

THE GOOD WAR?

A Reappraisal of How World War II Affected American Society

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A recent cartoon in *The New Yorker* depicts a young man sitting on a barstool, looking slightly dazed, saying to the bartender, an older man, "I remember the Second World War. That's the one that kind of flickers on the screen, right?" As the years go by and the war recedes further into the past, as the number of Americans old enough to have any memory of the conflict dwindles, perceptions of it are indeed increasingly shaped by the motion pictures and newsreels of the era. Those flickering images, however, were carefully fashioned to present a certain view of the war. Simply put, that view held that World War II was "the good war."

This phrase served as the title of Studs Terkel's oral history of the war, which became a best-seller in 1984 and won a Pulitzer Prize. Terkel took the precaution of placing the words between quotation marks because he considered it "incongruous" to attach the adjective *good* to the noun *war*. Yet most Americans have not been much bothered by the incongruity; nor, until recently, have most scholars. One historian even labeled World War II the "perfect" war, although he, too, used quotation marks.¹

This concept of the war rests on six assertions, all well substantiated, about the nature and consequences of the conflict:

First, World War II was a just war. Even discounting the official view that the war was fought only for the right of people everywhere to live in freedom and security, it is nevertheless true that the United States was fighting a defensive war, was not motivated by a desire for conquest, and was combating fascism, an evil and expansionist system.

Second, the war was fought by a largely united people, whose shared purpose not only led them to make sacrifices for the common good but also enabled them to transcend ethnic divisions and religious differences. Americans engaged in many forms of cooperative endeavor, such as community service, civil defense, volunteer work, war bond campaigns, and scrap and salvage drives.

Third, the war brought prosperity to a nation still bogged down in depression. Manufacturing output doubled, and there were jobs for all.

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1. Studs Terkel, *"The Good War": An Oral History of World War Two* (New York, 1984); Geoffrey Perrett, *Days of Sadness, Years of Triumph: The American People, 1939-1945* (New York, 1973), p. 441.

The war meant good pay—workers' weekly earnings increased by some 70 percent—and a somewhat more equitable distribution of a much larger national income. Membership in trade unions climbed from 10.5 to 14.75 million, and labor began to flex its political muscle. The GI Bill of Rights provided millions of veterans with generous college tuition benefits, allowances to assist in readjusting to civilian life, and federally guaranteed low-cost mortgage loans.

Fourth, the war benefited African-Americans. Fought against Nazi doctrines of Aryan supremacy, the war advanced the civil rights movement by discrediting the racist assumptions on which segregation depended. Defense industries lowered barriers to hiring blacks, who made up more than 8 percent of war workers in 1945, up from 3 percent in 1942. During the war, too, a Committee on Fair Employment Practices attempted, however haltingly, to end job discrimination by federal contractors.

Fifth, the war provided women with unprecedented opportunities in the war industries. Six million women joined the labor force between 1940 and 1945, and the percentage of women holding jobs rose from 28 to 37. Public opinion polls revealed a startling decline, from 80 to 13 percent, in the number of people who thought married women should not work outside the home, a decline to be expected at a time when three of every four new women workers were married.

A final reason why the war seemed to be "good" had less to do with what happened than with what did not happen. The war did not lead to the harsh curtailment of civil liberties that many had feared. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly were widely protected; there were few prosecutions for sedition; there was no public hysteria or mob violence; and critics of the war were, in general, treated leniently.

One of the people interviewed by Studs Terkel succinctly summed up many of these themes. "The war was fun for America," a retired Red Cross volunteer recalled, adding that for Americans who did not lose a loved one in combat—and most did not—the war was a hell of a good time."² That retrospective comment accurately captured the wartime outlook. Early in

2. Terkel, *The Good War*, p. 10.

1945, when pollsters asked whether the war had required people to make "any real sacrifices," 64 percent of those surveyed replied, "No."

For many years, historians have recognized that this rosy interpretation of World War II is flawed. Even the good war had its manifestly less appealing sides: military and foreign policy decisions based on expediency rather than morality, the persistence of anti-Semitism and ethnic discord, the continuing disparity between the conditions of the working poor and the corporate rich, the stubborn resistance to gains by blacks, the rapid erosion of women's wartime gains after 1945, and such indefensible restrictions on civil liberties as the relocation and incarceration of 110,000 west coast Japanese, two-thirds of them American citizens. By the 1960s and 1970s, scholars routinely noted these defects and offered a more critical assessment of the war. Until recently, however, historians usually accepted the terms in which the argument was originally posed. When the balance sheet was added up, World War II still seemed to have been "the good war."³

Only in the last ten years has a body of literature appeared that altered the terms of the discussion and placed the war in a different light. World War II, recent work has suggested, led to a pervasive conformity, in behavior as well as belief, fostered and sometimes imposed by the government, but for the most part eagerly embraced by Americans. The conformity was not something that civil libertarians, or intellectuals, or reformers challenged, but rather something they endorsed. The result was to narrow the scope of individual freedom and to reinforce illiberal tendencies in virtually all areas of life, but especially in class, gender, and race relations.

The war, in this view, bore out Alexis de Tocqueville's warning, sounded more than a century and a half ago, regarding the dangers that any lengthy war posed to democracy. Tocqueville had visited the United States in 1831, ostensibly to study the American prison system and to

3. Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941-1945* (Philadelphia, 1972); John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York, 1976). See also Barton J. Bernstein, "America in War and Peace: The Test of Liberalism," in Barton J. Bernstein, ed., *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (New York, 1968), pp. 289-312.

write a report on it for the French government, but with a more ambitious project in mind: to analyze the very nature of democratic institutions. The two volumes of *Democracy in America*, published in 1835 and 1840, touched on many topics—politics and law, race and religion, literature and the arts, manners and mores, relations between the sexes, and the "tyranny of the majority." Significantly, Tocqueville also presented "some considerations on war in democratic communities."

Tocqueville was of two minds about the subject. On the one hand, he said, war was beneficial, because it "almost always enlarges the mind of a people and raises their character." Although he was not specific, he seemed to think that war could encourage people to make sacrifices for the public good and could serve as a corrective to "the mediocrity of tastes." Yet Tocqueville also believed that a protracted war would "endanger the freedom of a democratic country"—would, indeed, be "the surest and shortest" way to destroy liberty. "War does not always give over democratic communities to military government," he wrote, "but it must invariably and immeasurably increase the powers of civil government, it must almost compulsorily concentrate the direction of all men and the management of all things in the hands of the administration. If it does not lead to despotism by sudden violence, it prepares men for it more gently by their habits."

When Tocqueville spoke of despotism, he had something quite specific in mind: an all-embracing conformity of thought and feeling, deriving not from laws but from public opinion, enforced not by the police but by the desire to be accepted by everyone else. Even in peacetime, the majority did not need laws "to coerce those who do not think like themselves; public disapprobation is enough." Wartime, however, exacerbated the situation. Democratic despotism, Tocqueville thought, not only affected public life but also, and more insidiously, "penetrates from all sides into private life." Under the tyranny of the majority, the "body is left free, and the soul is enslaved." Freedom's forms were maintained, but not its substance. The process by which people came to accept prevailing values would be aided by newspapers, which "can drop the same thought into a thousand minds at the same moment."⁴

Democracy in America was translated into English shortly after its publication, and a revised translation appeared in 1862. The first modern translation, however, was not made until 1944. The editor, Phillips Bradley, asserted that the work "speaks to our condition, while we are in the midst of war ... as freshly as when it was written." Yet Bradley, in a lengthy historical essay, breezily dismissed Tocqueville's warnings about war. He emphasized, instead, that the United States, guided by strong presidential leadership, was coping marvelously well with wartime problems. Tocqueville had simply not foreseen "the ability of a democratic people to stick together and to fight." Completed in the summer of 1944 and published in April 1945, Bradley's essay reflected the widespread assumption that World War II did not threaten democratic values.⁵

That view, which once governed most historians' accounts of the war and still dominates the public's perception, is no longer viable. To explain why it is not, this essay will show, first, how the government imposed effective censorship on the motion picture industry; second, how liberals acquiesced in the suppression of freedom; third, how some academics betrayed their professional responsibilities to aid the war effort; fourth, how labor organizations subordinated the interests of their members in order to back the government, and how business sometimes took advantage of the war emergency to control workers; fifth, how the war reinforced gender stereotypes, especially the notion that women belonged at home, and promoted new restrictions on the rights of homosexuals; and sixth, how the war sanctioned racist beliefs and racist practices. This essay will conclude with comments on Paul Fussell's 1989 volume, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*, which reflects the newly emerging historical consensus.

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4. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Phillips Bradley (2 vols.; New York, 1945), 1:269-80, 2:279-302. See also Roger Boesche, *The Strange Liberalism of Alexis de Tocqueville* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1987), pp. 131, 148-52; James T. Schleifer, *The Making of Tocqueville's Democracy in America* (Chapel Hill, 1980), pp. 174-77; Daniel T. Rodgers, "Of Prophets and Prophecy," in Abraham S. Eisenstadt, ed., *Reconsidering Tocqueville's Democracy in America* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1988).
 5. Phillips Bradley, "A Note to the Reader" and "A Historical Essay," in Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1:v, 2:485.

When Tocqueville feared that the same thought could be dropped into a thousand minds at the same moment, he had no way of knowing that, a century later, the same thought could be dropped into eleven million minds at more or less the same moment. That was the seating capacity of American movie theaters, and during the war the Office of War Information's Bureau of Motion Pictures assumed responsibility for making sure that moviegoers left those theaters only with government-approved thoughts in their minds. In *Hollywood Goes to War*; Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black assert that the OWI's supervision of Hollywood filmmaking was "the most comprehensive and sustained government attempt to change the content of a mass medium in American history."⁶ Another scholar adds that the level of supervision illustrated "the pervasive and unprecedented power of the state in the private sector."⁷

Lacking statutory authority to censor motion pictures, the government accomplished its objective through a combination of broad hints, appeals to patriotism and profits, and implied threats. The OWI told filmmakers to ask themselves, in each case, a deceptively simple question: "Will this picture help win the war?" Would it help, that is, by "contribut[ing] something new to our understanding of the world conflict," or would it hurt "by creating a false picture of America, her allies, or the world we live in"?⁸ In November 1942 Lowell Mellett, the head of the

Bureau of Motion Pictures, warned Hollywood executives that they must eliminate "carelessness and false conceptions" that might leave audiences with the mistaken impression that victory would come easily, thus doing "a very great disservice to the country." A month later, Mellett suggested to the studios that "it would be advisable" to submit finished scripts at a stage when changes could be made easily. The OWI's most effective threat, however, was that films falling short of expectations would be denied export licenses, thereby cutting into their margin of profitability. As an OWI memo noted, "[i]t would hurt like hell" to deny studios such a license.⁹

Faced with these strictures, Koppes and Black conclude, "Hollywood became a compliant part of the American war machine."¹⁰ In all, the Bureau of Motion Pictures reviewed 1,652 movie scripts. It often suggested alterations in dialogue and occasionally persuaded studios not to make a particular film. The OWI wanted movies to extol the virtues of the American way of life and to portray the Allies as models of righteousness and the Axis as embodiments of evil. The kinds of films that the government wanted the studios to make seemed to be the kind the public wanted and, eventually, came to expect. The government never threatened to prosecute a studio for making an unwanted film. On the contrary, the studios were so anxious to please that, in describing its new release *Joe Smith, American* to the OWI, a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer official pointed out that it was exactly the kind of film "which the Administration would wish to make."¹¹ Little wonder that an OWI official could boast in 1942 that "the effect of our efforts ... becomes more apparent every day."¹²

The OWI's concerns, method of operation, and success were illustrated in the changes made in another MGM film, *An American Romance*. In its original version, this movie depicted an immigrant, Steve Dangos, who became a successful automobile magnate and who gave up a comfortable retirement to help build airplanes to win the war. The script, however,

6. Clayton R. Koppes and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits, and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (New York and London, 1987), p. 324.

7. Michael Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Woman: Representation and Ideology* (Ann Arbor, 1988), p. 18. See also Bernard F. Dick, *The Star-Spangled Screen: The American World War II Film* (Lexington, Ky., 1985). For the way the government used radio "as a powerful instrument of domestic mass propaganda," see J. Fred MacDonald, "Government Propaganda in Commercial Radio—The Case of Treasury Star Parade, 1942-1943," *Journal of Popular Culture* 12 (1979): 285-304.

8. Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, p. 66.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 105.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

11. Ray Bell to Lowell Mellett, 23 Dec. 1941, quoted in Renov, *Hollywood's Wartime Woman*, p. 60.

12. Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, p. 84.

sang the praises of individual entrepreneurship and seemed downright hostile to labor unions. As the OWI put it, the screenplay expressed "the Ford philosophy" and "the classic but discredited" Horatio Alger myth. Officials convinced the studio to make revisions to emphasize labor-management cooperation. The final version, therefore, "invoked the liberal vision of a harmony of interests in society." The OWI was, presumably, delighted that the Dangos family had four sons named George Washington Dangos, Thomas Jefferson Dangos, Abraham Lincoln Dangos, and Theodore Roosevelt Dangos, the equivalent, Koppes and Black observe, of "a living Mount Rushmore."¹³

Similarly, the OWI had a hand in shaping the conventions of the combat film, a wartime genre epitomized by *Bataan*. Released in April 1943, the film focused on thirteen soldiers who bravely resisted the Japanese assault on the Philippine peninsula. To show America's diversity and unity, its righteousness and resolve, the men in the battalion represented a cross section of racial, religious, and geographical backgrounds. All thirteen were eventually killed, but their sacrifice, the film asserted, bought valuable time—"ninety-six priceless days"—for American forces and "made possible our victories in the Coral Sea, at Midway, on New Guinea and Guadalcanal. Their spirit will lead us back to Bataan." On reading the screenplay, the OWI was delighted to find that "superior officers are willing to take suggestions from men under them.... Thus the army reflects the democratic way of life—which is one way of demonstrating the difference between our ideology and the Fascist doctrine." The agency successfully urged the studio to play up the prominence of two Filipino soldiers and applauded the inclusion of a black private, although, of course, combat units were not then integrated.¹⁴

Most of the officials in the Bureau of Motion Pictures were liberals, and the message they wanted films to convey was a liberal one, that "this is

a people's army, fighting a people's war." The last thing the OWI wanted were films that depicted internal disunity or intractable social problems. Accordingly, the agency approved films that "upheld the legitimacy and justice of American politics and society." When presented with a screenplay about life in a squalid, poverty-ridden factory town, the OWI balked. The agency wanted the script changed to demonstrate that problems could be solved through the democratic process, because this scenario would enhance "the glorious story that we have to tell about our country." Such a transformation was beyond even Hollywood's vaunted creative powers, and the studio finally shelved the picture. Koppes and Black conclude that perceptions of wartime needs "alter[ed] the liberal ethos from identification with the working class to support for the needs of the state."¹⁵

This support for the needs of the state also shaped the attitudes of many liberals toward freedom of speech. They had no difficulty accepting the OWI's censorship of films because, as one Department of Justice official put it, "[t]he question of free speech ... in the entertainment world is not particularly valid."¹⁶ Sadly enough, the question seemed no more legitimate in other areas, either. Writing in the *Columbia Law Review* in 1942, David Riesman, who had recently clerked for Supreme Court justice Louis D. Brandeis, justified liberal support for the new wartime restrictiveness. In a wide-ranging defense of the use of group libel laws to prosecute antidemocratic forces, Riesman explained the need to "re-examine the liberal pre-conceptions, and discard them where they may be invalid." Those liberal preconceptions held that the chief danger to freedom came from a powerful state, when in fact during the war emergency it came from "'private' fascist groups." Fortunately, he concluded, "the Constitution is not a final bar" to such a reexamination, not when "it has become necessary to consider the possibility of repression."¹⁷

13. Ibid., pp. 146-54.

14. Ibid., pp. 257-59; Jeanine Basinger, *The World War II Combat Film: Anatomy of a Genre* (New York, 1986), pp. 50-62. It is instructive to compare the film's message with a recent treatment of the incident by Matthew S. Klimow, "Lying to the Troops: American Leaders and the Defense of Bataan," *Parameters* 20 (Dec. 1990): 48-60.

15. Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, pp. 69, 177, 258.

16. M. E. Gilfond to Lowell Mellett, 15 July 1942, quoted in Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, p. 105.

17. David Riesman, "Democracy and Defamation: Control of Group Libel," *Columbia Law Review* 42 (1942): 727-80.

In February 1942, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the executive order banning all Japanese Americans from the west coast, prominent civil libertarians, including most members of the American Civil Liberties Union executive board, failed to condemn the step. Faced with a choice between two resolutions, one calling for legal challenges to relocation orders not based on "immediate military necessity" and the other supporting evacuation if it had "a reasonable relationship to the danger intended to be met," the ACLU opted for the latter by a margin of two to one, thereby producing what one scholar has called "a clear victory for those who would subordinate civil liberties to wartime considerations and political loyalties."¹⁸ Those who took a principled stand on the issue were in a distinct minority. The majority view was closer to that expressed by Alexander Meikeljohn: "For us to say that they are taking away civil rights, would have as much sense as protesting because a 'measles' house is isolated. The Japanese citizens, as a group, are dangerous both to themselves and to their fellow-citizens."¹⁹

Leaders of the ACLU, such as Meikeljohn and Roger Baldwin, felt at home, socially and politically, with the government officials in charge of relocation, such as War Relocation Authority director Dillon S. Myer and Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy. Baldwin "regularly met with top administration officials" and then returned to New York City to give the ACLU board of directors confidential briefings and to report that officials "are about as much troubled as we ourselves." He wrote to General John L. DeWitt, who, as head of the Western Defense Command, supervised the process of putting 80,000 American citizens in concentration camps, to congratulate him on carrying out evacuation "with a minimum of hardship" and with "comparatively few complaints of injustice and mismanagement."²⁰ Dillon S. Myer, according to his biographer, Richard Drinnon, maintained an "extraordinary alliance with leading civil libertarians." Calling Baldwin and Meikeljohn into his office on one occasion,

Myer "indicated that we needed their sympathetic understanding in the whole process. We have always been very cordial in our relations with the Civil Liberties group, and both men showed a fine understanding."²¹

Liberals showed a similar understanding when the government decided to prosecute a group of pro-fascist extremists. In July 1942, urged on by President Roosevelt, Attorney General Francis Biddle moved to indict twenty-eight "native fascists" for violating the 1917 Espionage Act. Their attacks on government policy, the Department of Justice maintained, amounted to a conspiracy to cause insubordination in the armed forces. Later, at their trial, the prosecutor asserted that the defendants had attempted "to destroy the faith of all of us and have our soldiers not believe in our leaders, in order that we remain weak."²² An unsavory lot, to be sure, the defendants represented no danger to the United States and surely were not in cahoots with one another. Yet liberals in the Department of Justice favored the prosecution, in part to project an image of toughness. One of Biddle's assistants, James H. Rowe, Jr., informed his chief that the public had begun to regard them as "civil liberties boys" and "softies." "We had better get moving fast," Rowe said, in order to "jack up our public relations."²³ The ACLU refused to aid the defendants. The group decided that, unless due process issues were involved, it would not participate "in cases where, after investigation, there are grounds for a belief that the defendant is cooperating with or acting on behalf of the enemy, even though the particular charge ... might otherwise be appropriate for intervention."²⁴ The case dragged on through much of 1944 but ended in a mistrial when the judge died late in the year.

Just as Roosevelt had pushed for action against fascist sympathizers, so he urged Biddle to talk to black newspaper editors "to see what could be

18. Peter Irons, *Justice at War* (New York, 1983), p. 129.

19. Samuel Walker, *In Defense of American Liberties: A History of the ACLU* (New York and Oxford, 1990), p. 139.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

21. Richard Drinnon, *Keeper of Concentration Camps: Dillon S. Myer and American Racism* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987), pp. 116-17.

22. Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 202.

23. Patrick S. Washburn, *A Question of Sedition: The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press during World War II* (New York and Oxford, 1986), p. 75.

24. Walker, *In Defense of American Liberties*, p. 157.

done about preventing their subversive language." The language to which the president objected contained harsh condemnations of racial injustice. This type of criticism was an intrinsic element in the Double V campaign—victory over segregation at home as well as over fascism abroad—that African-American newspapers endorsed early in 1942. In this instance, liberals within the federal government, notably Biddle, proved instrumental in blocking any attempt to indict black newspapers for treason. The government, however, accomplished its purpose more subtly by the use of pleas, veiled threats, and hints that a failure to tone down criticism might result in the withholding of newsprint from the offending papers or even in criminal indictments. It became routine practice for FBI agents to visit black editors to complain about reporters who, for example, wrote about discrimination against black soldiers in the South. Unnerved by such visits, the black press retreated and became "subtly less outspoken" as the war progressed. From April to August 1942, the space devoted to the Double V campaign declined by half, and the movement was virtually dead a few months later.²⁵

One instance illustrated the larger pattern. In January 1943 a black soldier was court-martialed, convicted of sedition, and given a twenty-year sentence. At his trial, he maintained that he was influenced by articles in two black papers, the *Baltimore Afro-American* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*. Rather than publicize his statement, military officials arranged a meeting with the executive editor of the *Courier* and reported what the convicted soldier had said. The next day, the newspaper's president, Ira F. Lewis, wrote to thank the army for its "liberal attitude" in not releasing the testimony. Lewis added further assurances that his paper stood squarely behind the government, noting proudly that every employee had purchased war bonds. He realized, he said, parroting the official military line, that "the War Department cannot become a laboratory for an analysis of social ills."²⁶

The liberals' acceptance of restrictions on freedom, no less than government control of Hollywood films, illustrates, as Stephen Fox has writ-

25. Washburn, *A Question of Sedition*, pp. 81, 98.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

ten in another context, that "it is possible for a nation like the United States ... to come near to losing its soul in a time of crisis, even during a 'good war.'"²⁷ Fox was alluding to "the unknown internment," for several months in 1942, of a sizable number of German and Italian aliens on the west coast, but his comment can also be applied to scholars who were sometimes willing to sacrifice their professional standards in order to serve the government. Historians, economists, and political scientists worked for the Research and Analysis Division of the Office of Strategic Services, while anthropologists and sociologists cooperated with the War Relocation Authority. The experience of these scholars was, in at least one crucial respect, similar to that of scientists who worked on the atomic bomb.

One of the physicists who played an important part in the Manhattan Project recalled that many of his colleagues had set aside their moral qualms about working at Los Alamos because of "an absolutely Faustian fascination about whether the bomb would really work."²⁸ The scientists could not resist, any more than Marlowe's Doctor Faustus could, the opportunity to discover forbidden knowledge and the chance to experience "a world of profit and delight[,] of power, of honor, of omnipotence." After the bombs had devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, J. Robert Oppenheimer, who headed the Manhattan Project, allegedly said that "the physicists have known sin." As Oppenheimer's friend, Freeman Dyson, has pointed out, however, if the physicists had known sin, it was not because they had built the atomic bomb: "[T]hey did not just build the bomb. They enjoyed building it. They had the best time of their lives while building it."²⁹ The scientists would always recall Los Alamos as "an ideal republic" and the years they spent there, in the words of Hans Bethe, as "really the great time of their lives."³⁰

27. Stephen Fox, *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian-Americans during World War II* (Boston, 1990), p. xvi.

28. Robert R. Wilson, "The Conscience of a Physicist," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (June 1970), p. 32.

29. Freeman Dyson, *Disturbing the Universe* (New York, Toronto, and London, 1979), p. 53.

30. Alice Kimball Smith and Charles Weiner, eds., *Robert Oppenheimer: Letters and Recollections* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1980), p. 264.

Like the physicists, the scholars who were recruited by the OSS experienced an exhilarating sense of engagement. They remembered the OSS as fondly as the scientists remembered Los Alamos. As one recalled, "OSS was the most wonderful place to be young! We young ones had everything—belief, enthusiasm, opportunity, victory. Life rushed on in excitement and in confidence that we were a special group of colleagues with an important mission for our country."³¹ In the words of another participant, Walt W. Rostow, "[the] fact that this intellectual process related directly to violent acts of war gave to it, at the time, extraordinary point and vitality."³² Unlike many physicists, who would eventually have second thoughts about the making of the atomic bomb, social scientists were more likely to have only the warmest memories of "this almost legendary experience." One historian, too young to have participated, lamented that there was "no 'moral equivalent' to the OSS in peacetime."³³

McGeorge Bundy once commented that the OSS was "a remarkable institution half cops-and-robbers and half faculty meeting."³⁴ Many professors of history, economics, political science, and literature worked for the Research and Analysis Division, headed by William L. Langer, a Harvard University historian. For the most part, these scholars simply analyzed political and economic trends in various countries and submitted reports, sometimes of great value, to military and civilian authorities. A scholar who reached a conclusion at variance with policies favored by those in charge might be admonished by Langer that "your responsibility is primarily to me" and that it was presumptuous "to stake your judgment against ours."³⁵ Such conflicts were rare, however, and most scholars in the OSS

could reconcile military assignments with professional standards quite comfortably.

The same cannot be said for such undertakings as the Yale Library Project, described so well in Robin W. Winks's *Cloak and Gown*. By 1943 Joseph Toy Curtiss, a member of the Yale English department, had taken up residence in Istanbul, ostensibly to acquire books for the Yale University library, but actually to serve as a cover for an OSS mission in Turkey. To be sure, Curtiss collected books, but he also secretly collected all the information he could for the OSS. In order to conceal the OSS connection from prying eyes, Yale had to keep two sets of payroll accounts. Winks notes that a critic of such clandestine work could say that the library project proved the OSS was "willing to use anyone, to lie, to compromise the integrity of the academic community in order to achieve its ends." Yet even if Yale faculty and administrators had known the library was being used as a cover, Winks adds, "few would have objected, for hostility toward the intelligence agencies was neither great, nor as yet had it been earned."³⁶

The OSS did more than use a library as an operational cover. It also contracted out projects to Stanford, Berkeley, Columbia, Princeton, Yale, and other colleges. As Winks says: "No one at the universities appears to have protested these ties, and university presidents and professors courted contracts and consultantships."³⁷ Not only was the boundary between scholarship and intelligence crossed, but ingenious arguments to rationalize the crossing were also devised. A Committee on Relations between Government Intelligence and Research Work and the American Universities, appointed by Langer, reasoned that because faculty members traveled all over the world and spoke many languages, they could easily serve the purposes of intelligence agencies. Subsidizing scholars' research, in this view, was simply a cost-efficient way for intelligence agencies to obtain valuable information. "There is nothing at all discreditable or dishonorable in the projected activities," the committee concluded. Scholars who "col-

31. Caroline Bland, quoted in Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: America's Master Spy* (Chicago, 1982), p. 307.

32. Barry M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 97.

33. Fritz Stern, quoted in Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge and New York, 1988), p. 302.

34. Dunlop, *Donovan*, p. 309. See also Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.* (New York, 1983), chap. 8.

35. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence*, p. 184.

36. Robin W. Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-1961* (New York, 1987), p. 150.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

lect intelligence in the course of their legitimate research in a foreign country are in no sense engaged in activities detrimental to that country... . Such intelligence work can be done by American academic persons with a completely clear conscience."³⁸

Not all scholars had to travel to faraway places to participate in the war effort; anthropologists and sociologists found opportunities closer to home. The War Relocation Authority hired more than twenty anthropologists, including John Provins, who served as chief of community management, Robert Redfield, and John Embree. One of the anthropologists' chief tasks was to help control the behavior of Japanese Americans in the relocation centers. To this end, they studied the camps as if they were examining any other "developing communities"—as if, that is, the camps were appropriate subjects of ethnographic investigation. Their goal was to discover the sources of unrest that had led to strikes, labor stoppages, and riots and to recommend ways of reducing such conflicts and restoring order.

The anthropologists treated acts of resistance by internees, by definition, as evidence of maladjustment, as dysfunctional or pathological behavior. Having useful skills to put "at the disposal of [administrative] authority," these scientists served as agents of social control by seeking to dampen unrest, never conceding that such disturbances might be a rational response to poor conditions or to the injustice inherent in confinement.³⁹ With the best of intentions—these scholars, after all, wanted to combat racism—they became part of an administrative apparatus that enforced a racist executive order and thereby helped to legitimize it.

The anthropologists' ready acceptance of "notions of social control with repressive implications" was illustrated by their willingness to employ a government-approved vocabulary. According to one WRA directive, Japanese Americans "should always be referred to as 'evacuees,' never as 'internees' or 'prisoners'"; the work areas "should be referred to as 'relocation centers' or 'relocation projects,' not as 'internment centers' or 'con-

centration camps.'" Similarly, Japanese Americans were subjected only to "registration," not urged to sign "loyalty oaths." As Peter T. Suzuki has argued, the anthropologists assimilated "the categories of thought and the perspectives of the bureaucracy" and took seriously such concepts as "community government," which were, in truth, little more than figments of the WRA's imagination.⁴⁰ "Instead of confronting power with truth," another critic has concluded, "anthropology was to supply information to power."⁴¹

The subject of power—economic power—offers yet another avenue for exploring the implications of the war for American society. If some scholars and scientists had made a Faustian bargain during the war, so, too, did leaders of organized labor. By backing government policies designed to maximize war production and curb strikes, CIO and AFL officials gained real benefits for their members, solidified their authority, and extended their influence. Yet they also paid a price for obtaining this "Rooseveltian seal of patriotic orthodoxy," a price nearly as heavy, in its own way, as that exacted of Doctor Faustus.⁴² During the war, according to one historian, the CIO moved into a "filial-dependent relationship with the government."⁴³

In December 1941, shortly after the United States entered the war, representatives of labor and management had agreed on a no-strike, no-lockout pledge. By 1943, however, many workers, dissatisfied with wages and job conditions, pressed for a more militant policy. They called

38. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

39. Orin Starn, "Engineering Internment: Anthropologists and the War Relocation Authority," *American Ethnologist* 13 (1986): 705-10.

40. Peter T. Suzuki, "Anthropologists in the Wartime Camps for Japanese Americans: A Documentary Study," *Dialectical Anthropology* 6 (Aug. 1981): 42-45.

41. Starn, "Engineering Internment," p. 705. See also Yuji Ichioka, ed., *Views from Within: The Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Study* (Los Angeles, 1989).

42. Nelson Lichtenstein, "The Making of the Postwar Working Class: Cultural Pluralism and Social Structure in World War II," *The Historian* 51 (Nov. 1988): 46. See also Martin Glaberman, *Wartime Strikes: The Struggle Against the No-Strike Pledge in the UAW During World War II* (Detroit, 1980), pp. 8, 14.

43. Nelson Lichtenstein, *Labor's War at Home: The CIO in World War II* (Cambridge and New York, 1982), p. 177.

for revoking the pledge (which was not, in any event, legally binding) and often resorted to wildcat strikes. Union leaders, on the other hand, nearly always advised caution and adherence to the agreement. "Let our slogan be WORK, WORK, WORK, PRODUCE, PRODUCE, PRODUCE," said CIO official Philip Murray in 1942, and other leaders reiterated that motto even when members had legitimate grievances.⁴⁴ In March 1944, for example, when automobile workers at Henry Ford's River Rouge plant discovered that management was planning to provoke a strike, they caused a violent disruption at the factory's labor-relations office. In retaliation, Ford dismissed twenty workers, some of whom had not even taken part in the disturbance but were union activists. United Automobile Workers' representative R. J. Thomas nevertheless backed the company's decision. "Public opinion has become inflamed against our union," he said. "There can be no such thing today as a legitimate picket line. Any person who sets up picket lines is acting like an anarchist, not like a disciplined union man."⁴⁵

Labor willingly accepted a system of economic regulation that placed decision-making authority in the hands of business leaders. True enough, union officials were consulted on most matters, and they even held positions in such agencies as the War Manpower Commission and the National War Labor Board. Yet business executives, not labor leaders, had the expertise the government wanted. As a result, "virtually all major decision makers in war production were drawn from the business community,"⁴⁶ while "organized labor had little say as to the administration of war production."⁴⁷ The consequences were predictable. Tax laws "were rewritten and administered to facilitate profit making," military orders were channeled to the nation's largest corporations (with the leading 100

firms receiving 70 percent of war contracts), and, in general, "the relevant capitalists got most of the concessions on profits and taxes that they desired."⁴⁸

The war enabled employers, in a few specialized cases, to impose brutally coercive controls on powerless employees. To ensure an adequate supply of agricultural labor in the South and Southwest, the government created an emergency farm labor program. In the Arkansas and Mississippi deltas, cotton planters used the program "to secure a large pool of cheap and unskilled labor to harvest their crops." Planters not only dominated the local committees that decided whether farm workers would be permitted to leave the area but also sat on draft boards that sometimes "refused to defer those who would not work on their terms."⁴⁹

In Hawaii, where martial law had been declared and remained in force until October 1944, the army controlled wages, working conditions, and the allocation of labor to plantations. By criminalizing job switching, and even absenteeism, the army won the approval of local business groups. Speaking for the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce, one official said his membership "was not interested in the courts or the rights of civilians, but was only interested in the obtaining of priorities and the freezing of labor." Sometimes the army even permitted plantation managers to preside at the courts-martial of their own employees and to exercise "an insidious form of labor control."⁵⁰ A Department of Labor representative in Hawaii reported that workers, threatened with jail or the draft if they did not follow orders, had become "virtual 'slaves' of private individuals."⁵¹

During the war, the labor movement retreated from the class politics that had marked the 1930s and moved toward what Nelson Lichtenstein

44. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

45. Alan Clive, *State of War: Michigan in World War II* (Ann Arbor, 1979), p. 80.

46. Joe R. Feagin and Kelly Riddell, "The State, Capitalism, and World War II: The U.S. Case," *Armed Forces & Society* 17 (Fall 1990): 53-79.

47. Edwin Amenta and Theda Skocpol, "Redefining the New Deal: World War II and the Development of Social Provision in the United States," in Margaret Weir et al., eds., *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton, 1988), p. 114.

48. Feagin and Riddell, "The State, Capitalism, and World War II."

49. Nan Elizabeth Woodruff, "Pick or Fight: The Emergency Farm Labor Program in the Arkansas and Mississippi Deltas During World War II," *Agricultural History* 64 (Spring 1990): 74, 80.

50. Harry N. Scheiber and Jane L. Scheiber, "Constitutional Liberty in World War II: Army Rule and Martial Law in Hawaii, 1941-1945," *Western Legal History* 3 (1990): 349, 352.

51. Gary Y. Okihiro, *Cane Fires: The Anti-Japanese Movement in Hawaii, 1865-1945* (Philadelphia, 1991), p. 243.

has termed "consensual politics and social homogeneity."⁵² The wartime outlook, popularized by the government and endorsed by the unions, held that any form of internal discord threatened national unity. That was as true for class conflict as for racial, religious, or ethnic conflict. Derogatory remarks about Catholics or blacks sabotaged wartime unity, in this view, but so did such assertions as "Capital is profiteering." Gary Gerstle's study of textile workers in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, maintains that confrontation between workers and employers came to be seen as dangerously divisive. The union forsook its militant rhetoric, which accepted class antagonism as a fact, and emphasized instead what labor and capital had in common.⁵³

"In the case of the World War II mobilization," a recent study concludes, "the expansion of the state's power simultaneously reinforced the dominant social classes in industry and agriculture."⁵⁴ That seems an accurate assessment of the war's effect on class relations. More surprisingly, the war acted as a conservative force in the area of gender relations. Even though millions of women entered the work force, many in jobs that had traditionally been reserved for men, and even though the public came to accept the idea of women, especially wives and mothers, working outside the home, the consensus among historians is that the war thwarted any potential for a significant alteration in gender roles.

The war usually reinforced sex segregation in the workplace. Studies of the automobile and electrical equipment industries show that men and women invariably did different kinds of work. As one writer concludes, "Rosie the Riveter did a 'man's job,' but more often than not she worked in a predominantly female department or job classification."⁵⁵ Work

assignments on the Pennsylvania Railroad exhibited a similar pattern. The number of female employees rose during the war from 2,400 to nearly 24,000, but women overwhelmingly filled traditional female jobs as clerks, stenographers, and switchboard operators. Management and the railroad brotherhoods outdid one another in their patronizing approach to women, who were denied seniority and paid less than men. "Even during the wartime emergency," Michael Nash has noted, "it was almost impossible for working women to break the traditional barriers of labor market segregation."⁵⁶ In the shipyards, too, "the basic distribution between men's work and women's work was not altered. To a great extent, women and men in the shipyards were doing different types of jobs. Women filled in where men were unavailable or unwilling to work."⁵⁷

Women who entered the work force were supposed to be motivated by "feminine" ambitions—the desire to help win the war so their men could return quickly and their children could grow up in a safe world. It was acceptable for women to take jobs for reasons of patriotism, altruism, and self-sacrifice, but not merely because they enjoyed working or needed the money. A war job was a vehicle through which a woman shouldered her civic and moral duties. Any suggestion of individualistic or self-interested motives was disapproved. These attitudes inevitably prepared the ground for the mass layoff of women once the war was over. As one shipyard union newspaper put it, "The Kitchen—Women's Big Post-War Goal." Although women were expected to take on new responsibilities, they were also supposed to preserve their identities as wives, mothers, and homemakers. Susan M. Hartmann therefore concludes: "Along with its potential for refashioning sex roles, World War II also contained powerful forces which put checks upon women's aspirations and options."⁵⁸

52. Lichtenstein, "The Making of the Postwar Working Class," p. 42.

53. Gary Gerstle, *Working-Class Americanism: The Politics of Labor in a Textile City, 1914-1960* (Cambridge and New York, 1989), pp. 289-309. See also Philip Gleason, "Americans All: World War II and the Shaping of American Identity," *The Review of Politics* 43 (1981): 503.

54. Gregory Hooks, *Forging the Military-Industrial Complex: World War II's Battle of the Potomac* (Urbana, 1991), p. 195.

55. Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work: The Dynamics of Job Segregation by Sex during World War II* (Urbana, 1987), pp. 1-11.

56. Michael Nash, "Women and the Pennsylvania Railroad: The World War II Years," *Labor History* 30 (1989): 622.

57. Karen Beck Skold, "The Job He Left Behind: American Women in the Shipyards during World War II," in Carol R. Berkin and Clara M. Lovett, eds., *Women, War, and Revolution* (New York, 1980), p. 62. See also Deborah Scott Hirshfield, "Women Shipyard Workers in the Second World War: A Note," *The International History Review* 11 (1989): 478-85.

Those forces were patently revealed in stories appearing in popular magazines during the war. Inspired by the Office of War Information's Magazine Bureau, short-story writers invented plots designed to encourage women to take war jobs but, at the same time, to see their own needs as subordinate to those of their husbands, children, and communities. A typical story in the *Saturday Evening Post*, "The Winning of Wentworth Jones, Jr.," involved a young woman, Lois Neeley, with romantic designs on a Princeton graduate who worked in the town's bank. Unable to gain Jones's attention, much less his affection, Neeley enlisted in the WACs, performed bravely overseas, and became a local celebrity. Naturally, Jones noticed her, fell in love with her, and proposed marriage. The ultimate reward for any woman, in this view, was male approval. Maureen Honey, who has studied this brand of popular fiction, describes it as a "reactionary aspect of home-front propaganda."⁵⁹

The war saw the introduction in many places of "social protection" programs. Ostensibly designed to stop the spread of venereal disease, they also regulated "promiscuous" or "deviant" behavior. In other words, they restricted women's sexual and even social freedom. The Social Protection Division of the Office of Community War Services urged that all women arrested or held for investigation on morals charges be detained for mandatory testing for syphilis and gonorrhea. In 1944 the Seattle police arrested more than 2,000 women, all of whom were required to spend four or five days in the county jail awaiting the results of medical tests, though the great majority were not infected. A woman might be charged with prostitution if she had sexual relations with a man who was not her husband, even if no money changed hands. Some communities modified their disorderly conduct and vagrancy laws to permit the arrest of women whose

58. Susan M. Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston, 1982), p. 211. See also D'Ann Campbell, *Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York, 1988), chap. 3.

59. Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II* (Amherst, Mass., 1984), pp. 77, 92. The story, by Richard Thruelsen, appeared in the 11 November 1944 issue, pp. 16, 39, 42, 44-45.

behavior was deemed inappropriate, who patronized bars without male escorts, for example, or who registered at hotels under aliases.⁶⁰

Allan Bérubé's *Coming Out Under Fire*, a study of gay men and women, shows that, in the armed forces at least, wartime pressures strengthened sexual stereotypes and led to a more repressive environment. Before the war, the army did not seek to determine the sexual orientation of recruits. Acts of sodomy, however, were considered criminal and if discovered could lead to a court-martial and a resulting prison sentence. During the war, however, the policy changed drastically. Psychiatrists introduced the concept of the homosexual as a personality type unfit for military service and combat—as, in fact, mentally ill. Experts devised procedures to screen out men with "feminine bodily characteristics" or who betrayed an "effeminacy in dress and manner" and to disqualify them. This supposedly more humane approach sought to avoid formal trials and imprisonment; instead, homosexuals were committed to hospital psychiatric wards and, eventually, discharged as psychopathic undesirables. From 1941 to 1945, more than four thousand sailors and five thousand soldiers were so treated. The result, Bérubé reports, was "the widening of the net in which gay men and lesbians could be caught, vastly expanding the military's anti-homosexual apparatus and creating new forms of surveillance and punishment."⁶¹

The current of wartime repression, so treacherous in class and gender relations, also exerted a powerful pull in the area of race. Even while Americans condemned the Nazis' racial doctrines, they accepted odious stereotypes of the Japanese. Far from discrediting racism, one scholar has argued, the war merely made it "more subtle and complex."⁶² John W. Dower's splendid book, *War Without Mercy*, demonstrates that race hatred, pure and unadulterated, shaped the behavior of the United States and Japan

60. Karen Anderson, *Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women during World War II* (Westport, Conn., 1981), pp. 104-10.

61. Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York, 1990), pp. 19, 146.

62. Kevin Allen Leonard, "'Is That What We Fought For?' Japanese Americans and Racism in California, the Impact of World War II," *Western Historical Quarterly* 21 (1990): 481.

alike. The Japanese emphasized their own racial and cultural superiority and regarded Americans as "the demonic other"—immoral, decadent, and barbarous. For their part, Americans saw Japanese as subhuman and inherently inferior—primitive, childish, and mad. The consequences of racial thinking on both sides, Dower says, were "virtually identical—being hierarchy, arrogance, viciousness, atrocity, and death."⁶³

The wartime image of the Japanese was, most commonly, the image of an animal, a reptile, or an insect; they were depicted as monkeys, baboons, gorillas, dogs, rats, rattlesnakes, cockroaches, and vermin. It was often said that they hissed, like snakes. In motion pictures, Japanese were called "monkeypeople" and "ringtails" and "slant-eyed rat[s]." In *China* (1943), an American soldier kills three Japanese soldiers who have raped a Chinese woman and terms them "flies in a manure heap." In *Flying Tigers* (1944), an American soldier says, "I hear those Japs glow in the night like bugs." Films, of course, still had to meet the standards of the Hollywood Production Code, which banned profane and blasphemous language. Consequently, scripts were not approved in which American gunners exclaimed "hell" or "damn 'em" as they shot down Japanese fliers, but it was perfectly acceptable for GIs to shout "stinkin' Nips" or "fried Jap going down!"⁶⁴

When the government decided to relocate Japanese Americans, Dower points out, "[t]hey were not merely driven from their homes and communities on the West Coast and rounded up like cattle, but actually forced to live in facilities meant for animals for weeks and even months before being moved to their final quarters."⁶⁵ Confined in stockyards, racetracks, and cattle stalls at fairgrounds, some were even housed for a time in converted pigpens. When they finally got to the concentration camps, they might find that state medical authorities tried to prevent them from receiving medical care, or, as in Arkansas, refused to permit doctors to issue state birth certificates to children born in the camps, as if to deny the infants'

legal existence, not to mention their humanity.⁶⁶ Later, when the time came to begin releasing them from the camps, racist attitudes often blocked their resettlement. Even so staunch a supporter of minority rights as New York City mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia exhibited a virulent racism and xenophobia when it came to Japanese Americans. He not only defended relocation, but in 1944 he also opposed allowing any of the internees to settle in New York City. He called on Washington to prevent "these alien enemies" from moving about freely. Throughout the war, La Guardia referred to the Japanese as "deceitful Jap monkeys."⁶⁷

Racist doctrines often impute mystical qualities to blood, qualities that, in turn, are linked to concepts of "purity" and "contamination." The pervasiveness of racism during the war, the casual manner in which it was accepted, helps explain the tenacity with which the Red Cross and the armed forces adhered to their policies of segregating the blood plasma of black and white donors. Few official practices seemed better calculated to offend African-Americans, who pointed out that the policy "coincides with the Nazi philosophy of superior blood." Despite the bitter complaints of William C. Hastie, dean of Howard University Law School, who served as a civilian aide to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, the armed forces refused to rescind the policy. Frustrated in this skirmish, as in his general campaign against segregation in the army, Hastie resigned in disgust early in 1943. Not until December 1950 did the armed forces collect blood plasma without regard to race.⁶⁸

Hastie's departure demonstrated that a war in which racial thinking was so prominent was not likely to further the cause of civil rights. True, blacks chalked up significant gains in the workplace because of manpower needs, but the most conspicuous victory for the civil rights movement—the creation of the Committee on Fair Employment Practices following a

63. John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York, 1986), p. 180.

64. Dick, *Star-Spangled Screen*, pp. 181, 230-31; Koppes and Black, *Hollywood Goes to War*, p. 79.

65. Dower, *War Without Mercy*, p. 82.

66. C. Calvin Smith, *War and Wartime Changes: The Transformation of Arkansas, 1940-1945* (Fayetteville, Ark., 1986), pp. 68-69.

67. Thomas Kessner, *Fiorello H. La Guardia and the Making of Modern New York* (New York, 1989), pp. 536-38.

68. Phillip McGuire, *He, Too, Spoke for Democracy: Judge Hastie, World War II and the Black Soldier* (New York, 1988), pp. 76-77.

threatened march on Washington—occurred in the summer of 1941, before the United States entered the war. Thereafter, agitation for equality was confined to a relatively small number of northern, largely middle-class blacks. Recent scholarly research indicates that the war "delayed and stifled black protest activism, that it dampened black militancy." More characteristic than victories for civil rights was an "advancing racial polarization" between blacks and whites that produced deadly riots in Detroit and other cities.⁶⁹

No work better illuminates the overall reappraisal of how World War II affected American society than Paul Fussell's biting, highly controversial *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*, published in 1989. In Fussell's view, the war was so senseless and destructive, the soldiers—the "faceless young automatons"—who fought it were so expendable and so damaged by the experience, that some "artful narrative" had to be invented to confer purpose on events that were fundamentally meaningless. This was the role, Fussell asserts, played by the war publicists, who were skilled at disingenuous presentation. Critical analysis, evaluation, and satire were suspended for the duration, he continues, to be replaced by celebration, self-satisfaction, and smugness, by an atmosphere of "obligatory goodness." Fussell writes: "Now, fifty years later, there has been so much talk about 'The Good War,' the Justified War, the Necessary War, and the like, that the young and the innocent could get the impression that it was really not such a bad thing after all." In Fussell's view, it was "a war and nothing else, and thus stupid and sadistic."⁷⁰

69. Harvard Sitkoff, "American Blacks in World War II: Rethinking the Militancy-Watershed Hypothesis," in James Titus, ed., *The Home Front and War in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1984), p. 148; Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit: The Sojourner Truth Housing Controversy of 1942* (Philadelphia, 1984), p. 74. See also Dominic J. Capeci, Jr., and Martha Wilkerson, *Layered Violence: The Detroit Rioters of 1943* (Jackson, Miss., 1991); Adam Fairclough, "Racial Repression in World War Two: The New Iberia Incident," *Louisiana History* 32 (1991): 183-207, which concludes that the war "did not lead to the decisive breakthrough against white supremacy that blacks in Louisiana and elsewhere hoped for" (p. 207).

Fussell also quotes someone else Studs Terkel interviewed, not the person who talked about the war being fun and Americans having a hell of a good time, but a woman whose brother was killed in an airplane crash on a training mission and who resented the wartime propaganda: "The good war? That infuriates me. Yeah, the idea of World War Two being called a good war is a horrible thing.... I was lied to, I was cheated. I was made a fool of."⁷¹ Fussell entitles his concluding chapter, "The real war will never get in the books," a slogan of the combat soldiers who knew that patriotic propaganda had so falsified the barbarity of their experience that it could never be adequately communicated.

Yet perhaps the face of the real war, certainly of a different war, is at last beginning to get in the books. That war was closer to the type that Tocqueville had predicted democracies would fight, one that brought undoubted advantages but also prepared people for a democratic despotism "more gently by their habits." Although that is never going to be the image of World War II that we see flickering on the screen, it is nevertheless the more accurate image.

70. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York, 1989), p. 142.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 163. For another recent, quite different critique of the concept of "the good war," see Howard Zinn, *Declarations of Independence: Cross-Examining American Ideology* (New York, 1990), chap. 5.