

California Cities and the Hurricane of Change: World War II in the San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego Metropolitan Areas

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Beginning at least as early as the world wars, observers have debated the place of war in twentieth-century Western civilization. For example, from the publication of John U. Nef's *War and Human Progress: An Essay on the Rise of Industrial Civilization* (1952) to the appearance of Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (1985), historians have argued that war has had a ruinous affect on civilizations. In *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000* (1982), William McNeill has challenged this argument, noting many positive spinoffs of armed conflict. So has Gerald Nash in *The American West Transformed* (1985) and other works. Taking one or the other approach, scholars have written numerous books about war and society. Yet until recently, few of them have written about war and urban society, broadly conceived. Quite a number of works have appeared which inquire into some specialized aspect of the relationship between war and cities, but not many comprehensive studies have emerged. It is the purpose of this article to investigate the *general* relationship of cities and World War II in a California context.¹

1. John U. Nef, *War and Human Progress: An Essay on the Rise of Industrial Civilization* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952); Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great*

I will argue that the war had an ambiguous influence on history. The war produced profound revolutionary changes in warfare itself and, by extension, in foreign affairs. It created a dramatically new balance of power in place of the long-standing European system of nation-state pluralism. In place of a power vacuum in Central Europe, the war spawned a bipolar world without a power vacuum separating the superpowers. And by introducing the atomic bomb, World War II raised the cost of *great power warfare* so high that it could no longer be undertaken. Until August 6, 1945, politicians could afford to pay the awful costs that wars exacted. World War I killed millions of men, and World War II killed millions more. But until that momentous date in the late summer of '45, politicians had been willing to pay these appalling costs because they were not yet prohibitive. With the introduction of atomic weapons, these burdens at last became exorbitant. At this point in time, humankind had finally become experienced enough in the use of great-power violence to know that they had had enough.

This was true revolutionary change, to which nothing in California's home-front war experience can possibly be compared. Besides, most American home-front experiences were distinctly conservative. Many changes occurred, but they were either ephemeral, like the West Coast shipbuilding boom, they were not as immense as we have imagined, or they represented profound continuities with the past. Thus, I will argue that the war had an ambiguous effect, or perhaps even a contradictory or ironic one. The global conflict of the 1940s produced revolutionary effects abroad, i.e., in warfare and foreign policy, but largely conservative effects at home in urban California.²

Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000 (New York, 1987); Gerald D. Nash, *The American West in the Twentieth Century: A Short History of an Urban Oasis* (Albuquerque, 1977); Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington, 1985); Nash, *World War II and the West: Reshaping the Economy* (Lincoln, 1990); Alan S. Milward, *War, Economy and Society, 1939-1945* (Berkeley, 1977), 60-74; Marc S. Miller, *The Irony of Victory: World War II and Lowell Massachusetts* (Urbana, 1988).

2. William H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000* (Chicago, 1982.) I am indebted to Professor McNeill for the idea of violence experience. For the evolution of warfare, see Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, and McNeill, *Pursuit of Power*. McNeill actually traces the evolution of warfare over a much longer span of time and compares the institution between East and West.

Urban California is an ideal place to examine the joint venture of war and urban society. California cities are the most important urban areas in the twentieth-century West; they are the most industrialized; they have been heavily affected by war and defense; and they have almost completely replaced the countryside as the preferred place of residence. California is the quintessential urban society. It is also the most perfect manifestation of a defense society, until very recently leaning heavily on that component of its economy.

If the theses of John U. Nef-William Kennedy and William McNeill-Gerald Nash can be considered the interpretive poles between which the discussion of war and society has vacillated, the reigning interpretation of war and the West is closer to McNeill's view than to Nef's. It is widely held that World War II has had a transformative effect on the cities of the West. Three fundamental assumptions seem to underlie this argument: that the war created unprecedented change in the West, that the change amounted to progress, and, therefore, that the Second World War laid the foundation for the future. There is a kind of despondent corollary which argues that the war set the stage for the problems of the future, like ghettos and slums. However, although many of the examples of transformation are drawn from the Golden State, the cities of California do not seem to fit this argument. This article will argue that, in some respects, the effect of the war transformed California cities toward the future; in others, the conflict created disruption and regression; in yet other areas, like race and ethnic relations, the war stimulated contradictory tendencies. In some cases, like civil defense and transportation, the conflict produced novel situations which were quickly abandoned after the war; and finally, in yet other instances, such as industrialization and population, the influence of the war merely built on profound continuities with the past. In addition, several trends that have been attributed to the Second World War, especially the explosion of the electronics and aerospace industries, came only after the Korean War, rearmament, and the Cold War added a postwar stimulus. This article argues for a more complex World War II impact than the transformation hypothesis allows. In general, this view disagrees with the notion that the Second World War transformed the California part of the Urban West, either for

good or ill. Change was marked, but it did not all point in the same direction.³

Much of it was quite ephemeral, especially that in the realm of community. One of the most striking war-related changes in California cities was the renaissance of community. Ever since the European sociologists laid the foundation for the study of urbanism, cities have been thought to undermine a sense of community. In their simple dichotomy of modernization, pre-modern, "gemeinschaft" places were loaded with community and big cities were equally lacking in it. Big cities created a lonely crowd, to employ a later phrase. According to Thomas Bender, it is possible to experience both "gemeinschaft" and "gesellschaft" at once, even in a metropolis, but clearly, big cities destroyed many of the commonalities typical of small places. World War II temporarily reversed that pattern. The war was an everyday experience which all shared and to which nearly everyone contributed. The Second Great War put perhaps 16,000,000 persons under arms and enticed another 15,000,000 migrants to become defense workers or camp followers. Hardly any family in a nation of 130,000,000 could have remained untouched by this experience of mobility alone. In addition, sports fans lost the Rose Bowl; masses of retail businessmen lost their businesses; construction contractors stopped building subdivisions and began erecting war housing; and the young, disabled, black, female, Mexican, and elderly marched into the war factories and shipyards to replace the absent soldiers. Residents waited in line for gasoline, restaurant seats, and movie tickets, and teachers sold war bonds and stamps in the public schools.⁴

Simultaneously, and perhaps counterintuitively, as the war created this greater common national experience, it also encouraged local identification. Cities, as cities, organized for the

3. Nash, *American West Transformed*; Nash, *World War II and the West*; Keith E. Collins, *Black Los Angeles: The Maturing of the Ghetto, 1940-1950* (Saratoga, Calif., 1980); Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis* (Berkeley, 1985), 241-242; Wollenberg, *Marinship at War: Shipbuilding and Social Change in Wartime Sausalito* (Berkeley, 1990), 1-2; James J. Rawls and Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History* (6th ed., New York, 1983), 334.

4. Francis E. Merrill, *Social Problems on the Home Front: A Study of Wartime Influences* (New York, 1948), 17.

conflict and drew on all the allegiances and ties in their own distinct emotional banks. Los Angeles fought to become a federal office center and port of embarkation. Oakland and San Diego contended for more government housing, and San Franciscans strove to sidestep it. Each of the cities sought to avoid becoming congested manpower centers for fear of losing the lucrative employment-generating defense contracts. Mayors Roger Lapham, Angelo Rossi, and Fletcher Bowron toured their cities exhorting the residents, lauding the contributions of their ethnic constituents, and extending the umbrella of community to them. The *San Francisco Chronicle* did a magnificent job of publicizing the war activities of the Italians, the Chinese, the French, the Germans, the Irish, the Jews, and, in fact, every neighborhood. They praised each ethnic group and insisted on its legitimacy within the community.

Civil defense had the same effect. By bringing thousands of people in each metropolis into an organization to defend their own cities (165,000 in Los Angeles alone, and in San Francisco another 80,000), the war emphasized the idea of community again. It also gave people a public function that most of them did not have in peacetime. Polo players, mounted on their own ponies, patrolled the beaches of San Francisco and plane spotters sat atop buildings in Los Angeles and the hills in San Diego reporting to the filter centers. Block wardens stocked emergency depots, surveyed everything from scrap metal to garden hoses, stockpiled sand, and kept count and track of their neighbors. San Francisco alone enrolled 20,000 air-raid wardens. Remarkably enough, in Los Angeles men, women, and children raised enough money in bond sales literally to buy five ships for the United States Navy. Working people rented rooms to shipyard employees in east Oakland, and public and private secondary schools and colleges offered war preparatory courses in Russian, aviation, aeronautics, mechanics, first aid, and nursing. Catholic churches converted their basements to weekend military dormitories; Jewish temples dispatched their rabbis to the nearby camps for services, and Protestant churches fed hungry servicemen. People stood in silence for ten minutes in the chambers of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to honor their sons at war, and millions gathered every evening around the radios

to hear of their fate in battle. On Mothers' Day in 1942, all the stations closed their regular radio channels in San Francisco and simultaneously broadcast a single prayer. During this five-minute period, the city was cut off from "the outside world of general broadcasting." Hotels, theaters, restaurants, clubs, and automobiles were urged to tune in. On December 7, 1942, Station KFVB, Los Angeles, devoted an entire twenty-four hours to a tribute to the men "who gave their lives in the treacherous Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor one year ago." The Los Angeles Department of Playgrounds and Recreation staged "patriotic plays, pageants, operettas, and civic programs" by children and adults at the city playgrounds. Thousands more clustered to listen to patriotic speeches at the Hollywood Bowl or to see battles reenacted in Kezar Stadium or the Los Angeles Coliseum. Women literally danced their shoes off at USO functions, sometimes after a long bus ride to get to the scene of the merriment. Other women drove jeeps, rolled bandages, knitted stockings, hoarded fats, wrote to soldier pen pals, and collected fares on the trolley platforms. Everyone indignantly read the *San Francisco Chronicle* for lists of draft dodgers and anxiously scanned the *Los Angeles Times* for a litany of war fatalities.⁵ Seldom do urbanites share such common experiences.

More than any other event, the blackouts united a disparate urban people. Perhaps modern sports spectacles, like the World Series or Super Bowl, come closest to paralleling the blackouts, but no prewar contemporary civilian event did. The first blackout in San Francisco, just a few days after Pearl Harbor, is illustrative. Suddenly, at 7:32 p.m., over a million people were without auto lamps, door lights, bill-board signs, street lamps, window displays, home lighting that might have shone on the streets, neon signs,

5. Marilyn S. Johnson, *The Second Gold Rush: Oakland and the East Bay in World War II* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993); Arthur Verge, "The Impact of the Second World War on Los Angeles, 1939-1945" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1988), 31-57; Roger W. Lotchin, *Fortress California, 1910-1961: From Warfare to Welfare* (New York, 1992), 151; San Francisco Civil Defense Council, Press Release, February 21, 1942, 1; Ibid, "Press Release, May 2, 1942," 1; Ibid., "Press Releases, Jan. 27, 31, Feb. 18, 21, March 12, April 1, May 2, 1942; Los Angeles Civil Defense Council, "Bulletin," Dec. 12, 1942, p. 1; Los Angeles defense Council "Guide Sheet, no. 82," Feb. 12, 1942, p. 1; Los Angeles County Defense Council, Committee of One Hundred, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Committee of One Hundred," 13; San Francisco, Board of Supervisors, *Journal of the Proceedings*, Nov. 16, 1942, p. 2541.

bridge illumination, flashlights, monumental flood lighting, illuminated building fronts, and even power to drive the street-cars. For two hours and forty minutes the darkness of war and the experiences within it joined a fragmented urban area together. Before it ended, war would do so again many times. Simultaneously, therefore, urban Californians were reminded of their membership in several communities—national, urban, ethnocultural, and neighborhood.⁶

Besides being ephemeral, much of the war's impact on government was downright disruptive and regressive. Historian Robert Spinney has argued perceptively that World War II encouraged the modernization of southern urban government. However, in California, that institution was already modern. Since well before 1800, American urban governments had progressively become more professional and omnicompetent. City governments in 1700 exercised mostly regulatory functions and provided few services. Beginning with the creation of police departments, however, city governments furnished ever more benefits. For example, besides supplying the fire, police, sewers, record keeping, sanitation, water, parks, and transit services normal to cities, they provided many more. San Francisco, perhaps the most advanced city-service state among California governments, furnished a municipal opera house, grand enough to host the later United Nations Conference; a municipal restaurant, the Chalet; public housing; and a city airport. And although music is hardly an inherently governmental matter, the city provided a municipal band and chorus which regularly toured its neighborhoods, regaling its citizens with culture.⁷

World War II encouraged further elaboration of city government. It forced greater federal-city cooperation (and conflict) than previously. But aside from encouraging intergovernmental relations, the war mostly disrupted the evolution of urban government. For one thing, it forced cities into a "stretchout" of their work force which had to take on longer hours in order

6. *San Francisco Chronicle*, Dec. 13, 1941; *San Diego Union*, Dec. 12, 1941.

7. Jon C. Teaford, *The Municipal Revolution in America: Origins of Modern Urban Government, 1650–1825* (Chicago, 1975); Teaford, *The Unheralded Triumph: City Government in America, 1870–1900* (Baltimore, 1984); Robert Spinney, "The Transformation of Southern Cities during World War II: Nashville—A Case Study," *Journal of Southern History* (forthcoming).

to compensate for the loss of employees to the draft or to higher paying war industries. Secondly, cities had to depend on a large volunteer force to offset the loss of ambulance drivers, firemen, and police officers, a reversion to eighteenth-century practice. For example, these amateurs directed traffic, wrote parking tickets, or patrolled the warehouse district, freeing up the police for heavier duties at the sailors' night spots or in conveying military materiel through town.⁸ Thirdly, from a programatic standpoint, the war forced its exclusive set of priorities on cities, displacing their own. For instance, the war neatly reversed the trend of transportation development, especially in Los Angeles and Los Angeles County. The planned freeway system had to be postponed for the duration. Far from paving the way to the future, the war discontinued paving almost altogether.⁹ It also encouraged the late-depression renaissance of public transit and the even more archaic move toward pedestrianism. The conflict greatly overloaded transit, which in turn caused facilities to decline. Between physical deterioration and the inability to run the trolleys and buses because of labor shortages and union and management opposition to hiring women and minorities, many people resorted to walking. Both this extraordinary reversion to walking-city conditions and the renaissance of transit were probably desirable for the long run, but they were certainly not the wave of California's immediate transportation future.

Similar disruptions took place in other areas of public life. Public, or reform, housing was elbowed aside by war housing in every city.¹⁰ On the other hand, municipal recreation had to

8. Peace Officers Association of the State of California, "Proceedings" (1942), 24-50; San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *Journal* XL (Jan. 2, 1945), 53; Senate Special Committee Investigating the National Defense Program, *Hearings on Investigation of the National Defense Program*, 77 Cong., 1 sess. (1941), 1813-1825, 1828-1832. The problem of undermanning arose before the war began. House Committee on Naval Affairs, Subcommittee Investigating Congested Areas, *Hearings on Investigation of Congested Areas*, 78 Cong., 1 sess. (1943), 492-496, 404-415; 676-671, 759-770, 817-825, 870-880, 1811, 1837, 1863; San Francisco Civil Defense Council, Press Releases, Jan. 6, Feb. 18, March 3, 1942; Teaford, *Municipal Revolution*.

9. Los Angeles Central Business District Association, *Transit Study, 1944: Los Angeles Metropolitan Area* (Los Angeles, 1944.)

10. Los Angeles County, *A Review of the Activities of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, 1938-43* (Los Angeles, 1943); San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *Journal of Proceedings*, XL (Jan. 2, 1945), 150.

be exaggerated because of the presence of thousands of service men and women and the decline of pleasure driving. The government improved the municipal airports, but not as much as cities wanted them improved. And military transport partially shouldered civilian air travel out of the way. In addition, the emergency bore heavily on the infrastructure of cities. Los Angeles and its sister cities and several Bay area communities had to pollute their beaches because they could not get priorities to improve the war-induced, greatly overloaded sewers and disposal systems.¹¹ Even more damaging, the conflict deranged city finances, forcing cities to spend more money while simultaneously damaging their tax bases. Finally, World War II exerted an ambiguous influence on city planning. It forced cities to plan for war programs, but took much land out of their grasp and disrupted planning for beaches, recreation, sewers, highways, airports, transit, and housing. Because it was virtually a military garrison, San Diego was something of an exception to this rule. Overall, however, the conflict temporarily arrested the trend toward the city-services state.¹²

The war did not have a transformative effect on industrialization either, one of the foremost measures of western independence. Our misunderstanding of this problem has perhaps been caused by the fact that western wartime industrialization has usually been studied out of its national context. Western cities, especially California ones, did advance industrially during World War II, but so did everyone else. The global conflict did not change the relative standing of the sections, nor that of California. Moreover, it is by no means certain that the California part of the West was a colony in 1939.¹³

11. Metcalf and Eddy, Engineers, *Sewage Disposal for Los Angeles and Associated Communities: A Report to the Board of Public Works of the City of Los Angeles* (Boston, Mass., 1944.)

12. Fletcher Bowron to Hiram Johnson, Sept. 30, 1942, Bowron Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.; Martin J. Schiesl, "City Planning and the Federal Government in World War II: The Los Angeles Experience," *California History*, LIX (1980), 126-143; Gerald D. Nash, "Planning for the Postwar City: The Urban West in World War II," *Arizona and the West*, XXVII (1985), 99-112; Roger W. Lotchin, "California Cities and the Hand of Mars: City Planning and the Transformation Hypothesis," *Pacific Historical Review*, LX (1993), 143-171.

13. Since Paul Rhode's article in this issue addresses the question of the colonial status of the West, I will not develop this topic.

Contemporary commentators have recently informed the media that “Before the war, California was behind the national economy because [it] had little industry.”¹⁴ In truth, California cities had a considerable *absolute* amount. If industrialization is measured by the absolute number of production jobs, in 1939 California ranked ninth in the country, just ahead of North Carolina and just behind Indiana. By the same measure, metropolitan Los Angeles and San Francisco ranked as the seventh and thirteenth leading manufacturing centers in the United States, which indicates that they possessed more than a “little industry.” Los Angeles had more than Cleveland, St. Louis, Buffalo, Milwaukee, Baltimore, Providence, Cincinnati, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Youngstown, and Rochester, among the top eighteen. Thus in an absolute sense, the argument that California had hardly any industry before World War II is exaggerated. Yet industry advanced thereafter by ninety-six percent in California metropolitan areas *during* the war, an increase of many jobs. The City of Angels alone picked up 186,000, and San Francisco-Oakland, an additional 62,000. Yet those figures did not *transform* their standing. Los Angeles moved up from seventh to fifth, and San Francisco-Oakland did not move at all—in either case, hardly a seismic shift. In terms of total production jobs, San Francisco-Oakland remained in thirteenth place and produced fewer additional industrial jobs during the war than any of the other top thirteen cities except Baltimore. The war caused San Francisco *to fall farther behind* in absolute terms. This continued relative decline of San Francisco is an important continuity and a development often overlooked by those who write about the extraordinary effect of the war boom. And although Los Angeles gained in the ranking and added many new jobs, it too lost ground absolutely to both Chicago and New York. Whereas Los Angeles captured 186,000 new jobs, Chicago gained 335,000 and New York, 486,000. Put another way, Los Angeles was considerably farther behind the leaders at the end of the war than it had been at the beginning, having dropped 149,000 to 300,000 jobs *farther* behind the pacesetters, Chicago and New York.

Per capita figures highlight the same point. Despite its

14. *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 5, 1992.

absolute rank in 1939, from a *per capita perspective*, the state was relatively unindustrialized. These figures take on more meaning if put into a different context. The industrial advance of urban California is often misunderstood because it is not related to population change. It is usually assumed that industrial and population change tell the same growth story. That presumption is not accurate. California was not one of the most highly industrialized states in 1939 because its large absolute number of factory jobs was stretched over a very considerable population. Both Indiana and North Carolina had about the same number of production positions, but these were matched to populations roughly half the size of California's. The war did not change this equation very much. The Golden State captured new jobs, but it also gained over three million new residents. Therefore, the state's relative position vis-à-vis the rest of the country changed only marginally. In fact, California dropped one place, from twenty-sixth to twenty-seventh. The Golden State entered the census of manufactures period in a virtual deadlock with West Virginia, but by 1947 had fallen two places behind that state. Virtually all of the other western states ranked below California, approximately between numbers thirty-two and forty-nine, and all but four western states ranked below Mississippi, both before and after the war. The two which did not also lost ground per capita. Oregon dropped from nineteenth to twenty-first, and Washington dropped four places to twenty-sixth, throwing further suspicion on the notion that the war transformed the other parts of the West outside California. These states often experienced an impressive percentage increase in industrial jobs to population, but did so largely because they started on such a low level. Conversely, some older industrial regions registered less percentage change because they were so heavily industrialized to begin with. The following tables indicate the industrial stability of the war epoch.

More charts would unduly burden the narrative, but suffice it to say that California was not a pacesetter in percentage change either. In percent change, from 1939 to 1947, of the ratio of industrial jobs to population, California, in 1947, ranked thirty-first out of forty-nine. Among those major industrial states which outpaced California were Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Penn-

Table 1: Ratio of Population to Industrial Jobs by State, 1939
 (Western states are printed in bold and southern states in italics to emphasize the Sunbelt. Because it overlaps these categories, Texas appears both ways.)¹⁵

| | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|------|----|--------------------|-------|
| 1 | Rhode Island | 6.7 | 26 | California | 25.5 |
| 2 | Conn. | 7.3 | 27 | West Virgin. | 25.6 |
| 3 | New Hampshire | 8.9 | 28 | <i>Louisiana</i> | 33.6 |
| 4 | Mass. | 9.4 | 29 | Minnesota | 35.8 |
| 5 | New Jersey | 9.6 | 30 | <i>Florida</i> | 37.1 |
| 6 | Michigan | 10.1 | 31 | Iowa | 39.2 |
| 7 | Maine | 11.4 | 32 | <i>Mississippi</i> | 40.1 |
| 8 | Pennsylvania | 11.6 | 33 | Kentucky | 45.6 |
| 9 | Ohio | 11.6 | 34 | Colorado | 48.0 |
| 10 | Indiana | 12.5 | 35 | Utah | 48.4 |
| 11 | Maryland | 12.9 | 36 | <i>Texas</i> | 51.3 |
| 12 | Illinois | 13.3 | 37 | Idaho | 53.3 |
| 13 | <i>North Caro.</i> | 13.3 | 38 | Kansas | 58.2 |
| 14 | Delaware | 13.5 | 39 | <i>Arkansas</i> | 54.6 |
| 15 | New York | 14.2 | 40 | Montana | 63.5 |
| 16 | <i>South Caro.</i> | 15.0 | 41 | Nebraska | 71.5 |
| 17 | Wisconsin | 15.8 | 42 | Wyoming | 74.9 |
| 18 | Vermont | 17.5 | 43 | Oklahoma | 84.5 |
| 19 | Oregon | 19.0 | 44 | Arizona | 84.5 |
| 20 | <i>Georgia</i> | 20.0 | 45 | DC | 86.3 |
| 21 | <i>Virginia</i> | 20.3 | 46 | Nevada | 108.3 |
| 22 | Washington | 21.0 | 47 | South Dak. | 118.6 |
| 23 | Missouri | 21.5 | 48 | New Mexico | 165.3 |
| 24 | <i>Tennessee</i> | 22.3 | 49 | North Dak. | 246.0 |
| 25 | <i>Alabama</i> | 24.5 | | | |

sylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin, and New York. So did lesser industrialized eastern states like Vermont, Missouri, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Yet it is often argued that the war created the western future, even if it did not all arrive at the same time in 1945. Therefore, we must ask about the industrial outlook of California cities at the advent of peace. Were American manufacturers betting on the industrial future of the Sunbelt *right after* the war?

15. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufactures: 1947*, vol. 3: *Statistics by States* (Washington, D.C., 1950), 1-638.

Table 2: Ratio of Population to Industrial Jobs by State, 1947¹⁶

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|-------|----|---------------------|--------|
| 1 | Connecticut | 6.1 | 26 | Washington | 19.3 |
| 2 | Rhode Island | 6.2 | 27 | California | 19.96 |
| 3 | Michigan | 7.3 | 28 | Minnesota | 20.6 |
| 4 | Massachusetts | 7.8 | 29 | Iowa | 23.3 |
| 5 | New Hampshire | 8.02 | 30 | <i>Louisiana</i> | 24.1 |
| 6 | Ohio | 8.03 | 31 | Kentucky | 28.7 |
| 7 | New Jersey | 8.03 | 32 | Colorado | 30.0 |
| 8 | Indiana | 8.6 | 33 | <i>Mississippi</i> | 31.3 |
| 9 | Pennsylvania | 8.6 | 34 | <i>Texas</i> | 31.9 |
| 10 | Illinois | 9.1 | 35 | Kansas | 32.1 |
| 11 | Wisconsin | 10.0 | 36 | <i>Arkansas</i> | 32.6 |
| 12 | Maine | 10.1 | 37 | Utah | 34.5 |
| 13 | New York | 10.4 | 38 | Nebraska | 35.5 |
| 14 | Delaware | 11.0 | 39 | Idaho | 40.3 |
| 15 | <i>North Carolina</i> | 11.6 | 40 | <i>Florida</i> | 42.0 |
| 16 | <i>South Carolina</i> | 12.04 | 41 | Montana | 43.4 |
| 17 | Maryland | 12.4 | 42 | Oklahoma | 50.4 |
| 18 | Vermont | 12.5 | 43 | Wyoming | 67.8 |
| 19 | Missouri | 14.7 | 44 | Arizona | 76.1 |
| 20 | <i>Georgia</i> | 15.3 | 45 | District Col. | 80.2 |
| 21 | Oregon | 16.5 | 46 | South Dakota | 81.0 |
| 22 | <i>Alabama</i> | 16.5 | 47 | New Mexico | 107.3 |
| 23 | <i>Tennessee</i> | 17.1 | 48 | Nevada | 156.1 |
| 24 | <i>Virginia</i> | 17.5 | 49 | North Dakota | 162.08 |
| 25 | West Virginia | 18.4 | | | |

The answer is yes, but not as much as they were betting on the Rustbelt. To verify this answer, we can look at the amount of capital invested in new plants and equipment in 1946. This was the first full year of peace, when war contracts had been or were being cancelled wholesale and peaceful pursuits resumed. Thus 1946 should tell us something about the industrial prospects of the near future. In this year the per capita amount of investment in California urban manufacturing placed it at number seventeen nationally, with about half as much per capita investment as the leading state—Indiana. Once again, most of the western states ranked between thirty-second and last place. The following table indicates the situation.

16. *Ibid.*

Table 3: Expenditures, Absolute and Per Capita Investments for New Plant and Equipment by State, 1947. Rank Ordered According to Expenditures Per Capita of the General Population.

| <i>Money figures in thousands:</i> | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <i>State</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>New Plant</i> | <i>New Equip.</i> | <i>Pop. 1950</i> | <i>Exp. Per Capita</i> |
| 1 Indiana | 302,103 | 145,722 | 156,381 | 3,932,000 | 76.83 |
| 2 Delaware | 21,137 | 5,594 | 15,543 | 318,000 | 66.46 |
| 3 New Jersey | 303,987 | 93,130 | 210,857 | 4,802,000 | 63.30 |
| 4 Ohio | 498,254 | 179,293 | 318,961 | 7,938,000 | 62.76 |
| 5 Connecticut | 116,223 | 32,855 | 83,368 | 2,001,000 | 58.08 |
| 6 Illinois | 478,431 | 168,066 | 310,365 | 8,672,000 | 55.16 |
| 7 Maryland | 123,599 | 49,106 | 74,493 | 2,306,000 | 53.59 |
| 8 Pennsylvania | 533,805 | 201,376 | 332,429 | 10,480,000 | 50.93 |
| 9 Michigan | 427,746 | 119,254 | 308,492 | 6,361,000 | 49.28 |
| 10 Wisconsin | 162,787 | 55,189 | 107,598 | 3,433,000 | 47.41 |
| 11 New Hampshire | 24,010 | 5,994 | 18,016 | 531,000 | 45.21 |
| 12 Rhode Island | 34,609 | 8,117 | 26,492 | 774,000 | 44.71 |
| 13 Massachusetts | 198,985 | 52,426 | 146,559 | 4,665,000 | 42.65 |
| 14 West Virginia | 82,332 | 27,364 | 54,968 | 2,005,000 | 41.06 |
| 15 Oregon | 61,669 | 23,435 | 38,234 | 1,519,000 | 40.59 |
| 16 Texas | 304,944 | 149,226 | 155,718 | 7,584,000 | 40.20 |
| 17 California | 410,533 | 173,235 | 237,298 | 10,413,000 | 39.42 |
| 18 Maine | 35,055 | 12,708 | 22,347 | 912,000 | 38.43 |
| 19 <i>Louisiana</i> | 97,210 | 32,597 | 64,613 | 2,670,000 | 36.40 |
| 20 Wyoming | 10,235 | 8,756 | 1,479 | 282,000 | 36.29 |
| 21 Washington | 81,476 | 28,707 | 52,762 | 2,317,000 | 35.16 |
| 22 <i>Virginia</i> | 112,383 | 33,902 | 78,481 | 3,220,000 | 34.90 |
| 23 <i>North Carolina</i> | 137,583 | 42,512 | 94,771 | 4,014,000 | 34.27 |
| 24 New York | 497,443 | 152,177 | 345,266 | 14,801,000 | 33.60 |
| 25 Missouri | 132,166 | 50,531 | 81,635 | 3,952,000 | 33.44 |
| 26 <i>South Carolina</i> | 61,744 | 20,189 | 41,555 | 2,096,000 | 29.45 |
| 27 Minnesota | 82,800 | 29,438 | 53,362 | 2,981,000 | 27.77 |
| 28 Kentucky | 77,135 | 27,197 | 49,938 | 2,913,000 | 26.47 |
| 29 <i>Tennessee</i> | 83,792 | 24,356 | 59,436 | 3,281,000 | 25.53 |
| 30 Vermont | 9,698 | 3,051 | 6,647 | 378,000 | 25.05 |
| 31 <i>Georgia</i> | 84,320 | 28,147 | 56,173 | 3,402,000 | 24.78 |
| 32 Utah | 16,988 | 4,171 | 12,817 | 687,000 | 24.72 |
| 33 Iowa | 64,695 | 23,041 | 41,654 | 2,621,000 | 24.68 |
| 34 Colorado | 32,189 | 8,406 | 23,783 | 1,307,000 | 24.62 |
| 35 <i>Alabama</i> | 72,362 | 22,752 | 49,610 | 3,053,000 | 23.70 |

Table 3, continued

| <i>Money figures in thousands:</i> | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| <i>State</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>New Plant</i> | <i>New Equip.</i> | <i>Pop. 1950</i> | <i>Exp. Per Capita</i> |
| 36 Kansas | 36,787 | 11,739 | 25,048 | 1,887,000 | 19.49 |
| 37 Idaho | 11,447 | 3,903 | 7,544 | 588,000 | 19.46 |
| 38 Nevada | 2,959 | 1,411 | 1,548 | 157,000 | 18.84 |
| 39 Florida | 50,052 | 16,117 | 33,935 | 2,729,000 | 18.51 |
| 40 Arkansas | 30,262 | 11,569 | 18,693 | 1,908,000 | 15.86 |
| 41 Nebraska | 18,402 | 6,472 | 11,930 | 1,322,000 | 13.91 |
| 42 Montana | 7,446 | 1,708 | 5,738 | 589,000 | 12.64 |
| 43 Oklahoma | 25,504 | 12,252 | 13,252 | 2,218,000 | 11.49 |
| 44 Arizona | 8,328 | 3,131 | 5,197 | 742,000 | 11.21 |
| 45 Mississippi | 22,713 | 6,626 | 16,087 | 2,164,000 | 10.49 |
| 46 New Mexico | 5,431 | 1,810 | 3,621 | 668,000 | 8.13 |
| 47 District Columbia | 4,502 | 976 | 3,526 | 769,000 | 5.85 |
| 48 South Dakota | 3,371 | 1,252 | 2,119 | 650,000 | 5.18 |
| 49 North Dakota | 2,250 | 859 | 1,391 | 620,000 | 3.62 |

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufactures, 1947*, vol. 3: *Statistics by States* (Washington, D.C., 1950), 69–658; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1953* (Washington, D.C., 1953), 19.

The good fortune of the Hoosier state reiterates the fact that the war did not damage, but rather greatly strengthened, the dominance of the East North Central part of the Midwest, the leading industrial area of the country, while not improving that of the West much at all. California was not the industrial pacesetter in new industrial investment in 1947 as a result of the war, and it was not even on the way to becoming the pacesetter.

To summarize, neither the absolute number of production jobs, nor the per capita number, nor the investment in new plants and equipment for the future indicates a revolutionary change in the sectional industrial balance of power in the United States.

Population change offers perhaps a better case for the transformation hypothesis. Speaking of demographic change, historians have made the argument that “like the Gold Rush a

century earlier, World War II was a watershed in Bay area history, ushering in revolutionary changes that dramatically affected the region's subsequent development."¹⁷ Like much of the discussion of the war, this statement contains some truth, but by and large it is objectively mistaken. The Gold Rush simile is particularly problematic. The Gold Rush truly did transform California from a largely natural, lightly populated, pastoral, Hispanic, and Native American backwater into a rapidly populating, capitalistic, American growth engine. In contrast, World War II impacted on a mature, modern, and very growth-conscious state of 7,000,000 inhabitants. When a state is born in a Gold Rush, it is not easy to find anything else in its history which is quite so unprecedented. By the same token, when a state has also lived through something as tumultuous as the boom of the 1880s or the explosion of the 1920s, it will be even more difficult to find its subsequent decades very novel.

This is especially true of population growth, as the census makes clear. To demonstrate this point, I will have to supply some more numbers, with appropriate apologies in advance for employing such dry and, at the same time, controversial material. Someone once suggested the double entendre that "statistics are a group of numbers looking for an argument."¹⁸ Given the contents of the other articles, I fear that my numbers have already found their argument, or are at least looking for it in the right place. To gauge the transformative effect of the Second World War, one ideally should look at two sets of figures, percentage growth and absolute growth.

World War II certainly accelerated population growth rates. However, to begin with, it should be remembered that California's population grew vigorously even during the Great Depression. The population increased by some twenty-one percent, which would have been considered potent in almost any other American state. So what the war did was twofold. It accelerated growth rates over the depression and partially restored the robust growth rates of earlier years. I say *partially* because the growth rates of the 1940s did not equal those of the 1920s. Much of our misreading of the forties occurs because

17. Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis*, 241–242.

18. *Washington Post*, May 24, 1992.

the war decade is too often discussed out of its historical context. Therefore, in trying to assess the demographic importance of the forties, it is useful to frame the question in comparative terms by placing that decade into the stream of history that includes the two preceding and two succeeding decades. Doing so will indicate that more cities and counties experienced their largest percentage increases, or record growth rates, in the twenties than in the forties. And these include most of the important places: Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, Alhambra, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Glendale, Long Beach, Inglewood, Monterey, Monterey County, Oakland, Palo Alto, National City, Oceanside, Pasadena, Redwood City, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Bernardino County, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, Santa Monica, and Ventura. Among the state's bigger towns and major cities of the 1970s, only Burbank, Alameda, Fresno, Stockton, and Richmond set percentage growth records in the 1940s. The growth percentages were not even unprecedented, much less revolutionary or cataclysmic.¹⁹

The *absolute* increases were not record setting or beyond the experience of urban Californians either. Historians argue correctly that the war had a more dramatic effect on the suburbs than on center cities.²⁰ Nonetheless, even suburban increases were usually well within the experience of urban Californians. For example, Los Angeles County, a good index of suburbanization, gained 1,366,000 residents during the forties but added almost as many people, 1,272,000, during the twenties, starting from a much smaller population base. The total for the 1940s is only marginally larger. One could hardly argue that the distance between the two figures represents the difference

19. I have elected to discuss population by decades for several reasons. There were intercensal counts done during the war, which estimated population from 1940 through November 1943 and which estimated it from 1940 to 1945. I have decided not to use these wartime censuses because we have no comparable figures for other decades. I could not compare growth from 1940 to 1945 with that from 1920 to 1930. At the same time, the decade figures for the 1940s would seem to give the transformation hypothesis more than its due. Some of the migrants to California after 1945 may have come because they had served there during the war and wanted to return or because their relatives had lured them there based on the initial war boom. However, some of the postwar migrants came for other reasons. So using the decade figures gives maximum justice to the transformation hypothesis.

20. Johnson, "Western Front," 130-176.

between ordinary change and revolutionary upheaval. Clearly, California as a whole was accustomed to radical population growth. The experience of urban California in World War II was not all that different from its own past.

It was also not that different from its future either, i.e., the Korean War and Cold War decades. Another part of our misunderstanding of the war's contribution to California history stems from largely ignoring the Korean and Cold War periods. In our haste to pay homage to World War II, the Korean War and Cold War impact on population has been generally undervalued, but it was a very significant one. Of the major metropolitan counties in the state, twelve made their largest absolute gains during the era of Dwight D. Eisenhower instead of during World War II. These included Fresno, Los Angeles, Marin, Monterey, Napa, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Mateo, and Santa Clara, or in other words, most of the great growth centers of the post-World War II era. For example, what happened to Orange County in the 1960s is much closer to a boom and much more impressive than any of the absolute increases of the 1940s. In the one decade of the sixties, Orange County grew by 706,000, more than the World War II *total* of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Solano, and Sonoma counties put together!²¹ And the absolute growth of Los Angeles County alone in the 1950s was more than three times the advance of the same five counties in the 1940s. Its gain in that period is more than twice as much as all of the counties that set records in World War II.²²

Several counties did experience their greatest absolute growth explosion in the decade of World War II. Significantly, these were not scattered at random about the state, but rather confined to two locales: the San Joaquin Valley and the northern and eastern parts of San Francisco Bay. In other words, the boom of the forties was both suburban and exurban.²³ Even San Francisco, which would lose people in the next several decades,

21. Bureau of the Census, *1980 Census of Population*, vol. 1: *Characteristics of the Population. California* (Washington D C., 1982), pt. 6, pp. 6-8.

22. *Ibid.*

23. For a discussion of exurbia, settlements beyond the suburbs, but still tied to cities, see Blaine Brownell and David Goldfield, *Urban America: From Downtown to No Town* (Dallas, 1979), 305, 382-385.

registered an advance during World War II. The war reversed the stagnant depression growth rates of the city; however, it merely interrupted, but did not change, the long-term course of its demographic history. With the exception of Fresno County, all the record-setting growth areas of the 1950s were in the southern Bay area or in southern California.

One of the key assumptions of the transformation hypothesis is based on the fact that the federal government spent lots of money in the West.²⁴ Supposedly, the dollars then produced the unprecedented growth. Yet at this point in our research into World War II and urban society, the relationship of defense spending to population growth is not at all clear. As a matter of fact, the government spent more money in absolute and nearly as much in per capita terms in the North Central States of the Midwest than in the West, yet that area did not experience the same supposedly transformative growth. Throughout the United States, the war-induced expenditure of monies did not automatically produce a proportionate population increase. In fact, in several areas of heavy war spending, population growth was quite modest, stagnant, or even negative. The greatest growth in population occurred in places that already had a positive population growth curve in the Great Depression years, not simply those deluged with the most federal war monies.²⁵

Finally, to borrow a shopworn phrase from the 1920s, the wartime politics of California's two largest cities were not characterized by revolution or cataclysmic change, but rather by "normalcy." I suspect that those of Oakland were too, although some may dispute that interpretation. We need more work on the politics of Oakland, Long Beach, and San Diego; but the politics of the three largest metropolises, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, and San Francisco, were not transformed by the war. There was no correlation between the population buildup and industrial advances in cities and progressive—or even striking—political change.

The business-as-usual quality of politics is reflected in the

24. Rawls and Bean, *California*, 334.

25. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *County Data Book, 1947* (Washington, D.C., 1947), 77-90, *passim*; Roger W. Lotchin and David Long, "World War II and the Transformation of Southern Cities," in Stephen Ambrose and Guenter Bischof, eds., *Home Fronts during World War II* (forthcoming).

rates of incumbency for elected officials; in the racial, ethnic, and gender makeup of politics; and in the programs, structures, and what for a better name might be called the political culture of city politics. The latter is defined, in the manner of Maureen Flanagan, as the customs, habits, and traditions of politics. Since historians, political scientists, and sociologists perennially ask “who governs” cities, that question seems a good place to begin.²⁶

The wartime answer to this question is simple enough. The “Old Boys” governed. Terrence McDonald and J. Rogers and Ellen Hollingsworth have reminded us that incrementalism dominates city and town budget making. The best prediction of how much money anyone will get out of the city is the amount they received in the last competition. Similarly, the best forecast of who would govern in wartime San Francisco, Los Angeles County, and Los Angeles City was the outcome of the last election. In order to illustrate this point, one must compare the politics of the war era with those of the preceding and succeeding eras of peace. Having done so, we can see that continuity, not transformative change, dominated city officeholding. For example, Fletcher Bowron remained mayor of Los Angeles from 1938 to 1954. San Francisco changed mayors in 1943, when Roger Lapham upset three-term incumbent Angelo Rossi. However, Lapham hardly set a trend for the future. Incumbency ruled mayoral politics from 1911 to 1943, and, after Lapham, no other challenger beat an incumbent until Frank Jordan unseated Arthur Agnos in 1991.²⁷

The other electoral positions illustrate the same point. In San Francisco, the voters elected anywhere from ten to fourteen officers every two years. In 1937 and 1939, the city returned a combined total of twenty-four of the twenty-five incumbents who

26. Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven, 1961), 1-85. For more modern applications to California cities, see Frederick M. Wirt, *Power in the City: Decision Making in San Francisco* (Berkeley, 1974), 1-20 ff; and William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1965-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley, 1985), 1-7 ff.

27. Terrence J. McDonald, *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860-1906* (Berkeley, 1986), 252-254; J. Rogers Hollingsworth and Ellen Jane Hollingsworth, *Dimensions in Urban History: Historical and Social Science Perspectives on Middle-Size American Cities* (Madison, 1979), 157-158.

ran. Because it held off-year elections in November, San Francisco had only one election in a war year, as opposed to one during preparedness or reconversion. In the most war-impacted election of 1943, the voters reelected ten of twelve incumbents. And in the election in 1945, a year of conversion, seven of ten were reelected. After the war, in 1947 and 1949, the Bay City electors returned a two-election total of twenty-four out of twenty-five. Los Angeles's voters behaved the same way. In the elections of 1937, 1939, and 1941, incumbency rates of 78, 79, and 92 percent prevailed, an average of 83 percent. The heavily war-impacted elections of 1943 and 1945, both held during the war because of a spring election date, featured incumbency rates of 77 percent and 89 percent or an average of 83 percent. In 1947 and 1949, the voters returned 83 and 97 percent, respectively, an average of 90 percent. In 1949, thirty-seven of thirty-eight incumbents won, or 97 percent. Only Parley Christensen, a councilman whom the *Los Angeles Times* described as an EPIC politician, lost, in this case to an Hispanic, Edward Roybal.

Los Angeles County voters behaved in about the same manner. In the six elections closest in time to the war from 1938 through 1948, every incumbent supervisor contested his seat. One seat changed hands in 1944, and incumbents won every other contest or fourteen out of fifteen, or 93 percent. Oscar Hauge lost the only seat to long-term Mayor Raymond V. Darby of Inglewood, who was enough of an insider to gain the endorsement of the *Los Angeles Times*.²⁸ If one includes the other major elected county officials, the record is similarly weighted in favor of incumbency. In 1940, 94 percent of running incumbents won: in 1942, 100 percent; in 1944, 88 percent; in 1946, 94 percent; and in 1948, 96 percent, an average of 94 percent!²⁹ No election during the war returned even a simple nonincumbent majority in either city, nor in Los Angeles County, much less an overwhelming one. None even came close. That record would hardly qualify as revolutionary. The most change-filled elections took place *before the war* in San Francisco in 1941 and in Los Angeles City in 1939. Still, neither upset occurred

28. *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 1944.

29. *Ibid.*, Aug. 30, 1940, Aug. 28, 1942, May 18, 1944, June 7, 1946, June 4, 1948.

during the war and neither created a nonincumbent majority. Thus incumbency was an overwhelming fact of life before the war; it increased slightly, at least in Los Angeles City, during the war, and it remained downright absurd in all three places after the war. Year in and year out, the same people ran the governments of the two great metropolises. The global upheaval did not generate a comparable one in city electoral politics during the war and did not set a trend for the immediate postwar years.³⁰

If individuals held onto their seats, it is obvious that the war did not transform the composition of the governing class of the cities either. The answer, of course, implies the same thing about ethnicity, race, and gender. The war featured no major breakthroughs by any of these groups. Blacks, Hispanics, and women had already gained a tenuous foothold before the war, but they could not expand it until after the conflict. Before the war, voters elevated Teresa Meikle to a San Francisco judgeship, Ida Adams and others to Los Angeles judgeships, and Eva Allen, a Los Angeles African-American, to the Board of Education. In addition, one woman generally sat on the San Francisco Board of Education and one or two on the Los Angeles board. San Francisco women did not enlarge this beachhead during the war, and Angelenos did not increase theirs much either. Allen lost her seat to another woman in 1943, but the voters returned two other women to the municipal court. Black and Hispanic males began to make respectable but not serious races in San Francisco only after the war. They did better in supposedly more conservative Los Angeles, perhaps because that city had district rather than the at-large elections that San Francisco did. Leon Washington, an African-American publisher, led the seventh district primary ticket in 1939 but did not win in the municipal general election. Others ran respectable, but losing, campaigns

30. The San Francisco election returns have been compiled from the San Francisco City and County Registrar of Voters, *Statement of the Votes Cast at the General Municipal Election*, Nov. 3, 1931, Nov. 5, 1935, Nov. 2, 1937, Nov. 7, 1939, Nov. 4, 1941, Nov. 2, 1943, Nov. 6, 1945, Nov. 4, 1947, Nov. 3, 1949, housed at the San Francisco City and County Registrar of voters at City Hall. The Los Angeles returns are not available on microfilm, so those were compiled from election returns in the *Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1937, April 6 and May 4, 1939, April 3 and May 8, 1941, April 8 and May 5, 1943, April 4, and May 3, 1945, April 3 and May 29, 1947, April 7 and June 2, 1949.

thereafter. The first black or Hispanic males elected to the city council during these years were Edward Roybal in 1949 and Charles Navarro in 1951. Thus, in both cities, the breakthroughs in race, ethnicity, and gender came before and after, but not during, the Second Great War. And not very many were made at all. World War II was not politically transformative; it was good for incumbent white males.³¹

Just how good can be further illustrated from a rough comparison of political and economic fields, where females and minorities were the last hired and first fired. Blacks, women, and Hispanics each joined the war work force only after other supplies of labor had been exhausted. However, once they got their feet in the door, they entered, at least temporarily, in large numbers. Women created the largest gains, so their experience illustrates the most extreme contrast between politics and economics. For example, one historian has estimated that female participation in the labor force reached as high as thirty-six percent. Another points out that women eventually constituted "41 percent of all government workers in California," a fifty percent increase, and that they composed as much as thirty percent of the work force in selected aircraft plants. A nationwide estimate of women in munitions manufacture puts their numbers at forty percent.³² Estimates vary, but authors agree that women eventually made up a large percentage of the work force in some war industries. Whether we accept the lower or the higher estimate of female participation in the labor force, it is clear that nothing even moderately comparable happened in politics.

It did not happen for African-Americans either. Experts provide different figures for black Americans in shipbuilding. Alonzo Smith and Quintard Taylor estimate that blacks constituted forty percent of some Bay area shipyards, while Albert Broussard estimates the total number of black Americans in Bay

31. The election returns are in *Los Angeles Times*, June 1, 1949, May 30, 1951. Other urban political institutions registered the same glacial pace of change. For example, the first Hispanic was not elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors until the 1980s were well advanced and the first African-American was not elected until 1992. *Ibid.*, Dec. 25, 1992.

32. Richard Santillan, "Rosita the Riveter: Midwest Mexican American Women during World War II, 1941-1945," *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies*, II (1989), 131.

area shipbuilding at about 7.5 percent. Keith Collins implies that the figure for black employment in aircraft and shipbuilding in Los Angeles was smaller, but does not cite a specific figure. If we accept the numbers of Charles Wollenberg, it would appear that in January 1944, some 24,000 blacks worked in a Bay area shipbuilding labor force of 240,000. That achievement, at ten percent of the work force, was a remarkable gain, and left the African-American share close to, or in excess of, their Bay area population. This record was markedly better than their electoral advance.³³

Minorities and females broke into formerly all-male parts of the work force because of the acute labor shortage generated by the war. The conflict triggered no such emergency in the political work force. In the realm of democracy, women did not make even temporary gains comparable to those made in the economic arena, and in fact, they achieved virtually no gains at all. *Fewer women held office in San Francisco and Los Angeles after the war than before.* Mexicans and African-Americans also became a significant part of the work force, but made virtually no gains in electoral politics before, during, or immediately after the conflict.³⁴

Major structural changes did not accompany the war either. The main structural changes to San Francisco's government occurred with the adoption of a new charter in 1932 and in Los Angeles, with the new charter of 1925 and with the elevation of Fletcher Bowron and the reformers to power in 1938. In Oakland, the transformative structural changes occurred in 1911 and 1930, again before, not during, the war.³⁵ The conflict did

33. Wollenberg, *Marinship at War*, 82; Albert S. Broussard, *Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954* (Lawrence, 1993), 145-156; Keith E. Collins, *Black Los Angeles: The Maturing of the Ghetto, 1940-1950* (Saratoga, Calif., 1980), 48-68; Alonzo Smith and Quintard Taylor, "Racial Discrimination in the Workplace: A Study of Two West Coast Cities during the 1940s," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, VIII (1980), 42.

34. "Cities Out of Housing: How the National Defense Projects Changed San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* (forthcoming); Sheila Tropp Lichtman, "Women at Work, 1941-1945: Wartime Employment in the San Francisco Bay Area" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Davis, 1981), 72-73.

35. Tom Sitton, "Another Generation of Urban Reformers: Los Angeles in the 1930s," *Western Historical Quarterly*, (1987), 315-332; William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley, 1986), 195-198; Fred Wirt, *Power in the City: Decision Making in San Francisco*

sometimes add to the programmatic agenda of both cities, but not much. Housing became a significant issue because of the war and so did redevelopment. Both Oakland and Richmond struggled with the problem of wartime migrants, and race began to emerge as an issue in several places. Both blacks and Mexican Americans fought for immediate gains—for example, more transit jobs—and organized on behalf of broader civil rights platforms. Yet neither group was able to place its ethnocultural political concerns at or near the top of the agenda, as they have in recent years.³⁶ In both cities, most issues of metropolitan politics carried over from the prewar era.

Finally, the war did not change the political culture of either place.³⁷ Both cities featured nonpartisan municipal elections, and lots of them. Los Angeles held both primary and general municipal elections every two years and elected the entire city council each time. Lacking parties, many other groups put forward slates, and the press had its own as well. The media in both places denigrated city politics in favor of national struggles and events, but in both places the press exercised strong

(Berkeley, 1974), 11. We cannot be entirely certain about the absence of major structural change until important works now underway by William Issel about San Francisco and Martin Schiesl about Los Angeles are completed. However, from reading secondary accounts, newspapers, and the proposed charter changes in San Francisco and Los Angeles referenda, for the years 1937–1953, it appears that the major political structural changes occurred before the war. For the importance of urban structural reform, see Melvin Holli, *Reform in Detroit: Hazen S. Pingree and Urban Politics* (New York, 1969), 1570–1584; Martin J. Schiesl, *The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America, 1800–1920* (Berkeley, 1977), 1–6 ff; Bradley R. Rice, *Progressive Cities: The Commission Government Movement in America 1901–1920* (Austin, 1977), 11–12 ff.

36. Mario T. García, “Americans All: The Mexican American Generation and the Politics of Wartime Los Angeles, 1941–1945,” *Social Science Quarterly*, LXV (1984), 278–289; Alonzo N. Smith, “Blacks and the Los Angeles Municipal Transit System, 1941–1945,” *Urbanism Past and Present*, VI (1980–1981), 25–31. For the present importance of ethnic politics, see Hugh Dellios “L.A. Melting Pot Turns into a Flashpoint,” *Chicago Tribune*, Nov. 12, 1992, sec. 1, pp. 1, 8; Frank Clifford, “Bradley Won’t Run for 6th Term,” *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 25, 1992, sec. A1, p. 14; Bob Baker, “Latinos Shortchanged in Riot Aid, Group Says,” *ibid.*, Sept. 15, 1992, sec. B, pp. 3–4; Rodolfo Acuña, “Allegiance to the Party Is Passe: L.A. Redistricting Shows Why Latinos and Other Minorities Must Pull Together for Clout,” *ibid.*, July 1, 1992, sec. B, p. 7; Sheryl Stolberg and Frank Clifford, “Black-Korean Truce Termed ‘Very Fragile,’” *ibid.*, Oct. 5, 1991, sec. B, p. 1; “Hispanic Woman Wins Los Angeles Vote,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 21, 1991, sec. A, p. 2.

37. Sitton, “Another Generation,” 315–332; Fred W. Viehe, “The Recall of Mayor Frank L. Shaw: A Revision,” *California History*, LIX (1980–1981), 290–305.

influence over the elections. Each city also featured considerable direct democracy in the form of referenda. In this free-wheeling political culture, flamboyant individuals like Fletcher Bowron or Roger Lapham played major roles. The war somewhat subordinated local urban news to international and national events; however, this tendency was almost as ingrained before the war broke out. The war did, however, reduce the incidence of referenda because cities could not get priorities to build projects in competition with war-related ventures. In this respect the conflict was somewhat disruptive, but it did not create a watershed, since urban Californians promptly reembraced the referenda on an impressive scale after the guns fell silent.³⁸

One aspect of the political culture differed considerably between the two cities, and that was voter participation. San Franciscans voted much more frequently than Angelenos. Since most Los Angeles officers were elected in the municipal primary, that election is probably a better test of voter participation. In no election did a majority of registered Angeleno voters march to the polls to throw the rascals out or, in some cases, to keep them in. In the 1937, 1939, and 1941 elections, 34 percent, 34 percent, and 38 percent, respectively, voted. The war depressed these totals marginally to 31 and 33 percent in 1943 and 1945. In 1947 the participation rate climbed back up to 38 percent and reached 45 percent in 1949. The war produced hardly any effect in voter participation, and the most significant change occurred in 1949, the election most remote from the conflict. Therefore, war and peace had the opposite effect on this part of political culture. By contrast, San Franciscans voted more often, and the war affected voter participation more decisively.

38. For the referenda provisions and voting, see the *Los Angeles Times*, April and May, 1935–1953, and the *San Francisco Statement of the Vote*, 1935–1952. For the continuities in San Francisco politics from 1941–1945 through the period 1975–1991 see Richard Edward DeLeon, *Left Coast City: Progressive Politics in San Francisco, 1975–1911* (Lawrence, 1992), 23–45 ff. Among the parts of San Francisco's political culture that survived were at-large elections, incumbency, nonpartisanship, club politics, hyperpluralism, weak executive, divided administrative authority, fragmentation of authority in general, and especially direct democracy, especially the initiative and referendum. Of course, the antiquated charter of 1932 is the source of much of this chaos and has survived till the present. Mayor Jordan very recently sought to replace it. Quoting Manuel Castells, DeLeon calls San Francisco a "wild city." DeLeon, *Progressive Politics*, 7, 18, 137.

In 1939, a record eighty-four percent of San Francisco's registered electorate cast their ballots in the municipal election, more than in the 1940 presidential contest. The war depressed the level of voting somewhat, but it recovered again, although not to the record 1939 level. If democracy can be considered an indication of human progress, war clearly did not encourage this art at the municipal level. As in many other matters, it modified previous patterns, but its influence proved rather limited and very ephemeral. The word "revolutionary" is sometimes employed to describe the Second World War's impact on the West. If the term revolution implies what the Bolsheviks did to the Russian Empire or the Nazis did to the Weimar Republic, then nothing close to it occurred at the local level of California politics. Despite the unprecedented *global* situation, the *struggle for power* in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Los Angeles County maintained a timeless quality.³⁹

The political stability of California cities during the conflict is not consistent with what contemporaries either feared or hoped for and what later historians have found. Both conservatives and liberals saw the war as potentially transformative, but in different ways. Liberals like Harry Girvetz and Catherine Bauer hoped that the global struggle would provide an opportunity to widen the realm of liberalism and produce greater economic equality and political freedom. Conservatives, like those in the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, feared that the limitless expansion of the modern state would come at the expense of their economic freedom. Historians John Morton Blum and Richard Polenberg found some evidence of both at the national level. The Republicans made major gains in 1942, including nine seats in the Senate and forty-four in the House of Representatives. In 1944, the Democrats recaptured twenty-two of the lost House seats. The cities, which played such a conspicuous role in the Democratic comeback in 1944, did not lead either a swing to the right in 1942 or a comeback in 1944 in

39. The incidence of voting was compiled from statements by the registrar of voters quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* at the time of each election, usually the day after and from the report of the San Francisco City and County Registrar of Voters, contained in the *Annual Reports of the City and County of the City and County of San Francisco*. These are reprinted in the San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors, *Journal of the Proceedings*.

California city elections. Nor did the political behavior of California cities indicate the "G.I. Revolts" that many scholars have found in other American cities after the war. All of this once again reminds us of the variety of political behavior within the American political system.⁴⁰

So does the history of urban California in general. Its demography increased, but in a rather unexceptional way, at least for California. Its factories multiplied, but not enough to change the industrial balance of power in order to offset its supposed colonial relationship to the East. Its government was stalemated from its normally expansive growth path, but quickly became hyperexpansive upon peace. Its politics continued to favor the status quo, and its ephemeral sense of community and shared experience grew markedly, only to dissolve with the cease fire. One would expect more from a Second Gold Rush. Nor is there any change here to compare with the genuinely revolutionary transformation in the art of warfare itself. To reiterate, the global conflict had an ambiguous, contradictory, and perhaps ultimately ironic effect. The Second World War produced revolutionary consequences abroad, but largely conservative, rather than unprecedented, effects at home in urban California.

40. Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945* (Philadelphia, 1972), 184-214; Blum, *V Was for Victory*, 221-254; Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities* (Chapel Hill, 1981), 246; William Miller, *Mr. Crump of Memphis* (Baton Rouge, 1964), 332.