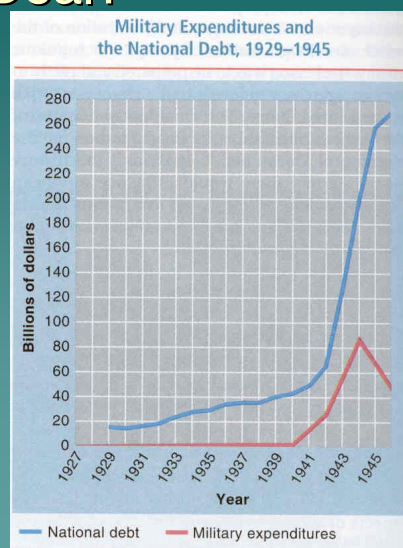


Mobilizing Women for War



War as Continuation of New Deal?

- ◆ Priming the Pump or fiscal activism
 - Federal budget 10X of New Deal
- ◆ transform economic machinery for military purposes



Women in the War Work Force

- ◆ 16.4 million served in the military
 - 4 million in WWI
- ◆ female labor force grew 14.5 million (1941) to 19.5 million (1945)
 - 1 million additional in WWI
- ◆ primary growth rate for white women over 35
 - married women become the majority of wage earners for the first time
 - African American already had 90% labor force participation in 1940, but larger numbers left domestic service for higher-paying jobs in manufacturing



3

Blurring but persistent distinctions

- ◆ pink collar and blue collar
- ◆ unequal earnings \$31.21/week compared to \$54.65/week for men
- ◆ Unions advocate for equal pay for equal work to protect dewaging of jobs
 - Women's membership grew from 800,000 (1940) to 3 million (1944)
- ◆ Executive Order 8802
 - banning discrimination in defense industries and government
 - appointed Fair Employment Practices Committee



“At times it gets to be a pain in the neck when the man who is supposed to show you work stops showing it to you because you have nicely but firmly asked him to keep his hands on his own knees; or when you have refused a date with someone and ever since then he has done everything in his power to make your work more difficult.”

4

Families in Wartime

- ◆ marriage
 - at least 1 million more people married between 1940-1943 than expected without war
 - marrying younger (20.3 years median age for women)
 - rise in divorce rate 16/100 in 1940 to 27/100 in 1944
- ◆ childcare
 - War Manpower Commission estimated 2 million children needed childcare
 - Federally funded day-care centers served 600,000 children
 - 5x increase in juvenile delinquency

5

Women in the Military

- ◆ Before WWII, women served primarily as nurses and clerical workers
- ◆ 350,000 women served in WWII - regular military status



6

Challenging and reinforcing boundaries

- ◆ Can one be a Lady and a Soldier?
 - not in combat situations
 - viewed as substitutes for men
 - limited promotional opportunities and authority over male soldiers
- ◆ racial segregation/exclusion
- ◆ Sexual regulation
 - dismissal for pregnancy but not provided with contraceptives
 - Screening for lesbianism
- ◆ Sexual Opportunities



WASP (Women's Airforce Service Pilots)

7

Long-term impact of War World II on Gender Roles?

- ◆ Women as reserve labor army
 - 2x dismissal rate after the war
 - return to sex-typed work
- ◆ continued involvement of older, married women in the labor force after the war
- ◆ experience as basis of women's movement in the 1960s?
 - “My mother warned me when I took the job that I would never be the same. She said, ‘You will never want to go back to being a housewife.’ She was right, it definitely did. At Boeing I found a freedom and an independence I had never known. After the war I could never go back to playing bridge again, being a clubwoman and listening to a lot of inanities when I knew there were things you could use your mind for. The war changed my life completely.”
- ◆ Inez Sauer, Seattle, Washington

8