

The fact that the narrator herself is included in the on-screen group strengthens the emphasis on group work and submerged or diffused subjectivity. This is common to most Japanese films of the war period. While the American women of steel are individualized by interviews and are introduced by name, the women of this uniform factory work as a harmonic mass. Virtually the only time a woman worker is singled out for individual attention is when one gives a sewing demonstration. However, as soon as the lecture is over, she quietly melts back into the crowd.

Generally, the documentary form places much less emphasis on individuals than fiction filmmaking. Documentaries encourage us to identify with the film as a member of society or humanity. In comparing Japanese and American war documentary, however, we can see how the American films still rely heavily on characters as hooks for our identification. Examples from this volume would include *Jap Zero*, *The Fleet That Came to Stay*, *Let There Be Light*, and *Women of Steel*. *We Are Working So So Hard* is typical of Japanese war documentary in that audiences are encouraged to identify with an on-screen group, and by extension the *kokutai* (national structure or body politic). This is one reason for the obligatory exercise scenes that may puzzle foreign viewers of Japanese war films. There could be no better example of group unity than rows upon rows of healthy, young bodies moving in synch. Furthermore, these are group activities (exercises, factory work, singing) that the audience itself was undoubtedly performing on a daily basis.

There is one individualized figure in *We Are Working So So Hard*, and this is the key to the film's sexual politics. While women fade in and out of their group, the male supervisor remains apart. He barely tilts in the face of the women's deep bows. He drills them on the correct way to march, and leads their exercises. He is geographically separated from the group, giving speeches to them from a platform. At lunch, he sits at his own table and accepts tea from one of the workers. While he supervises their every move, they are infantilized by being shown skipping ropes and playing on swings. As Father/Manager/Superior Officer, he takes the place of a substitute patriarch. Together with his factory workers, he functions as a microcosm of the emperor and his subjects. By contrast, *Women of Steel* presents a much more positive image of women and their potential.

— *Abé Mark Nones*

Justice

U.S.A. Production: Signal Corps, Print: 35mm, sd., English, b&w, 3 min., 1945.

Placed before feature films, *Justice* was a trailer designed to attract people to war jobs. It opens in a factory with the narrator calling out to the workers (and the theater's audience): "Hold on to your seats folks, have you killed a Jap soldier today?" The film continues by cataloging the horrors Chinese suffered under the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, using footage of Japanese massacres that were recycled in countless films, including *Let's Have a Drink* and most episodes of the *Why We Fight* series. The ending cross cuts between shots of factories and scores of Japanese corpses with the voice of God narration booming, "Every forging...Kills

a Jap. Every tank...Kills a Jap. Every truck...Kills a Jap. Every plane...Kills a Jap. Every shell...Kills a Jap. Every gun...Kills a Jap." Simply stated; no subtlety here.

There's a decisiveness of will here that hasn't been seen in any of America's subsequent wars. The hysteria and severity of the violence in this film beg us to reexamine our assumptions about the role of media in both Vietnam and the Gulf wars. Many people assume that the violence TV brought from Vietnam to American homes contributed to the lack of support for the war and the chaos in society. This in turn led to the restriction of media coverage in the Persian Gulf. However, any number of films from this sidebar plainly show that there was no shortage of graphic violence served up for middle America during World War II. And despite the support for the Gulf War, when faced with corpses, Americans showed none of the unflinching confidence exuding from *Justice*.

— Abé Mark Nornes

Introduction to Our Weaponry Series: The Fighting Homefront
(*Warera no heikishū — johen — tatakau jūgo*)

Japan Direction: Azumi Kōji, Production: Riken Kagaku, Inspection: Ministry of War, Press Section, Print: 16mm, sd., Japanese, b&w, 12 min., 1941.

The Fighting Homefront was the introductory issue of a long series produced from 1941 to 1942. The *Our Weaponry* series was made under the supervision of the Army Weaponry Headquarters. Oya Sōichi and Azumi Kōji acted as producer and director, respectively. It consists of sections covering ammunition, cannons, bullets, bombs, guns, swords, machine guns, optical arms, electrical arms, and the like. In each edition, the production process and the features of each weapon is introduced. This introductory episode entitled *The Fighting Homefront* attempts to show how the production of arms requires the participation and contribution of the entire nation.

In the very first scene, the movie camera itself appears on-screen with narration pledging that, "The camera speaks nothing but the truth." Then it captures the figures of women, students, and children working at the production sites. The on-screen camera returns at the end, with the narration stressing, "We must always win," and "That's what the camera screams." On a movie screen containing a record of reality, showing the camera shooting through the eye of the record leaves a strong impression. This is the fruit of labor of excellent documentarists. We imagine that, by offering such peculiar scenes in the film, the staff tried to express the spirit of true workmanship as true documentarists.

However, when we examine the scenes of housewives and children polishing and assembling bombs in surprisingly orderly steps, we must assume that they had to be deliberately arranged. Consequently, by taking advantage of the rhythmic and delicate handiwork, the film succeeds in capturing our interest till the end. Meanwhile, even the bar hostesses and *geisha* have been chased out for the war effort on the homefront, which, we are told, has become the battlefield itself.

The word "homefront" (*jūgo*: literally behind the guns) became popular during the Russo-Japanese War, and meant behind the front lines. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, the term was immediately revived, signifying the whole of Japan as opposed to the front on the continent. For example, after the outbreak of