

The Complexity of American Public Opinion During World War II

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Introduction

A nation's public has proven the power they hold over politicians' major decisions. From starting revolutions to overthrowing a government with which they are unhappy, to affecting a choice simply with their opinion. However, it is not always obvious exactly what the public wants. While one glance at an issue shows an overarching sentiment, a closer look reveals the countless sides and opinions present.

The complexity of public opinion appeared before the war even started, as it broke out in Europe and the United States was debating on intervening or not. The majority of historians today believe that before Pearl Harbor, the American public was strictly isolationist, wanting no part at all in the war in Europe after the pains of the Great War. However, it has become evident that there was a fairly strong interventionist feeling amongst the people that simply could not defeat the isolationism present.

In the case of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, James F. Byrnes, the Secretary of State under President Truman, was famously quoted to have said that accepting Japanese terms or softening unconditional surrender terms would lead to the "crucifixion of the president". Henry L. Stimson, the Secretary of War at the time, also mentioned in his article

published in the Harper's Magazine that one could not look at fellow Americans knowing that the bombs could have saved American lives.¹ While political leaders in the years leading up to the end of the war believed that the American public would be outraged knowing the possibilities held in the bombs in fact there was much more debate centering around whether unconditional surrender should be pursued or whether the terms of surrender be modified. Along with the surrender terms, there was further debate around Hirohito himself and the position and level of importance he should hold in post-war Japan.

This paper will attempt to identify the major categories under which public opinion at the time fell, namely looking at the decision for America to enter the war in Europe, the decision of dropping the atomic bomb in order to secure Japan's unconditional surrender, and the treatment of the Emperor during the American occupation. Countless people today believe that all Americans were against entering the war until Pearl Harbor and that the public at the time thought anything should be done in order to wrestle a cry of unconditional surrender from the Japanese Empire, however that has proved to be false. Public opinion was and still is a very complicated topic with countless sides to each issue, and the complexity of opinion is evident through the United States' role in World War II.

Pre-War Isolationism

As the second world war loomed over Europe, America was still reeling from the impact of the so called "Great War", the "war to end all wars". In the 1930s, "the combination of the

¹ Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," Harper's Magazine, Vol. 194, No. 1161 (1947), p. 106

Great Depression and the memory of tragic losses in World War I contributed to pushing American public opinion and policy towards isolationism”,² the pain caused by such recent memories discouraged Americans from wanting to spend more lives on international issues that seemingly did not concern the United States. This sentiment was especially strong as many citizens had never even left their state, much less the country, and Europe was completely unfamiliar and foreign. On the other hand, what concerned people the most was their own country’s economic woes. As Franklin D. Roosevelt became the 32nd President of the United States, his first task was to face the Great Depression. Even during the Spanish civil war in late 1936, “unemployment and economy in government ranked as the ‘most vital issues before the American people today’”.³ There simply was no time to look at European affairs that appeared so far away.

The start of the second world war in 1939 “did not suddenly diffuse popular desire to avoid international entanglements”,⁴ in fact “ninety percent of Americans hoped the United States would stay out of the war”.⁵ Americans so strongly believed that intervention in the first European war was fruitless that from 1935 to 1939, “Congress passed five different Neutrality Acts that forbade American involvement in foreign conflicts”.⁶ There was a slight shift in American neutrality as Hitler started making his moves, quickly occupying the majority of

² Office of the Historian, “American Isolationism in the 1930s”

< <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/american-isolationism>> (5 November 2019)

³ Geoffrey S. Smith, " Isolationism, the Devil, and the Advent of the Second World War: Variations on a Theme," *The International History Review*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1982), p. 58.

⁴ Office of the Historian, “American Isolationism in the 1930s”

⁵ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), “The United States: Isolation-Intervention” <<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-united-states-isolation-intervention>> (5 November 2019), Key Facts

⁶ William E. Leuchtenburg, “Franklin D. Roosevelt: Foreign Affairs”

<<https://millercenter.org/president/fdroosevelt/foreign-affairs>> (17 November 2019), Confronting Germany and Japan

mainland Europe and setting his eyes on Britain. “FDR re-asserted American neutrality, noting, however, that he could not ‘ask that every American remain neutral in ^{through} as well’”, pushing the United States to support Great Britain “with all aid ‘short of war’”.⁷ Despite America’s strongest ally in danger of falling victim to Hitler’s conquest, the American public’s neutrality remained strong.

In fact, in the summer of 1940, a group of Yale University law students founded the America First Committee. At its peak, the group boasted some 800,000 members with at least 450 chapters nationwide.⁸ In March of 1941, they officially released their set of Principles, the first of which states that the America First Committee’s “first duty is to keep America out of foreign wars. [America’s] entry would only destroy democracy, not save it”.⁹ Leaders of the Committee thought of Great Britain as the front line against Nazi Germany and were hoping that she would not fall, yet they did not believe that “a complete British victory could be accomplished without the full military participation of the United States in the war”. America could win the war, but it would create a long, bloody battle that would drain the country of its resources.¹⁰ As the conflict in Europe reached higher tensions, the Committee urged its members to participate in the decision making by sending “wires, postcards and letters tonight, tomorrow and all week”. The strength of the pacifist and isolationist movements is what pushed Congress to pass the Neutrality Acts.¹¹ Evidently, this shows the strong non-interventionist feelings

⁷ Leuchtenburg, “Franklin D. Roosevelt: Foreign Affairs”, *Descent Into War*

⁸ USHMM, “The United States: Isolation-Intervention”, *The America First Committee and other Non-Interventionist Groups*

⁹ Wayne S. Cole, “The America First Committee,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1908-1984), Vol. 44, No. 4 (1951), p. 308

¹⁰ Cole, “The America First Committee,” p. 309-310

¹¹ U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, “U.S. Neutrality During World War II”

<<https://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/artifact/america-first-committee-poster-1940-1945>> (5 December 2019), America First Committee Poster Image

throughout the country, especially considering that prominent Americans such as Henry Ford, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, Charles Lindbergh and various senators were all members and spokesmen.

Pre-War Interventionism

The lesser known side of the debate before war broke out in December of 1941 was arguably equally as strong. In May of 1940, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies (CDAAA) was founded by William Allen White, a Republican publisher in Kansas. The CDAAA had over 750,000 members and 750 chapters at its peak,¹² rivaling the numbers of the America First Committee. Their goal was to “discredit isolationist sentiment and to stimulate popular support for Roosevelt’s policies for aiding the allies”,¹³ the complete opposite of the America First Committee that sought to restrain Roosevelt’s power on war policies. The CDAAA “staged rallies and performances, took out full-page newspaper ads, and handed out flyers in an effort to gain support for aiding Great Britain”, as America’s ally was the only thing that stood between them and Hitler, and they were the ones to inform the public of Nazi Germany’s mass murder of Jews.¹⁴

There was another prominent group that was founded April of 1941 was the Fight for Freedom Committee. The FFF “aggressively advocated entering World War II to defend both Great Britain and democratic values”¹⁵ and the Chicago chapter established the Chicago Sun in

¹² USHMM, “The United States: Isolation-Intervention”, Interventionist Groups

¹³ William M. Tuttle, Jr. “Aid-to-the-Allies Short-of-War versus American Intervention, 1940: A Reappraisal of William Allen White's Leadership,” The Journal of American History, Vol. 56, No. 4 (1970), p. 841

¹⁴ USHMM, “The United States: Isolation-Intervention”, Interventionist Groups

¹⁵ USHMM, “The United States: Isolation-Intervention”, Interventionist Groups

November of 1941 with “a vigorous pro-war stand”.¹⁶ The group had countless prominent members and sponsors, including Walt Disney Studios, which “produced a program cover for a FFF rally featuring Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy”¹⁷, several of the most famous characters to date.

Looking back on the pre-war sentiment from the perspective of America having just entered the war, George Gallup, the inventor of the Gallup Poll, saw that past polls revealed that “after the invasion and conquest of France, a steadily rising majority believed that it was more important that Germany be defeated than that the United States stay out of the war” despite the fact that the public feared war.¹⁸ Furthermore, Gallup noticed from looking at other past polls “that the public has consistently during the past two years favored stronger measures against Japan than any put into effect previous to the summer of 1941”.¹⁹ While American opinion appears to have been mostly focused on the war in Europe, as the United States’ greatest ally was coming under attack, there was evidently some concern for Japanese expansionism.

Although the isolationist side of the debate was stronger up until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, it is important to note that it was, after all, just ^{one} ~~a~~ side. There are other sides that existed, not every single American at the time believed in staying out of the war and leaving Great Britain to fight for itself. Even while the war was still considered just a European conflict, American public opinion was already showing its complexity.

¹⁶ University of Chicago Library, “Guide to the Fight for Freedom Committee Records 1941-1947”, 2006, < <https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/scrc/findingaids/view.php?eadid=ICU.SPCL.FFC> > (6 December 2019), Biographical Note

¹⁷ USHMM, “The United States: Isolation-Intervention”, Interventionist Groups

¹⁸ George Gallup, “Public Had Expected War With Germany For 18 Months, Past Polls of Opinion Show”, The Washington Post, 17 December 1941 (6 December 2019)

¹⁹ George Gallup, “Evidence Indicates Voters Wanted Stronger U.S. Policy Towards Japan Two Years Ago”, The Washington Post, 15 December 1941 (6 December 2019)

Major Shift in Opinion After Pearl Harbor

As the war situation steadily declined in Europe, American public opinion slowly shifted. According to the Gallup Poll, 93% of Americans voted against declaring war on Germany after Hitler invaded western Europe in May of 1940. After the fall of France to Nazi Germany in June of 1940, and with Great Britain as the only major power remaining, though Americans did believe it was important that Germany be defeated, there was overpowering fear of entering the conflict, and only 35% voted to specifically help the American ally. However, it shows that there was indeed sentiment towards aiding Great Britain brewing in the American public, not everyone was vehemently against the war. It was only in September of 1941, when an American destroyer was attacked by a German U-boat that the majority, 64% voted to help Britain in its battle for survival against Nazi Germany.²⁰ However, even then it seemed that intervening in the European war was still a topic of debate. Isolationism had been apparent ever since the Great War ended, gaining more traction as the European situation degraded, and it was not about to leave the hearts of Americans so soon.

It was only after the attack on Pearl Harbor that American public opinion truly changed. The attack was devastating. Being the first attack on US soil brought a true sense of shock, especially to Americans who thought the war would remain in Europe, never expecting an attack to come from Japan. And as one opinion piece in the Washington Post so puts it, “the American public had been led to believe that no invader could come anywhere near the island without

²⁰ USHMM, “How did Public Opinion About Entering World War II Change Between 1939 and 1941?”, < <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/us-public-opinion-world-war-II-1939-1941> > (27 October 2019), May 10, 1940: Germany Invades Western Europe, June 22, 1940: France Falls To Germany, September 4, 1941: American Destroyer Attacked

being apprehended or without his approach being radioed to the Army Air Force on Oahu”.²¹ As a result from the attack, 2,335 military personnel and 68 civilians were killed along with 1,246 wounded, both military and civilian, compared to the mere 55 Japanese casualties,²² a staggering ratio of 66 to 1. This sent a shiver of fear through all Americans, knowing that Japan was not a little island on the other side of the ocean, but a force that could reach across the Pacific and hurt America itself.

This attack, on December 7, 1941, “ended the debate over American intervention in both the Pacific and European theaters of World War II” and “only days after the United States entered World War II, no mainstream isolationist movement remained”,²³ and with the declaration of war from Nazi Germany three days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, “President Roosevelt was able then to portray war against both Japan and Germany as defensive measures against Axis powers who declared war on the United States first”.²⁴ Walter Lippmann, a journalist for the Washington Post, criticizes America’s “inadequate diplomatic arrangements and of a belated and retarded mobilization”, but thanks to the Japanese attack, “overnight [Americans] have, it is true, become at long last a united people”.²⁵ American public opinion did a near complete 180 degrees revers^e, it was no longer a war about helping allies who were falling to Germany, it was now a war of revenge caused by an attack on the mainland. To the public, “the very existence of the Nation, the lives, the liberties and the fortunes of all [Americans], are

²¹ “Let Us Start Right,” The Washington Post, 9 December 1941 (5 December 2019)

²² Pearl Harbor Visitors Bureau, “How many people died at Pearl Harbor during the attack?” (17 November 2019)

²³ The National WWII Museum, “The Great Debate” (17 November 2019)

²⁴ USHMM, “The United States: Isolation-Intervention”, America Attacked

²⁵ Walter Lippmann, “Wake Up, America,” The Washington Post, 9 December 1941 (5 December 2019)

in the balance".²⁶ The conflict in Europe has become World War II, a war of defense to protect world democracy.

During the War

Throughout the war, American public opinion rarely changed. Whilst there were a couple of debates on smaller decisions, such as the Lend-Lease program, what to do with Poland and the results of America's first battle in Africa, there is little argument against fighting the war. As previously mentioned, to the American public, this became a war to defend their rights and to save democracy from fascism. While there had been debate about entering the war, "the American attitude was neither wholly isolationist nor wholly interventionist; it was predominantly an attitude of self-defense, based on the conception that England was the first line of defense".²⁷ Once the United States entered the war though, it seemed as if all sense of argument had disappeared.

Whilst conducting research in Washington Post newspapers of the 1940s, it becomes evident how much the American public's mind is occupied by the war. In the early months after Pearl Harbor, other than the front-page news, there was little other mention of the war. Instead, the pages were filled with advertisements for Christmas shopping and other end-of-the-year sales.²⁸ However, by 1943 there is already a drastic change in the layout of the newspaper pages, with much more of each page dedicated to opinion pieces or editorials on the war.²⁹ Furthermore,

²⁶ Lippmann, "Wake Up, America"

²⁷ George Gallup, "Public Had Expected War With Germany For 18 Months, Past Polls of Opinion Show",

²⁸ See Appendix I

²⁹ See Appendix II

by June 1945, the opinion page is so full of text that the Washington Post no longer includes a political cartoon on the page.³⁰

Another interesting part of the public's opinion concerning the war was the purchase of war bonds. Between May of 1941 and December of 1945, "85 million people, invested \$185.7 billion in war bonds" while the purchase of war savings stamps contributed another \$1.5 billion.³¹ This totaled to \$187.2 billion as contribution from the American public, and simply financial contribution at that. There was of course the manpower to supply the factories and armed forces in addition.

Pro Unconditional Surrender

With the end of the war in sight, there came a question of how to address the situation with Japan. America was set on winning the war, whether it be through an invasion, bombing, or Russian intervention, they knew that Japan had already lost the war but simply did not want to surrender. At least not according to what Japan ^{else} believed unconditional surrender entailed for the future of their empire.

One option that was frequently considered was to tell the Japanese about maintaining Hirohito as emperor. However, there was a strong belief that allowing that concession would appear weak, both to Japan and to the American public. Eugene Dooman, one of the drafters of the Potsdam Declaration in the State Department, "argued against including retention of the

³⁰ See Appendix III

³¹ Kiku Adatto, "Saving for Democracy Thrift, Sacrifice, and the World War II Bond Campaigns," in Joshua Yates and James Davison Hunter, Saving for Democracy: Thrift and Thriving in America: Capitalism and Moral Order from the Puritans to the Present (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 2

emperor system on the grounds that it would not be supported by American public opinion”.³² Changing the terms of unconditional surrender would make it seem as if the United States was giving up, unwilling to fight the war to the finish and force Japan towards surrendering.

This belief is supported by the extreme hatred directed towards Hirohito, as there was little knowledge about Japanese culture made available in the US, thus leading many to believe Hirohito to be as involved in the war as Hitler and Mussolini were. Throughout the war, “the emperor had been almost universally hated in the United States”, and even after the American occupation of Japan started, there were “commentators calling for his arrest or execution”.³³ However, as most decisions concerning Japan’s role in the war were decided by the Big Six and required unanimous opinion, it is evident that Hirohito did not have the amount of power the other Axis leaders did.

American political leaders at the time also believed that the public held strong negative opinions towards the emperor. In the final months of World War II, “polls that went directly to the White House, when not printed on the front page of the Washington Post, repeatedly stated that only 10 to 18 percent of Americans approved "working out peace terms" with Japan”, compared to 33 percent who wanted execution, 11 percent wanted imprisonment, 9 percent wanted banishment and 17 percent for Hirohito to be tried.³⁴ As the Nazi officials were tried for their war crimes, so should the Japanese Emperor be for bringing the war to America, many must have thought. No matter what the punishment was to be, a total of 70 percent of Americans were

³² Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman and the Surrender of Japan (Harvard University Press: 2005), p. 113

³³ Hal Brands, “The Emperor’s New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II.”, The Historian, Vol. 68, No. 1 (2006), p. 1

³⁴ Michael D. Pearlman, “Unconditional Surrender, Demobilization and the Atomic Bomb”, Combat Studies Institute, (1944), p. 15

against the emperor with some form of consequence in for the war in mind. And it is this treatment of Nazi officials that caused Japan to fear the unclear terms of unconditional surrender. They looked to Germany as an example and saw what they would die to prevent from happening.

Thus, it seemed that public opinion leaned strongly on the side of unconditional surrender, urging the United States to fight Japan until they surrendered and gave up their empire. Truman himself mentioned to the JCS and service secretaries in June of 1945 that “‘he did not feel that he could take any action at this time to change public opinion’ about unconditional surrender”.³⁵ It had become such a rallying cry that united the country and launched America towards becoming the leading world power that now, the phrase seemed to be carved in rock.

Pro Softening Terms

Throughout the war, American public opinion has remained diverse and complicated, each one trying to voice their own ideas of what should be done and in which way. Although politicians and others in power sought to adapt “to their perceptions of domestic opinion in shaping and altering emperor policy, these perceptions were at times incomplete, resulting from only a partial view of a public debate that had grown quite complex between 1942 and 1945”.³⁶ Whilst most believed that the American public wanted Japan to surrender unconditionally, there are actually those that thought changing the terms would enable the war to end earlier.

³⁵ Pearlman, “Unconditional Surrender, Demobilization and the Atomic Bomb”, p. 16

³⁶ Hal Brands, “Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor during World War II”, *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2005), p. 433

Right after the United States formally entered the war due to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Americans were already looking at the coming years and the impact the conflict would have. While there were definitely lofty goals and ideals that pushed the US to fight, such as "the restoration of the conditions of peace for which we shall take the responsibility due to our position as the greatest Nation in an integrated world",³⁷ or the "Bill of Rights [America] fights to defend".³⁸ However, these goals did not clarify what America really wanted. Mark Sullivan, another author for the Washington Post, saw that even in December of 1941, there were few ways to shorten the oncoming war. He suggested a negotiated peace to be one of the solutions, as none of the Axis were likely to crumble any time soon.³⁹ Before the phrase "unconditional surrender" had even come to be voiced by Roosevelt, there were already people who believed that the country should aim to negotiate in order to keep the war short.

Furthermore, as the war continued, more and more opinion pieces appeared to discuss the end of the war. Of course, there were multiple sides and opinions concerning this issue, "whereas the New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune generally supported harsh terms against the emperor, the Washington Post and the Boston Globe advocated soft peace".⁴⁰ Lippman, a vocal writer for both the Washington Post and the Boston Globe, hits the nail on the head when it comes to the problem with unconditional surrender. The phrase by itself is a strong declaration, showing that America is taking a firm stand, however what it encompasses is completely unknown to the Germans. From their perspective, it is deciding between "whether, when

³⁷ "Righteous Might", The Washington Post, 9 December 1941 (5 December 2019)

³⁸ Scott Hart, "America Celebrates 150th Anniversary of Bill of Rights She Fights to Defend", The Washington Post, 15 December 1941 (5 December 2019)

³⁹ Mark Sullivan, "Prospects of the Months Ahead", The Washington Post, 15 December 1941 (5 December 2019)

⁴⁰ Hasegawa, Racing, p. 222-223

Germany is disarmed and at their mercy, the Allies will impose specific terms – and limited – or whether they will retain the right to formulate new demands for an indefinite period of time”.⁴¹ The same could be said about Japan, although they continued to fight past Germany’s surrender, all they had as a point of reference for what unconditional surrender would mean are the remnants of Nazi Germany.

Post-War Compassion Towards Hirohito

August 28, 1945, the American occupation of Japan finally starts. With the Second World War finally over, Americans now had to decide what to do with Japan, now that it is under their control. No thanks to the vague terms of “unconditional surrender”, there were mixed feelings concerning war trials and power distribution. At the center of this issue stood Emperor Hirohito, previously thought to have held as much military power as Hitler and Mussolini, but now understood to hold a tremendous amount of symbolic power. As emperor, Hirohito was “the basic factor not only in the actions but in the very thoughts of his subjects”,⁴² an omnipresent god in the minds of all Japanese.

Many Americans blamed Emperor Hirohito for starting the war, such as Senator Richard Russell calling him “the ‘head and heart’ of Japanese expansionism” whilst demanding “immediate war crimes proceedings against the emperor”.⁴³ However, that did not happen. By September of 1945, “Hirohito [ruled] a defeated empire subject to the approval of General

⁴¹ Walter Lippman, “Unconditional Surrender”, The Boston Globe, 18 January 1945 (6 December 2019)

⁴² George E. Jones, “Hirohito: The Man And the Emperor: Portrait of Japan's ruler who is his symbolic role may hold the key to peace in the Pacific,” The New York Times, 23 September 1945 (6 December 2019)

⁴³ Brands, “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, p.1

MacArthur, whose views are transmitted to the Emperor via Premier Prince Naruhiko Higashi-Kuni and the Foreign Minister”.⁴⁴ He continued to rule Japan, even as a puppet to MacArthur, but remained emperor nonetheless. Furthermore, in July of 1946, it was declared that there would be no war crimes trial for Hirohito. Joseph B. Keenan, the prosecutor for the Japanese trials, portrayed Hirohito as “a figurehead and a fraud perpetrated on the Japanese people”,⁴⁵ but not a war criminal.

What is most fascinating however, is that after Keenan’s announcement, “one might have expected ... elicit anger and widespread disagreement”, as there was a strong negative sentiment towards the emperor in the United States, yet “Keenan’s news received a muted public reaction”.⁴⁶ Even before the announcement in July, the public was already somewhat satisfied with how the war ended. As Hirohito formally said he did not intend for the attack on Pearl Harbor until after war was declared, “the world [was] willing to believe, however, that Hirohito [was] for peace”⁴⁷, at least for a moment. With the war finally over, the public seemed more relieved that their friends and families could return home than concerned about what was going to happen to the emperor.

In the end though, it seems that public opinion could not affect this particular decision. The Truman administration decided to keep Emperor Hirohito “as a means of maintaining social and political stability in Japan” and meanwhile, “MacArthur announced that Hirohito had taken ‘a leading role in the democratization of his people’”.⁴⁸ Although the decision to keep Hirohito

⁴⁴ Jones, “Hirohito: The Man and the Emperor”

⁴⁵ The New York Times, “No Hirohito Trial, Says Keenan; First Witness Called in Tokyo”, The New York Times, 17 July 1946 (9 December 2019)

⁴⁶ Brands, “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, p.1

⁴⁷ The Los Angeles Times, “Hirohito Says He’s All For Peace, Now, Anyhow”, The Los Angeles Times, 26 September 1945 (9 December 2019)

⁴⁸ Brands, “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, p. 10

as emperor had already been made, portraying him as the “democratic emperor” would serve to appease the sides of the public that wanted to remove him.

Conclusion

As observed through the three main issues discussed in this paper: the US entry into the war, the terms of Japanese surrender and the treatment of Hirohito during the occupation, American public opinion is extremely complex and varied. There are times where the country leans staunchly to one side, such as the pre-war isolationism, when in reality there were many Americans who wanted to intervene by providing aid France and Great Britain, even at the risk of entering the war themselves. Or concerning Japanese unconditional surrender, despite the overwhelming hatred towards “Japs”, there were in fact ^{es}advocators for negotiated peace in order to end the war earlier.

However, it is very difficult to accurately portray the whole of American public opinion during World War II. Polls are usually biased in the pool of responders and newspapers’ columns may be heavily edited or purposefully incendiary in order to spark discussion. As history portrays public opinion in a way that fits the government’s actions, it does lead to the question, in what ways will today’s public opinion be written down to pass on to future generations?

Bibliographic Essay

As my topic centers around public opinion, I started with journal articles written by Hal Brands, who also researched public opinion. The two articles I make use of in this paper, “Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor” and “The Emperor’s New Clothes: American Views of Hirohito after World War II”, although focused specifically on Emperor Hirohito, definitely provided a lot of valuable information. My own research led me to look at a lot of polls conducted at the time along with opinion pieces published in newspapers, but Brands specifically notes the flaws in polls in “Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and Policy in the American Debate over the Japanese Emperor”. The second article, “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, illustrates the vast differences between suggested policies concerning Emperor Hirohito and the real decisions made, which was particularly useful for the last section of this paper concerning the American occupation after the war.

Another source that I found particularly helpful was reading The Washington Post, one of the newspapers noted by both Brands and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa as publicly challenging unconditional surrender. Some of the pieces published definitely served to show the different sides, opinions and ideas on each issue that captured the public’s attention. It is extremely fascinating to see what thoughts Americans of the time had, especially right after the United States joined the war, as they had no idea what was going to happen for the next couple years. However, if I had more time allotted to this research paper, I would have wanted to look at other popular newspapers published at the time, such as The New York Times or The Boston Globe, whilst also spending more time on The Washington Post itself. It is very time consuming to scroll through the microfilms of each month’s worth of publications, thus I only managed to read about four or five months of The Washington Post, starting with December 1941, the month of

the attack on Pearl Harbor, and January 1943, the month of the Casablanca conference during which Roosevelt first used the phrase “unconditional surrender” concerning World War II. I believe that these two months could possibly show some of the most drastic shifts in American public opinion, but I would have liked to be able to read through all the newspaper publications throughout the duration of the war and the occupation.

Additionally, there were several official sources from the US government and related organizations that helped provide some statistics and facts to enforce my analysis of American public opinion at the time, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Pearl Harbor Visitor’s Bureau. Having plain numbers as a representation of the attack on Pearl Harbor for example helped to show how this event shocked the American public. It demonstrates Japanese expertise, capability and power, inspiring fear throughout the country.

The focus of this paper is the complexity of American public opinion throughout World War II, however I mainly concentrated on three topics: entering the conflict, Japan’s surrender, and Hirohito during the American occupation. These three issues were amongst the most pressing matters during that time, but I believe it would be interesting to take a closer look at other issues that preoccupied the American public during the war, such as the Polish question, Russian veto power, etc. Each discussion may provide a small shift in opinion or some insight into how politicians made their decisions.

In the end, as is with all research, having more time and access to various sources would prove to be tremendously valuable. This topic is endlessly complex and varied, so while I may attempt to help the reader have a better understanding of American public opinion, the views presented here may in themselves be narrow and limited.

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Appendix I:

Second page of *The Washington Post* on December 12, 1941

THE WASHINGTON POST: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1941

TYPISTS WANTED
SECRETARIES
Must know 12 to 15 words per minute. Good penmanship. Good references. Salary \$10.00 per week. Apply to: **BOYD SCHOOL**, 1111 14th St. N.W.

Gift SUGGESTION for Luckier than!

A Gift that STANDS OUT in the Rain



Men's Gloria Umbrellas \$5 special

"A Gift from Beckers Means More!"

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Tokyo Silent On Jap Losses

Tokyo, Dec. 11.—(AP)—The Japanese government today refused to comment on reports that the United States had captured a Japanese submarine in the Pacific.

ROSE LOVELIEST PATTERN

Stiff Feeling

COMPLETE SERVICE FOR 6

52¢

SERVING PIECES...

R. HARRIS & CO.
1111 14th St. N.W.

Bulletins

Chinese Attacking in Hainan

Changsha, China, Dec. 11.—(AP)—Chinese troops attacking all along the Hainan front to capture Japanese positions in Hainan have inflicted 15,000 casualties on the Japs in a continuous steady offensive, the China radio announced today.

War Declared On Nazis, Italy

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11.—(AP)—The United States today declared war on Germany, Italy and Japan.

War Declared On Nazis, Italy

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11.—(AP)—The United States today declared war on Germany, Italy and Japan.

CATHOLICS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11.—(AP)—The Catholic Church today declared war on Germany, Italy and Japan.

Hickey-Freeman Army Officers' Uniforms

Official Jacket, Trousers and Overcoat

GOLDHEIM'S
1409 H STREET

ARMY AND NAVY Officers' Uniforms

Accessories and Equipment

A&N Trading Co.
8th & D Sts. N.W.

REGARDLESS OF PRICE

No better Gift in any bottle



REALLY SINCE 1823

WILSON DISTILLING CO., INC., BRISTOL, PA., BLENDED WHISKEY - 40% PROOF - 70% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS

LISTEN! EVERY WEEKDAY

IT&T GOOD NEIGHBOR NEWS

Headline News Gathered and Assembled by United Press From the American Republics and Presented by

INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH CORPORATION

WJSV
TONIGHT AT 6:15 P. M.

IT & T GOOD NEIGHBOR NEWS will be on the air every week day evening Monday through Saturday at 6:15 P.M. (except Tuesday). On Tuesday, IT & T GOOD NEIGHBOR NEWS will be heard at 6:10 P.M.

Wickard Urges Crop Control After War

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24.—Wickard today urged that after the war the Federal Government should take steps to control the production of food and fiber...

Flynn's Approval Appears Likely

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24.—Flynn's approval appears likely for the proposed new Federal Reserve Board...

Investigators Still Stumped By Train Murder in Lower 13

PULLMAN, Jan. 24.—Investigators still are stumped by the murder of a woman on a Pullman train...

Portuguese Fast Arrives Bringing 188

LISBON, Jan. 24.—The Portuguese fast ship arrived today with 188 refugees from the Azores...

Navy Announces Crew of Missing Transport Plane

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24.—The Navy announced today that the crew of a missing transport plane had been located...

Berlin Paper Hints Of Impending Disaster in Russia

BERLIN, Jan. 24.—A Berlin newspaper hints of an impending disaster in Russia...

Business of World Over, Dr. Butler Says

NEW YORK, Jan. 24.—The business of the world is over, Dr. Butler says...

Books Will Reach Servicemen, Slimson Assures

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24.—Books will reach servicemen, Slimson assures...

AMERICAN FIGHTING MEN APPEAL TO YOU TO

Fill Your War Stamp Albums Now AND CONVERT THEM INTO WAR SAVINGS BONDS

This important message is directed to holders of the thousands of partially-filled war stamp albums in Washington...

- List of member banks of the District of Columbia Bankers Association offering facilities for purchasing war stamps and bonds.

The Truth about Lend-Lease EDITORIAL

by WALTER LIPPMANN

THE Associated Press reports that the Republican leaders in Congress have decided not to support an attack on Lend-Lease...

DOWNTOWN PARKING 25¢

Pianos for Rent

LEND-LEASE will be continued for the same reason that it was adopted two years ago...

THE TESTIMONY which was brought forward two years ago against the adoption of Lend-Lease still shows...

IF THEY prevail, it is not necessary to be a prophet to see what will happen...

AS A PUBLIC SERVICE this timely and important message is reprinted from The Washington Post of Jan. 24, 1943...

STOP AND CONSIDER! YOUR MORTGAGE MODERN! IF NOT CONSULT MORTGAGE LOAN DEPT.

INTERNATIONAL LAYEX CORPORATION • PLAYTEX PARK • BOYER DELAWARE

The Washington Post
 Published Daily Except on Sundays and Public Holidays
 Vol. 62, No. 125, June 10, 1945
 Price 5 Cents
 Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 3, 1877
 Post Office at Washington, D. C., and at additional mailing offices
 Postmaster: This publication is published daily except on Sundays and public holidays.
 Second-class postage paid at Washington, D. C., and at additional mailing offices.
 Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on June 10, 1945.
 Copyright, 1945, by The Washington Post Company
 Printed and Published by The Washington Post Company, 11th and Pennsylvania Avenues, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Veteran's Seniority

ANOTHER ADVANCE has been made in the effort to determine what the employment rights of a veteran should be. At the present time a veteran who has served in the armed forces is entitled to a certain amount of seniority in the civilian service. This is usually based on the number of years of military service. The question now before the Civil Service Commission is whether a veteran should be entitled to seniority based on the number of years of military service, or whether he should be entitled to seniority based on the number of years of civilian service. The Commission is currently hearing arguments on this issue.

Official Leakage

THE CASE OF THE late Representative Charles McNary has again raised the question of official leakage. McNary was a member of the House of Representatives and was known for his frequent leaks of confidential information to the press. The question is whether McNary's actions constitute a crime under the Espionage Laws. The Department of Justice is currently investigating this matter. It is clear that the issue of official leakage is a serious one and that the government must take steps to prevent such leaks in the future.

Tough Assignment

THE LATE REPRESENTATIVE McNary has been assigned a tough assignment. He has been assigned to a position in the War Relocation Authority. This is a position of great responsibility and it is clear that McNary will be expected to perform well. The War Relocation Authority is a government agency that is responsible for the care and education of Japanese-Americans who have been interned in camps. McNary's assignment to this position is a reflection of the government's confidence in his abilities.

Staff Case

THE STAFF CASE of the late Representative McNary is a matter of great interest. It is clear that McNary's actions have caused a great deal of controversy and that the government is currently investigating the matter. The staff case is a matter of internal government affairs and it is clear that the government will take steps to ensure that such cases do not recur in the future.

It is not clear from the above that McNary was a member of the House of Representatives. It is also not clear that McNary was a member of the War Relocation Authority. It is clear that the government is currently investigating the matter and that McNary's actions have caused a great deal of controversy.

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Reader Opinion

THE READER OPINION page is a place where readers can express their views on current events. It is a place where readers can voice their concerns and offer their suggestions. The Editor of The Washington Post will consider all reader opinions and will publish those that are deemed to be in the public interest.

Community Chest

THE COMMUNITY CHEST is a fund that is used to support various community projects. It is a place where individuals can contribute to the betterment of their community. The Community Chest is a place where individuals can make a difference in the lives of others.

Expensive Children

THE EXPENSIVE CHILDREN are those children who are born into families that are unable to provide for their needs. These children are often born into families that are struggling financially and are often the result of a lack of planning and foresight. These children are often the most vulnerable and need the most help.

Plenic Ordinary

THE PLENIC ORDINARY is a type of food that is made from the placenta of a cow. It is a type of food that is believed to have various health benefits. It is a type of food that is often consumed in various parts of the world.

Life On Train

THE LIFE ON TRAIN is a type of transportation that is used to transport passengers between different parts of a city. It is a type of transportation that is often used by people who do not have their own cars. It is a type of transportation that is often used by people who are going to work or school.

Cooperation With Russia

THE COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA is a topic that has been discussed extensively in the press. It is a topic that has caused a great deal of controversy and has led to a great deal of speculation. The question is whether the United States should cooperate with Russia in the fight against Germany. The answer to this question is a matter of great importance and one that must be carefully considered.

Vital To Permanent Peace

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Letters To The Editor

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