

COMPARATIVE QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did working people's views of government, as expressed in their letters and in the Mexican farm workers' attempts to organize a union, differ from those expressed by Franklin Roosevelt in his speech?
2. What might Republican opponents of the New Deal have said about Huey Long's plans? To what extent was Long a departure from the New Deal or merely an extension of it? How might a New Dealer criticize Long's proposals? What might Long have said about the Mexican farm workers' attempts to unionize?
3. How might the working people who wrote to New Dealers and the Mexican farm laborers in California have responded to Republican critics of the New Deal that they were "human parasites" and "paupered poverty rats"?
4. The documents in this chapter express conflicting views about the relationship between individual freedom and government action. To what extent did the New Deal alter that relationship, according to these authors?

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THE SECOND WORLD WAR

1939-1945

Nothing in the previous history of the world compared with the conflagration of World War II. The entire globe became engulfed by fighting, preparing to fight, or supplying combatants. The high stakes of the conflict were made clear by the attack on Pearl Harbor and reports of Nazi anti-Semitism. Nearly all Americans enlisted in the war effort, whether or not they wore a uniform. The following documents illustrate some of the experiences, at home and overseas, shared by millions of Americans during World War II and contemplate the long-term consequences of those experiences.

DOCUMENT 25-1

President Franklin D. Roosevelt Requests Declaration of War on Japan

The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor catapulted the United States into World War II. The attack erased hesitations many Americans had felt about getting entangled in another foreign war. Although the war in Europe had been under way since 1939 and the United States had aided the Allies, war was not declared on Germany until, after Pearl Harbor, Hitler declared war on the United States. President Roosevelt's speech to Congress on December 8, 1941, communicated the sense of crisis and resolve felt by most Americans on the day after Pearl Harbor.

Speech to Congress, December 8, 1941

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that Nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese

air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace. The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday the Japanese Government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night the Japanese attacked Wake Island.

This morning the Japanese attacked Midway Island. Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our Nation.

As Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense.

Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces — with the unbounded determination of our people — we will gain the inevitable triumph — so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.

QUESTIONS FOR READING AND DISCUSSION

1. Why did Roosevelt call the attack on Pearl Harbor a "a date that will live in infamy"? To what extent were "our people, our territory, and our interests . . . in grave danger"?
2. Where else did Japanese forces attack? Why?
3. Do you think Roosevelt's speech would have been effective in enlisting Americans' support for the war against Japan? Why or why not?
4. In this speech, Roosevelt made no mention of Germany and the war in Europe. Why? To what extent did Germany threaten American people, territory, and interests?

DOCUMENT 25-2

A Japanese American Woman Recalls Pearl Harbor

The attack on Pearl Harbor inaugurated a wave of anti-Japanese sentiment and activity that culminated in the internment of citizens of Japanese ancestry in camps scattered throughout the West. Monica Sone, a native of Seattle and student at the University of Washington, was first interned along with her family at Camp Harmony in Puyallup, Washington, and later moved to Camp Miridaka in Idaho. Sone's memoir, the source of the following excerpt, reveals the emotions that engulfed her and her family members as the nation mobilized for war against Japan.

Monica Sone

Nisei Daughter, 1953

On a peaceful Sunday Morning, December 7, 1941, Henry, Sumi, and I were at choir rehearsal singing ourselves hoarse in preparation for the annual Christmas recital of Handel's "Messiah." Suddenly Chuck Mizuno, a young University of Washington student, burst into the chapel, gasping as if he had sprinted all the way up the stairs.

"Listen, everybody!" he shouted. "Japan just bombed Pearl Harbor . . . in Hawaii. It's war!"

The terrible words hit like a blockbuster, paralyzing us. . . . I felt as if a fist had smashed my pleasant little existence, breaking it into jigsaw puzzle pieces. An old wound opened up again, and I found myself shrinking inwardly from my Japanese blood, the blood of an enemy. I knew instinctively that the fact that I was an American by birthright was not going to help me escape the consequences of this unhappy war.

One girl rumbled over and over again, "It can't be, God, it can't be!" Someone else was saying, "What a spot to be in! Do you think we'll be considered Japanese or Americans?"

A boy replied quietly, "We'll be Japs, same as always. But our parents are enemy aliens now, you know."

A shocked silence followed. Henry came for Sumi and me. "Come on, let's go home," he said. . . .

Mother was sitting limp in the huge armchair as if she had collapsed there, listening dazedly to the turbulent radio. Her face was frozen still, and the only words she could utter were, "Komatta neh, komatta neh. How dreadful, how dreadful. . . ."

With every fiber of my being I resented this war. I felt as if I were on fire.

"Mama, they should never have done it," I cried. "Why did they do it? Why? Why?" Mother's face turned paper white. "What do you know about it? Right or wrong, the Japanese have been chafing with resentment for years. It was bound to happen, one time or another. You're young, Ka-chan, you know very little about the ways of nations. . . ."

Discussion of politics, especially Japan versus America, had become taboo in our family for it sent tempers skyrocketing. Henry and I used to criticize Japan's aggressions in China and Manchuria while Father and Mother condemned Great

Britain and America's superior attitude toward Asiatics and their interference with Japan's economic growth. During these arguments, we had eyed each other like strangers, parents against children. . . .

Just then the shrill peel of the telephone cut off the possibility of a family argument. When I answered, a young girl's voice fluttered through breathily, "Hello, this is Taeko Tanabe. . . ."

The next day we learned that Taeko was trying desperately to locate her mother because FBI agents had swept into their home and arrested Mr. Tanabe, a newspaper editor. The FBI had permitted Taeko to try to locate her mother before they took Mr. Tanabe away while they searched the house for contraband and subversive material, but she was not to let anyone else know what was happening. . . .

We were shocked to read Attorney General Biddle's announcement that 736 Japanese had been picked up in the United States and Hawaii. Then Mrs. Tanabe called Mother about her husband's arrest, and she said at least a hundred others had been taken from our community. Messrs. Okayama, Higashi, Sugihira, Mori, Okada — we knew them all.

"But why were they arrested, Papa? They weren't spies, were they?"

Father replied almost curtly, "Of course not! They were probably taken for questioning."

The pressure of war moved in on our little community. The Chinese consul announced that all the Chinese would carry identification cards and wear "China" badges to distinguish them from the Japanese. Then I really felt left standing out in the cold. The government ordered the bank funds of all Japanese nationals frozen. Father could no longer handle financial transactions through his bank accounts, but Henry, fortunately, was of legal age so that business could be negotiated in his name.

In the afternoon, President Roosevelt's formal declaration of war against Japan was broadcast throughout the nation. In grave, measured words, he described the attack on Pearl Harbor as shameful, infamous.

I writhed involuntarily. I could no more have escaped the stab of self-consciousness than I could have changed my Oriental features. . . .

It made me positively hivey the way the FBI agents continued their raids into Japanese homes and business places and marched the Issei men away into the old red brick immigration building, systematically and efficiently, as if they were stocking a cellarful of choice bottles of wine. At first we noted that the men arrested were those who had been prominent in community affairs, like Mr. Kato, many times president of the Seattle Japanese Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Ohashi, the principal of our Japanese language school, or individuals whose business was directly connected with firms in Japan; but as time went on, it became less and less apparent why the others were included in these raids.

We wondered when Father's time would come. We expected momentarily to hear strange footsteps on the porch and the sudden demanding ring of the front doorbell. . . . Once when our doorbell rang after curfew hour, I completely lost my Oriental stoicism which I had believed would serve me well under the most trying circumstances. . . .

Gradually we became uncomfortable with our Japanese books, magazines, wall scrolls, and knickknacks. When Father's hotel friends, Messrs. Sakaguchi, Horiuchi, Nishibue, and a few others vanished, and their wives called Mother weeping and warning her again about having too many Japanese objects around the house, we finally decided to get rid of some of ours. We knew it was impossible to destroy everything. The FBI would certainly think it strange if they found us

sitting in a bare house, totally purged of things Japanese. But it was as if we could no longer stand the tension of waiting, and we just had to do something against the black day. We worked all night, feverishly combing through bookshelves, closets, drawers, and furtively creeping down to the basement furnace for the burning. I gathered together my well-worn Japanese language schoolbooks which I had been saving over a period of ten years with the thought that they might come in handy when I wanted to teach Japanese to my own children. I threw them into the fire and watched them flame and strivel into black ashes. . . .

Mrs. Matsui kept assuring us that the FBI would get around to us yet. It was just a matter of time and the least Mother could do for Father was to pack a suitcase for him. . . . So Mother dutifully packed a suitcase for Father with toilet articles, warm flannel pajamas, and extra clothes, and placed it in the front hall by the door. It was a personal affront, the way it stood there so frank and unabashedly. Henry and I said that it was practically a confession that Papa was a spy, "So please help yourself to him, Mr. FBI, and God speed you. . . ."

We had a family conference to discuss the possibility of Father and Mother's interment. Henry was in graduate school and I was beginning my second year at the university. We agreed to drop out should they be taken and we would manage the hotel during our parents' absence. Every weekend Henry and I accompanied Father to the hotel and learned how to keep the hotel books, how to open the office safe, and what kind of linen, paper towels, and soap to order.

Then a new menace appeared on the scene. Cries began to sound up and down the coast that everyone of Japanese ancestry should be taken into custody. For years the professional guardians of the Golden West had wanted to rid their land of the Yellow Peril, and the war provided an opportunity for them to push their program through. As the chain of Pacific islands fell to the Japanese, patriots shrieked for protection from us. A Californian sounded the alarm: "The Japanese are dangerous and they must leave. Remember the destruction and the sabotage perpetrated at Pearl Harbor. Notice how they have infiltrated into the harbor towns and taken our best land. . . ."

In February, Executive Order No. 9066 came out, authorizing the War Department to remove the Japanese from such military areas as it saw fit, aliens and citizens alike. Even if a person had a fraction of Japanese blood in him, he must leave on demand.

A pall of gloom settled upon our home. We couldn't believe that the government meant that the Japanese-Americans must go, too. We had heard the clamoring of superpatriots who insisted loudly, "Throw the whole kaboodle out. A Jap's a Jap, no matter how you slice him. You can't make an American out of little Jap junior just by handing him an American birth certificate." But we had dismissed these remarks as just hot blasts of air from an overheated patriot. We were quite sure that our rights as American citizens would not be violated, and we would not be marched out of our homes on the same basis as enemy aliens.

In anger, Henry and I read and reread the Executive Order. Henry crumpled the newspaper in his hand and threw it against the wall. "Doesn't my citizenship mean a single blessed thing to anyone? Why doesn't somebody make up my mind for me. First they want me in the army. Now they're going to slap an alien 4-C on me because of my ancestry. What the hell!"

Once more I felt like a despised, pathetic two-headed freak, a Japanese and an American, neither of which seemed to be doing me any good. The Nisei leaders in the community rose above their personal feelings and stated that they would

cooperate and comply with the decision of the government as their sacrifice in keeping with the country's war effort, thus proving themselves loyal American citizens. I was too jealous of my recently acquired voting privilege to be gracious about giving in, and I felt most uncooperative. . . .

Events moved rapidly. General DeWitt marked off western Washington, Oregon, and all of California, and the southern half of Arizona as Military Area No. 1, hallowed ground from which we must remove ourselves as rapidly as possible. Unfortunately we could not simply vanish into thin air, and we had no place to go. We had no relatives in the east we could move in on. All our relatives were sitting with us in the forbidden area, themselves wondering where to go. The neighboring states in the line of exit for the Japanese protested violently at the prospect of any mass invasion. They said, very sensibly, that if the coast didn't want the Japanese hanging around, they didn't either. A few hardy families in the community liquidated their property, tied suitcases all around their cars, and sailed eastward. They were greeted by signs in front of store windows, "Open sea-son for Japs!" and "We kill rats and Japs here. . . ."

General DeWitt must have finally realized that if he insisted on voluntary mass evacuation, hundreds and thousands of us would have wandered back and forth, clogging the highways and pitching tents along the roadside, eating and sleeping in colossal disorder. He suddenly called a halt to voluntary movement, although most of the Japanese were not budging an inch. He issued a new order, stating that no Japanese could leave the city, under penalty of arrest. The command had hatched another plan, a better one. The army would move us out as only the army could do it, and march us in neat, orderly fashion into assembly centers. We would stay in these centers only until permanent camps were set up inland to isolate us.

The orders were simple:

Dispose of your homes and property. Wind up your business. Register the family. One seabag of bedding, two suitcases of clothing allowed per person. People in District #1 must report at 8th and Lane Street, 8 P.M. on April 28.

I wanted no part of this new order. I had read in the paper that the Japanese from the state of Washington would be taken to a camp in Puyallup, on the state fairgrounds. The article apologetically assured the public that the camp would be temporary and that the Japanese would be removed from the fairgrounds and parking lots in time for the opening of the annual State Fair. . . .

One evening Father told us that he would lose the management of the hotel unless he could find someone to operate it for the duration. . . .

Sumi asked, "What happens if we can't find anyone?"

"I lose my business and my livelihood. I'll be saying good-bye to a lifetime of labor and all the hopes and plans I had for the family."

We sagged. . . .

We listened to Father wide-eyed and wistful. It had been a wonderful, wonderful dream.

QUESTIONS FOR READING AND DISCUSSION

1. Why were Sone and her friends so pessimistic about their fate on learning about Pearl Harbor? How did they and other Americans answer the question, "Do you think we'll be considered Japanese or Americans?"
2. How did Monica's attitudes toward Japan and "things Japanese" change, if at all? Did her attitudes toward America change? If so, how and why?

3. What was the significance of what Sone called the "professional guardians of the Golden West [who] had wanted to rid their land of the Yellow Peril"?

4. How did the internment order affect the Sone family?

5. How might government officials have answered Henry Sone's question, "Doesn't my citizenship mean a single blessed thing to anyone?"

DOCUMENT 25-3

The Holocaust:

A Journalist Reports on Nazi Massacres of Jews

Nazi anti-Semitism was well known in the United States because Adolf Hitler had sponsored persecution of German Jews for more than a decade. But during World War II, many Americans and others among the Allied powers considered reports of Nazi policies of systematic annihilation of Europe's Jews utterly incredible. American journalist Varian Fry, who had reported on the rise of the Nazis in Germany during the 1930s, helped many Jews escape from occupied France in the early 1940s. Fry published "The Massacre of the Jews," excerpted here, in a major American magazine in December 1942. Fry outlined the horrific dimensions of Nazi atrocities and proposed possible responses by the United States and its allies. His article documents the widespread disbelief about the ongoing Holocaust and the reluctance of Allied governments to divert attention and resources from the all-consuming military conflict.

Varian Fry

The Massacre of the Jews, December 21, 1942

There are some things so horrible that decent men and women find them impossible to believe, so monstrous that the civilized world recoils incredulous before them. The recent reports of the systematic extermination of the Jews in Nazi Europe are of this order.

We are accustomed to horrors in the historical past, and accept them as a matter of course. The persecution of the Jews in Egypt and the Roman Empire, the slaughters of Genghis Khan, the religious mania which swept Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Indian massacres in America, and the equally brutal retaliations of the white men — all these we credit without question, as phenomena of ages less enlightened than our own. When such things occur in our own times, like the Armenian massacres, we put them down to the account of still half-barbarous peoples. But that such things could be done by contemporary western Europeans, heirs of the humanist tradition, seems hardly possible.

Our skepticism has been fortified by our experience with "atrocious stories" during the last war. We were treated, during that war, to many accounts of German atrocities. We were told of the rape of nuns, the forced prostitution of young Belgian girls, of German soldiers spearing infants on their bayonets, or deliberately and wantonly cutting off their hands. Later, when the bitterness of war had

the Nazis are systematically destroying the potential leaders of democratic movements in all the countries they have overrun.

We must face the terrible truth. Even though Hitler loses this war, he may win it anyway, at least as far as Europe is concerned. There are reports, apparently trustworthy, that the Nazis and the German army are prepared for eventual retreat, and that their plans call for the extermination of every living thing and the destruction of all physical property in the areas they may be forced to evacuate. When we remember that, even after the war of 1914-18 was hopelessly lost and the German army was retreating in confusion on the Western Front, it still found time, and the will, wantonly to destroy the factories and flood the mines in its path, we may well believe that this time it will be even more thorough, go even more berserk.

If this happens, we shall be confronted with the most frightful dilemma imaginable. Every man, woman, and child in Europe will become a hostage, a means of blackmail. If we continue the war, they will die. Yet if we do not continue the war, the Nazis will have won all they can then hope to win — time. Time to regroup their forces, divide ours and strike again.

Our only course then will be to overwhelm them so rapidly that they will not be able to carry out their threats. For that we shall need all the strength we can possibly muster, and all the courage. The Nazis will certainly hope to cut off our allies one by one by threatening the total annihilation of their peoples if they continue to oppose them. We and our allies must be prepared to face the challenge unflinchingly.

Meanwhile, there are some things which can be done now, slight as the chances are that they will have much effect in deterring Hitler and his followers from their homicidal mania. President Roosevelt could and should speak out again against these monstrous events. A stern warning from him will have no effect on Hitler, but it may impress some Germans like the officer who helped the Jew from Brussels to escape. A similar warning from Churchill might help, too. A joint declaration, couched in the most solemn terms, by the Allied governments, of the retribution to come might be of some avail. Tribunals should be set up now to begin to amass the facts. Diplomatic warnings, conveyed through neutral channels, to the governments of Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania might save at least some of the 700,000 to 900,000 Jews still within their borders. The Christian churches might also help, at least in countries like France, Holland, Belgium. Norway, the Pope by threatening with excommunication all Catholics who in any way participate in these frightful crimes, the Protestant leaders by exhorting their fellow communicants to resist to the utmost the Nazis' fiendish designs. We and our allies should perhaps reconsider our policy of total blockade of the European continent and examine the possibilities of extending the feeding of Greece to other occupied countries under neutral supervision. Since one of the excuses the Nazis now offer for destroying the Jews and Poles is that there is not enough food to go around, we might at least remove the grounds for the excuse by offering to feed the populations of the occupied countries, given proper guarantees that the food will not fall into the hands of the enemy.

If we do any or all of these things, we should broadcast the news of them day and night to every country of Europe, in every European language. There is a report, which I have not been able to verify, that the OWI [Office of War Information] has banned mention of the massacres in its shortwave broadcasts. If this is true, it is a sadly mistaken policy. We have nothing to gain by "appeasing" the

anti-Semites and the murderers. We have much to gain by using the facts to create resistance and eventually rebellion. The fact that the Nazis do not commit their massacres in western Europe, but transport their victims to the East before destroying them, is certain proof that they fear the effect on the local populations of the news of their crimes.

Finally, and it is a little thing, but at the same time a big thing, we can offer asylum now, without delay or red tape, to those few fortunate enough to escape from the Aryan paradise. We can do this without any risk to ourselves, because we can intern the refugees on arrival, and examine them at leisure before releasing them. If there is the slightest doubt about any of them, we can keep them interned for the duration of the war. Despite the fact that the urgency of the situation has never been greater, immigration into the United States in the year 1942 will have been less than ten percent of what it has been in "normal" years before Hitler, when some of the largest quotas were not filled. There have been bureaucratic delays in visa procedure which have literally condemned to death many stalwart democrats. These delays have caused an understandable bitterness among Jews and non-Jews in Europe, who have looked to us for help which did not come.

My Marseilles correspondent, who is neither a Jew nor a candidate for a visa, writes that, "in spite of the Nazi pressure, which she feels more than any other neutral, and in spite too of the reactionary tendencies of her middle class, the little country of Switzerland will [by accepting 9,000 refugees from Nazi terror since July] have contributed more to the cause of humanity than the great and wealthy United States, its loud declamations about the rights of the people and the defense of liberty notwithstanding."

This is a challenge which we cannot, must not, ignore.

QUESTIONS FOR READING AND DISCUSSION

1. According to Fry, why did many people find it difficult to believe reports of the massacre of Europe's Jews?
2. What significance did he attribute to the "heirs of the humanist tradition"? What was the Nazis' view of the "Jewish problem"? Why was it a "problem"? In what sense did Americans judge the Nazis "by our own standards"?
3. What responsibilities did Fry believe the United States had to aid the victims of Nazi atrocities? What might realistically be done to oppose the massacres?
4. To what extent did the U.S. government respond to appeals such as Fry's? What accounted for government policies?

DOCUMENT 25-4

Soldiers Send Messages Home

At home, Americans built a war economy. Thousands of tanks, airplanes, and ships came off American assembly lines. Millions of uniforms, bombs, and bullets funneled from civilian plants into military warehouses. Vital and compelling as all this military production was, probably no domestic activity was more important to Americans on the home front than the post office. Letters from loved ones in uniform overseas — "V mail" — were treasured. News of the war was always welcome, but news that the soldier was still alive was even better. The following correspondence illustrates what home-front Americans learned when they opened V mail.