

THAT WAS THEN, THIS IS NOW

Beyond capturing a critical moment in our nation's history, the riveting series **Manhattan** reveals the situations, relationships, motivations, and issues behind the creation of The Manhattan Project, while holding a mirror up to who we are as a society today. It shines a fascinating spotlight on the similarities and differences between the conflicts, politics, and moral dilemmas of the 1940s and the present day.

DISCOVERY

Read the following extracts from World War II era documents on key topics reflected in **Manhattan**. Then use the resources provided in Activity 1 to find more information and primary sources on these topics.

GOVERNMENT SECRECY

In June 1942, prior to the formation of The Manhattan District, the director of the Office of Scientific Research and Development and the Chairman of the National Defense Research Committee submitted a report covering the status of the atomic bomb program to the President of the United States, through a Top Policy Group consisting of the Vice President, Secretary of War, and the Army Chief of Staff. In addition to an account of what had been accomplished under the program the report contained a number of recommendations for future procedure... "Extreme secrecy should be exercised in connection with the project particularly with respect to its purpose, the raw materials used to develop the final product and the manufacturing process involved."
— **Manhattan District History**, (www.osti.gov/opennet/manhattan_district.jsp)

NUCLEAR POLICY

Discoveries of which the people of the United States are not aware may affect the welfare of this nation in the near future. The liberation of atomic power which has been achieved places atomic bombs in the hands of the Army. It places in your hands, as Commander-in-Chief, the fateful decision whether or not to sanction

the use of such bombs in the present phase of the war against Japan. We, the undersigned scientists, have been working in the field of atomic power for a number of years. Until recently we have had to reckon with the possibility that the United States might be attacked by atomic bombs during this war and that her only defense might lie in a counterattack by the same means. Today with this danger averted, we feel impelled to say what follows.
— Leo Szilard, **Petition to the President of the United States**

(www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/ManhattanProject/SzilardPetition.shtml)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In the past, science has often been able to provide adequate protection against new weapons it has given into the hands of an aggressor, but it cannot promise such efficient protection against the destructive use of nuclear power. This protection can only come from the political organization of the world. Among all arguments calling for an efficient international organization for peace, the existence of nuclear weapons is the most compelling one. In the absence of



an international authority which would make all resort to force in international conflicts impossible, nations could still be diverted from a path which must lead to total mutual destruction, by a specific international peace, the existence of nuclear weapons is the most compelling one.

— **The Franck Report**

(www.atomicarchive.com/Docs/ManhattanProject/FranckReport.shtml)

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

*All the day long,
Whether rain or shine,
She's a part of the assembly line.
She's making history,
Working for victory,
Rosie the Riveter.
Keeps a sharp lookout for sabotage,
Sitting up there on the fuselage.
That little girl will do more than a male will do.*

— **Rosie the Riveter**

(www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/rosie-transcript.html)

DISCUSSION

Now, find current primary source documents that reflect present day attitudes on each of these topics. Be sure to provide citations for your documents. Summarize the current climate of opinion on each topic, then generate statements which you think reflect where society will be in fifty years with regard to each topic.

- Government Secrecy
- Nuclear Policy
- International Relations
- Women's Rights

MANH(A)TTAN

HOW MUCH EVIL DOES IT TAKE TO DO GOOD?

SEASON 2 PREMIERES ON WGN AMERICA TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 9PM/8C

