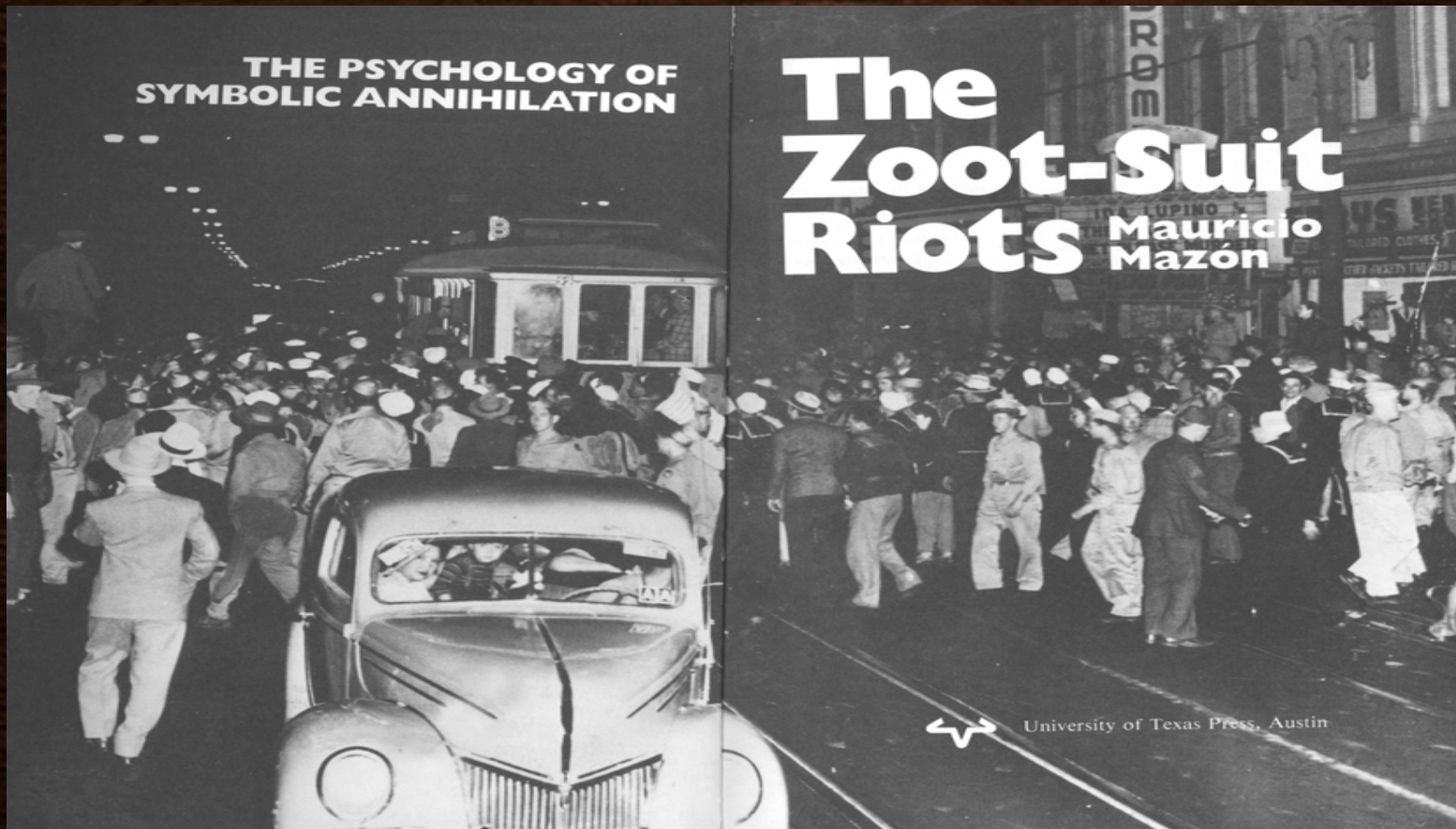


# PPT: WWII and Social Tensions

# ZOOT SUIT RIOTS



Primary Content: The Americans' Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Images as Cited.

[http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/center/events/Sleepy\\_Lagoon/SleepyLagCol.htm](http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/center/events/Sleepy_Lagoon/SleepyLagCol.htm)

- Many of the tensions between the Chicano community and the sailors existed because the servicemen walked through Chicano neighborhoods on the way back to their barracks after nights of drinking.
- On May 31, 1943, a group of white sailors on leave clashed with a group of young Hispanics in the downtown area. One sailor, Joe Dacy Coleman, was badly injured.
- In response, 50 white sailors gathered and headed out to downtown and East Los Angeles, which was the center of the Hispanic community.



- The sailors attacked young people, especially targeting males in “zoot suits.”
- In many instances, the police intervened by arresting Hispanic youths for disturbing the peace. The police left the sailors to the military justice system.
- The violence escalated over the ensuing days. Thousands of servicemen joined the attack.
- Many African Americans assisted the Chicano community by providing vehicles and weapons to fight back against the Caucasian sailors.



- The violence only subsided when military authorities intervened on June 7. They declared that Los Angeles would be off-limits to all military personnel. Of the nine sailors that were arrested, eight were released with no charges and one had to pay a small fine.



# Why was WWII a turning point in the Civil Rights Movement?

1. Many Black soldiers had served their country in two world wars and were military heroes
2. America was fighting for freedom in Europe when America was an unjust country itself
3. US soldiers overseas saw countries which were not segregated and felt they deserved the same



- over 2.5 million black men registered for the draft and one million served as draftees or volunteers in all of the branches of the Armed Forces during conflict.
- by 1944, 145,000 black men served in the US Army Air Force, including the 99th Fighter Squadron, popularly known as the Tuskegee Airmen.
- segregated combat support groups.

➤ The Navy only allowed blacks to serve as mess attendants

➤ pressure from President FDR forced the Navy to start recruiting blacks in April 1942 for service.

➤ Despite its goal of recruiting 14,000 volunteers in the first year, blacks never made up more than 5 percent of the entire Navy.

➤ Even FDR refuse to integrate whites and black in the armed services



The poet Langston Hughes, for example, expressed this sentiment in his piece “Nazi and Dixie Nordics.”

“The Germans are the victims of a mass psychosis,” says an American sociologist. “It will take drastic measures to control them when peace comes.” These people were talking about Germany. To a Negro, they might just as well have been speaking of white Southerners in Dixie. Our local Nordics have a mass psychosis too, when it comes to race. As the Hitlerites treat the Jews, so they treat the Negroes, in varying degrees of viciousness ranging from the denial of educational opportunities to the denial of employment, from buses that pass Negroes by to jailers who beat and torture Negro prisoners, from the denial of the ballot to the denial of the right to live.





# Double V- Campaign

- “Democracy: Victory at home, Victory Abroad”
- major objective of the campaign was to encourage blacks to support the war effort but fight for civil rights.
- wage a “two-pronged attack” against those who would enslave us “at home and those who abroad would enslave us. **WE HAVE A STAKE IN THIS FIGHT . . . WE ARE AMERICANS TOO!**”



- In response to the blatant discrimination in the workplace and the military, A. Philip Randolph launched the March on Washington Movement (MOWM), which helped organize thousands of people of African Americans to march on the nation's capital in 1941
- Demanded that President FDR issue an executive order banning discrimination in the defense industry.
- FDR agreed to meet with Randolph and other march leaders in June 1941.



REGISTER NOW!

To March on Washington

TUESDAY

JULY 1st

For Action Now

Negro March on  
Washington Committee

2289 SEVENTH AVENUE

New York Committee

I will participate in the March to Washington  
so as to cause the President of the United  
States to abolish discrimination in defense in-  
dustry and armed services.

As Our Commander in Chief  
Our Race is appealing to  
you for the Rights for a livelihood

ADDRESS *Tried of Jim Crowism*  
*It Must End!*

TEL. *Mrs Anna Williams*  
*56 Miller St Newark NJ*

391  
6/25/41

CALL TO  
NEGRO  
AMERICA

NEGRO MARCH ON WASHINGTON

FOR

J O B S

IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

TUESDAY, JULY 1st, 1941

Negro March on Washington Committee for actual  
participation in National Defense.

New York Office  
2289 - 7th AVENUE

Brooklyn Office  
1660 FULTON STREET

N. J. URBAN LEAGUE

FOR SOCIAL WORK AMONG NEGROES

58 WEST MARKET ST.  
NEWARK, N. J.

## WHY SHOULD WE MARCH?

### What Are Our Immediate Goals?

1. To mobilize five million Negroes into one militant mass for pressure.
2. To assemble in Chicago the last week in May, 1943, for the celebration of

### "WE ARE AMERICANS - TOO" WEEK

And to ponder the question of Non-Violent Civil Disobedience and Non-Cooperation, and a Mass March On Washington.



15,000 Negroes Assembled at St. Louis, Missouri  
20,000 Negroes Assembled at Chicago, Illinois  
23,500 Negroes Assembled at New York City  
Millions of Negro Americans all Over This Great  
Land Claim the Right to be Free!

FREE FROM WANT!  
FREE FROM FEAR!  
FREE FROM JIM CROW!

*"Winning Democracy for the Negro is Winning the War  
for Democracy." — A. Philip Randolph*

# Executive Order 8802

- FDR gave in and gave this order which
  1. Ended all segregation/discrimination in the armed forces
  2. Did the same for all government jobs
  3. Government would support an end to discrimination in all American jobs



FDR also created a temporary Fair Employment Practices Committee to help ensure that defense manufacturers would not practice racial discrimination