Jobs and Justice

Wartime work, organized pressure, and unequal treatment

SS24.US2.8b "Explain how minority groups organized to gain access to wartime jobs and how they confronted discrimination, including the Bracero Program and Double V Campaign."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that opened or defended access to wartime jobs, and circle forms of discrimination those actions confronted.

A Job Was Only the Beginning

1. In 1941, defense factories were hiring, yet many refused to employ Black workers or kept them in the lowest-paid jobs. Labor leader A. Philip Randolph organized a movement and threatened a mass march on Washington to demand an end to discrimination in defense work. Facing that pressure, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which banned discrimination in defense industries and created the Fair Employment Practice Committee to investigate complaints. The order opened a route to jobs, but it did not end workplace bias. Black workers and civil rights groups kept filing complaints and pressing employers to comply.

2. In 1942, the Black newspaper *Pittsburgh Courier* called for a Double V Campaign: victory over fascism abroad and victory over racism at home. Readers sent letters, displayed the Double V symbol, and debated why a nation fighting for freedom allowed unequal hiring and segregation. The campaign gave scattered workers a shared message and made discrimination a public issue, not just a private grievance. It did not replace Randolph's pressure on federal officials or complaints filed with the Fair Employment Practice Committee. Together, public protest and official complaints challenged barriers that could survive even when new wartime jobs appeared.

3. Meanwhile, wartime labor shortages on U.S. farms led the United States and Mexico to begin the Bracero Program in 1942. Mexican men signed temporary contracts to work in the United States; the agreement promised wages and basic living conditions. The two governments organized recruitment, but access to jobs did not ensure fair treatment. Some growers underpaid workers or provided poor housing. Braceros reported abuses to Mexican consulates and sometimes acted together to demand the terms of their contracts. Unlike the Double V Campaign, this program was a government labor agreement, not a worker-led protest. Workers still used its promises to challenge discrimination and exploitation.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Randolph's organizing lead to a federal response, and why did workers still need to take action afterward?

2. How did Double V supporters organize to confront discrimination beyond filing official complaints?

3. How did the Bracero Program provide access to jobs, and how could braceros challenge employers who broke its promises?

4. How did the Double V Campaign differ from the Bracero Program in who organized access to work? What problem persisted in both cases?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label titled “A Promise Is Not Enough.” Explain why access to wartime work did not guarantee fair treatment, and connect one Double V Campaign action with one action braceros took to challenge abuses.

ANSWER KEY

Jobs and Justice

GRADE 11 · SS24.US2.8b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions that opened or defended access to wartime jobs, and circle forms of discrimination those actions confronted. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Randolph's organizing lead to a federal response, and why did workers still need to take action afterward?	**His threatened march pressured Roosevelt to issue Executive Order 8802 and create a committee to investigate complaints. Workers still filed complaints because employers continued to discriminate.**
2	How did Double V supporters organize to confront discrimination beyond filing official complaints?	**They sent letters and displayed a shared symbol, making unequal hiring and segregation public issues tied to the nation's wartime claims about freedom.**
3	How did the Bracero Program provide access to jobs, and how could braceros challenge employers who broke its promises?	**The U.S. and Mexican governments recruited men for temporary farm jobs with contracts promising wages and living conditions. Braceros reported abuses to Mexican consulates or acted together to demand the contract terms.**
4	How did the Double V Campaign differ from the Bracero Program in who organized access to work? What problem persisted in both cases?	**Double V was a public campaign led by Black Americans and their supporters, while the two governments organized Bracero recruitment. Discrimination or unfair treatment persisted despite access to jobs.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Promise Is Not Enough. During World War II, factories and farms needed labor, but getting a job did not guarantee fair treatment. Double V supporters sent letters and made unequal hiring a public issue, arguing that a country fighting for freedom should practice it at home. Braceros had contracts promising wages and living conditions, yet some growers underpaid them or supplied poor housing. By reporting abuses to Mexican consulates, workers tried to make employers honor those promises. Both actions pushed beyond getting hired toward fair treatment on the job.

Accept other passage-supported Double V and bracero actions. Look for a clear distinction between gaining access to work and securing fair treatment once employed.