles, which even prior to the Great Depression had a substantial black community, black protest between 1940 and 1942 gained strength as a result of the "Double V" campaign.<sup>35</sup> National in scope, the "Double V" campaign signified black America's efforts to win victory over the Axis powers overseas and over discrimination at home. To help attain these ends a variety of black organizations worked together documenting instances of discrimination against minorities in the work place.

Among the most successful of these groups was the Negro Victory Committee. Formed in April 1941, the Los Angeles Victory Committee sought to remind the city's white majority of the American black community's historic loyalty to the nation while at the same time aggressively pursuing the cause of equal rights.<sup>36</sup> Under the leadership of Rev. Clayton D. Russell, the local Victory Committee organized five black-owned markets into the Victory Markets Cooperative. The cooperative functioned throughout the war years, helping to solidify black support behind both the war effort and the fight for equality at home.

Black solidarity against hiring discrimination also received strong support from the community's two leading black newspapers, the *California Eagle* and the *Los Angeles Sentinel*.<sup>37</sup> Discrimination against blacks in Los Angeles also received national attention from *Fortune* magazine. Its March, 1943, issue accused Los Angeles defense plants of "almost universal prejudice against Negroes" with "little concealment about the anti-Negro policy."<sup>38</sup>

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35. A good summation of Los Angeles's substantial black community before the Second World War can be found in Lawrence de Graaf, "The City of Black Angels: Emergence of the Los Angeles Ghetto, 1890-1960," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXIX (1970), 323-352.

36. E. Frederick Anderson, *The Development of Leadership and Organization Building in the Black Community of Los Angeles from 1900 through World War II* (Saratoga, Calif., 1980), 85-86.

37. Issues of the *Los Angeles Sentinel* are not available for the years 1941-1945.

38. *Fortune Magazine*, XXIII (March 1943), 98.

And as historian James Wilburn has noted, "In June, 1941, there were exactly four Negro production workers in the aircraft industry in southern California."<sup>39</sup>

The black solidarity forged by Russell and other leaders soon became evident on the streets. In July 1942, a local official of the United States Employment Service tried to justify discriminatory hiring practices by claiming that black women were not interested in working in defense production and were better suited for employment as domestic servants and cooks. The statement awakened long-smoldering resentment among blacks over their inability to find jobs despite the region's massive shortage of war workers. The Negro Victory Committee encouraged black women to flood the agency with job applications, organized a protest march, and finally forced federal officials from the War Manpower Commission to enter into negotiations over the job issue. A joint statement followed announcing that discrimination would no longer be tolerated in the defense industry.<sup>40</sup>

The Victory Committee's march played a paramount role in breaking down the barriers that had confronted blacks in the defense industry. Although Executive Order 8802 forbade discriminatory hiring practices, leaders throughout the black community felt the only hope for enforcement of the order was strong public pressure by blacks. Arguing patriotically from the position of "we want to aid in the war effort but are prevented from doing so," the Negro Victory Committee avoided charges of subversion and anti-Americanism.

Fortunately for blacks and other minorities, Los Angeles began to suffer acute labor shortages in 1942. The aircraft industry, for example, had nearly 20,000 workers who either enlisted in or were drafted into the military by August 1942. Further, industrial expansion in the Los Angeles area between 1940 and mid-1943 accounted for the creation of 550,000 new jobs. In sharp contrast to the Depression years, women and minorities soon found themselves with an wide array of job choices. So dramatic was the change that the number of women

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39. Wilburn, "Aircraft Industry," 165.

40. Anderson, *Leadership and Organization Building*, 88-91.

employees in the six southern California aircraft plants went from 143 in 1941 to nearly 65,000 by the summer of 1943.<sup>41</sup>

Los Angeles, however, despite gaining substantially in its labor supply by employing women and minorities, still faced large shortages of workers in 1943 and late into 1944. Part of the problem was rapid industrial expansion, where the number of new job openings often outstripped the number of workers entering the labor force. Job turnover, too, contributed to lagging production schedules. Many women entering the work force for the very first time, for example, found factory work unappealing and often left it for employment in service sector work. Others, quite understandably, found juggling a full-time job, while raising children and maintaining a home, to be too difficult. Still others cited the lack of adequate child care as the cause for their leaving defense work.

The continual loss of valuable workers forced the defense industry to completely rethink its employment practices. Several Los Angeles aircraft plants responded to the loss of women workers by redesigning their assembly lines to include conveyor belts, streamlined tools, chain hoists, and load lifts.<sup>42</sup> The industry also effectively lobbied for the 1942 passage of the Lanham Act.<sup>43</sup> The act, which provided federal funding for an extensive array of on-site child-care centers, reduced significantly the loss of women war workers.<sup>44</sup>

In turn, women employees proved to be the backbone of the city's wartime industrial expansionism. At the peak of worker shortages, women comprised forty-two percent of the aircraft industry's total work force. In fact, in several companies their numbers made up over fifty percent of those employed.<sup>45</sup> Thus, the large-scale incorporation of women in the industrial work

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41. Sherna Berger Gluck, *Rosie the Riveter Revisited: Women, the War, and Social Change* (Boston, 1987), 203–204.

42. Carleton Champe, "Women Only," *North American Skyline* (May–June 1944), 10–11.

43. Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn., 1981), 125; D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 13–14.

44. House Subcommittee of Committee on Naval Affairs, *Hearings on Congested Areas*, 78 Cong., 1 sess. (1944), 1794, 2036.

45. Wilburn, "Aircraft Industry," 236–237.

force proved to be the single greatest factor in easing the war's severe "manpower" shortage.

Despite apparent gains made by blacks in defense hiring, they received a disproportionate share of jobs when compared to their population. In June 1944 blacks composed 5.3 percent of the war workers in Los Angeles yet blacks constituted 7.1 percent of the city's population.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, the open hiring of blacks in the high-paying defense industry did lead to the greatest black migration in Los Angeles history. By the summer of 1943 blacks were arriving in Los Angeles at a rate of between 10,000 to 12,000 a month, or approximately fifty percent of new migrants to the city.<sup>47</sup> From 55,114 in 1940, the black population of Los Angeles swelled to 118,888 by April 1944.<sup>48</sup>

The subsequent war production by the people of Los Angeles proved remarkable. Perhaps no other Los Angeles industry was impacted as much from the war as the area's shipbuilding industry. Local shipyards, which until 1940 had not constructed a large ship in twenty years, were by late December 1941 the second largest manufacturing industry in the Los Angeles area.<sup>49</sup> Henry J. Kaiser played a prominent role in the area's shipbuilding success. In 1940, Kaiser and his associates, backed by the Maritime Commission, organized from scratch the California Shipbuilding Corporation. Known as Calship, the yard was located on 175 acres of semi-tidelands on Los Angeles's Terminal Island. Beginning production of Liberty ships in May 1941, the yard, thirteen months later, broke the existing world's record by delivering fifteen Liberty ships in June 1942.<sup>50</sup> By standardizing the design and specifications for all its government ordered ships, Calship was able to launch 111 ships in 1942,

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46. *Ibid.*, 270.

47. *Hearings on Congested Areas*, 1761.

48. De Graaf, "Negro Migration to Los Angeles," 263. In total numbers, between April 1940 and April 1944, an estimated 780,000 persons migrated into the Los Angeles area. Nearly eighty percent of these immigrants were under the age of forty-five, and they were responsible for increasing Los Angeles's wartime labor supply by twenty-five percent. U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Wartime Changes in Population and Family Characteristics, Los Angeles Congested Production Area, April 1944," Series CA-2, No.5, 1-3.

49. Security-First, *Monthly Summary* (Feb. 1943).

50. Charles F. Queenan, *The Port of Los Angeles: From Wilderness to World Port* (Los Angeles, 1982), 87.

more than any other yard in the United States.<sup>51</sup> Ship production at Calship was further accelerated with the completion of Kaiser's Fontana steel plant in August 1943. As a result, Calship was the country's second largest emergency shipyard, launching 467 ships between September 27, 1941, and September 27, 1945.<sup>52</sup>

Los Angeles was also the home of several other major shipyards. Consolidated Steel Corporation delivered more than 500 vessels, while the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation repaired and returned to service an average of two large naval vessels for every work day during the war. Todd Shipyards took over the previously failed Los Angeles Shipbuilding and Drydock Company and converted 2,376 ships during the last three years of the war.<sup>53</sup> During the war the shipyards of Los Angeles handled more than one and one-half billion dollars in shipbuilding contracts.<sup>54</sup> At the war's peak they employed some 90,000 employees, including 55,000 at Calship.<sup>55</sup>

The rapid rise of Los Angeles's shipbuilding industry from 1939 to 1945 gives testimony to the region's adaptability for wartime industrial growth. However, the greatest beneficiary of this adaptability was the aircraft industry. By 1944, the aircraft production sector led Los Angeles's second largest industry, shipbuilding, by a six-to-one ratio in payroll and employee figures.<sup>56</sup> Its development affected the region as no other wartime industry and, unlike maritime construction, its impact was long-standing.

As the dominant force in wartime Los Angeles, the aircraft industry played a prominent role in shaping the local economy. At its wartime high, the industry employed 228,400 workers.<sup>57</sup> These substantial numbers of employees, many of whom had families, helped to continue the economic growth of service-related industries during the war. Much of the financing of the

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51. Security-First, *Monthly Summary* (Feb. 1943).

52. Queenan, *Port of Los Angeles*, 87; City of Los Angeles, Board of Harbor Commissioners, *Annual Report: For the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 1946, and Ending June 30, 1947* (Los Angeles, 1947).

53. Queenan, *Port of Los Angeles*, 52.

54. City of Los Angeles, Board of Harbor Commissioners, *Annual Report, 1946-1947* (Los Angeles, 1947).

55. Queenan, *Port of Los Angeles*, 91.

56. Wilburn, "Aircraft Industry," 68.

57. *Ibid.*, 47.



large payrolls came from defense orders. The United States government by June 1945 had placed more than \$7 billion worth of aircraft orders.<sup>58</sup>

The financial impact on Los Angeles was nothing short of phenomenal. For small manufacturers, the plane orders were a “boon” as they quickly expanded their operations to meet the sub-contract demands of an already overwhelmed aircraft industry. By 1944, an estimated 4,000 separate “war plants” were located in Los Angeles with the large majority involved in aircraft manufacturing.<sup>59</sup> By producing a wide variety of vital defense goods, ranging from planes to ships and uniform clothing, Los Angeles as early as July 1942 had won 47.1 percent of the nearly five billion federal defense dollars invested in California since 1940. In comparison, the San Francisco-Oakland industrial area captured only 20.4 percent, and San Diego County, due in large part to its growing aviation production, received 21.8 percent.<sup>60</sup> As a result, Los Angeles, which many federal authorities still considered a branch plant town, emerged in the summer of 1942 as the nation’s second most productive industrial area based on the size and number of government war contracts awarded.<sup>61</sup>

Los Angeles, like most boom towns during the war, found itself contending with a wide array of societal ills linked to its rapid growth. The influx of massive numbers of hopeful job seekers and their families simply overwhelmed the city’s physical infrastructure. Chief among Los Angeles’s war-related problems was the increasing lack of available housing for newly arriving defense workers. Ironically, prior to 1942, Los Angeles had a substantial surplus of available housing. Blessed with a decentralized base, large open spaces, and a history as a migratory center, prewar Los Angeles was able to handle large numbers of new arrivals. Home building, however, quickly slowed with the American entrance into the war. Builders found themselves stymied by wartime restrictions on building supplies and the loss of large numbers of their construction workers to the war effort.

Especially hard hit by the region’s housing shortages was the

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58. Nash, *American West Transformed*, 26.

59. Wilburn, “Aircraft Industry,” 54–55.

60. Security-First, *Monthly Summary* (Aug. 1942).

61. *Ibid.*

black community of central Los Angeles. Because blacks had been forcibly segregated by racial covenants into approximately five percent of the city's residential area, newly arriving blacks had great difficulty in finding housing within the established black communities of Central Avenue, West Jefferson, and Watts.<sup>62</sup> Many of the migrants had to live instead in the city's "Little Tokyo" section which had been emptied because of the internment of Japanese Americans. Renamed by locals as "Bronzeville," this section became the worst wartime housing in Los Angeles. Deputy City Mayor Orville Caldwell was so appalled at the conditions there that he testified to federal investigators that if they visited the area, as he had, "You will see life as no human is expected to endure it." A member of the Los Angeles Women's War Chest Committee echoed Caldwell's sentiments: the conditions in Bronzeville "almost require the help of missionaries."<sup>63</sup>

Overcrowding, particularly in the central city area, led to record crime rates. The Los Angeles Police Department, already severely hampered by the loss of experienced personnel to the war effort, saw felonious assaults and robberies increase by more than fifty percent between 1942 and 1943.<sup>64</sup> The problem of juvenile delinquency was most clearly linked to the war's impact. Between 1940 and 1943 the numbers of those arrested under age eighteen in Los Angeles doubled. The lack of proper parental supervision and overcrowded housing conditions contributed to the rise. The situation became so bad in parts of the city that parents of those repeatedly arrested were prosecuted for allowing their children on the streets again.<sup>65</sup>

Also plaguing law-enforcement officials was the open confrontation between military service personnel and groups of young Mexican-American males, many of whom were outfitted in the then popular "zoot suit." On the night of June 3, 1943, large-scale fighting broke out between the zoot suiters and

62. Mignon E. Rothstein, "A Study of the Growth of Negro Population in Los Angeles and Available Housing Facilities between 1940 and 1946" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 1950), 36-44. As late as 1950 the United States census showed that the city of Los Angeles contained seventy-eight per cent of the blacks in the county.

63. *Hearings on Congested Areas*, 1761.

64. *Ibid.*, 1770-1771.

65. *Ibid.*

servicemen. While the tension between the two groups had been mounting for some time, the exact origins of zoot suit riots are unclear, although racism played a large part in instigating the violence. The uniforms of each group seemed to take on meaning. Many servicemen saw the zoot suit as a symbol of open defiance of society. Further, many military personnel considered the zoot suiters draft dodgers. In contrast, many of the zoot suiters resented the constant traffic of servicemen through their neighborhoods and the impolite attention the servicemen gave to their girlfriends. For some Mexican Americans, the military uniforms symbolized dominant Anglo society invading their closed world.

While no one was killed during the riots, police were unable to control the mobs of servicemen who swarmed into the downtown area in search of zoot suiters. Their invasion was precipitated by rumors that Mexican hoodlums had openly attacked servicemen near a dance hall in Venice on the night of June 3, 1943. For at least ten days military officials were unable to control the servicemen despite efforts by local and military police authorities. There were simply too many service personnel involved in the riots to be controlled. The rioters marched through the downtown area stripping zoot suiters of their outfits. They even entered a movie theatre, turned on the lights, and attacked persons they considered to be zoot suiters. Most of the victims were Mexican Americans, but there were cases of attacks on blacks as well. The riots stopped after the commanding officers of southern California military bases put the barrio and downtown areas on off-limits status.<sup>66</sup>

While local police and military officials contended with a growing epidemic of crime, city and county health departments fared little better in their fight against the increasing spread of communicable diseases. The shortage of adequate essential care facilities, for example, raised serious concerns that an epidemic in Los Angeles could affect the nation's war effort. Such fears were not unfounded. Wartime Los Angeles received thousands of new residents and transients, a substantial percentage of

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66. For accounts of the "Zoot Suit Riots," see Mauricio Mazón, *The Psychology of Symbolic Annihilation: The Zoot Suit Riots* (Austin, 1984); Richard Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin, 1983), 165-167; Nash, *American West Transformed*, 115-121.

whom had never been inoculated against communicable diseases. Further, overcrowding and lack of adequate sanitation in many parts of the region raised the threat of rodent and insect borne diseases such as bubonic plague, typhus, and malaria.<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, rapid wartime industrialization and population growth of Los Angeles created serious environmental problems. Most adversely affected were the adjacent Pacific Ocean and the air over the city. In terms of ocean pollution, Los Angeles's large population growth during the war years overtaxed regional sewer systems to the point that dumping of raw sewage in neighboring Santa Monica Bay became commonplace. The beaches of southern California, the region's number one tourist attraction, were often closed during the war due to the presence of raw sewage along the shore. Elmer Belt, president of the California State Board of Health, complained of "massive, gross contamination" of the Los Angeles shoreline by the raw sewage, and he subsequently led efforts to quarantine beaches most seriously affected by sewage dumping. Still, the quarantines were not always effective and local Santa Monica Bay area doctors reported large increases in intestinal diseases in proportion to the numbers of ocean swimmers.<sup>68</sup>

Adding to public health woes was the dramatic wartime change in the region's air quality. Much of the change was due to the growth of new industries in the region. In 1940 and 1941 a total of 233 new industrial plants sprang up in Los Angeles. In the next two years industrial usage of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power soared from 400 million to over a billion kilowatt hours. Literally, while area production statistics brightened, the skies over Los Angeles darkened.<sup>69</sup>

Despite its poor wartime environmental record, Los Angeles continued to gain stature as the leading city of the newly industrialized West. Although the cessation of hostilities in 1945 prompted fears that Los Angeles would be plagued by war plant closures and large unemployment, the city's ties to technological innovation assured it a bright future. Just as the city quickly

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67. *Hearings on Congested Areas, 1773-1780, 1816-1827.*

68. Elmer Belt, "A Sanitary Survey of Sewage Pollution of the Surf and Beaches of Santa Monica Bay," *Western City*, XIX (June 1943), 17-22.

69. Marvin Brienes, "Smog Comes to Los Angeles," *Southern California Quarterly*, LVIII (1976), 515-532.

adapted itself to wartime production, it rapidly and successfully adjusted to a postwar economy.

Thus, the Second World War changed nearly every facet of life in Los Angeles, and many of the most dramatic changes occurred in the expansion of local industry. Although some 175,000 wage earners were dropped from local manufacturers' payrolls between August 1944 and September 1945, substantial wartime employment gains were retained by nearly every local industry.<sup>70</sup> The aircraft industry, for example, at its lowest postwar employment level was still nearly 400 percent above its 1939 prewar level.<sup>71</sup> The shipbuilding industry, which suffered an 81 percent decline in employment between its wartime peak and October 1945, nevertheless exceeded its 1939 level by over 500 percent. Other industries experiencing substantial growth during the war years (petroleum, steel, and electric) survived postwar downturns in employment only to quickly recover with dramatic gains over their 1939 prewar levels.<sup>72</sup> The growth of local industry was so substantial that even as production reached its lowest postwar levels in December 1945, local manufacturing employment exceeded that of 1939 by nearly eighty percent.<sup>73</sup>

Among the chief factors influencing the wartime industrial growth of Los Angeles were federal government investment capital, a large work force, and the region's abundant natural resources. The federal government's interest in developing industry in Los Angeles also stemmed from the city's location and its manufacturing potential. Los Angeles proved worthy of federal investment dollars. The area's several hundred small concerns, which characterized the manufacturing base of Los Angeles in 1939, quickly converted to wartime production needs. They proved instrumental in supplementing the needs of the

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70. Frank L. Kidner and Phillip Neff, *Los Angeles: The Economic Outlook* (Los Angeles, 1946), 5. Particularly hard hit by aircraft industry lay-offs were thousands of women defense workers. A postwar survey conducted by the *Los Angeles Times* found that the number of women in the city's five largest aircraft plants had dropped from thirty-seven percent on August 5, 1945, to twenty-seven percent by December 16, 1945. While it is true that some of these women left voluntarily, other women found themselves forcibly removed from company payrolls by lay-off notices and social mores that demanded that returning male war veterans be given any available jobs in the high-paying industry.

71. Wilburn, "Aircraft Industry," 247.

72. Security-First, *Monthly Summary* (Dec. 1946).

73. *Ibid.* (Jan. 1946).

area's most important wartime industries: aircraft production and shipbuilding.

Federal defense dollars were also used to finance industries that produced locally needed unfinished items, especially those requiring steel and aluminum. Perhaps most notable was the federally financed Kaiser steel plant in Fontana. The Fontana mill, second largest in the West, helped Los Angeles to break the domination of eastern-based industries whose high cost for raw and basic materials had hindered the city's industrial development. As a result of these investments, Los Angeles emerged from the war confident that it could produce locally many of the items needed to carry on its expansive industrial program.

Los Angeles's confidence in its postwar future was further spurred by the wartime gains made in harnessing the abundant natural resources of the area. Substantial progress was made in oil recovery and in chemical and electrical production. In addition, gains made in technological developments added to the city's growing industrial strength. The most important natural resource, though, was the people of Los Angeles. Despite wartime stresses and strains, many Angelenos worked well beyond the forty-eight hour average work week. Still others worked the mandatory forty-eight hour work week and then used their free time as civilian defense volunteers. Despite these heroic efforts, there never seemed to be enough workers to meet wartime industrial needs. The chronic shortages were eased only by the constant influx of first-time workers.

Given the vacuum in defense industry employment, previously neglected groups, notably women, blacks, and Hispanics, made their way aggressively into the ranks of well-paying occupations for the first time, representing social changes that bordered on revolutionary. For the first time in the history of Los Angeles these groups worked in large numbers in positions that had been dominated by white males. Although each of these groups experienced sharp downturns in employment near the end of the war due to the return of white male workers, fiscal cutbacks, and other cultural and social factors, the maintenance of second-class status for women and minorities thereafter was unacceptable to both groups.<sup>74</sup>

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74. Wilburn, "Aircraft Industry," 236-237.

It must be stressed that the federal government played an integral role in helping women and minorities obtain employment in the wartime industries of Los Angeles. Through its chief agency for minority groups, the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC), the government exerted pressure on employers to end discriminatory hiring practices. Although the agency was considered weak and ineffective, its hearings on working conditions and labor practices encouraged minority groups to continue their fight for equal employment. The intervention of the federal government on their behalf kept growing numbers of minorities committed to the ideals of democracy.

Another important aspect in the fight for equal employment and working conditions was the continued development of organized minority groups. Groups such as the Negro Victory Committee achieved important gains for their causes. By maintaining a mainstream patriotic strategy, these organizations were able to press their demands for job opportunities. Among their successful approaches were large war bond rallies, where leaders not only raised money for the war but also pleaded for war industry jobs for minorities. The irony of large worker shortages and the continued refusal by industries to hire minorities was not lost on the press or the public.

Minority community organizations also played a vital role in pointing out the problems of their neighborhoods exacerbated by the war. Local minority leaders, such as Charlotta Bass, editor and publisher of the black newspaper, the *California Eagle*, made known the needs and problems in the black community by serving on public boards and organizing peaceful protests.<sup>75</sup> Although government help remained limited, inroads were made in the segregated and discriminatory features of Los Angeles society. One of the most important new starts was the work begun to end housing-covenant restrictions. Strong efforts to repeal this policy were begun in the minority communities during the war years when the racially segregated communities were overrun with in-migrants.<sup>76</sup>

75. Charlotta Bass, *Forty Years: Memoirs from the Pages of a Newspaper* (Los Angeles, 1960).

76. The United States Supreme Court in 1948 ruled in *Shelley v. Kraemer* and *Hurd v. Hodge* that the enforcement of restrictive covenants against selling

The vast migration of aspiring war workers and their families dramatically altered the population characteristics of the Los Angeles area. The United States Bureau of the Census in January 1946 conducted a special census of Los Angeles City. It found that the total population had grown by twenty percent since 1940. The most dramatic changes, however, occurred in the minority communities. The black community grew by an astounding 108.7 percent. In contrast, mostly due to the removal of the Japanese Americans, other racial groups not classified under white or black (except for Hispanics who were classified by census takers as white) declined by nearly half.<sup>77</sup>

As a result of the strong population growth of the city of Los Angeles and an estimated wartime population increase of thirty-one percent for Los Angeles County, the region appeared destined for a bright future.<sup>78</sup> Adding to the encouraging picture was the easing of restrictions on building materials. With plenty of open space remaining outside the central city, Los Angeles expected to handle its burgeoning population growth by building new residences. During the first nine months of 1945, a total of 21,916 building permits were issued by the city, a number more than double that of either Detroit or New York City.<sup>79</sup>

Another positive indicator of Los Angeles's postwar economic strength was the large-scale conversion of war production plants into peacetime factories.<sup>80</sup> Many of those buying and converting war plants were companies from outside the region. During the war, thirty-one eastern and midwestern manufacturers bought property in Los Angeles County. Following the war's conclusion, such companies as Sylvania Electric, General

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residential properties to minorities was in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1866. A Los Angeles case, *Barrows v. Jackson* (1953), closed an important loophole by ruling out damage suits against the seller of a property covered by restrictive covenant. For description and background on the Los Angeles case, see Loren Miller, "Scotching Restrictive Covenants," in John W. Caughey and Laree Caughey, eds., *Los Angeles: Biography of a City* (Berkeley, 1976), 388–391.

77. Special U.S. census figures on population characteristics of Los Angeles City on January 28 1946, are broken down in Security-First, *Monthly Summary* (Sept. 1946).

78. *Ibid.*

79. In comparison, Detroit was ranked second nationally with 9,965 permits followed by New York City with 9,707. *Los Angeles Times*, Special Mid-Winter Edition, Jan. 2, 1946.

80. Security-First, *Monthly Summary* (Feb. 1946).



Motors, and Quaker Oats all opened large branch factories in Los Angeles. Approximately one-eighth of all the new businesses started in the United States in 1946 were begun in southern California, thus adding to the region's economic promise.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the termination of large war contracts following the war's conclusion in August 1945, Los Angeles retained its close ties with the federal government. Among the key developments emanating from the war experience was the establishment of a large aerospace industry in southern California with an important economic relationship with the military. At the war's conclusion, military authorities chose Los Angeles as the site for the government's first "think tank," the RAND Corporation. Standing for "Research and Development," RAND brought military authorities and scientists together to discuss military contingencies and defense strategies.<sup>82</sup>

Los Angeles also remained throughout the war a leading fashion center. Between 1940 and 1945 employment in the city's garment industry grew by approximately twenty percent. Ironically, the greatest boom during the war in the garment industry came not from its tremendous production of parachutes, life preservers, and military outfits, but in the production of clothing that reflected the outdoor and informal living style characteristic of Los Angeles. Among the best individual customers were visiting military personnel, many of whom were taken with the region's temperate climate and natural beauty.<sup>83</sup>

Also benefitting from the war was the city's entertainment industry. It lured some of the world's greatest talent to Los Angeles by offering high paying work and a place of refuge from the destruction of Europe. According to cultural historian Peter Gay, "The exiles Hitler made were the greatest collection of transplanted intellect, talent, and scholarship the world has ever seen."<sup>84</sup> Hollywood, in particular, benefitted from this great talent

81. "The Undiscovered City," *Fortune*, XXXIV (June 1949), 160.

82. Fred Kaplan, "Scientists at War: The Birth of the RAND Corporation," *American Heritage*, XXXIV (1983), 49-64.

83. The garment industry in Los Angeles in 1944 employed 35,000 workers and was selling eighty-five percent of its product east of the Rockies. Carey McWilliams, *California the Great Exception* (New York, 1949), 218-220; "Los Angeles' Little Cutters," *Fortune*, XXXI (May 1945), 134-139.

84. Peter Gay, "Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider," in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 11-12.

because of the employment opportunities it offered for writers, musicians, and artists. Although the number of European war refugees in southern California totaled no more than ten thousand, the presence of such emigrés as Arnold Schoenberg, Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Ernest Gold, and Erich Korngold helped Los Angeles break out of its cultural provincialism and ascend to the ranks as one of the world's cultured cities.<sup>85</sup>

Upon the war's conclusion, Los Angeles remained a popular destination for those in search of better lives and economic opportunity. Even with the city's well publicized problems of smog-filled air, congested streets, inadequate housing, racial tension, and a broken sewer system, to name but a few of the wartime afflictions, newcomers continued to pour in. Much of the city's attraction remained the industrial base that had been developed by the war. No longer dependent on the investment monies and raw materials from the regions east of the Rockies, Los Angeles, in partnership with the federal government, developed a self-sustaining economy that was oriented toward future regional growth and technological innovation. As the *Los Angeles Times* explained in late December 1945:

The story of the west's great industrial future has spread over the nation and like the story of the discovery of gold, it is luring hopeful men whose dreams are spun of golden opportunity.<sup>86</sup>

In summation, the Second World War brought forth a new West, a new Los Angeles. So powerful was the war's impact that the once "small town" of Los Angeles had by 1943 become home to one in forty Americans.<sup>87</sup> And unlike most war boom areas, Los Angeles's new inhabitants decided to remain in the city. Indeed, many invited friends and relatives to join them. This new population of footloose people sought government housing and jobs and looked for the urban advantages of good schools, pleasant neighborhoods, and a California life-style of automobiles and easy access to work, shops, and recreation. The Second World War consequently gave them a taste of paradise. Thus, in reducing the war's impact on Los Angeles to the simplest of terms, it is correct to say, "The 'war' made Los Angeles."

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85. Nash, *American West Transformed*, 195.

86. *Los Angeles Times*, Dec. 18, 1945.

87. *Hearings on Congested Areas*, 1761.