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Our Eyes Are Open Now

TEN CONVULSIVE YEARS of history have now passed since the Japanese attack of December 7, 1941, and once again we shall remember Pearl Harbor. But today we remember in the light of all that followed, and we can see what was not visible before. Among other things, we can see one casualty which was not counted in the toll of that tragic Sunday. For on that day, though we could not know it, the doctrine of isolationism ceased to exist as a vital, dominant force in American life and policies.

Isolationism still exists, of course. But though it has supporters, it has long since lost its meaning and its reason. Before Pearl Harbor it was ingrained to some extent in the whole nation's thinking, for reasons of geography, habit and tradition. It must have had its influence on even the best-informed and most world-minded Americans. In spite of all evidence to the contrary, they must have believed that Europe's, and particularly Asia's, quarrels were none of our business, and that somehow we could escape involvement in them. How else can we explain the fact that the men who died in the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor were no more surprised and unprepared than the government and the nation that stood behind them?

On December 7, 1941, the United States was brutally forced to recognize reality. It had to face up to the awesome might of the conquering Nazi forces. It had to revise its contemptuous

estimate of Japanese power. It had to close ranks and meet the gravest challenge to American strength and resolution that had confronted the country in this century.

It was a terrible, painful, bloody lesson that America had to learn, but such lessons are likely to be remembered. To see how obviously it was remembered we have only to contrast the present with the tenth year after this country's entry into World War I. In 1927, Americans were basking in the sunny atmosphere of Coolidge prosperity, and most of them were blissfully, indifferently willing to let the rest of the world go hang. Today—well, it is scarcely necessary to explain today to those who are living in it.

There are differences, now as always, over our foreign policy. There is confusion among the policy makers. But except in the lunatic fringes, there is a hard core of determination in American minds. And there is a new realism in their attitudes.

Americans have not forgotten Pearl Harbor. But they have put the old animosities aside because they must be put aside. We have made formal peace with the Japanese, and we have granted limited sovereignty to the former enemy in free Germany. This has been done not because there is necessarily any love between victors and vanquished, but because both are faced with a common threat to their freedom and existence. And it has been done because we

realize what we could not realize while the desperate fighting still continued.

The war of 1939-'45, like the first World War, was a war against ideas and philosophies as well as a war between people. Human beings fought the war, and killed one another by the millions. But, however vast and merciless the slaughter, ideas could not be killed with bullets and bombs.

The idea of world mastery by a "master race" is not dead. It certainly remains in the minds of many Germans and Japanese. The United States and its Allies must vigilantly guard against a re-emergence of those ideas in the policies of the German and Japanese governments.

But we have no quarrel with the deluded and enforced millions who were sent forth to translate the delusions of Hitler and Tojo into global conquest. They must be helped, not hated. For we need them, as they need us, at a time when the Soviet masters of a deluded and subjugated empire threaten to send *their* millions forth in a mad attempt to make real the obsession of world mastery by a "master political philosophy."

This time, unlike 1941, the United States is arming against the threat of arms. It is not ignoring the rest of the world, because it knows that Generalissimo Stalin will never ignore it, whatever America may do. The United States is awake and aware. It has met the constant threat of Soviet aggression, even at the cost of thousands of lives in Korea, and of great and growing amounts of money, material and effort. It is not a pleasant or easy or encouraging situation that we find ourselves in today. But at least we know one thing—there will not be another Pearl Harbor.

Willie Strikes Up the Band

"Softly at first, Willie began a chant, making up words as he went along. The tune, in strict marching cadence, captured the aching feet and vocal chords of Willie's mates and they arrived at the post on the double, on time—and on key."

THUS READS A PORTION of a newspaper story about a day, back in 1944, when Private Willie Lee Duckworth, a Stateside soldier, improvised a song on a 13-mile hike back from a 24-hour bivouac. The song stayed in the Army for seven years, gathering popularity and additional verses as time went along until, like its composer, it eventually broke out of service into civilian life. Unless you're completely insulated from radio, records, television, college bands and other blessings of modern life, you can't escape having heard the piece. Its title is Sound Off.

We mention this only to recall that Private Duckworth didn't really do anything new. Music and war—whatever you think of either of them—have been going steady for some time now. American soldiers in the Civil War and the Revolution marched into battle to the music of fife and drum. And before that, soldiers of all nations had done the same with the help of trumpets, bugles, hautboys, and probably rebecs and nose flutes, since the beginning of recorded history. But modern, mechanized war had no place for such tuneful fripperies. So today it's news when a private has made up a song to lighten the step, ease the weight of gun and gear, shorten the march, and otherwise lend melodic stimulation to the martial emotions.

Just goes to prove, we guess, that aside from atomic bombs, jet planes, guided missiles, etc., soldiering hasn't changed much over the years.

Collier's for December 8, 1951



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holidays



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