us up. They were just there to irritate us. . . . The local French people were great. If there was a sniper in a tower, they told you where he was. They were informants. They were glad to see us. They helped us in any way they could.

READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What perspective of war and the D-Day invasion in particular emerges from these interview transcripts? How might an account of D-Day differ if you read, for example, a report from General Dwight Eisenhower, who planned the Normandy invasion?

2. From these interviews, what can you infer about the meaning and significance of D-Day from these soldiers’ perspectives? What about the invasion stands out in their memories?

24-3 | Japanese Americans in the Crosshairs of War

GORDON HIRABAYASHI, Why I Refused to Register for Evacuation (1942)

After Japan’s 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt imposed restraints on Japanese and Japanese Americans, including curfews and eventually evacuation to internment camps. Gordon Hirabayashi, an American citizen of Japanese descent, refused to register for the forced evacuation and was convicted and sentenced to jail. His appeal to the Supreme Court ended in defeat. When the evacuation order was announced, Hirabayashi penned this note describing his reasons for resisting.

Over and above any man-made creed or law is the natural law of life—the right of human individuals to live and to creatively express themselves. No man was born with the right to limit that law. Nor, do I believe, can anyone justifiably work himself to such a position.

Down through the ages, we have had various individuals doing their bit to establish more securely these fundamental rights. They have tried to help society see the necessity of understanding those fundamental laws; some have succeeded to the extent of having these natural laws recorded. Many have suffered unnatural deaths as a result of their convictions. Yet, today, because of the efforts of some of these individuals, we have recorded in the laws of our nation certain rights for all men and certain additional rights for citizens. These fundamental moral rights and civil liberties are included in the Bill of Rights, U.S. Constitution and other legal records. They guarantee that these fundamental rights shall not be denied without due process of law.

The principles or the ideals are the things which give value to a person’s life. They are the qualities which give impetus and purpose toward meaningful

The violation of human personality is the violation of the most sacred thing which man owns.

This order for the mass evacuation of all persons of Japanese descent denies them the right to live. It forces thousands of energetic, law-abiding individuals to exist in a miserable psychological and a horrible physical atmosphere. This order limits to almost the full extent the creative expressions of those subjected. It kills the desire for a higher life. Hope for the future is exterminated. Human personalities are poisoned. The very qualities which are essential to a peaceful, creative community are being thrown out and abused. Over 60 percent are American citizens, yet they are denied on a wholesale scale without due process of law the civil liberties which are theirs.

If I were to register and cooperate under those circumstances, I would be giving helpless consent to the denial of practically all of the things which give me incentive to live. I must maintain my Christian principles. I consider it my duty to maintain the democratic standards for which this nation lives. Therefore, I must refuse this order for evacuation.

Let me add, however, that in refusing to register, I am well aware of the excellent qualities of the army and government personnel connected with the prosecution of this exclusion order. They are men of the finest type, and I sincerely appreciate their sympathetic and honest efforts. Nor do I intend to cast any shadow upon the Japanese and the other Nisei who have registered for evacuation. They have faced tragedy admirably. I am objecting to the principle of this order, which denies the rights of human beings, including citizens.

GORDON K. HIRABAYASHI
May 13, 1942

READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Analyze Hirabayashi’s statement to determine the argument he makes against the U.S. policy regarding Japanese internment camps. Upon what sources of authority does he base his refusal?

2. What does his form of civil disobedience reveal to you about the wartime pressures and constraints on civil liberties?

24-4 Fighting for Democracy and Civil Rights at Home and Abroad

LULAC NEWS, Editorial (1945)

When the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) was organized in 1929, those of Latin American descent faced racial and ethnic discrimination, exacerbated by the economic tensions of the Great Depression. Franklin Roosevelt supported a policy of repatriating many