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Black and Jewish Responses to Japanese Internment

CHERYL GREENBERG

TWO MONTHS AFTER the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. Citing concern over wartime espionage and playing on American outrage, shock, and fear over the unexpected attack, the order permitted the Secretary of War to “prescribe military areas . . . from which any or all persons may be excluded” and provided for the relocation and support of those people so designated. Although the order named no ethnic group explicitly, it in fact targeted all those of Japanese descent, including American citizens. Ultimately, without any evidence of conspiracy or subversion, the military forced all Japanese Americans (and some Italian and German nationals) to evacuate the West Coast and move to inland detention camps.

Scholars of this shameful episode in our history have identified racism as the root explanation for both the Executive Order and the lack of public outcry against it. Certainly there can be little question that racism either blinded many Americans to the injustice of condemning an entire group, or in fact justified that condemnation. Anti-Asian prejudice predated Pearl Harbor, spurred by economic competition and the Hearst press. Nationwide but strongest in the west, this dislike of Asians was expressed in immigration restrictions, naturalization laws that barred them from citizenship, the prohibition in several western states against their owning or leasing land or practicing certain trades or professions, employment discrimination and residential segregation, and exclusion from many trade unions and other non-governmental institutions. As Morton Grodzins has written, “The sentiment against Japanese was not far removed from (and was interchangeable with) sentiments against Negroes and Jews.” Thus the fact that no similarly expansive wartime program detained or incarcerated German or Italian Americans raised few eyebrows. Those who noticed the discrepancy generally explained it with reference to race, claiming that unlike European whites, Japanese could never overcome the untrustworthy nature of their genes ¹

Yet not all Americans endorsed such racism. Two similarly oppressed groups, African Americans and Jewish Americans, had already orga-

nized to fight discrimination and bigotry. In this period they both came to recognize that their own persecution was part of a larger pattern of prejudice, and began working together on those larger issues. One therefore would have expected them to have identified and protested the racism of Japanese American internment. Yet the papers of several of the most prominent and outspoken black and Jewish civil rights organizations reveal that they made no such protest. The National Urban League (NUL), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), Anti-Defamation League (ADL), American Jewish Congress (AJCongress), and American Jewish Committee (AJC) all knew of the Executive Order. Of them a few seemed tacitly to endorse the evacuation; most did not even discuss it. Only the NAACP and NCJW responded in any explicit or public way in those early years on behalf of the evacuees, and neither took an unequivocally oppositional stand. Indeed the evidence suggests many of these civil rights agencies did not even perceive the injustice of the racially based evacuation and incarceration.

At the same time, however, these organizations did support fair treatment for individual Japanese Americans not living in militarily sensitive areas, and over the course of the next several years (and following the administration's lead) expanded the scope of their concern to embrace all Japanese living in the United States. These groups had proved themselves sensitive to racism; why, then, did they not recognize it in the internment order?

This essay explores possible explanations for such anomalous blindness. An examination of the contradictory behavior of these groups and the deliberations of those organizations which did discuss internment will suggest that the explanations for the general silence lie in the particular constraints and pressures perceived by black and Jewish organizations at this time. Part of the answer can be found in the government's rhetoric, which served to disguise the real motivations behind the internment. Federal officials distorted or suppressed evidence in order to gain Americans' acquiescence and used "military necessity" to hide racism and disarm potential critics. Such transformations have marked many important policy discussions with the use of rhetorical masks such as "national security" or "law and order." By diverting attention away from race and toward wartime security concerns, thereby fueling the national paranoia that followed Pearl Harbor, government leaders made it much

more difficult to identify and prove that bigotry, not national defense, underlay the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans.²

Yet more of the explanation lies in the particular circumstances of the organizations themselves, and how they viewed their own situation. Their goal was the betterment of their own group's condition; how that was to be achieved changed with historical circumstance. This was war-time and self-interest dictated that these groups, who ordinarily made it their business to challenge racism, in this instance would acquiesce to national hysteria and accept the government's line without interrogation. In other words, this willful ignorance occurred for reasons specific to the historical moment. Self-absorption during a difficult time, each agency's real concerns about its own survival, support of the war effort, and some evidence of racism, combined to silence dissent among civil rights groups.

One might argue that these organizations should not have been expected to speak out, but the groups themselves disputed such a view. Nathan Perlmutter, a former director of the ADL, praised his organization for "their willingness to stand up and speak out against bigotry. . . . They never sinned by silence in the face of evil. They dared to protest no matter the power of the oppressor." The NAACP editorialized in a 1942 issue of the *Crisis* that "with our country at war . . . the *Crisis* would emphasize with all its strength that now is the time *not* to be silent about the breaches of democracy here in our own land. Now is the time to speak out, not in disloyalty, but in the truest patriotism." Similarly, in 1938 NAACP Secretary Walter White urged "action to wipe out bigotry based on racial hatred no matter who are the victims, nor where such bigotry and oppression exist." In its egregious violation of constitutional rights, not to mention ethical standards, internment raises particularly troublesome issues of both governmental manipulation and the abrogation of responsibility by many groups who portrayed themselves as civil rights watchdogs.³

Both the black and Jewish communities perceived themselves, correctly, as restricted minorities, facing discrimination on the basis of ascribed affiliation. Jim Crow segregation, while most widespread and legally entrenched in the South, extended into every region and into every aspect of American social and political life. Black people north and south were restricted from certain schools, neighborhoods, jobs, unions, and public and private facilities, and gerrymandered out of political power in most of the places they were allowed to vote at all. Jews

faced less widespread discrimination, but endured quotas in institutions of higher education, and substantial barriers to employment and private club membership. Restrictive housing covenants barred them from residential areas, a restriction they shared with blacks and Asians (and occasionally also with other European ethnic or religious groups).

And both communities suffered from the racist and anti-Semitic attitudes of a majority of their white fellow citizens. Pollster Elmo Roper reported in 1945 that "Negroes have long enjoyed the unenviable distinction of being America's most oppressed minority group." In 1939 71 percent of white Americans questioned believed blacks to have lower intelligence than whites. Forty-one percent endorsed Jim Crow laws, and another 42 percent believed that while laws were not needed, "unwritten understanding, backed up by social pressure" should maintain residential segregation. These attitudes remained rigid during wartime. In 1942 78 percent of high school students surveyed indicated they would not wish a black roommate (45 percent did not wish to room with a Jew), and fully 92 percent refused to consider a black marriage partner (51 percent also rejected Jews).

During the war years anti-Semitism actually rose slightly in the United States. Just over half of all Americans surveyed in 1942 believed Jews had "too much influence" in business, for example, rising to 58 percent by 1945. *Fortune's* similar findings of 1947 prompted the National Opinion Research Center to conclude that "feeling against the Jews is stronger than [against] any other minority group in the United States."⁴ While it is undoubtedly false that anti-Semitic attitudes were stronger than racist ones at any point, the evidence reveals clear and persistent prejudice and discrimination directed against both populations. Both Jews and blacks knew about bigotry firsthand.

By 1942 both groups had also moved beyond a parochial understanding of discrimination. Although halting and often more rhetorical than real, Jewish and African-American organizations had already begun making connections between their own oppression and that of others, particularly when defending others' rights shored up their own. As early as 1934 William Pickens, contributing editor of the *Associated Negro Press* and NAACP field secretary, wrote, "Hitlerism is a challenge . . . to those who have been working toward more human relations between white and black in Virginia; to those who have been striving to bring about a more sportsmanlike attitude toward the Oriental on the American Pacific Coast." Edward Lewis of the Urban League of Greater New York insisted:

The problem of other racial minorities in our midst . . . beggar[s] description. . . . The need for building up better inter-cultural relations and understanding with all groups in our communities, Jews, foreign-born, Mexicans, and other racial minorities becomes a significant part of a world movement which must surely triumph or our cause is lost.

The NCJW used examples of discrimination against blacks, Jews, Mexicans and Chinese to argue, “The problem of discrimination is the problem of every American.”⁵

Black agencies particularly recognized the potency of pointing out the parallels between the situation of Jews in Germany, for which there was some sympathy, and that of African Americans in the United States. For example, Walter White made an explicit link between German anti-Semitism and racism in the United States in a statement to the *Amsterdam News* in 1938:

It is now obvious that Hitler is merely using race prejudice against the Jews to seize their property to bolster Germany’s precarious economic situation. We Negroes know what this means since it has happened to us. We must join with all those condemning Nazi terror because what happens to one minority can happen to others—a lesson which Jews, Negroes and all other minorities must learn in sheer self-defense.

African-American sociologist and former Howard University dean Kelly Miller put it more bluntly:

Let not the American Christian upbraid his German cousin for his brutal treatment of the Jew. The most brutal treatment received by the Jew at the hands of the Germans is but an act of mercy compared to what off-colored Christians receive at the hands of their co-religionists in this country

When the Negro sees an American churchman hold up his hands in holy horror over the brutal treatment, Jew by German, he can hardly refrain from quoting the Master’s word: “Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye!”⁶

Jewish organizations made a similar shift toward a broader conception of bigotry, and began to speak out publicly against racism, particularly when directed against African Americans. One of the first, the NCJW, added opposition to lynching to its platform in 1935. By 1940 the ADL

(and soon after, other Jewish groups) had begun a pattern of contact and cooperation with black organizations that would grow over time to sustained collaboration on civil rights.⁷

Thus both African-American and Jewish-American organizations began moving toward policies of identification with the struggles of other minority groups, and felt increasingly willing to take public stands on their behalf. This shift occurred for a variety of reasons too complex to detail here, but in brief, civil rights groups in both communities recognized, or finally acted upon the recognition, that racism practiced against another group could quickly be used against one's own, and that alliances brought greater clout to any civil rights challenge. The (slowly) growing strength of these organizations also enabled them to look beyond immediate demands to recognize that all bigotry ultimately challenged them. While sustained black-Jewish cooperation remained several years in the future, and both groups generally paid more attention to each other than to other minority communities, certainly the early years of the 1940s revealed a growing willingness of black and Jewish groups to name and protest racist oppression when it occurred to others.

One would expect, then, the recognition that evacuation of all those of Japanese origin, even of citizens, was racist, especially in the absence of either specific evidence of subversion or comparable restrictions on Italian or German Americans. Certainly arguments linking internment with Nazism were made explicitly at the time. At the Tolan Committee Hearings, for example, James Omura asked, "Has the Gestapo come to America? Have we not risen in righteous anger at Hitler's mistreatment of the Jews? Then, is it not incongruous that citizen Americans of Japanese descent should be similarly mistreated and persecuted?" Nor did the issue receive attention only in the west. In New York, for example, the *Herald Tribune* editorialized that the wholesale internment of citizens violated the constitution. On the west coast and across the country individuals from the black and Jewish communities spoke out against the proposed evacuation, and some of their organizations did indeed find such racially selective incarceration problematic, as we will see.⁸ However, such concern did not prove compelling enough to any civil rights agencies to condemn the evacuation order. Both black and Jewish organizations, ordinarily so sensitive to the racism underlying ostensibly non-racial claims, by their silence apparently accepted the argument that the evacuation was simply a wartime security measure based on legitimate fear of espionage and unrelated to the history of anti-Asian bigotry so pervasive on the west coast.

The Roosevelt administration made it simpler to miss the racism of the incarceration. Not only was the Executive Order devoid of any mention of Japanese Americans, but each step in the process came carefully packaged as an emergency wartime necessity. Furthermore, even while the camps were filling, the government began releasing some Japanese Americans: first agricultural laborers and students beginning in mid-1942, then draftees and other individuals deemed loyal by the end of the same year. The War Relocation Authority officials running the camps quickly organized resettlement programs and the army, which had halted the drafting of Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor, reinstated it in 1943 and created a special (segregated) battalion for them. All this masked the racism remarkably effectively. The selective release strategy conformed to a tokenism-as-equality argument often made during the early years of the civil rights struggle, that the success of some individuals proved that racism, which targeted an entire population, had been overcome. The releases also helped coopt many of the civil rights organizations that might otherwise have become vocal opponents. Indeed these groups' pattern of initial silence followed by emerging support of some Japanese Americans and quiet challenge to more overt or virulent racism against them from the right parallels the same shifts in the Roosevelt administration.

It is necessary to add here, as a brief but crucial aside to the question of black and Jewish reaction, the response of Japanese American organizations and those non-Japanese groups that supported them. The foremost Japanese American political organization was the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), organized in 1930 by Nisei (American-born children of Japanese immigrants) to improve their political status and prove their Americanism. This group urged cooperation with the evacuation order, calling it a military necessity and legitimate security measure, and sought to demonstrate their loyalty through compliance. The attack on Pear Harbor represented many Japanese Americans' worst nightmare, and chagrin or guilt may also have played a part in the willingness of many to accept relocation. The JACL refused to aid the Seattle branch of the ACLU in its test of the Order's constitutionality, and urged those required to evacuate to do so without resistance or complaint.

Progressive organizations and guardians of civil liberties generally did no better. ACLU director Roger Baldwin considered the order "undoubtedly legal in principle." Progressive activist Vito Marcantonio

claimed the bombing of Pearl Harbor had been aided by a fifth column of Japanese in the United States. The Communist party called the evacuation "unfortunate but vital."

In June of 1942, the Post War World Council called a meeting in New York on "the Japanese situation." Present at that meeting were representatives (not necessarily official) from both leftist and pacifist groups and more mainstream liberal and ethnic agencies including the JACL, Japanese American Committee for Democracy (JACD), YWCA, American Committee for the Protection of Foreign Born (ACFPB), Russell Sage Foundation, YMCA, Workers Defense League (WDL), Pittsburgh *Courier*, League for Industrial Democracy (LID), Union for Democratic Action, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), NCJW, Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), Post War World Council, AJCongress Women's Division, Socialist party, ACLU, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), and several others. Both Norman Thomas of the Socialist party and Mike Masaoka of the JACL pointed out the violations of democracy wholesale evacuation represented. "Mr. Masaoka pointed out that, if this can be done to Japanese citizens, no one could tell what group might be affected next." Nevertheless, no one, including either Japanese American organization, explicitly opposed the evacuation per se. Only Norman Thomas urged a "reconsideration" of the order. The resolution agreed to at that meeting called on the government to limit evacuation to the west coast; to conduct the next phase of the process under civilian, not military, authority; to resettle rather than incarcerate the evacuees, and to establish hearing boards to issue "credentials" for citizens and aliens "whose loyalty is unquestioned" so they might return to civilian life with "protection and . . . the reassurance of the public."⁹

Despite its rather modest position, most of the liberal black and Jewish groups still viewed this coalition as too radical or too subversive; except for two Jewish women's groups and the *Courier*, neither community sent anyone to the meeting. In fact, in comparison to most other actions, the Post War World Council's statement did lie at the outer bound of protest. The expectation that any prominent liberal group would speak out forcefully against evacuation must be tempered in such a context.

Indeed, most did not. Only two organizations raised concerns about the Executive Order, one black: the NAACP, and one Jewish: the NCJW. Much more typical was silence. Assuming its national records are complete, the NUL's national board held no discussions at all about the

evacuation order or made any public or private statements about it. In fact, in September of 1942 its staff conference passed a resolution “express[ing] to the President . . . its deep appreciation of steps taken . . . toward the elimination of racial discrimination in the war effort” which it defined as applying to “all Americans regardless of race, religion or national origin.”¹⁰ Nor did more progressive and confrontational black organizations take a stand. Although they may have sympathized with the difficulties faced by Japanese Americans, they too stopped short of protesting the internment per se. A 1943 pamphlet issued by A. Philip Randolph’s March on Washington Movement (MOWM) argued strenuously against segregation and discrimination in the armed forces by claiming:

Our struggle for complete equality for all men regardless of race, religion or national origin is the basic struggle to preserve and extend democracy in these United States. . . . [The] Jew in Nazi Germany knows that Nuremburg-law-segregation is discrimination and the American Negro soldier knows that jim crow-segregation is discrimination.

Yet the pamphlet made no mention of the segregation of internment (or of segregated Japanese American military units). Randolph’s later Committee Against Jim Crow in the Military also argued that all segregation was inappropriate, but again there is no evidence Randolph himself or either organization took any public position on the issue of Japanese internment during wartime. Hearings the Committee Against Jim Crow held about the evils of segregation in the Armed Forces raised the issue of segregated Japanese American companies only in order to endorse it and argue for its disanalogy to black experience. Records of the deliberations of the National Negro Congress reveal no mention of these questions. Nor did the (fledgling) NCNW discuss it despite its explicit commitment to “promote understanding of the economic and social problems of all groups in our midst and work together for their amelioration.”¹¹

Most Jewish organizations also remained silent on internment. “The Evacuee Speaks Newsletter,” product of unnamed Japanese activists that chronicled opposition to evacuation, noted in its first issue of August 1, 1942 that “vociferous demands have been made by Christians and liberals to cease this practice and institute hearing boards to give justice to the evacuees.”¹² The exclusion of Jews from the list of protesters reflected the reality of the 1942 political scene. Based on national board meeting minutes and weekly newsletters, neither the AJCongress,

founded by liberal activist Rabbi Stephen Wise, nor the more temperate AJC ever privately discussed or publicly protested the Executive Order or the placement of Americans in concentration camps solely on the basis of national origin. Certainly neither issued any press release on the question or raised it at their annual conventions.¹³ A third Jewish civil rights agency, the ADL, also took no stand either privately or publicly with regard to the Japanese that can be found, although the chief counsel at the time, Arnold Forster, staunchly maintained in a 1991 interview with the author that the ADL had opposed the Executive Order. In fact there is some anecdotal evidence at least some west coast ADL officials tacitly supported it. Basically, the issue seems to have passed unnoticed; a 1947 inquiry to ADL's national office on the nature of the JAACL elicited the response: "We do have a little information on the group dating back to 1942 and 1943. This came to us through newspaper clippings and consequently is hardly conclusive."¹⁴

It is possible these organizations recognized the problematic nature of internment, yet chose not to speak out publicly for other reasons, such as concern not to jeopardize their own programs or goals. Yet if this were true, internal meeting minutes would have recorded or at least mentioned such a debate. Since none did, one can only conclude from the overwhelming public and private silence that these black and Jewish groups accepted the government's argument that internment was necessary, legal, and appropriate.

Given their strong and public commitment to fighting discrimination based on "race, religion or national origin," to quote the catch phrase of the time, these organizations must not have recognized the racism of the Executive Order, or they would have remarked on it. Yet other observations by these same groups contradict this lack of recognition. At a 1941 meeting, for example, well before the government transformed internment from a Nazi-like horror to a military necessity, Edward Lewis of the New York UL urged active promotion of an Allied victory because if Hitler won "we might be meeting in a concentration camp."¹⁵

Similarly myopic was the AJCongress. In October of 1942 its official newsletter, *Congress Weekly* praised Attorney General Francis Biddle's decision to consider Italian nationals in the United States "friendly" rather than "enemy" aliens. The article pointed out:

This very act presupposes the belief in all persons who breathe the air of America long enough to perceive its way of life, that loyalty to the eternal idea of human freedom and equality is stronger than the loyalties to the

passing forms prevalent in their homeland. It is an expression of America's belief in itself, in the righteousness and permanence of those basic principles for which all the elements of the population no matter what their origin are called to fight.

Of those aliens, and even citizens, who were not included in Biddle's presupposition of loyalty, not a word. Not that the AJCongress did not see hypocrisy in America about race. The article pointed to clear violations of these "basic principles" in the United States: "the treatment of the Negro in the South."¹⁶ Civil rights groups recognized racism in the United States yet did not link the evacuation or internment to it or even see the link as a strong enough possibility to investigate further.

Why didn't these civil rights groups see the order as racist? The discussions and decisions of the two groups that did deal explicitly with the plight of the west coast Japanese may offer some clues. The NCJW, founded in 1893, had long been the most active of the Jewish organizations in terms of broader civil rights questions, cooperating with black civil rights groups generally, and working closely with its black counterpart, the NCNW, since the latter's inception. At the end of 1940 the NCJW passed a resolution condemning "discrimination against the legally admitted alien to the United States" as a violation of democratic principles. Already sensitized to these issues, therefore, the social legislation committee raised concerns immediately after Roosevelt issued his Executive Order. At its March meeting, the committee drafted a statement to the executive committee recommending that

National Council of Jewish Women, in line with its traditional philosophy, should take cognizance of the implications of the mass evacuation . . . of peoples whether citizens or aliens, on the basis of nationality alone. . . . [Our] Committee . . . recognize[s] the need to take every precaution to safeguard our country from sabotage but believe that the wholesale evacuation of the Japanese without regard to their citizenship creates a "second class citizenship" which disregards Article 14 of the Constitution of the United States of America . . .

[Furthermore we] believe that in the interests of national morale as well as the interests of the loyal aliens, some method should be devised by the Federal authorities to distinguish between the loyal and the disloyal aliens of enemy nationality and that evacuation should be conducted on an individual basis after just and adequate investigation.

The executive committee agreed that the evacuation presented a "civil liberties" problem, noted that several Christian organizations concurred,

and forwarded to Blanche Goldman, President of the NCJW, a protest to be signed and sent to President Roosevelt. Goldman expressed her reluctance to challenge publicly any decision the military believed "absolutely necessary for the safety of our war effort" particularly when the Japanese themselves raised no public protest and urged them "at every cost to abandon the idea at this time." The San Francisco chapter also indicated its disapproval. Even a compromise, a referendum to the Board, "according to not only my own best judgment but the judgment of leaders of liberal and informed groups . . . contained so many . . . statements which have been considered 'plants' by subversive elements, that I could not in all justice send this material through the mails."¹⁷

The social legislation committee, acknowledging that in any case the issue had passed, then urged the Council to advocate loyalty boards. By this time, because of statements like that of WRA head Dillon Myer insisting that most Japanese were devoted to the United States, the WRA had come under attack by racists who maintained that no Japanese could be trusted. The fact that the NCJW position was now also an endorsement of the government may have eased Goldman's conscience. The group wrote to Myer praising his statement and offering help in setting up loyalty boards. A cover letter from Goldman accompanied it noting there was no reason to give the NCJW position "undue publicity."¹⁸

In May of 1943, NCJW took up the question of a proposed transfer of authority over the internees from the WRA to the War Department, and proposed to forestall it by sending a letter endorsing the WRA's handling of events. Again Goldman objected, this time claiming that the WRA had not done a good job monitoring released internees. After a reassuring letter from J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI confirming that Japanese aliens were monitored, the NCJW considered a resolution on the subject at its 1943 convention. As proposed, the resolution noted the loyalty of most Japanese Americans, commended the government for recognizing this fact, and urged them to continue the process of identifying and releasing those proven loyal. After criticism by the San Francisco and Pacific Coast delegations, the members voted to delete the section proclaiming Japanese loyalty and replace it with: "The WRA has dealt with this highly complex and exceedingly important problem in a truly democratic manner." To the claim that this resolution tacitly endorsed concentration camps, delegate Simon replied, "This is not a concentration camp idea. . . . [After investigation, loyal] Japanese are being put back into civilian life" and this attention to individual cases is precisely what made the process democratic. This argument, like the government's

selective release programs, was based on tokenism and it persuaded a majority of the delegates. The motion passed as amended. In under two years the NCJW had moved from recognition that the government's policies were racist to an endorsement of the same policies.¹⁹

The NAACP began its internal debate after the evacuation was already underway. Though muted and at times oblique, its critique of internment was the most forceful of any at the time. In July of 1942 the chair of the NAACP's Alameda County Branch Legal Committee wrote Walter White about his concerns over inhumane treatment of Japanese evacuees, and the simultaneously eased restrictions against white enemy aliens. "White people are noticing the rank discrimination between these people." White forwarded the letter directly to Attorney General Biddle, noting in his cover letter that although "this does not come strictly within the scope of the work of the N.A.A.C.P., I send it to you with the hope that as far as is consonant with the war efforts steps may be taken to prevent such treatment as this." He protested not the evacuation itself nor its racial selectivity, but solely its inhumane implementation, arguing on the basis of the Allied war effort. "I greatly fear that stories like this could and would be used by the Japanese, through radio broadcasts and other means of reaching the colored peoples of the Orient, to create bitterness against the United Nations."

The following week NAACP representatives gathered for their annual convention and took up the question. While accepting the government's claim of wartime necessity, and confining their concern only to citizens, the delegates nonetheless squarely addressed the racism of the internment.

Whereas in the evacuation of persons from the West Coast, as a military measure, American citizens of Japanese extraction were evacuated along with Japanese aliens, and whereas, similar treatment was not accorded citizens and aliens of other foreign extractions, it is apparent that race and color were the sole basis for the arbitrary classification by which one group of citizens is being unfairly treated.²⁰

Meanwhile, Mike Masaoka of the JACL contacted White regarding a bill pending in the Senate for nationwide Japanese internment for the duration of the war. "Knowing of your interest in Americanism, a square deal for all, and in the preservation of the cardinal tenets of our Constitution for all peoples, regardless of race, color, or creed," he wrote, touching on the issue of greatest concern to the NAACP, "we trust . . . that you and your organization will take whatever action you feel is appro-

appropriate." Masaoka pointed out that the majority of Japanese in this country were citizens, that those on the west coast had cooperated with evacuation for the sake of "national welfare," linked the action with "Hitlerism," and asked whether such legislation would not violate the constitutional protection citizens enjoyed. (That Masaoka wrote to White but not to other black or Jewish civil rights organizations reinforces the argument that these groups had not shown any substantive concern for Japanese American rights to that point.) Like the NCJW, the NAACP's first public protest against wholesale internment supported the administration, which also opposed the Senate bill. On July 26 the NAACP issued a press release recording its board vote in opposition to the bill "on the ground that the Association feels it encourages racial discrimination since Germans and other Axis peoples are not included." The NAACP remained reluctant, though, to press for any position contrary to that of the administration. Despite the convention resolution, the press release and subsequent correspondence with federal officials did not raise any question regarding the legitimacy of the west coast evacuation already underway, nor did it raise the constitutional question behind depriving any citizens of their rights based on national origin.

The Association recognized the racism of the internment, and in that its analysis went far beyond that of any other civil rights organization. Nevertheless it remained unwilling to air its criticisms publicly. Following the convention White did write a follow-up letter to Assistant Attorney General Wendell Berge, but not to present the NAACP's opposition. Either granting the government's claim of military need or at least recognizing internment as a *fait accompli*, he simply requested that the government hold loyalty hearings and allow those proven to be no security risk to return to the west coast. Those urging White to propose hearings had objected explicitly to the racial bias behind the evacuation, and his own organization had noted this as well; nevertheless in his letter he made no mention of such considerations. Instead, and perhaps in light of the decision to release agricultural laborers from the camps, he chose a different approach: "The reason in most instances is a practical rather than an idealistic one, namely, the tremendous increase in the cost of vegetables and fruits and the difficulty of getting persons to do the work as well as the Japanese." The racism of that statement, which obviously escaped him, is evident nonetheless in hindsight. There is a great irony in a black man arguing that certain jobs were best filled by a particular racial group. The NAACP, like the NCJW, ultimately chose not to criticize the administration. While it fully and explicitly recog-

nized the racist nature of internment, it publicly addressed only superficial inequities and never challenged the structural racism that lay beneath.²¹

All this raises a related question: how did west coast branches of these agencies react to the Executive Order? As the examples scattered through this article suggest, the issue was no more clear cut on the local than the national level. San Francisco clergy, including rabbis, protested the internment, but the local Federation of Jewish Charities said nothing. A California NAACP official raised doubts about internment, while west coast NCJW delegates supported the government's decision and UL representatives remained silent. The ADL in Los Angeles apparently supported internment (but not publicly) while the Portland ADL, which did not oppose internment either, defended the rights of local Japanese aliens deemed "loyal" by the Navy. While local responses need to be explored in more depth than is possible here, they seem to be similar to the views of their nationals, albeit often more intensely expressed.

Understanding the general silence of black and Jewish organizations is complicated by the fact that it was completely situational. They had not yielded on their concerns about racism or discrimination; rather, for them, evacuation and internment seemed distinct from those issues. How else can the changes in the NCJW position be understood? During internment, these same civil rights organizations who would not take a public or oppositional stand defended Japanese American rights and worked with Japanese American organizations in other contexts. K.M. Nakano, chairman of the JACD, announced the group's 1942 "victory rally" to his "Brothers and Sisters of the Jewish Labor Committee" who had purchased tickets. "This war is not a race war. . . . In order to successfully carry on the work, we must unite all Americans, regardless of race, color, religion or nationality," he argued, and the JLC agreed. Portland's ADL challenged a local ordinance forbidding licenses to Japanese aliens screened and released from detention; the California office challenged local anti-Japanese campaigns. Nor was the AJCongress unmindful of the situation of Japanese Americans; an October 1942 article objected to the forced closing of schools that taught the cultures or languages of Axis countries, specifically citing Japanese language schools as an example.²²

The ADL agreed to participate in a 1944 conference held in New Jersey to discuss "violently anti-Japanese, anti-Nisei" pamphlets distributed by the American Legion in that state to protest Japanese resettle-

ment plans. As an ADL staffer commented, "This problem affects all groups interested in the question of minority rights." The AJCongress, NAACP, NCJW, NUL, JACL, JACD, and the Post War World Council also attended. So did the WRA. Hillel, a Jewish campus organization, donated scholarships for Japanese American students in the camps to leave and attend college. In a letter revealing the unconscious ambivalence of the moment, Arnold Forster asked an ADL colleague to investigate a speech given at the Central Presbyterian Church in Summit, New Jersey by a Japanese man "who left one young lady with the impression that we were unkind to the Japs."²³

In some cases these organizations belatedly acknowledged the link between the evacuation and more general racism. After the Supreme Court upheld a law establishing curfews on west coast Japanese Americans, Frank Crosswaith of the Negro Labor Committee pointed to the decision as one example of "the spread of Hitler's despicable doctrine of racism." Roy Wilkins, *Crisis* editor, joined with George Schuyler, assistant editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, Fred Hoshiyama of the JACL, and Norman Thomas in speaking at a 1944 mass meeting in New York City protesting Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia's objection to admitting relocated Japanese Americans into the city. They sent a strongly worded telegram to the Mayor arguing that

THESE PEOPLE ARE AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO ALREADY HAVE BEEN ARBITRARILY CONFINED TO CONCENTRATION CAMPS CONTRARY TO ALL AMERICAN LAW AND CUSTOM. IT IS NOW KNOWN TWO YEARS AFTER THIS HYSTERICAL ACTION THAT THE SOLE BASIS FOR THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS WAS THE COLOR OF THESE AMERICANS. . . . [You have not advocated the exclusion of Italian and German nationals] SURELY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK HAS NOT USED THE CLOAK OF MILITARY SECURITY TO ADVOCATE DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT FOR LOYAL AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO HAPPEN NOT TO BE WHITE.²⁴

Such apparent contradictions in their positions may be reconciled by considering the role of the government in defining and shaping the question of loyalty during wartime. An appeal to wartime emergency and fear of sabotage initially masked the question of racism. Thus black and Jewish groups could support obviously loyal Japanese Americans not living in militarily sensitive areas while accepting the need for relocation. Once government officials began "redeeming" the Japanese, a

gradual process beginning almost immediately after internment, first releasing students and others deemed loyal, then drafting eligible men, and defending some Japanese Americans against the more virulent attacks of right wing racists, civil rights organizations could comfortably follow suit, challenging racism while supporting Roosevelt.

Activities on behalf of the Japanese intensified in the postwar period, as war fever abated and government support for Japanese Americans became increasingly open. In 1946, for example, President Truman held a ceremony to honor Japanese American soldiers. By 1948 public opinion had shifted so dramatically that Congress passed the Japanese American Claims Act compensating some internees for property losses. Mike Masaoka of the JACL was appointed consultant to the President's Committee on Civil Rights. Black and Jewish groups took more visible stands as well. During a two-day conference in San Francisco in January of 1945 convened by the Pacific Coast Committee on American Principles and Fair Play to plan for the return of the evacuees, black organizations joined Filipino and Korean groups in their agreement that "any attempt to make capital for their own racial groups at the expense of the Japanese would be sawing off limbs on which they themselves sat." The NAACP helped California evacuees upon their return and supported legal efforts on their behalf.²⁵ By 1946 the ADL newsletter "The Facts" included Japanese Americans in its articles on discrimination, and soon thereafter engaged in cooperative efforts with the JACL (now legitimated by Masaoka's involvement with the Civil Rights Committee) as well as with black agencies on various civil rights and civil liberties issues. At their 1946 conference, AJCongress leader Shad Polier specifically raised the problem of anti-Japanese discrimination. Two years later the AJCongress and the NCJW came out publicly in support of granting citizenship rights to Japanese immigrants, based in part on the impressive performance of Japanese Americans during the war; and the AJCongress, like the NAACP, filed supporting briefs in several of the JACL's cases.²⁶

Indeed, these organizations sometimes disingenuously recast their own positions vis a vis internment. In 1946 NAACP's Director of Branches, Gloster Current, reflected:

When the Army evacuated the entire 115,000 people of Japanese blood from the Pacific Coast and herded them into concentration camps, many a Negro throughout the country felt a sense of apprehension always experienced in the face of oppression: Today *them*, tomorrow *us*. For once the

precedent had been established of dealing with persons on the basis of race or creed, none of us could consider ourselves safe from future "security" measures.²⁷

Similarly implying it had been evident to them at the time, the ADL described internment in clearly racial terms in a 1956 article. After Pearl Harbor Japanese Americans were

ordered out of their west coast homes, shunted behind barbed wire in barren "relocation centers," a euphemism for concentration camps; and reviled as possible spies and saboteurs solely because of their ancestry. "Jap" was a daily epithet.²⁸

Government's rhetorical reliance on national security as the motivation for evacuation helped minimize the chance these organizations would identify relocation as a civil rights problem until some time for reflection had passed. Still, such situational blindness cannot be blamed entirely on government sleight of hand. Why were these organizations so easily disarmed? Many reasons lie behind their silence, some shared among black and Jewish groups, others more particular.

First and foremost, blacks and Jews were absorbed by their own pressing problems. The battle against lynching, discrimination, and segregation occupied black leaders, while Jewish organizations struggled to aid the Jews in Europe and the refugees European violence produced. Certainly the NAACP, NUL, and the MOWM had much to do to challenge the segregation of the armed forces, hiring barriers erected against black workers, and continued racial violence against blacks, particularly around southern army bases. The NUL, for example, spent these years focused primarily on securing adequate housing and broader access to skilled and clerical jobs for blacks in war industries. Absorption by the needs of black workers left little time to question and investigate the military's claim that evacuation was a vital part of the war effort. Similarly, every issue of the *Crisis* documented numerous violations of black civil rights, and the many battlegrounds on which the NAACP's staff fought, including struggles for anti-lynching laws and stronger Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) protections; challenges to discrimination in the military, employment, housing, education, and public services; and the easing of racial tensions that erupted into riots in several American cities and army bases.

For Jews, the situation was also stark, and their priorities obvious. Officials from the three major Jewish organizations, questioned later

about their silence, explained that Jewish groups were too preoccupied with Germany to notice anything in the United States. The wholesale slaughter of Jews in Europe and the plight of increasingly desperate refugees was certainly a problem of overwhelming proportions for the American Jewish community, and their attention to this issue was not only crucial, but in the minds of some, inadequate even at the level of attention it received. Available executive committee minutes for the AJCongress, AJC, and ADL certainly attest to the intense attention Jews paid to the situation in Europe. Confirmation of such single-mindedness also comes from an NUL fundraising discussion in 1939. Its president, L. Hollingsworth Wood, reported that he had asked several wealthy Jews for contributions. "Of course, it is seemingly brutal to ask Jews for money for anything but their own problems," he acknowledged.

Still, he noted, many Jews did concern themselves with other issues as well: "Dorothy Straus tells me that there is a very interesting cleavage in regard to that in the Jewish group."²⁹ Indeed topics other than rescue did arise in executive committee discussions, but never that of internment. The AJCongress issued press releases on matters such as Executive Order 8802 and Jim Crow, for example; the ADL proclaimed itself "Vitality Interested in Welfare of Negro Community." The NCJW launched an investigation into the exploitation of Mexican and Filipino farm workers. And black organizations took time to condemn Nazi brutalities against Jews and American sailors' attacks on Mexicans in Los Angeles. It seems clear that more than distraction was operating to keep black and Jewish organizations silent.³⁰

Civil rights groups were also under a different kind of pressure during this period, as white supremacists, anti-Semites, and others sought to discredit them at every opportunity. To succeed in challenging discrimination or rescuing refugees, these organizations had to survive such attacks. This often meant supporting government policies wherever possible, and avoiding controversial issues that would further jeopardize that survival. As NCJW delegate Coleman noted during the debate over the resolution praising the WRA, "as a minority group it is of great advantage . . . and certainly it is a wise policy to commend our government for acting in a democratic fashion towards another minority group."³¹ For the NUL too, fear for its own survival helps explain the group's willingness to overlook its own earlier observations about racism and take no stand on internment. The NUL's effectiveness depended on the support and good will of the white community, particularly white elites. Throughout the 1930s opponents in the south repeatedly painted

it as a communist front, to discourage donors and later to remove the organization as a recipient of Community Chest funds. Terrified that the accusation might stick, the League took great pains to argue its loyalty and moderation.³² It is almost inconceivable that NUL leaders would in that environment publicly oppose any broadly supported wartime decision. In other words, while its own analysis recognized the similarities between Nazism and racism, between European concentration camps and treatment of oppressed groups at home, concern for its own survival led League officials to accept without further inquiry the Army's argument of military necessity.

Other black organizations shared this sense of vulnerability, because they were often branded as disloyal and because of differences of opinion over strategy against wartime segregation. Although unhesitatingly embracing Allied war aims, black agencies were pressuring the President to end discrimination in war industries and the armed forces, and pointing out examples of racism and discrimination wherever they occurred. Many whites considered such activities inopportune, and racists used the opportunity to charge them with disloyalty. Indeed, black organizations and the black press had been investigated and censored during World War I because of similar suspicions; there was no reason to expect less government scrutiny this time. Furthermore, there appeared to many to be legitimate cause for concern. Frustration over American race relations, public highlighting of American racism, and Japanese propaganda efforts in the black community led some black individuals to express anti-American and even pro-Axis sentiments, which naturally fueled accusations of disloyalty.

Operatives from Japan actively recruited support among blacks, arguing this was a race war in which the Japanese represented "colored" interests. Pro-Axis black organizations did spring up around the country (although their followers numbered presumably fewer than the "fantastic army . . . [of] 100,000" the FBI "discovered") and more groups were infiltrated, investigated and raided by the FBI. Such stories hit the press: "U.S. Indicts 38 in Jap-Backed Nation of Islam," the *Chicago Sun* reported. Even liberal papers like New York's *PM* ran headlines like "Pro-Jap Negro Cultists Raided," revealing how widespread such fears of black subversion were. Black organizations therefore felt intense pressure to distance themselves from such suspicions and prove their devotion to the Allied cause. In response to the Chicago FBI raids, for example, the local Urban League turned to the press.

A.L. Foster, Executive Secretary of the Chicago UL pointed out [to the Chicago *Herald American*] the patriotic war efforts of the great mass of the Negro population . . . as “proof that very few members of this race have listened to the siren call of Jap 5th columnists. . . . The uncovering of . . . subversive[s] . . . is work that should and must be done. Very few Negroes would condone disloyalty. . . . The Negroes are overwhelmingly patriotic.”

Such an atmosphere made criticism of government actions regarding Japanese internment highly unlikely.

A. Philip Randolph’s increasingly confrontational tactics against segregation in the armed forces also helped move black organizations toward a more public embrace of the war effort, if only to distance themselves from charges leveled against him of disloyalty and even treason. While less accommodating than the NUL, the NAACP too felt the need to juggle its defense of desegregation efforts with insistence of black loyalty. In December of 1941 the Association declared:

Though 13 million American Negroes have more often than not been denied democracy, they are American citizens and will as in every war give unqualified support to the protection of their country. At the same time we shall not abate one iota in our struggle for full citizenship rights here in the United States. We will fight but we demand the right to fight as equals in every branch of the military, naval and aviation services.³³

Of course, support of the war was also a crucial political move. Many of the proposed antidiscrimination programs relied on governmental support. Not only did most black groups sincerely believe in the Allies’ cause, they also recognized clearly that support for the war was a prerequisite for white cooperation on any civil rights issues. For all these reasons, black organizations felt obliged to demonstrate total loyalty to the war effort and knew opposition to evacuation would appear unpatriotic. While challenging racial discrimination in government contracts and the military, they would not have wished to reinforce accusations of obstructionism by also opposing Executive Order 9066. Or, to put it differently, defending Japanese American rights at that juncture would not further blacks’ own agenda (as defending Jewish rights did, for example) but rather would hinder it.

Commitment to the war effort also affected every decision made by Jewish organizations during this period, and they were similarly reluc-

tant to challenge the government on behalf of Japanese Americans. First (and less important), Jews, like blacks, faced accusations of disloyalty despite the intensity of Jewish commitment to the war. According to ADL's Ben Epstein, "There were charges that Jews were trying to evade military service."³⁴ Certainly the need to demonstrate Jews' loyalty lay behind the NCJW president's reluctance to question claims that internment was a military necessity.

More important in Jewish motivation, though, was the ferocity of Jewish commitment to the Allied effort. Because of American isolationist sentiment and general anti-Semitism, many Jews feared that Americans would offer only weak support for the Allies which would slow the struggle against Hitler and fascism in Europe. Therefore, for Jewish organizations, wartime's central domestic problem was the dissemination of Axis propaganda by foreign nationals, which helped justify to them the government's concern over Japanese loyalty to the United States. The ADL used undercover "informants" to gather information about pro-Axis speakers and freely shared this information with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

On 10 April 1942, Arnold Forster wrote to New York FBI's assistant director P. Foxworth about a "colored gentleman" named Miles Duncan who told his lawyer "(who is our informant)" that he had been "approached recently by some Japanese people with the request that he, Duncan, go to Peterson [a community leader] to persuade the latter to deliver public speeches among the colored people in behalf of the Japanese." Duncan refused. The letter concludes, "Your office might visit Duncan and ascertain the identities of these Japanese persons."

Other ADL memoranda and correspondence report similar concerns about American (particularly African American) loyalty to the Allied cause, and exhibit a similar willingness to overlook the niceties of civil liberties for the sake of the war. A.B. Kapplin of ADL's Fact Finding Department wrote the Chicago office of the FBI about a black candidate for committeeman who referred in his election literature to " 'the hard-hitting Japanese.' This is a vicious communication apparently going out to many Negro voters, which attempts to foment race hatreds, and which is definitely subversive when it calls the enemy 'hard-hitting Japanese.' I know you will want to make further investigation, and if our office can be of any further service, please call on us." A "Negro employed by us [ADL]" proved "quite instrumental" in an FBI raid on the Temple of Islam for alleged pro-Japanese activities which resulted in 82 arrests. The NCJW's decision to delete the section of its resolution proclaiming

Japanese American loyalty reflected the same concern; it did so because not enough delegates felt sure such a claim was valid.³⁵

Thus Jewish fear of Japanese subversion was very real and may have predisposed them to believing the military's similar claim about the Japanese threat to security on the west coast. After all, it only confirmed what the ADL itself had concluded. Furthermore, the use of informants and cooperation with the FBI suggests that the ADL did not need to be persuaded that conspiracies were plausible. That permitted the jump from the discovery that individual Japanese were actively trying to undermine the war effort to the conclusion that any Japanese person was reasonably suspect. Nor would the civil liberties violations of wholesale evacuation necessarily trouble an organization that recommended "crackdowns" and themselves infiltrated suspicious organizations.

Still, the ADL was careful in its investigations to gather full information on individuals they found suspicious. To leap from specific accusations to a sense of generalized guilt would require more than a fear of subversion or even a willingness to believe in conspiracies. Here again, ADL files are suggestive of a possible explanation.

In October 1942 the ADL received a letter of complaint about a Twentieth Century Fox release, "Little Tokyo USA" that denigrated the Japanese. The writer, a member of the Society of Friends, lamented that a Jewish-owned film company could produce a movie which would fan anti-Japanese sentiment at such a time. A series of internal memoranda discussed possible responses. Staffer Maurice Fagan wrote to New York Director Leonard Finder that although Fox was not in fact Jewish-owned, nevertheless defamation was an ADL issue, and the movie should be investigated for possible bias. Finder replied that he saw no reason for the ADL to get involved in the case. "If a non-Jewish owned motion picture company wants to put out a cheap thriller attacking the Japs I cannot be too excited about it. . . . I recognize that some persons might think that Twentieth Century Fox is Jewish owned, but I doubt whether many of them would share that feeling of resentment that it was unfair to suggest the possibility of a Japanese plot." ADL Director Richard Gutstadt obviously concurred with the latter view, since a memorandum to him from Finder reads:

it is quite possible a number of Japs on the U.S. coast were aching for the Nipponese government. . . . If Americans would feel better toward those truly guilty, they might be less apt to direct prejudice against the innocent victims of false propaganda.

These views, I believe, are reflections of . . . your own.³⁶

A certain level of unthinking racism, then, obviously played a part in the decision not to oppose internment. Many Jews and blacks presumably shared the widely held perception that as a group (and regardless of the level of assimilation or even citizenship), Japanese were “sly” and “treacherous”; this could only reinforce the belief in the possibility of subversion. Even those holding generally benign views toward the Japanese could have acted, without intending to, in a racist way. Subversion was a legitimate fear, and the acceptance of common and unexamined stereotypes, blended with the pressure of wartime, could lead otherwise reasonable people into believing that while most Japanese were loyal, the danger from a few was such that all must be viewed as potentially suspect. This attitude made the Executive Order appear a reasonable precaution. Yet the willingness to generalize from a small number to an entire group in turn reinforced and legitimized racist thinking. Certainly this dynamic operated in both the black and Jewish communities, although it played itself out differently in each.

The subtle racism exhibited in the ADL film discussion joined more overt expressions of anti-Japanese sentiment by some Jews, as in this advertisement placed by Armand Katz Co. in support of the war effort: a grimacing Japanese head sits atop a drawing of a skinned bear hide, overlaid with the words: “Made in Japan, Caught in the Pacific, Tanned in the U.S.A.” Below the picture Katz demonstrated his flair for poetry with: “That treacherous monster the Jap/Must be wiped from the face of the map/Let’s flay his skin without delay/By Buying War Bonds—now—today! AMK.”³⁷ Obviously one Jewish bigot cannot be presumed to represent Jewish opinion, but it does suggest the ability of an oppressed group to feel so concerned about one issue (the war effort) that it may be blinded to another issue (racism) although both spring from the same source. It also serves as a reminder that experience with discrimination does not necessarily prevent bigotry against others.

The reference in Finder’s memorandum about “innocent victims” and “those truly guilty” suggests the tremendous fear shared by many Jews during this time of growing anti-Semitism. This fear led not only to fights against Axis propaganda (and against the Japanese, potential bearers of that propaganda), it also further strengthened their already fervent commitment to the war effort. Even their repeated insistence on equality for African Americans during wartime was tempered when it came into

conflict with the war effort; for example, ADL's previously warm relations with A. Philip Randolph cooled considerably when he began talking about civil disobedience if the armed forces were not integrated. Suddenly ADL officials called Randolph "extremely left wing" and "nearly seditious" and urged local offices not to work with him.³⁸ How much easier was it for Jewish agencies to turn their backs on a group they had not already had positive dealings with, particularly when Jews shared the widespread attitudes toward Asians that allowed them to use words like "Jap" in public and private?

Since Jewish organizations recognized bias against African Americans they almost certainly also recognized the civil rights issues involved in wholesale evacuation; yet it seems both their passionate support of the war and some racist feelings about the Japanese allowed them to remain silent in the face of it. A December 1943 article by the AJCongress reflected all these elements. It opposed discrimination against blacks in the armed forces which, it argued, aided "Jap agents" working in America to bolster support for the Axis.³⁹

As Walter White's thoughtless advocacy of "Japanese jobs" indicates, racism appeared in the black community as well—but with a different twist. Black newspapers not only mirrored white ones in their war coverage, with liberal use of the word "Jap," and racist characterizations of enemy Japanese, but they also reported incidents of Japanese American store owners and restaurateurs mistreating black patrons, as if to justify United States policy. Such behavior by some Japanese, along with a history of economic competition with Asians for farming, construction, and railroad jobs, created a level of resentment among blacks that may have reinforced an unreflective racism against Asians that blacks shared with whites and a blindness to the discriminatory nature of internment.⁴⁰

Yet the wartime pressures that allowed black and Jewish agencies to ignore one of the worst civil rights violations in our history did abate. When they did, some of the forces keeping these organizations from addressing the racism of wholesale internment eased as well. Indeed, the postwar period saw these groups' redoubled efforts to fight discrimination against all minority populations, including the Japanese. In other words, this was situational, not systematic blindness, a claim borne out by the antidiscrimination efforts of black and Jewish groups on behalf of the Japanese Americans both during and after the war.

Not only a heightened commitment to general civil rights, but new issues of mutual self-interest prompted this new cooperation with Japa-

nese American organizations. Beyond shared concerns over discrimination, Jews and blacks had moved into formerly Japanese neighborhoods in California and so had a strong interest in peaceful reintegration of returning internees. In the postwar world, migration restrictions affected not only Asians but Jews. Thus the AJCongress position in support of American citizenship for the Japanese came in part from their concern for Jewish war refugees, which led them to advocate easing all immigration laws including those regarding Asians. While "national origin" in its earliest use by Jewish groups referred explicitly to German Jews, over several years the meaning broadened to include all those whose place of origin excluded them from immigrating or becoming citizens.

Anti-communism further strengthened such associations. In a 1952 "Statement on American Immigration Policy" to the President's Special Commission on Immigration and Naturalization, the ADL and AJC jointly argued: "To keep Asia from falling prey to the lure of Communism, we must retain the good will of the colored peoples of the world. What reaction can we expect from these peoples to a law which attaches an unfair stigma to Asiatic ancestry?"⁴¹ Like the relationship between black and Jewish organizations, which strengthened as each recognized the link between its own interests and broader equity issues, Jews may have moved toward a greater defense of Japanese American rights as their problems increasingly coincided. Certainly in the postwar period blacks and Jews moved toward a broader conception of equality and security, one that viewed the defense of others' rights as crucial to the advance of one's own. As Edwin Embree, president of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, wrote in 1946, "All of us in America—Negroes, whites, Jews, Japanese Americans, Catholics, Protestants, all of us—can build a society of freedom and security if we stand together. If any of us suffer we all suffer."⁴²

No single cause can explain entirely the unwillingness of black and Jewish organizations to recognize the racism implicit in the Executive Order. Although in each case the balance of reasons was different, overall four central arguments seem to explain the silence of these groups in the face of what they later recognized so clearly as racism. First, both black and Jewish groups were themselves under fire for suspected disloyalty, and each scrambled to prove itself solidly behind the war effort. Second, both had their own reasons for supporting the war enthusiastically: Jews to fight the anti-Semitic forces of Hitler; and African Americans to argue for legal equality on the basis of outstanding performance

on the battlefield and the homefront, and to use the fight against racism abroad to argue for black civil rights at home. Certainly, both placed a great deal of faith in those conducting the war. Third, a certain amount of unthinking racism does seem to have played a part in the myopia these groups exhibited when it came to the Japanese. Although black and Jewish organizations certainly continued to recognize overt discrimination against Japanese Americans, these factors weakened their ability to identify covert racism. Thus, fourth, widely shared tokenist concepts of racial justice and the ability of government officials to repackaging racism into emergency military necessity made virtually certain these groups would not be able to challenge—or even clearly perceive—the racism of internment.

While the evidence is sketchy, it does suggest that Jewish groups were more willing than African American ones to endorse the evacuation on some level. If so, this can perhaps be explained by the greater investment of Jews in Allied war aims, the most important factor of the four for Jewish groups. Both blacks and Jews shared a need to prove loyalty and a preoccupation with their own agendas, but on the Jewish side can be added the fear of anti-Semitism at home and of their co-religionists' safety abroad, fed by word of Japanese propaganda efforts in the United States. For black organizations, the political need to demonstrate loyalty, in light of their desegregation struggles on the one hand and suspicion (and some evidence) of black pro-Axis sentiment on the other, seems to have been the most salient.

Two months after Pearl Harbor, emotions in the United States ran high. Beyond the sense of betrayal, Americans believed the Japanese were winning the war. It was at that most bleak of times that the Commander in Chief, one of the most popular presidents in history, issued Executive Order 9066. Blacks and Jews, struggling to protect their own people, to support the war effort as the best hope against fascism and racism, and to gain a more secure foothold for themselves in unstable times, allowed their usual sensitivity to discrimination to lapse at a crucial time for civil rights in this country. This lapse was ironic, given Jews' criticism of Germans claiming obliviousness to the plight of Jews there, and African Americans' criticism of those who placed other priorities before the struggle for racial equality. Nevertheless, it was a lapse shared by virtually every organization in America, and serves as a chilling reminder that eternal vigilance is not only the price of freedom but its only secure guarantor.

NOTES

I would like to thank my OAH commentators (annual meeting, 17 April 1993), David Farber and H.V. Nelson, and Larry Greene, my commentator at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (23 October 1993), who gave helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper. I am particularly grateful to Roger Daniels who read several versions of the paper and responded with good grace and sound advice on each.

1. Morton Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed* (Chicago, 1949), p. 163. The history of anti-Asian prejudice on the West Coast has been well documented, as has the internment period itself. See Grodzins, Bill Hosokawa, *JACL in Quest of Justice* (New York, 1982); Carey McWilliams, *Prejudice, Japanese-Americans* (Boston, 1944); William Peterson, *Japanese Americans* (Washington, D.C., 1971); Yamato Ichihashi, *Japanese Immigration, Its Status In California* (San Francisco, 1915); Daniel Davis, *Behind Barbed Wire* (New York, 1982); Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps, North America* (Malabar, Fla., 1981, a revision of *Concentration Camps USA*, New York, 1972); Daniels, *The Decision to Relocate the Japanese Americans* (1975; 2nd ed., Philadelphia, 1983); Daniels, *Asian America* (Seattle 1988); Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial* (N.Y., 1993); Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy* (New York, 1976); Audrie Girdner and Anne Loftis, *The Great Betrayal* (New York, 1969); Peter Irons, *Justice at War* (New York, 1983); Richard Drinon, *Keeper of the Concentration Camps* (Berkeley, 1987); Toshio Yatsushiro, *Politics and Cultural Values* (New York, 1978); Alan Bosworth, *America's Concentration Camps* (New York, 1967), and others on more specific topics. Also see the congressional hearings on internment and compensation and U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C., 1982). The Executive Order was issued 19 February 1942, 74 days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The only citizens of German or Italian descent similarly interned were the minor children of incarcerated nationals.

2. David Farber first suggested I focus on the point that "racism often cannot be easily seen, discussed or fought even by the most sensitive social groups, when the State or other elites package racism into alternative if even synonymous discursive forms." OAH comments. For a fuller description of the government's distortions or suppression of evidence, see, for example, Daniels, *Prisoners*, especially pp. 38-43.

3. Nathan Perlmutter, Introduction to "Not the Work of A Day," Oscar Cohen and Stanley Wexler, eds, *ADL Oral Memoirs*, 1987, pp. 2-3, ADL library, New York, N.Y. Editorial, *Crisis*, 49 (January 1942): 7; Telegram, Walter White to Mayor LaGuardia, 8 December 1938, NAACP papers, box I, C 208, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. During the recent debates over reparations, most civil rights groups strongly and publicly criticized the internment decision. For example, an AJC press release lamented the "terrible injustice" of the decision, adding, "In retrospect, almost everyone agrees that the incarceration of the Japanese-Americans during WWII was indeed a tragic and shameful episode [which could not have occurred without] a long history of prejudice against Japanese Americans and actual discrimination by law against them." Press release, 21 April 1988. The ADL "declar[ed] that the Japanese Americans were interned during WWII not because of military considerations but as a result of 'racism and prejudice.'" Press release, 28 April 1986, both in AJC vertical files: "Japanese Americans," AJC library, New York, N.Y. Nevertheless, none of these groups took such a position during the evacuation and none mentioned that in their 1940s statements.

Obviously, given the overwhelming support for the Executive Order, even vehem-

ment protest might not have made a difference. Nevertheless the question here is why no protest, not whether the protest would have been effective.

4. Elmo Roper, "What People Are Thinking," 8 February 1945, clipping, AJC inactive vertical file: "Public Opinion Polls"; "Civil Rights in the United States," National Opinion Research Center, *Opinion News* 10 (1 March 1948): 7.

5. Edward Lewis, "Action Forward," speech? Typescript, 1941, p. 8, Edward Lewis papers, box 1, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (hereafter Schomburg), New York, N.Y.; NCJW, "Legislation Highlights," November 1942, NCJW papers, box 142, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; William Pickens, "Hitlerism's Challenge to Human Brotherhood," Radio address, 16 September 1934, William Pickens papers, microfilm, reel 4, box 8, Schomburg. Pickens had his share of disagreements with the rest of the NAACP hierarchy, but here he seemed entirely in line with its position.

6. "Statement for *Amsterdam News* from Walter White," 15 November 1938, NAACP, I, C 208; "Germans Set Up New Idols as Gods, Says Kelly Miller," unidentified newspaper clipping, n.d., Gumby collection, microfilm, reel 10, vol. 80, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscripts Library, New York, N.Y. Also see Walter White to AJCongress, telegram, 30 August 1943, NAACP, I, A 325; White to Max Yergan, 30 November 1938, NAACP, I, C 208.

7. NCJW: Social Legislation #3, NCJW box 142, lists NCJW endorsements and dates, including 1935 advocacy of anti-lynch laws. ADL: see, for example, ADL microfilm, "Yellows and Dittoes 1940" and "Yellows [hereafter Y] 1941: Negro Race Problems" (hereafter NRP). Other groups, most particularly CIO unions and several church groups, also participated in civil rights and antiracism alliances.

8. Examples of individuals: Twenty eight Jewish and Protestant clergy signed a letter to the San Francisco *Chronicle* in support of the Japanese. A Jewish secretary of the California State CIO, Louis Goldblatt, spoke publicly on the loyalty of Japanese in this country. George Schuyler protested the internment in the Pittsburgh *Courier*, as did Adam Clayton Powell Jr. in the *People's Voice*. See Girdner and Loftis, *Great Betrayal*, p. 126; Grodzins, *Americans* chap. 6; Charles Hamilton, *Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.* (New York, 1991), p. 119; George Schuyler, "News and Views," Pittsburgh *Courier*, 6 June 1942; Daniels, *Concentration Camps, USA*, p. 78. Omura: Tolan Committee Hearings, February 1942, Part 29, pp. 11229–32. "Rewriting the 14th Amendment," *Herald Tribune*, 12 July 1942, NAACP, II, A 325. Also see "Cool Heads or Martial Law," *Nation* (14 February 1942): 183–4.

9. "Minutes of the Conference Called by the Post War World Council on the Japanese Situation," 18 June 1942, and "Statement Adopted by Conference on Japanese Evacuation," 18 June 1942, both in UNIA files, reel 5, Schomburg microfilm. Even the moderate demands of the Conference were rebuffed by the President and his advisors. Roughly speaking, the ACPFB, WDL, LID, and SP were leftist or socialist; FOR, WILPF, AFSC pacifist; the rest liberal to progressive. Most are familiar except the JACD which was even more loudly patriotic than the JACL. For example, since 1941 New York's JACD held annual rallies "to mobilize all Americans behind the war effort for the realization of world democracy." By 1946 Adam Clayton Powell Jr., Chicago UL's Earl Dickerson, and Carey McWilliams (who was still using the word "Jap" in 1944) served on its advisory board. Chiye Mori, JACD, to NAACP, 5 January 1946, NAACP, II, A 325. McWilliams: Speech at Ethical Culture Society, 9 March 1944, ADL micro "Y 1944: NRP." Hosokawa offers a detailed account of the JACL's role in the evacuation, which, though an apologetic, is still quite useful; see *JACL*, especially pp. 130–250. Other works have more critical, though briefer, accounts; see for example, Daniels, *Asian America*,

pp. 218–224. See also the JACL correspondence in Daniels, ed., *American Concentration Camps: A Documentary History of the Relocation and Incarceration of Japanese Americans 1941–1945*, 9 vols (New York, 1989). The JACL did not do much outreach to other groups until after the war. Many Japanese Americans disliked or distrusted the JACL and there was some limited protest over evacuation (far more surfaced later) but most of the population concluded, as did the JACL, that their only viable option was quiet compliance. Weglyn, *Years of Infamy*, especially chaps. 6 and 7, discusses what little outcry there was, focusing particularly on the Quakers who opposed the relocation and the ACLU who accepted it. (The Seattle and Northern California branch of the ACLU wanted to challenge the Order, supported by Norman Thomas. The JACL refused to endorse the challenge; this helped lead to the decision by the ACLU membership to accept relocation. Nevertheless, the Seattle branch ignored this decision: “Seattle Branch Tests Constitutionality of Evacuation order,” ACLU, *Monthly News Bulletin* #3, June 1942, NAACP, II, A 325; Girdner and Loftis, *Great Betrayal*, pp. 201–2; Grodzins, *Americans*, pp. 182–3, 190–1; Conversations with Wayne Collins, 19 March 1993; and with Michi Weglyn, 2 March 1993.) By 1946 the ACLU had reconsidered. In 1946 Baldwin called internment “one of the worst racial tragedies ever suffered by a minority in American life . . . the discrimination was wholly racial.” Baldwin, “Column for APA,” draft, n.d., ADL micro “Y 1946: NRP.”) Communist Party and Marcantonio: Daniels, *Concentration Camps, USA*, p. 79; quotation from *People’s World*, a west coast Party newspaper. Daniels concluded, p. 79, “Many liberals, . . . perhaps despairing of doing anything much for the Japanese, concentrated on getting fair treatment for refugees, largely German Jews, who were legally German aliens.” H.V. Nelson first suggested the force of guilt in Japanese American acquiescence. OAH comments.

10. No Board meeting minutes for the period mention Japanese Americans at all. NUL, Resolution adopted at Annual Staff Conference, 4 September 1942, Florence, Pa., NUL papers, box 5, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Although the NUL is a more accommodationist organization than the NAACP, I include it because officials spoke out against racism and anti-Semitism during this period, and played an active role in the civil rights efforts of this and the postwar period.

11. MOWM: E. Pauline Myers, Executive Secretary, MOWM, Introduction, in Dwight MacDonald, “The War’s Greatest Scandal: The Story of Jim Crow in Uniform,” 1943, pp. 2, 9, Jewish Labor Committee papers, microfilm reel 2033, box 10, Tamiment Archives, NYU library, New York, N.Y. Committee Against Jim Crow papers are in the Schomburg. The NNC papers are on microfilm at the Schomburg; the NCNW papers are at the Bethune archives in Washington, D.C. NCNW, Program for . . . the promotion of better human relations,” n.d. [1941], NCNW papers, series 4, box 1. The NCNW was organized in 1935.

12. “The Evacuee Speaks Newsletter,” 1 August 1942, p. 1, NAACP, II, A 325.

13. Wise signed the Call founding the NAACP, and figured prominently in several battles against injustice or oppression of minority groups. The AJC was founded by German Jews dismayed at the rising number of restrictions placed on Jews with the influx of Eastern European immigrants in the earlier part of the century. AJCongress minutes and press releases are at the AJCongress library, New York, N.Y.; AJC’s at the AJC library. AJCongress also published weekly activities reports. Neither the 1942 nor 1943 issues of *Congress Weekly* contain a single mention of internment. The Jewish Labor Committee, created in 1934 to rescue Jewish unionists trapped in Europe, also did not raise the issue.

14. Arnold Forster, interview with author, 13 August 1991, New York, N.Y. William Pinsley to Pauline Weinstein, 27 August 1947, memorandum re “JACL,”

ADL micro reel 24: "Chisub: Japanese situation." Hosokawa, *JACL*, pp. 140–1, maintains that George Roth, a Los Angeles Quaker opposed to removal, was "astonished to find the Anti-Defamation League among those hostile to Japanese Americans" and attributed it, after some investigation, to ADL concern over support for the Axis powers and for Nazi activity in some sections of the American Japanese press. I am unable to find documentation in any ADL files of a pro-internment position—or any position at all—taken publicly by them.

15. Lewis, "Action Forward," p. 8.

16. Ironically, Biddle was the one cabinet officer who opposed Japanese internment. See, for example, Daniels, *Prisoners*, p. 41. "Timely Topics," *Congress Weekly*, 9 (23 October 1942): 3. Daniels found similar examples of Jewish groups ignoring Japanese internment: most striking was testimony of San Francisco's Federation of Jewish Charities at the Tolan Committee hearings who discussed only the problems of European refugees and ignored the central question of the hearings. Correspondence from Roger Daniels, 1 March 1993.

17. Resolution against internment proposed: Social Legislation Committee, Minutes, 27 March, 1 May, and 28 May 1942, NCJW box 141; "Statement to the Executive Committee: re Evacuation," box 11. Discussions re statement: Executive Committee, Minutes, 22 April 1942; "Report of the Chairman to the Executive Committee," 4 June and 17 September 1942; "Report of Social Legislation Committee to the National Board of Directors," 9–13 November 1942, p. 4; "Report of President to National Board of Directors," 9 November 1942, p. 4 (includes referendum quotation); Mrs. Maurice Goldman to Section Presidents, 4 January 1943, p. 2, all in box 11.

18. Social Legislation Committee, Minutes, 27 November 1942, NCJW, box 141; Executive Committee, Minutes, 14 January and 8 April 1943, NCJW, box 11.

19. Transfer from WRA: Social Legislation Committee, Minutes, 19 February 1943, box 141. Poor follow-up: Executive Committee, Minutes, 24–25 June 1943, p. 4; "Report of Chairman to Executive Committee," 23 September 1943 (FBI letter), box 11. Convention resolution: 17th Triennial Convention, Minutes, 10 November 1943, p. 3; "Proceedings of the . . . Convention," vol. 2, pp. 401–14, box 43, all in NCJW.

20. "Resolutions of the 33rd Annual Conference of the NAACP, July 14–19, 1942," Los Angeles, CA, p. 6, NAACP, II, A 25; C.L. Dellums to Walter White, 7 July 1942 (who used the word "concentration camps" to describe the evacuees' destination); White to Francis Biddle, 10 July 1942. Wendell Berge, Assistant Attorney General, replied to White, 27 July: "You may rest assured that this communication is receiving serious consideration." NAACP, II, A 325

21. Mike Masaoka, *JACL*, to Walter White, 24 June 1942; NAACP, Press release, 26 July 1942. The loyalty board suggestion came from, among others, several Quaker groups. Ross Marquis, Friends Civilian Public Service of Indiana, to NAACP, 18 July 1942. The letter raised the racist motivations behind evacuation explicitly: "The very words 'protective custody' . . . were 'made in Germany' not here. Race discrimination has always been Hitler's crime now it appears to be ours too!" White to Berge, 27 July 1942. There was no answer in the files. All in NAACP, II, A 325. Harry Paxton Howard, "Americans in Concentration Camps," *Crisis*, 49 (September 1942): 281–4, 301–2, again condemned the racial basis for internment. However the organization took no further action on the question nor discussed it again at national meetings.

22. JLC: K.M. Nakano to "Brothers and Sisters," 26 March 1942, JLC microfilm, reel 4, box 3. David Robinson, ADL, to William Pinsely, memorandum re "JACL," 2 September 1947, ADL micro. reel 24; David Coleman, ADL, to Max

Kroloff, memorandum re "Japanese Exclusion Association," 13 June 1944, ADL micro. reel 11 "Chisub: Holland-Kuhn"; AJCongress: "Un-American Measures," *Congress Weekly* (2 October 1942): 4-5. The JLC noted with approval the opposition of the Oregon Labor Press to Japanese discrimination in the U.S. Cited in "The Jewish Problem in the American Trade Union Press," American Labor Archive and Research Institute, December 1944, JLC, reel 5, box 7.

23. Horace Marston to Ben Epstein, 12 April 1944; Memorandum re "Japanese Relocation," 27 April 1944; Forster to Edward Meyers, 25 April 1944, all ADL micro. "Dittoes 1943: Int-Kap." Hillel: Weglyn, conversation.

24. Frank Crosswaith to JLC ["Dear Friend"], 15 September 1943, JLC, reel 2033, box 10. New York: Minorities Workshop, Press release, 12 May 1944; Telegram, Roy Wilkins to Mayor LaGuardia, 27 April, 1944 (text also sent as press release to New York newspapers). LaGuardia was surprisingly racist against Japanese at this time—surprising because he had been one of the few opposing immigration restrictions against them in 1924 when he was serving in Congress, and because he remained an advocate of black equality and foe of anti-Semitism. The NCJW also protested LaGuardia's stance. "Mayor Protests Japanese in East," clipping [*New York Times*?], n.d. All NAACP, II, A 325.

25. Quoted from "Highlights of Conference on Interracial Cooperation, in "Pacific Coast Committee for American Principles and Fair Play," Manuscript, Bancroft Library, quoted in Daniels, *Camps*, p. 158; Grodzins, *Americans*, p. 190 (the group had several names, and during the early war years was the Committee on National Security and Fair Play). NAACP: Girdner and Loftis, *Great Betrayal*, p. 412; JACL to Roy Wilkins, 17 May 1948; Wilkins to Senator John Cooper, 18 May 1948, NAACP, II, A 325. The NAACP got involved in resettlement in part because blacks (and other migrants) had settled in formerly Japanese areas.

26. Shad Polier, chair, AJCongress Panel Discussion: "The Struggle for Economic and Social Equality," 30 May 1946, p. 9; "Noted Witnesses Urge House To Grant Issei Citizenship," *Pacific Citizen*, n.d. [1948?], in "Clippings on Racism and Anti-Semitism"; "Role of JACL in Test Cases Hailed by Maslow," *Pacific Citizen*, 2 June 1949, in "CLSA binder," all in AJCongress library. In 1949 AJCongress testified before the House Judiciary Committee on behalf of HR 5004 which would remove racial bars from naturalization. AJCongress, CLSA, "Report of Activities October 1949," p. 4. The year previous, AJCongress urged the Senate to pass House Jt. Res 238 "which would make resident Asiatics eligible for citizenship." CLSA, "Report of Activities April 16 to May 15, 1948," p. 2, both in NAACP, II, A 361. Jewish/JACL cooperation: see above and Forster to Nathan Perlmutter, 19 July 1950, Memorandum re cooperation with JACL and UL on housing; I.H. Gordon, JACL, to Bernard Simon, ADL, 1 March 1949, both from ADL micro. "Y 1949-52: Pro-org: JACL." Other examples: Elmer Gertz, *Jewish Affairs* 2 (1 February 1947); "A Survey of the Anti-Semitic Scene in 1946," in "The Facts," April 1947, p. 25; ADL *Bulletin*, 5 (1948): 5. Black and Jewish groups joined in coalition with the JACL for the first time in part because only after the war did the JACL seek to enter into such activities. The point here is that blacks and Jews recognized them as an oppressed minority requiring civil rights protections.

27. Gloster Current, "Today Them, Tomorrow Us," 30 July 1946, American Press Associates, in ADL micro. "Y 1946: NRP."

28. Ironically, the ADL itself used this epithet at the time (as did the *Crisis* and several other civil rights agency publications), and had acquiesced in some of the same actions they were now criticizing. "The Nisei Make the Grade," ADL *Bulletin* (October 1956): 4. On p. 5 the ADL took credit for making films challenging anti-

Japanese prejudice, but made no reference, of course, to less savory ADL positions (or silences) during wartime.

29. L. Hollingsworth Wood to Mrs. Alfred Schoelkopf, 20 February 1939, in Wood papers, box 3, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscripts. The “cleavage” was never explained.

30. Only a small portion of ADL executive committee minutes are available. “ADL Vitality Interested in Welfare of Negro Community,” Press release, n.d. [1943], ADL micro. “Y 1943: NRP.” NCJW, “Report on Migratory Workers,” 7 March 1941, NCJW box 141; White, “Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors,” 14 June 1943, p. 5, NAACP, II, A 134.

31. Proceedings of the NCJW Convention, 1943, vol. 2, p. 408.

32. Communism: e.g., Mr. Thomas to Eugene Knickle Jones, 11 July 1938; Reply, 12 July 1938. Loyalty: e.g., NUL Finance Committee meeting, 14 June 1940, all in Guichard Parris papers, series III, box 36, Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscripts.

33. “Board Action in re Segregation,” 8 December 1941, NAACP Board of Directors Meeting, NAACP, II, A 136; “Negroes Loyal—Foster,” *Chicago Herald American*, 22 September 1942. Black Pro-Axis sentiment covered by press, infiltrated by FBI: e.g., Robey Parks, untitled article, *Chicago Herald American*, 21 September 1942, p. 1, begins: “Leaders and members of a [black] jap-inspired 5th column exposed . . .”; Miles Goldberg to Robinson, Zeisler, Coleman, Benjamin, Bluestein, Boxerman, Forster, 16 October 1942, Memorandum re “Temple of Islam raid”; “US Indicts 38 in Jap-Backed Nation of Islam,” *Chicago Sun*, 11 October 1942; Chandler Owen, “Report of the Meeting of the Movement of Ethiopia, Sunday evening May 31, 1942,” 1 June 1942, all in ADL micro. reel 11; “Pro-Jap Negro Cultists Raided,” *PM*, 22 September 1942; “Reveals Black Dragon Activity,” *Daily Mirror*, 17 December 1942, both clippings, ADL micro., “Press clips 01 Japanese.” See also Dominic Capeci, *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 51–55; John Roy Carlson, *Under Cover* (Philadelphia, 1943); Richard Dalfume, “The ‘Forgotten Years’ of the Negro Revolution,” *Journal of American History* 55 (June 1968): 90–106. Larry Greene suggested class as a relevant factor: middle class liberal organizations may have been less willing to contradict white mainstream positions than those with less stake in the existing system. Might the numbers of black groups sympathetic to Japan and the size of the audiences at their meetings (Chandler Owen reported 300 black people at the pro-Japanese meeting he attended, for example) suggest an “embryonic nationalism” among lower-class blacks who were more willing to challenge white middle-class notions? ASALH comments.

34. Epstein, “Not the Work,” p. 79. Clifford Uyeda, president of the National Japanese American Historical Society, agrees that politics and war frenzy accounted at least in part for the silence: “Roosevelt was the darling of the liberals, and opposing him was unthinkable.” Correspondence, 9 June 1992.

35. NCJW: “Proceedings of the Convention,” pp. 401–14. An internal memorandum from Paul Richman to ADL head Richard Gutstadt, 2 July 1942, discussed the concern they shared with the Justice Department to “crack down on the seditious Negro publications” and referred to the Japanese as “Japs.” Letters to FBI: Forster to Mr. Foxworth, 10 April 1942; A.B. Kapplin to Mr. Hosteny, 15 July 1943. First letter and memorandum in ADL micro. “Y 1942: NRP”; second letter in ADL micro. “Y 1943: NRP.” Temple of Islam infiltration: Chandler Owen; Miles Goldberg to Robinson et al. Also see Julian Stone, Jewish Federation Welfare Fund of Southern Illinois to Max Krolloff, 22 March 1944, ADL micro. reel 11. The files also contained newspaper articles about “Japs” and “Japs in camps.” Besides the

indication of ADL's concern about the Japanese, these articles also show how dangerous support for them could be. The newspapers attacked anyone indicating the least sympathy for their plight.

36. Fox was indeed not owned by Jews. Richard Gutstadt to Leonard Finder, 3 October 1942 (who did say if the movie was offensive "friendly representations may avert other releases which will prove similarly disconcerting"); Maurice Fagan to Finder, 6 October 1942; Finder to Fagan, 7 October 1942; Finder to Gutstadt, 14 October 1942; all in ADL micro. "Y 1942: motion pictures." By 1951, if not earlier, the ADL had reversed itself on this issue, and worked with the JACL to convince television stations not to show "old movies in which various members of minority groups are usually depicted in an unfavorable light e.g., the Negro, the Mexican-Americans, the Japanese, the Chinese and sometimes, the Jew." "Recognizing the widespread problem of defamation in films, the ADL proposed that the umbrella group of Jewish organizations, the National Community Relations Advisory Council, "organize together with some of the other organizations like the NAACP, the Urban League, the JACL, the American Council of Spanish-Speaking People, some kind of a topside committee which could work out similar arrangements on a national scale. . . . We are not suggesting censorship, but rather more careful selection, particularly this is true of films which portray Negro characters and Japanese characters." Philip Lerman to Oscar Cohen, Memorandum re "Local contacts JACL," 31 August 1951, in ADL micro. "Y 1949-52: Pro-org: JACL." The ADL's refusal to consider protesting "Little Tokyo" reflected immediate attitudes about the Japanese, rather than an unwillingness to consider defamation against non-Jews as a matter of concern.

37. In ADL micro. "Y 1942: Discrimination." For more on race and the war, see John Dower, *War Without Mercy* (New York, 1986).

38. See, for example, Memorandum, Gutstadt to Finder, 14 September 1942: "The danger of our working with a man like Philip Randolph is that he is considered extremely left-wing. . . . The violence of his recommendations, incidentally, might conceivably affect our relations with some government bureaus because Randolph does not hesitate to whip the Negroes up to the adoption of methods calculated seriously to embarrass Washington." Also Finder to Paul Richman, 2 September 1942; Reply, 3 September 1942; Reply, 4 September 1942; Gutstadt to Finder, 8 September 1942; Reply, 10 September 1942; Stanley Jacobs to Finder, 10 September 1942, all in ADL micro. "Y 1942 NRP." A need to ingratiate themselves with the power structure that had so recently admitted them may also have played a part in this hesitation among Jews to openly challenge the status quo.

39. J. X. Cohen, "Is This a White Man's War?" *Congress Weekly*, 10 (17 December 1943): 8-10, 14. One cannot discount entirely another possible explanation for Jewish silence. In a surprising number of situations, Jewish organizations fought hard for action or legislation they refused to take public credit for. A radio program praising American ethnic and racial diversity, produced by the ADL, was released by a non-Jewish front group. "Jewish relationship to this program should be kept as quiet as possible," Marcel Steiglitz argued. ADL Executive Committee Meeting, Minutes, 4 January 1940, ADL warehouse box 178. The ADL organized "good will" speakers to combat pro-Axis propaganda, but insisted that the program "not be under Jewish auspices." ADL Advisory Council Meeting, Minutes, 4 March 1940. It advocated the creation of municipal and state interracial commissions "but of course . . . it should not be known as the product of the Jewish Community Council." President of Jewish Community Council, Columbus, Ohio, to ADL, 1 September 1943, ADL micro. "Y 1943: NRP." Ben Epstein remembered the ADL

in those years as reluctant to go public with anything, preferring to work behind the scenes. Epstein, "Not the Work," p. 59. There are hundreds of such examples. Perhaps the ADL opposed internment but only acted behind the scenes. However, no documentation supports this hypothesis; no private discussions on this issue appear in confidential minutes or memoranda.

40. Roger Daniels' survey of black newspapers during the early 1940s revealed an almost exact duplication of stories regarding Japan and the war, "with one special twist: several columnists complained that they had been badly treated in Japanese restaurants." Daniels correspondence. Even the *Crisis* used "Jap" liberally by 1942.

41. Lester Gutterman, "Statement on American Immigration Policy," 30 September 1952, ADL National Civil Rights Committee, Minutes, 23 October 1952, ADL library. Arnold Forster, interview with author, 25 June 1992 maintained that all references to national origins included Asians, but in early discussions Jewish groups use the word interchangeably with German Jewish refugees, and never mention Asians until the late 1940s. ADL pamphlets regarding immigration laws use the term "national origin" but all specific examples describe European immigrants. ADL warehouse box 42. In 1952 the last bar to Asian immigration was lifted. The relationship between anti-communism and interracial cooperation is too complex to detail here, and has not yet been fully explored by scholars. Thankfully, such questions have recently begun to receive greater attention.

42. Edwin Embree, "All of Us," speech? n.d., ADL micro. "Y 1946 NRP."