

Reading Guide for “More Safe, Less Free: A Short History of Wartime Civil Liberties”

by Ira Glasser

1. According to the author, what do all governments do in times of war or fear of war?
2. According to the author, why do people allow their civil liberties to be reduced?
3. The author states that is no simple tradeoff, liberty for security. He argues that the real question is “whether the remedies (to threats against security) proposed to deal with those fears are necessary, whether they will work, and whether the government has selected the right targets.
 - a. How many aliens or traitors were stopped by the Alien Acts of the 1790s?
 - b. Who were the real targets of the Sedition Act of 1798?
 - c. How many traitors or German spies were found through the Espionage and Seditious Acts of WWI?
 - d. Who were the real targets of the Espionage and Seditious Acts of WWI?
 - e. How many Japanese-American internees were charged with a crime?
 - f. Why were Japanese-Americans in Hawaii not interned?
4. Explain the drunk and the lamppost metaphor.
5. How effective are measures taken after 9-11 (Patriot Act)?
6. Was Alexander Hamilton right to worry? Explain.