

1940-1945

Overview

World War II was in many ways a “total war” for the United States. As the industrial machine of the nation revved up to fight the war, more women and African Americans entered the industrial workforce. United States factories produced 100,000 tanks and armored vehicles, 41 trillion rounds of ammunition, more than 200 submarines, and more than 300,000 aircraft for the war effort. Families rationed food and grew victory gardens to support the troops. Most labor unions pledged not engage in strikes during the war.

Labor Related Issues of the Period

- Women and African Americans enter the work force in large numbers as the main work force of white males go to war.
- Labor unions pledge not to strike during the duration of the conflict.

Labor Related Events of the Period

1940 In *Apex Hosiery Co. v. Leader*, the Supreme Court ruled that a sit-down strike is not an illegal restraint of trade under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in the absence of intent to control trade.

John L. Lewis resigned as CIO president to be replaced by Philip Murray.

1941 The United Auto Workers were recognized by Ford Motor Company. They sign a union-shop agreement- the first in the auto industry.

The United States entered World War II on December 8.

The AFL and the CIO announce a no-strike pledge for the duration of the war.

1942 The United Steelworkers of America was created to replace the Steel Workers Organizing Committee first established in 1936 by the CIO.

President Roosevelt establishes the National War Labor Board to determine procedures for settling labor disputes.

The National War Labor Board establishes a procedure for wartime wage adjustments.

The Stabilization Act gives President Roosevelt the authority to stabilize wages based on September 15, 1942 levels.

1943 Roosevelt made an executive order to create a Committee on Fair Employment Practices to eliminate employment discrimination in war industries based on race, creed, color or national origin.

The Smith-Connally (War Labor Disputes Act) authorized plant seizure if needed to avoid interference with the war effort.

1944 There are 18,600,000 union workers in the US, 3,500,000 are women.

1945 World War II ends.

The CIO affiliated with the newly created World Federation of Trade Unions. The AFL did not join because it felt the labor organizations of the Soviet Union were not "free and democratic".

Important Concepts

Committee on Fair Employment Practices, employment discrimination, no-strike pledge