

Name: _____

American Agitators

Use the questions below to guide your viewing of the film.

Introduction

What is an organizer? Why do you think they are described that way?

Why is Fred Ross described as a “social arsonist?” Why do you think he is described that way?

How would you describe the events and individuals that impacted Fred Ross Sr’s childhood? How do you think this helped to shape his worldview?

Great Depression:

How would you describe the living conditions in the Dust Bowl camps? What other challenges faced Dust Bowl Migrants?

How would you describe Fred Ross Sr’s leadership of the Arvin Camp? How did Ross work with the organizers in his camp? What does this reveal about him, both as a leader and as an individual?

How would you describe Francis Gibson? Where do you see similarities to the character of Fred Ross Sr?

WWII

What challenges did the attack on Pearl Harbor and WWII bring to the United States?

What was Executive Order 9066? What did it do and how did it impact American Japanese Americans (think about Japanese farmers and businesses)?

How would you characterize the experience of the Japanese Americans who were relocated to internment (concentration) camps?

How did Ross Sr attempt to aid Japanese Americans whose rights were being denied by the government in the camps? What challenges did he face?

Post WWII

What are house meetings? Why do you think Ross found that they were so effective?

Describe the case of Mendez v. the Westminster School Board of Education? Why was it a significant case?

What was the CSO? What role did Ross play in the organization?

What was the significance of Bloody Christmas in 1951?

National Farmworkers Association

What did Ross believe the significance of meeting with people one on one?

Who were Cesar Chavez and Deloras Huerta? What issues were important to them? How did Ross Sr. work with them to support their cause?

What issues faced farmers in the 1960's? How did the NFWA use this organization to advance their cause and message? How did this lead to their success?

Modern Legacy

Fred Ross Sr. believed that organizers needed to remember who they represented? Why do you think that this was so important to him?

Why did organizers keep track of data? Why is this important?

How was Fred Ross Sr characterized in eulogy? What did people say about him? What does it reflect about Ross Sr and his influence?

How did Fred Ross, Jr. carry on his father's legacy?

Why does Ross believe you need to be an optimist to be an organizer?

Modern Organizing:

For each of the issues below, think about the following questions:

- What issues face Americans today?
- How are the lessons on organizing utilized?
- What was the outcome of the organizing efforts?

Vegas Casino Workers

Dollar General

Oakland teachers

Final Reflection:

Fred Ross Sr. is described as a “social justice pyromaniac.” Why do you think that he is described this way? How accurate do you think the description is?