Cruel irony – blacks were fighting for the human rights that they did not have

**Social Affluence Society:**
Look at changes in America as a result of the Second world War

**Black Americans**

**Women in America**

**Japanese Americans during WWII**

**Trade Unions**

**Race**
United races across society, however discrimination was still rampant, especially in the military

Some blacks were treated less well than Axis prisoners

1939: Blacks earned 40% of whites

1945: 60%

White employees often went on strike against black workers – June 1943, 25,000 white workers struck at Packard’s engine Plant in Detroit (urban area) when management proposed to employ two black workers

Attempt to end racism: **Executive Order 8802**

Outlawed racial discrimination in defence industries, enabling tens of thousands of African Americans to get jobs during the war

1943, Detroit, 34 people were killed, 29 of whom were black

**Philip Randolph** – union leader representing **The Brotherhood of sleeping car porters**

Important to racial progress: **National Association for the advancement of Coloured People (NAACP)**, and **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)**

1941 Randolph planned a march on Washington, concerning Roosevelt who then passed the Executive Order 8802 – federal government directive on equal pay, and ends discrimination in the armed forces, black pilot + army officers for the first time in American history

**Randolph** inspired – notably **James Farmer** who set up CORE in 1942

**Post-war Prosperity**
US economy experienced a period of growth, which was unprecedented in world history, after the Second World War. It only possessed 7% of the population, but it produced 50% of the world’s manufactured goods. Also produced 43% of the world’s electricity, 57% of the world’s steel and 62% of the world’s oil. 1930’s unemployment had disappeared. 1945 stood at 1.9%, only rising to 4% in a temporary slump 1950. 20% of families lived below the poverty line: 1/3 homes had no running water and 40% had no flushing toilets. End of 1940’s average American had an income fifteen times greater than average European. Poorest in the USA were rich by European standards. Harlem (one of the poorer areas of NYC), ranked within the top five nations in the world. Poor rural areas e.g. Harlan Country, Kentucky, 2/3 of homes would have TV’s and 3/5 a car by the early 1950’s. Construction Industry received a major boost – building of suburbs became more inclined. Cape Cod Box house – with four rooms, (tens of thousands constructed) – were affordable and mass produced. A Bendix washing machine was also thrown in to tempt buyers. End of 1950’s over 30% of Americans lived in the Suburbs.

Motor industry key indicator of booms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cars Sold</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>69,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>2.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>5.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>7.9 million</td>
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</tbody>
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1950: 40 million cars on the roads which would boost the oil industry and highway construction. Luxury goods and inessentials multiplied – sale of household appliances went up five times. 1952: Americans spent $255 million on chewing gum and $23 million on mouthwash.