

Reading Questions for Blum, Dower, Terkel, and Polenberg

John Blum explains that "World War II posed a special test of the ability of the American culture to accommodate to its inherent pluralism." (p. 147) In the reading for this week, we will explore the complexities of gender and race during wartime.

What does Blum's statement mean? What does he mean by pluralism?

How did FDR's Four Freedoms (and other government propaganda) build upon this idea of pluralism?

In what ways did government propaganda undermine notions of freedom and equality?

What wartime factors forced Americans to confront challenges to the ideals of pluralism?

What opportunities did women and minorities have during the war?

To what extent did those experiences change lives?

What obstacles did they face?

Can you give concrete examples of discrimination?

Would minorities describe World War II as the Good War? Why or why not?