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### The Echo: Pivotal Moments in the 40's

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**'The Echo' Pivotal Moments in the 1940's**

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## **Introduction**

The 1940's was a pivotal time for Americans during the rise of World War II and around the world. Americans could not catch a break, after World War I and the permeating effects of the Great Depression, the outbreak of a second world war left young Americans tired. During this time, the people relied on newspaper publications to stay up to date with the happenings across the world, in the country, and locally. Taylor University, a small Christian college in rural Indiana, struggled to feel the impact of world events on their campus. Taylor's location in and of itself added to the separation from war efforts beyond American borders. It would be the job of Taylor University's newspaper to help keep students updated and aware. Throughout the 1940's, Taylor chooses to inform their students and reflect upon ways they can integrate these hard times with their faith, trusting in God to get them through the war and beyond.

## **The Beginning**

Taylor's publication known as The Echo, began in 1913, and was a newspaper to keep students updated with the happenings around campus. Students often reflected on chapel speakers and kept updates on what alumni were up to around the country. The beginning years of The Echo were informative of on-campus happenings, but left students wanting more. One student shared their thoughts shortly before the war in 1936, saying

“in thinking over this past year's Echo my criticism concerns the subject matter. The editor has done splendid work in journalism, promptness, and regularity at each publication. However what I should like is a student newspaper rather than a circular for advertising the school (the Bulletin serves that purpose).” (Taylor University, 1936)

Taylor students at the time were unhappy with how the Echo was not quite organized and did not pertain information that students really wanted to read or were interested in. The Echo had a lot of room to grow as a publication, and the rise of World War II would force Taylor's newspaper to change for the better.

### **America Enters the War**

War with Japan started as early as 1931, when Japan seized Manchuria. America was still rebuilding after WWI and in the midst of a depression. America remained isolated from the start of World War II. But, on December of 1941, Japan finally attacked American ground at Pearl Harbor. The day after the attack, President Roosevelt declared war on Japan (The National WWII Museum New Orleans, 2020). No longer could America remain isolated from the war. Likewise, Taylor University had the means to respond.

By May of 1941, The Echo released its first ever international statement from Washington DC when there was a proposition to make extensive changes to the selective service act, lowering the draft age from twenty-three to eighteen. The proposed change directly impacted college students around the United States; "Mr. Roosevelt in a press conference two weeks ago forecast draft revisions that would make every healthy man eligible for service upon reaching his eighteenth birthday" (Taylor University, 1941). This was the start towards a better Echo, that informed students of more than just small-town happenings, but news that impacted students internationally as well.

### **Student Responses to the War**

It was not long before students had their own opinion on the war efforts going on all around them. Students began to share in the Echo, their personal opinions on the morality of fighting in the war as a Christian. The attitudes of men at Taylor "range all the way from those

who are sincere and thorough-going conscientious objectors to all war to those who think it is their duty to go the limit in armed defense of our country and in exterminating from the world the threat of totalitarianism” (Taylor University, 1942).

Some students writing in *The Echo* recognize this time of war as a pivotal moment to change the course of history regarding war; these decisions right now will decide “whether the boys and girls who go to college after [them] will have to go to war again and again every twenty years” (Taylor University, 1942).

The maturity of Taylor students even recognizes the responsibility that colleges have towards the war. American society has offered students a few choices as to how they could spend these war years. The American Council’s *Bulletin* specifically gave students the option to volunteer, work in an essential industry, or intensify college study to help lead in the armed forces or production world (Taylor University, 1942).

### **Isolated in Upland, IN**

By September of 1942, Taylor’s campus began feeling the effects of the war efforts, even from Upland. *The Echo* put out advertisements and reminders for students to help send out canned goods to servicemen. Students would buy from their local canned goods factories and send them to servicemen in need (Taylor University, 1942). Although Taylor’s campus was far removed from the war in Japan, students had a practical way to help those fighting across the world.

Chapels were a great time for Taylor to bring in relevant speakers for students to listen to. In November, a Taylor grad of 1923 who was serving in the Navy, Commander Schilling, gave an influential chapel message to students. He emphasized that religion was one of the most important things to have during times of war, despite the Church taking a stance on war itself. He

says, “Don’t throw overboard your religion when you join the armed forces”, in which students responded with saying it was one of the most interesting and practical chapel messages they had had all year (Taylor University, 1942).

Taylor’s clubs also made an effort to help during the war. The International Relations Club posted in the Gem-Echo (A hybrid Echo series, that featured bits of the yearbook as well as newspaper columns and editorials) to assist students in understanding the war terms heard about in their local newspapers. The club’s programs centered around “The Allied Nations: Who are they? What are they doing to win the War?” and “The Effect of the War on the Church, the Home, and the School” (Taylor University, 1943). The program helped students appreciate the problems confronting those three fundamental questions the nation faced as a result of the war.

Although Taylor University’s campus was far from real war problems, The Echo did a great job at highlighting some of the needs and assisting in filling those needs. The Editor in Chief (lead student of the Echo) urged students to find addresses of ‘Taylor boys’ who were serving in the war so they could send the Echo out to the boys abroad. He wrote in the Echo telling students to find him on campus and hand him addresses so the Echo could bless these servicemen with a little piece of home away from home. Obviously, this effort probably meant a lot to those who were far from a familiar place, and The Echo provided a small sense as to what was continuing to happen at Taylor.

### **Athletics**

Even though students felt quite isolated from war, students really started feeling the effects in terms of athletics. War restrictions kept athletes from traveling far from campus, which complicated basketball season schedules in the fall of ’42. It was hard to even put together a roster with the unknown future of the war and drafting policies. In the Athletics section of the

Echo that September, the Sports Editor reported that “Nearly all of the boys are, or will be, in the reserve corps but if a shortage of men occurs, they will become active participants of another type of struggle.” (Taylor University, 1942).

Taylor University’s athletic basketball star Don Odle, ended up enlisting in the marines, putting his athletic career beyond Taylor on hold. Odle would serve in the military from 1942 to 1943 and after his return from war, would go on to play basketball. Don Odle later became Taylor University’s head football and basketball coach throughout the rest of his lifetime.

As students continued to leave school for the war, The Echo occasionally highlighted student athletes who served and were killed in action. One student in particular, Vernor Miller, one of Taylor’s most talented and noticeable baseball players, was killed in action. The Echo emphasized that if the war had not happened, he would have killed it on first base that season (Taylor University, 1943).

By May of 1943, the 1942-943 basketball season became hesitant to even have a season because of the looming draft, as student athletes’ careers were being cut short.

### **War Restrictions**

The next fall, The Echo’s first issue was released in November instead of the usual September issues. Sadly, The Echo had been reduced to a monthly issuance instead of biweekly because “Print shops everywhere [were] so busy that they do not care to print a school paper” (Taylor University, 1943). By the fall of 1943, the war was in full swing, which boosted all sorts of prices and war restrictions tightened.

Gasoline rationing also left problems for The Echo, as they required transportation to get up to date news when, unfortunately, no ‘scoop’ could be rushed to the printer with reliable return time.

### **The Last Echo Issue for Four Years**

In December 1943, The Echo printed its last issue, little did they know. In the last issue, they wrote about a Taylor graduate who became a Nazarene missionary, Rev. L.C, Osborne. He moved to China after he graduated from Taylor and before the war. In his message, he spoke of loving the Japanese despite the evil going on in the war. He challenged Taylor students saying, “The Japs need Christ as much as do the Chinese” and finished saying “if there ever was a time that we needed faith, it is today” (Taylor University, 1943).

This was a great end to an unforeseeable end to the Echo. Unfortunately, the war restrictions continued to tighten which kept the Echo from producing content for almost four years.

### **Enrollment Doubles in 1946**

After the war, The Echo comes out with its first print production in nearly three and a half years. The headlines of this issue celebrated Taylor's enrollment numbers doubling from 200 to 400. The school was “full and running over” (Taylor University, 1946)

Even though the war was over, and victory had been claimed, America had a lot of rebuilding to do. The conditions of the world post-war were worse than the war itself, which called for cancellations and alterations of events on Taylor's campus. Luckily, sports began to be reintroduced, as some had come to a complete halt during the war.

For the first time ever, Taylor included a new column titled “News Boys” which focused on national and international news coverage. In early October's issue, the International News covered the attempt for a peace treaty among Nazi Germany's former allies whilst “keeping in mind that every move and countermove is motivated by the underlying struggle between Communistic Russia and the Capitalistic Democracies” (Taylor University, 1946).

Students began to share their own thoughts on international and national news coverage. In October's second issue, the National News covered America's conversations with Russia about Atomic Energy Control (Taylor University, 1946). America did not want atomic energy in the wrong hands. Students shared this: "What a pity that the enormous amounts of time and energy being spent in striving for an effective control of atomic energy to keep it from becoming an instrument of any future war are not being spent in eliminating the basic causes of war itself!" (Taylor University, 1946).

In late October, President Truman emphasized an agreement to spend time focusing on rebuilding America, a similar agreement Joseph Stalin came to (Taylor University, 1946). Taylor students expressed their skepticism along with the rest of the American people saying "Joe, your actions speak louder than your words" (Taylor University, 1946) seeing Stalin's failure to demobilize Russia's large army as well as the pressure they put on Turkey to gain control of other nations. Luckily, the United States kept tabs on Russia, remaining near Russian borders. Taylor students continue to ask their campus, "What is our duty to our Christ, our country, and humanity the world over in face of this tragic trend?" (Taylor University, 1946).

### **A Merry Christmas at Taylor**

December's issue of the Echo marked the 31<sup>st</sup> year of the Echo itself. An article titled Past-Present-Future-of The Echo, reflects on this last school year where students made an effort to revive The Echo; "Prouder still are they of the fact that they have revived the Echo after four years of non-existence." (Taylor University 1946). Some students did not even know that Taylor had ever had a school newspaper. Only few students were still at Taylor in the fall of 1943, where they saw the last issuance of The Echo.

This particular issue of the Echo also brought up the fact that it was the first Christmas post-war. The past few Christmas' had been merry for some but for others, it was a time for grieving and silence for lost loved ones. Yet, the Christmas of 1946 would be one to remember because of what Christ had done despite all that had been lost in the last few years. Taylor students reflected on how Jesus made it possible to celebrate this time of year; "Let us remember during our celebrations that Christ made it possible for us to have Christmas. It was through His love for us that we have the privilege to enjoy Christmas. Let us honor His name and give Him glory" (Taylor University, 1946).

Taylor University's Echo came a long way from the span of the late 30's into the next decade. Although it had always been a publication for the students, at this point it had become more an inclusive and reflective newspaper than ever before. Students could now see the importance of interacting with the national and international world around them, relating it to the faith they so deeply care for. The 1940's may have been the most pivotal time for The Echo, despite the near four-year gap between issues. During this time, students began to understand the importance of relating one's faith to the world around them and reflecting on how, no matter what, it is all made possible because of our Christ, Jesus.

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