

Analysis

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After the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 by the Japanese forces, the United States of America formally entered the Second World War. In fact, the immense sense of crisis was communicated by President Roosevelt to the Congress on 8 December, 1941, whereby he asserted the need to check the aggressions being made by Germany, Japan and Italy. The attack on Pearl Harbor led to severe damages to American navy and military establishments and several soldiers were killed in the unprovoked attack. Another area of concern was the fact that on the same day, Japan also attacked Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam, Philippine Islands, Wake Island and Midway Island, clearly indicating that it was ready to take on the military might of the USA. In his speech to the Congress, President Roosevelt was categorical in saying that under the circumstances the US could not remain a silent spectator and was prepared to do everything to protect its territories and the interests of its people. He correctly said that for Americans, 7 December 1941 would be a “date which will live in infamy” because the Japanese had dared to directly challenge America for the ways it was involved in the War so far. It cannot be denied that President Roosevelt’s speech would have certainly resulted in enlisting American support for the war against Japan, primarily because the attack on Pearl Harbor was an open message to the US that Japan would now use forceful means against the US to meet its territorial and political objectives.

In his article titled *The Massacre of the Jews*, American journalist Varian Fry has given an authentic account of the horrible treatment of Jews by the Nazi regime during the Second World War and the manner in which thousands of them were cruelly tortured and annihilated by the Nazis regime. Fry was correct in holding that people found it difficult to believe reports of the Jews’

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massacre in Europe because they straight away dismissed them as impossible despite the fact that indirect warnings were received from the Nazis also. Fry referred to the “ heirs of the humanist tradition” in being surprised that the annihilation of the Jewish people was least expected from a humanist society such as the Europeans who did not have a negative record in history so far. According to the author, the Jewish problem was Hitler’s intolerance for Jews because he hated them and considered them to be the main cause for Germany’s defeat in the First World War as they believed in liberal, socialist and communist policies. He asserted that the Americans judged Nazis by their own standards in not going to the extent of adopting brutal and inhuman practices against any society as they did with the Jews. The author has also accounted the unbelievable attitude of the Allied forces in deliberately ignoring the plight of the Jews in having avoided the diversion of resources from the intensely felt need to only focus on the war efforts. Through this article, Fry had called upon the US to permit all such sufferers to enter the USA without any restrictions but his suggestions were not given any importance.

Works Cited

Johnson, Michael P. Reading the American Past, Volume II: From 1865: Selected Historical Documents, Bedford, 2008.