

## Resource Sheet#12

### *Document K-Post-War Intentions of the Maryland Commission of Post-War Reconstruction and the Department of Labor's Post-War Layoffs Assessment*

It must be borne in mind that after the war returning members of the armed forces will replace employees, who have taken over their jobs for the duration [of the war].... This does not alter the number of unemployed. It merely represents a replacement.

Source: Program and activities of the Maryland Commission of Post-War Reconstruction and Development, 1943-1944. (n.d.). In *Maryland Commission on Post-War Reconstruction and Development*.

Background Information: The Maryland Commission of Post-War Reconstruction was concerned with addressing increased rates of unemployment after the war years. Many women workers migrated to Maryland to find war work, in addition to the women and others who became employed during the war years. In this pamphlet, the commission clearly states that many of the wartime workers will simply be replaced when the men return from fighting overseas.

#### Guiding Questions:

1. Based on this document, can women workers expect to maintain their jobs after the war years?

2. How does the Maryland government view wartime working women?

That the end of the war would bring substantial numbers of layoffs was expected. In the weeks immediately following the Japanese surrender, huge reductions in force took place in Baltimore, chiefly in aircraft and shipbuilding. At the large aircraft plant which, at the peak of the war production employed some 20,000 women, reductions-in-force reduced the number of women workers to 2,500. Shipbuilding plants reported that of thousands of women who had been employed during the war, all but a few clerical workers were let out from the yards immediately following VJ-day. Unemployment compensation claims multiplied. Displaced women war workers represented half of the unemployed in Baltimore 2 months after VJ-day.

Source: *Baltimore women war workers in the postwar period.* (1948). Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Labor.

Background Information: Bethlehem Steel and the Glenn L. Martin Aircraft plant were two of the largest wartime industries in Baltimore during World War II. Many women working at Bethlehem Steel built ships, welded, and riveted among many other laborious tasks.

Guiding Questions:

1. What event sparked major reductions in workforce in wartime industrial centers?
2. How many women were able to maintain their wartime jobs?