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By GARY Y. OKIHIRO and JULIE SLY

The Press, Japanese Americans, and the Concentration Camps*

THE MALEVOLENT INFLUENCE and power of the press has often been exaggerated — as, for example, in the observation by Seldes that Hearst proved “that news is largely a matter of what one man wants the people to know and feel and think.”¹ It is generally acknowledged, however, that economic necessity compels publishers to print to please readers. Thus, a Hearst columnist observed that “nobody wants to know what you think. People want to know what they think.”² Further, it is said that journalists tend to emphasize crises, to fish in troubled waters, to stir up, rather than moderate, popular opinion. “Under the pressure of publishers and advertisers,” wrote Innis, “the journalist has been compelled to seek the striking rather than the fitting phrase, to emphasize crises rather than developmental trends.”³ Thus, members of the press have been characterized as reactors to, not creators of, new issues and crises “like the modal members of their audience; and their communications fit audience predispositions, not through a process of tailoring, but through correspondence in outlook.”⁴

The foregoing points provide a generalized framework for reviewing the historiography of the role of the press in the removal and detention of Japanese Americans during World War II. The standard interpretation depicts the press as a political pressure group and attempts to link it causally with Executive Order 9066 which formed the basis for the concentration camps. The historian Roger Daniels offers the clearest example of that interpretation. The press, wrote Daniels, particularly the Hearst papers, adopted and disseminated in the early twentieth century the image of the “yellow peril.” A notable example was the 1907 two-part Sunday Supplement fantasy authored by Richmond Pearson Hobson entitled, “JAPAN MAY SEIZE THE PACIFIC COAST.” Hobson predicted that Japan would soon conquer China and thus “command the military resources of the whole yellow race,” and estimated that an army of 1,207,700 men could capture the Pacific Coast. “The Yellow Peril is here,” Hobson concluded.⁵ That spectre of the “yellow peril” was revived in more strident form following Pearl Harbor. “Day after day,” wrote Daniels, “throughout December, January, February,

* The authors gratefully acknowledge the research assistance of Carol Giammona and Cynthia A. Gonçalves.

¹ George Seldes, *Freedom of the Press* (New York, 1935).

² H. A. Innis, *The Press: A Neglected Factor in the Economic History of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1949), p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15. See also Paul L. Fisher and Ralph L. Lowenstein, eds., *Race and the News Media* (New York, 1967).

⁴ Bernard Berelson, “Communications and Public Opinion,” in Wilbur Schramm, ed., *Communications in Modern Society* (Evanston, 1948), pp. 169-71.

⁵ Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps: North America* (Malabar, Florida, 1981), p. 30. See also Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice* (New York, 1970), pp. 70-8, 90-1.

and March, almost the entire Pacific Coast press . . . spewed forth racial venom against all Japanese.”⁶ More significantly, the newspapers incited further racial violence by alleging espionage and sabotage by the Japanese in America. “Examples of newspaper incitement to racial violence appeared daily. . . . In addition, during the period that the Japanese Americans were still at large, the press literally abounded with stories and, above all, headlines, which made the already nervous general public believe that military or paramilitary Japanese activists were all around them.”⁷

Generally, Daniels avoids naming the press directly as a cause for the decision to remove and confine the Japanese Americans. There remains, nonetheless, an implication that the press, through fostering and disseminating notions of the “yellow peril,” both before and in the crucial months after Pearl Harbor, created a climate of intolerance and racism which in turn enabled the establishment of concentration camps. Perhaps the closest Daniels comes to making the causal link appears in his assessment of the significance of columnist Walter Lippmann’s essay of February 12, 1942 entitled, “The Fifth Column on the Coast,” in which Lippmann argued for the mass removal of Japanese Americans.

. . . the Pacific Coast is in imminent danger of a combined attack from within and without. . . . There is an assumption [in Washington] that a citizen may not be interfered with unless he has committed an overt act. . . . The Pacific Coast is officially a combat zone. . . . And nobody ought to be on a battlefield who has no good reason for being there. There is plenty of room elsewhere for him to exercise his rights.⁸

The column, noted Daniels, drew wide attention and gained circulation among influential persons in the administration. Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall, sent Lippmann’s column to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, who in turn passed it on to the Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy. “It was almost certainly read in the White House as well,” speculated Daniels.⁹

Other authors offer greater precision in analyzing the role of the press and the concentration camps. They demonstrate that the press was not uniformly in favor of mass removal and that their depiction of Japanese Americans and the “yellow peril” varied over time. Clearly the most sophisticated analyses of the press during the period from December 8, 1941 to February 19, 1942, the date EO 9066 was issued, derive from the massive University of California Evacuation and Resettlement Study. The first, by Morton Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed* (Chicago, 1949), offers a detailed description of the California press; the second, by

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33. See also Roger Daniels, *The Decision to Relocate the Japanese Americans* (Philadelphia, 1975), p. 12.

⁸ Daniels, *Decision*, p. 47.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Jacobus tenBroek, et.al., *Prejudice, War and the Constitution* (Berkeley, 1970), posits an historical interpretation of that data. Grodzins' study was based on a content analysis of 112 California newspapers for the period December 8, 1941 to March 8, 1942. The survey represented the largest newspapers of forty-nine counties, and a total of fifty-five of the fifty-seven counties in the state which published a newspaper. His findings contradict the conventional wisdom on the topics of the press, the "yellow peril," and Pearl Harbor. Summarizing his surveys of editorial comments on Japanese Americans, Grodzins wrote:

During the first four weeks of the war there were no fewer than 62.5 favorable editorials as compared to 4.5 unfavorable. The period between January 5 and 25 was characterized by a decrease in editorial interest, and favorable editorials exceeded the unfavorable to a much less market degree (20.5 favorable; 11.5 unfavorable). Starting with the period beginning on January 26, favorable editorial comment was completely lost in the barrage of allegations of disloyalty, demands for a strict control program, and expressions of dissatisfaction over the government's assumption of an evacuation program.¹⁰

The first four weeks of overwhelmingly favorable commentaries on Japanese Americans are difficult to explain in light of the historical heritage of "yellow peril" journalism, and certainly contradict Daniels' portrayal of a daily flood of "racial venom" following December 7, 1941. We shall return to this point later in attempting an explanation of Grodzins' findings. It is instructive, at this time, to follow the shift in editorial sentiment as detailed by Grodzins.

Favorable editorials during the first four weeks of the war came from large dailies and small weeklies, and from all sections of the state. The San Francisco *Chronicle*, for instance, editorialized on December 9, 1941 on the FBI arrest of Japanese aliens suspected of disloyalty.

The roundup of Japanese citizens in various parts of the country . . . is not a call for volunteer spy hunters to go into action. Neither is it a reason to lift an eyebrow at a Japanese, whether American-born or not. . . .

There is no excuse to wound the sensibilities of any persons in America by showing suspicion or prejudice. That, if anything, is a help to fifth column spirit. An American-born Nazi would like nothing better than to set the dogs of prejudice on a first-class American Japanese.¹¹

Representative of a rural newspaper, the Brawley *News* (Imperial Valley) of December 8, 1941 cautioned: "Americans should remain calm and considerate. In this community we have many Japanese neighbors and citizens and nothing should occur to cause embarrassment to those whose loyalty to their adopted country remains steadfast during this time

¹⁰ Morton Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed* (Chicago, 1949), p. 380.

¹¹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 380.

of crisis."¹² Unfavorable editorials during this period reflected the current rumors of Japanese American espionage in Hawaii contributing to the Japanese military success at Pearl Harbor, and warned against possible fifth-column danger. The San Luis Obispo *Independent*, on December 12, 1941, became the first paper to demand mass evacuation of Japanese Americans.

During the month of January, 1942, there appeared a noticeable shift in sentiment toward the Japanese Americans in nearly every paper. The Los Angeles *Times*, although slow in developing an editorial position on the subject, offers a clear time frame for the shift in attitude. The *Times* first editorialized on the topic on January 23, 1942:

Many of our Japanese, whether born here or not, are fully loyal and deserve sympathy rather than suspicion. Others, in both categories, hold to a foreign allegiance and are dangerous, at least potentially. To be sure it would sometimes stump an expert to tell which is which and mistakes, if made, should be made on the side of caution.

By January 28, the *Times* had moved away from sympathy and hardened its position on the side of suspicion. The editors asserted that "the rigors of war demand proper detention of Japanese and their immediate removal from the most acute danger spots."¹³ The San Francisco *Chronicle* illustrates graphically the shift in sentiment; it offered a consistently tolerant attitude up to a late date. "What we have been urging all Americans to recognize," wrote the editors on December 22, "the loyalty to America of fellow-citizens and fellow-residents of Japanese antecedents, San Francisco Nisei are demonstrating by their organization of a special chapter auxiliary to the Red Cross. . . . They . . . are not to blame for defects of any persons in their groups. . . . It is actions, not antecedents, that count." With increasing talk of mass evacuation, the *Chronicle*, in its editorials of February 1 and 9, argued against such treatment of Japanese Americans. "It is not necessary to imitate Hitler by herding whole populations, the guilty and the innocent together, into even humane concentration camps." Two days after EO 9066, on February 21, the *Chronicle* reversed its earlier stance that "there shall be no discrimination by reason of race," and rationalized that "we have to be tough, even if civil rights do take a beating for a time." Its February 23 editorial offers a curious example of cyclical reasoning:

There is regret for the hardship put upon a people in the mass. . . . The hardship, however, is not put upon these by the United States. It is put upon them by Japan, by the Japanese Government, by the thousands of Japanese in Hawaii who clicked into rehearsed action the instant the first bomb dropped on Pearl Harbor and who knew the time and were ready for it to drop.¹⁴

¹² Quoted in *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

Apparently the *Chronicle* had become convinced of Japanese American complicity in the Pearl Harbor disaster and of a generalized loyalty to Japan. Summarizing the editorial sentiments, Grodzins wrote, "Most papers—even those that initially proclaimed the loyalty of resident Japanese—later demanded evacuation, or at least, approved that program after it was announced."¹⁵ Letters to the editor, a crude measurement of public opinion, closely paralleled the editorial swings, but as pointed out by Grodzins, the selection of these letters is itself an editorial process.¹⁶ News space devoted to Japanese Americans, unlike the editorial position, was consistently unfavorable from December 8 onward. Like the editorial shift, however, unfavorable news increased greatly toward the end of January, particularly after January 26, and reached a peak during the period February 15-23.¹⁷

Grodzins did not concern himself with interpreting the data; tenBroek, et.al. offered an explanation based on their interest in pinpointing the causes for the concentration camps. Like Daniels, tenBroek, et.al. begin with the heritage of "yellow peril" journalism along the West Coast starting in 1905. That image disseminated by the press embedded itself in the public mind and was later resurrected at Pearl Harbor. "Studies of popular attitudes on the West Coast in the late twenties and early thirties," wrote the authors, "show clearly that the stereotype established through three decades was firmly embedded in the public consciousness and no longer depended for its existence upon the prodding of 'pressure groups.'"¹⁸ Pearl Harbor served to trigger those absorbed memories: "The rumors that emerged from Pearl Harbor gave new sustenance to racist belief in the yellow peril, to romantic movie-fed ideas of the treacherous and inscrutable Asiatic, to undefined feelings of hostility and distrust compounded of the xenophobia of superpatriots and the rationalizations of competitors."¹⁹ In particular, tenBroek, et.al. cite the dispatch of United Press correspondent Wallace Carroll as being influential in "confirming" the rumors of sabotage. Carroll went to Hawaii shortly after December 7 to investigate the causes for the disaster. His report alleged that numbers of Hawaii's Japanese had reported on U.S. fleet movements, had advance knowledge of the attack, and fingers of Japanese pilots shot down in the raid had class rings of Honolulu high schools and Oregon State University. The dispatch continued: "Japanese of American nationality infiltrated into the Police Departments and obtained jobs as road supervisors, sanitary inspectors or minor government officials. Many went to work in the post office and telephone

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 384-85.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 393-99.

¹⁸ Jacobus tenBroek, Edward N. Barnhart, and Floyd W. Matson, *Prejudice, War and the Constitution* (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 66-7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

service, ideal posts for spies. . . ."²⁰

Further "confirmation" of Japanese American espionage derived from front-page attention given to FBI raids and arrests of Japanese allegedly in possession of contraband. Tensions increased with the release of the Roberts Committee Report on January 25 which alleged that the attack was greatly abetted by Japanese spies centered in the Japanese consulate in Hawaii.²¹ "By the end of January," wrote tenBroek, et.al., "a radical shift had taken place in the editorial position of California newspapers."²² That conclusion simply restates Grodzins' earlier findings, but the authors go on to add a significant new dimension. They observe that the shift in editorial opinion reflected a similar shift in the public opinion. "The shift in public sentiment, visible in late January, from comparative tolerance to general hostility toward the Japanese minority, was accurately mirrored in the Pacific Coast press."²³ That observation falls in line with the standard nostrums of the role of the press in society, that they are reflectors and not creators of public opinion, and turns on its head Daniels' interpretation that the press served to conceive and sustain anti-Japanese hostility. Still, the authors perceived the press to be a pressure group within the theoretical framework of public policy as deriving from democratic processes: "Under the prodding of public opinion and the press, members of the Congress from the West Coast states intensified their efforts toward the formulation of a severe control program aimed at the Japanese."²⁴

Grodzins and tenBroek, et.al. offer greater precision than Daniels in assessing the role of the press; Grodzins demonstrated that editorial and news column sentiment varied over time, while tenBroek, et.al. placed the data within an historical context and linked it with the swings of public opinion. The variable and complex nature of press opinion is similarly illustrated in the national press which, like the California press, was not uniformly consistent in its denunciation of Japanese Americans. The point is illustrated in the influential *Harper's* magazine,²⁵ and a survey of the *New York Times*. The *New York Times* paralleled the California press in its fairly balanced coverage of Japanese Americans through January. While the content of news items contained anti-Japanese statements and the captions sometimes suggested Japanese American disloyalty and espionage, they were usually accompanied by responses from the Japanese American community, notably from a rep-

²⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2.

²¹ Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts headed the official committee of inquiry on the attack on Pearl Harbor. The entire report is published in *Pearl Harbor Attack: Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack* (Washington, D. C., 1946).

²² tenBroek, et. al., *Prejudice*, p. 75.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

²⁵ See, e.g., Carey McWilliams, "Moving the West-Coast Japanese," *Harper's*, 185 (September, 1942): 359-69; An Intelligence Officer, "The Japanese in America," *Harper's*, 185 (October 1942): 489-97; Cecil Henry Coggins, "The Japanese-Americans in Hawaii," *Harper's*, 187 (October 1943): 450-58.

representative of the patriotic Japanese American Citizens League (JACL).

Beginning in February, however, there was a noticeable shift in sentiment giving extensive coverage to Japanese American subversion and the demands for the mass removal of Japanese from the West Coast. The first news item, headlined, "Coast Oil Plot Laid to Japanese," appeared on February 7, and focused especially on comments by Mayor Fletcher Bowron of Los Angeles and Governor Culbert Olsen of California. Mayor Bowron, in an emotional statement, called for the removal of all persons of Japanese blood, including the American-born, to "several hundred miles from the coast." He declared: "They could raise good old navy beans for the Navy . . . if they are loyal to this country they should glory in the fact that they are doing something beneficial; if they are loyal to Japan, that is the place for them." Governor Olsen, at a conference with Japanese-American leaders, was described as opposed to mass evacuation of all persons of Japanese ancestry, but noted that there "was not any middle ground for Japanese citizens": if they were not prepared to "go all the way" in showing their loyalty to the U.S., they "ought to be concentrated." Moreover, leaders of California's petroleum industry, though claiming that no "serious" sabotage attempts by Japanese had been made, were reported as being "apprehensive" about future Japanese attacks. In particular, A. C. Rubel, Vice President of Union Oil, said that the industry "was convinced and has information that there is a pretty well organized plan of sabotage and awaits only the zero hour to go into effect."²⁶

The second news item, captioned, "Coast Japanese Split on Ouster," appeared on February 21, two days after President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, justifying the evacuation of the Japanese from the Pacific Coast because of "military necessity." The President's order, the report said, was announced during a day in which "one Japanese was shot to death and several others were wounded or robbed," while federal agents and police continued their raids against enemy aliens suspected of being "dangerous." More significant however, the report cited Visalia District Attorney Walter Haigh, who charged Japanese truck drivers in the Ivanhoe District with "planting tomatoes so that they formed a crude arrow pointing at an air training field." In addition, the news story contained a response from the JACL advising its 20,000 members not to become "overly alarmed and panicky" over the Presidential order, and a statement by Fresno produce merchant Kay Sugahara, who is quoted as saying: "If the Army and Navy say we are a menace, let's get out. But if it's merely a question of fighting politicians that would gain favor by hopping on 'those defenseless Japs' we should fight them to the last ditch."²⁷ The quote, no doubt, only

²⁶ *New York Times*, February 7, 1942.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, February 21, 1942.

served to heighten anti-Japanese sentiment among those who read it.

Beginning in March of 1942, and continuing until 1948, most of the coverage on the Japanese in the *New York Times* came from one reporter — Lawrence E. Davies. Davies, because the *Times* had no other analysis or editorial opinion on the Japanese evacuation until 1948, was the lone source of information about the Japanese for the newspaper's readership during this time. Moreover, his articles for the most part showed objectivity in analysis of persons and events, and his tone was often sympathetic to the hardships endured by the Japanese in the camps.

Davies' first article appeared in the *New York Times* on March 4, 1942, two days after General John DeWitt's Public Proclamation No. 1, encouraging voluntary evacuation by the Japanese on the Pacific Coast. In his report, Davies interprets the underlying intention of DeWitt's order:

General DeWitt's order, issued under authority of a Presidential order, was the blow which aliens and Japanese-Americans had been expecting for more than two weeks. The proclamation did not actually order an evacuation and the General said that "immediate compulsory mass evacuation" of all Japanese and other aliens from the coast was "impracticable." But he left no doubt that every person of Japanese lineage must get out of the region.²⁸

During 1943, Davies began to analyze the Japanese relocation. In particular, he concentrated on the problems posed by the resettlement of the Nisei outside the camps, and the corresponding opposition by Congress and citizens of the Pacific states. On May 25, Davies gave a detailed report from Tule Lake, as one of a few selected newspapermen allowed by the Office of War Information to visit the camp. In reference to the native-born Japanese allowed to leave Tule Lake, he noted:

They departed, with a mixture of hope and misgiving, to try to make a new place for themselves in American society. . . . Those they left behind at the center either admired them for a courageous spirit or called them fools for thinking that they and others like them could overcome discriminatory attitudes and practices of American communities into which they were going.

From his talks with Issei, Nisei and Kibei at Tule Lake, Davies made some general observations, and also noted that other reporters "who came with some pretty well-defined ideas about life in the camps and about what ought to be done with the evacuees 'from here on out' had some of their ideas shaken."

Regarding the issues of loyalty and segregation of internees in the camps, Davies observed that more than 6,000 Japanese, including some American citizens, had asked for repatriation to Japan, but were "housed and permitted to intermingle freely with other Japanese in the

²⁸ Lawrence E. Davies, "Evacuation Area Set for Japanese in Pacific States," *New York Times*, March 4, 1942.

relocation centers. Japanese loyal to this country know what the 6,000 stand for and discount their influence on camp life." Moreover, contended Davies, to "salvage" the loyalty of Japanese still loyal to the U.S., and to preserve their ambitions, early resettlement of the evacuees in jobs outside the West Coast was "essential"; according to the Nisei at Tule Lake, "camp life was stultifying, engendered brooding," and had "dulled" the work habits of many persons. Life in the camps, reported Davies, was embittering many of the American-born Japanese, and "giving the elders the feeling that life is over for them and causing a breakdown in the time-honored Japanese family tradition." Probably most of the Issei, he said, were convinced that California and other states would not permit their return, and regarded the camps as "havens of refuge with free food, housing and medical care."²⁹

An important result of the evacuation, noted Davies, was that many citizen evacuees were not "pro-Japanese" but "anti-American," because of "what they regarded as their unconstitutional treatment." "Their loyalty flickers and subsides," said Davies. Further, during the February 1943 registration for selective service and outside jobs, reported Davies, Tule Lake, according to project attorney Tony O'Brien, had become a "rumor factory," with "agitators" having "a field day circulating rumors that the registration was a prelude to new restrictions." The evacuees however, said O'Brien, "had not received enough advance information." Though the February-March registration caused a doubling of Tule Lake Japanese seeking repatriation, Davies, in May, concluded:

Asked to renounce Japan, some of them felt frustrated and decided that this step might leave them without any country. Since first filing their repatriation requests many have reconsidered and cancelled them. At Tule Lake alone nearly 100 cancellations have come in out of a total of 487 requests.³⁰

In June of 1943, the Dies subcommittee investigating the concentration camps concluded that their administration had not been "satisfactory": that the management of the camps was "carried out by the Japanese themselves"; that "there has been no adequate segregation made of loyal and disloyal Japanese"; and, that "sufficient work opportunities" had not been provided for the Japanese in the camps.³¹ Davies, however, in a June 27, 1943 report, noted that both the Dies inquiries and the continued release of 1000 persons from the camps each week had brought one question into sharp focus: "What shall be done from here on out with the 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry in this country?"

Amid the controversy, Davies contended, "A lot of irresponsible

²⁹ See also Matthew Richard Speier, "Japanese-American Relocation Camp Colonization and Resistance to Resettlement: A Study in the Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity Under Stress" (Master's thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1965).

³⁰ Lawrence E. Davies, "Living in America Beckons Evacuees," *New York Times*, May 25, 1943.

³¹ "Japanese Camps Called Badly Run," *New York Times*, June 20, 1943.

statements and unsubstantiated charges have been made in discussions of the issue. Some of them have smacked of deliberate attempts to stir up hysteria." In particular, he singled out two crucial issues: first, that an overwhelming proportion of the population strongly opposed resettlement of the Japanese in the "combat zone" before the war ended, while persons unbiased from economic or political considerations contended that far too much stress had been placed upon the possibility of such a move; and second, that a movement was evident on the West Coast, "backed by persons who wanted to prevent the return of any Japanese to the coast even after the war," and who were looking for a "legal loophole" to ship all Japanese back to Japan. In addition, Davies observed that "Persons who have spent any time in the centers and talked at length with evacuees . . . have been struck with the growing feeling of frustration encountered there. The camps are not ideal places for the propagation of Americanism." In conclusion, however, he noted that "difficult as another move would be, there is a growing belief that the thousands who have asked for repatriation . . . should be segregated."³²

In 1944, no significant coverage appeared in the *New York Times* until December, when the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the wartime evacuation of the Japanese (in the case of Fred Korematsu), but also ruled (in the case of Mitsuye Endo) that Japanese-Americans of "unquestioned loyalty" could not be confined in relocation centers. On the day of the decision, December 18, Davies reported on the order (effective January 2, 1945) by General H. Congar Pratt (Western Defense Commander), to end the mass exclusion of the Japanese. Though the Army's action, said Davies, "anticipated any decision by the Supreme Court on the exclusion issue," in regards to the subsequent Japanese resettlement he noted:

Their resettlement will be a gradual process and several thousand of them presumably will continue to be blocked off from the coastal military area through individual Army exclusion orders issued against those known to be pro-Japan in their sympathies or whose presence on the coast is adjudged dangerous to the war effort.³³

From 1945 to 1948, Davies continued to analyze the effects of the Japanese resettlement on the West Coast. These were detailed inquiries into the problems faced by the returning Issei and Nisei. Davies noted "the instances in which evacuees have been welcomed back by their old neighbors far outnumber the cases of hostility shown . . . yet the

³² Lawrence E. Davies, "Japanese Issue Fires Coast," *New York Times*, June 27, 1943.

³³ Lawrence E. Davies, "Ban on Japanese Lifted on Coast," *New York Times*, December 18, 1944.

sailing for the evacuees, great numbers of them, will not be smooth."³⁴ Moreover, in late 1946, Davies observed that the social acceptance of the Japanese on the West Coast had "improved greatly." He attributed this not only to the war record of the Nisei, but, "in some quarters, to a diminution in the economic competition threatened by those of Japanese descent." In general, the economic situation of the returned evacuees, said Davies, was "mixed"; they had trouble becoming re-established in their former businesses such as produce, and were virtually excluded from the cleaning and dyeing business, but the professional men such as doctors and dentists were "doing well."³⁵

Davies' final reports on the Japanese appeared in the *New York Times* during 1948. In February, nearly six years after the original evacuation, he analyzed the existing conditions on the Pacific Coast, noting that "the Nisei and their alien parents are following a living and work pattern somewhat altered from its pre-war character." The return of the evacuees, contended Davies, had been a three-stage process: first, hostility and even violence in some areas; second, acceptance with considerable publicized enthusiasm; and third, acceptance with apathy. Further, he pointed to various results of the evacuation and resettlement program: that it "scattered residents of Japanese ancestry over the country as they never had been scattered before"; that it caused significant occupational changes, "broadening the Nisei work pattern"; that it brought the Nisei "into friction, real or potential, with Negroes who moved into the evacuated districts in wartime"; and that, "for the first time, as a result of their wartime experiences," the Japanese-Americans were worried over the problem of juvenile delinquency.³⁶

In May of 1948, Davies, in his last article, observed that "there are growing signs that the West Coast . . . is swinging around to the view that Japanese and other Orientals be admitted to the U.S. under the quota system and made eligible for citizenship." This changed attitude, three years after Japanese resettlement, contended Davies, was due in part to the realization that acts of sabotage on the part of Japanese were "lacking during the war," and also to "a sympathetic awareness that alien Japanese parents, many of whom spent twenty years or more in this country, raised their Nisei children according to American customs and sent sons to war to be wounded or killed while proving their loyalty."³⁷

³⁴ Lawrence E. Davies, "Heartaches Await Nisei," *New York Times*, March 25, 1945. Cf., "American Fair Play?" *Time*, March 19, 1945, p. 19, which indicated that racial incidents against the returning Japanese were numerous and that anti-Japanese racism had not abated.

³⁵ Lawrence E. Davies, "Nisei Return to Coast," *New York Times*, October 27, 1945.

³⁶ Lawrence E. Davies, "Japanese-Americans Return Amid Changed Conditions," *New York Times*, February 8, 1948.

³⁷ Lawrence E. Davies, "Reversal of Old Policies on Asiatics Indicated," *New York Times*, May 9, 1948.

In 1948 and 1949, seven years after the evacuation order, the first editorials on the Japanese appeared in the *New York Times*, reflecting the majority American sentiment at that time, by calling for citizenship rights for the Issei. On May 2, 1948, the editors urged the passage of three Congressional bills (for compensation of losses suffered by the Japanese, for not deporting longtime Japanese residents, and for providing naturalization for aliens) that "would right some of the injustice that has been done these fellow residents of ours, who have shown every qualification for citizenship except that of race." They stated:

Many Japanese who have lived here for years under pre-war arrangements and who served this country loyally during the war face a forced return to a land that is far more alien to them than the United States . . . the intent of all three bills is to right actions that the years have proved wrong. If our national policy is equal justice for all, then Congress should live up to it by passing these three measures.³⁸

In March of the following year, the *New York Times*' editors again advocated the passage of a Congressional bill, which called for both lifting the barriers to immigration for Asiatics, and for permitting naturalization of resident Orientals. "It took a war," the editors said, "to break down the artificial barriers of race that were raised years ago under the hysterical spur of the 'yellow peril.'" The good effects of the bill (H.R. 5004), they contended, were hardly calculable:

Despite the low quotas, at least the restriction that implied an inferiority of race will be removed. . . . Who knows how Japanese-American, Chinese-American relations might have developed had not the people of those two countries had raised against them this bar sinister of color? It is good to have it removed, to return to the principle that our neighbors are as good as we are.³⁹

A survey of the wartime press thus reveals a mixed pattern in the coverage of Japanese Americans. Of special significance is not simply the variations in sentiment ranging from favorable to unfavorable, but the period of sympathetic coverage in the weeks following Pearl Harbor. Surely December 7 provided the most dramatic "evidence" of the veracity of the "yellow peril" predictions of the early twentieth century. Given the history of the West Coast press, one would have expected the "flood of venom," as described by Daniels; the large preponderance of favorable accounts during December is thus inconsistent with the historical pattern. Further, the shift in sentiment from favorable to unfavorable in January, reaching a peak in mid-February, is of additional importance. It is instructive at this point to return to the original dictum about the parallel relationship between the press and popular opinion.

³⁸ "A Matter of Justice," *New York Times*, May 2, 1948.

³⁹ "Neither Race Nor Creed," *New York Times*, March 3, 1949.

Unfortunately we have no surveys from December 1941, but the ones available provide sufficient evidence to show the general trend. The first poll was based on 192 interviews in four California localities during the last week of January, 1942. The survey found that 36 percent believed the Japanese to be "virtually all loyal" while 38 percent believed them to be "virtually all disloyal." In addition, the report noted that "a substantial number among those who feel that most Japanese are loyal went on to say that since one could not tell precisely which ones are loyal and which disloyal, a certain amount of suspicion was naturally attached to all Japanese." Still, the majority of the respondents felt existing control measures to be adequate and only one-third called for further action against the Japanese Americans.⁴⁰ The second study, conducted the second week of February, surveyed 797 persons in California, Oregon, and Washington. Some 40 percent of the respondents believed that there were "many disloyal aliens in their vicinity," specifically the Japanese. Three-fourths of the southern Californians questioned felt that "only a few" or "practically none" of the Japanese aliens were loyal and called for their internment in concentration camps, and one-third advocated confining Japanese American citizens as well. Nonetheless, only 14 percent in northern California, Oregon, and Washington were in favor of holding in detention Japanese American citizens.⁴¹ A third opinion sample, conducted during the last three weeks of February, found "evidence of growing tension" and a rise of suspicion directed at Japanese Americans. Over half questioned Japanese loyalty and "most people who make such a judgment believe there is no limit to what a Japanese might be expected to do," while 77 percent disliked and distrusted Japanese Americans on racial or national lines. Before February 20, 54 percent judged government measures against Japanese Americans to be adequate, while during the last week of the month, that sentiment declined to 40 percent.⁴² The swing in public opinion against Japanese Americans was also reflected in a national survey conducted in March, 1942 in which 93 percent approved the removal of Japanese aliens away from the West Coast and 59 percent approved the removal of Japanese American citizens.⁴³ The public opinion surveys cited above appear to confirm the role of the press as reflector of popular sentiment in the shift against Japanese Americans toward the end of January and the growing support for stricter control measures.

⁴⁰ U.S. Office of Facts and Figures, Bureau of Intelligence, *Exploratory Study of West Coast Reactions to Japanese*, February 4, 1942 (Washington, D.C., 1942). Cited in tenBroek, et. al., *Prejudice*, p. 349.

⁴¹ U.S. Office of Facts and Figures, Bureau of Intelligence, *Pacific Coast Attitudes toward the Japanese Problem*, February 28, 1942 (Washington, D.C., 1942). Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 349.

⁴² U.S. Office of Facts and Figures, Bureau of Intelligence, *West Coast Reactions to the Japanese Situation*, March 1942 (Washington, D.C., 1942). Cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 349-50.

⁴³ Hadley Cantril, ed., *Public Opinion, 1935-1946* (Princeton, 1951), p. 380.

In considering an explanation for the shift in attitude, both in the press and in the public opinion, Grodzins and tenBroek, et.al. offer some clues. They note that swings in sentiment were often accompanied by events, such as FBI arrests and searches for contraband and the release of various government reports of Japanese subversion. This phenomenon tends to validate the idea that the press generally emphasizes crisis at the expense of analysis, a situational rather than an analytical approach. A number of salient events associated with the upsurge in anti-Japanese opinion resulted in a flurry of press coverage unfavorable to Japanese Americans. First, FBI arrests and raids received widespread attention. Since June, 1940, J. Edgar Hoover's FBI was responsible for domestic espionage, counter-espionage, and sabotage involving civilians, and for coordinating the domestic, civilian intelligence operations among the FBI, Office of Naval Intelligence, and Military Intelligence Division.⁴⁴ By early 1941, over 2,000 Japanese had been identified as actual or potential subversives. On November 12, 1941, the FBI detained and interrogated fifteen Japanese American leaders from the Los Angeles community, and confiscated books, records, and papers from the Los Angeles Japanese Chamber of Commerce and the Central Japanese Association. Attorney General Francis Biddle was quoted as saying that the Justice Department was "ready to control the aliens of any enemy country" and that "plans for the internment of dangerous Japanese aliens" were already complete.⁴⁵ Anticipating war with Japan, Hoover, on December 5, instructed FBI agents to be ready for "the immediate apprehension of Japanese aliens who have been recommended for custodial detention." In fact, as pointed out by Kumamoto, Hoover instructed agents in Alaska, two days before Pearl Harbor, to begin the detention process.⁴⁶ On the evening of December 7, Franklin Roosevelt ordered the immediate arrest and internment of the identified subversives. FBI spot raids for contraband continued, despite the detention of presumably all the dangerous persons after Attorney General Biddle's authorization of search warrants for any house in which an alien lived on December 30 and intensified in early February, 1942.⁴⁷

The second event associated with an increase in anti-Japanese sentiment was a press conference held in Los Angeles by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, on December 15, 1941 after returning from an inspection of Pearl Harbor. Knox spoke of "treachery" in Hawaii, and alleged that Japanese success at Pearl Harbor was due to "the most effective fifth-column work that's come out of this war, except in Norway." The newspapers responded with headlines stressing that

⁴⁴ Bob Kumamoto, "The Search for Spies: American Counterintelligence and the Japanese American Community 1931-1942," *Amerasia Journal*, 6:2 (1979): 52.

⁴⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, November 19, 1941.

⁴⁶ Kumamoto, "Search for Spies," p. 69.

⁴⁷ Daniels, *Concentration*, p. 43; and tenBroek, et. al., *Prejudice*, pp. 348-49.

aspect of Knox's report: "Secretary of Navy Blames Fifth Columnists for the Raid," "Fifth Column Prepared Attack," and "Fifth Column Treachery Told."⁴⁸ Michi Weglyn points out that as late as March 24, 1942, Knox persisted in his allegations. Before the Tolan Committee,⁴⁹ Knox stated:

There was a considerable amount of evidence of subversive activity on the part of the Japanese prior to the attack. This consisted of providing the enemy with the most exact possible kind of information as an aid to them in locating their objective, and also creating a great deal of confusion in the air following the attack by use of radio sets which successfully prevented the commander in chief of the fleet from determining in what direction the attackers had withdrawn and in locating the position of the covering fleet, including the carriers. . . .⁵⁰

The third and probably most significant event, in terms of turning the tide of public opinion and newspaper sentiment, was the release of the Roberts report on January 25, 1942. The report, observed tenBroek, et al., served "to support the rumors of disloyalty among Japanese in Hawaii and to cast further doubt upon the loyalty of Japanese along the coast."⁵¹ Perhaps more importantly, the report implied that too much concern for civil liberties had seriously hampered the counter-intelligence work of the FBI resulting in the Pearl Harbor disaster.⁵²

All three events correspond to the swings in press and public attitude, particularly the marked upsurge following January 25 as evidenced in the editorial positions of the Los Angeles *Times* cited above. In addition, the FBI spot raids in early February and two influential commentaries by syndicated columnists Drew Pearson on February 9 and Walter Lippmann on February 12, appeared to have prepared public opinion for EO 9066 on February 19. Lippmann's column was described previously; Pearson's derived from information which he obtained from the yet to be released report of the Dies Committee.⁵³ In his February 9 column, Pearson predicted that the report would show how Japanese consuls had directed espionage through the Central Japanese Association at Los Angeles. Further, the report would warn that, "The United States has been and still is lax, tolerant and soft toward the Japanese who have violated American hospitality. Shinto Temples still operate, propaganda outlets still disseminate propaganda material and Japanese, both alien and American citizens, still spy for the Japanese government." Finally, wrote Pearson, the report would maintain that Japanese Americans were abusing their civil

⁴⁸ tenBroek, et. al., *Prejudice*, p. 70; and Daniels, *Concentration*, p. 35.

⁴⁹ In late February, 1942, Representative John H. Tolan of California held hearings on the West Coast to investigate "National Defense Migration."

⁵⁰ Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy* (New York, 1976), p. 52.

⁵¹ tenBroek, et. al., *Prejudice*, p. 73.

⁵² Daniels, *Concentration*, pp. 49-50.

⁵³ Congressman Martin Dies of Texas chaired the House Committee on Un-American Activities which at this time was investigating Japanese American subversion.

liberties "to promote systematic espionage such as prepared the way for the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7."⁵⁴

All the above events associated with the increase in anti-Japanese sentiment emanate from the government, principally from the executive branch, including the FBI orchestrated raids and arrests, Navy Secretary Knox's revelations, the Roberts report, and Pearson's preview of the Dies committee report. Weglyn suggests that Knox provided the opening wedge for the revival of anti-Japanese racism, and both Weglyn and Daniels charge that Knox, despite knowledge to the contrary, used the Japanese Americans as a convenient scapegoat for Pearl Harbor.⁵⁵ "It can only be assumed," wrote Weglyn, "that Knox's tissue of fallacies impugning the fidelity of the resident Japanese was meant merely to divert, to take political 'heat' off himself and the Administration for the unspeakable humiliation that Pearl Harbor represented." Further, Weglyn puts forth a theory of government conspiracy: "The actions of Knox and the wartime suppression of the Munson papers,⁵⁶ like the more familiar Pentagon Papers, once again make evident how executive officers of the Republic are able to mislead public opinion by keeping hidden facts which are precisely the opposite of what the public is told — information vital to the opinions they hold."⁵⁷ On the other hand, recent evidence from declassified transcripts of "Operation Magic" intercepts suggests that the President, Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy, and the Directors of Naval and Military Intelligence had some grounds for believing in domestic espionage. In the spring of 1941, "Operation Magic" intercepted and deciphered Japanese coded transmissions, uncovering espionage reports from Japanese consulates in the U.S. to Tokyo.⁵⁸ The ciphers, for example, identified Taro Terasaki as the "spymaster chief" in Washington, D.C. who ran the entire Japanese espionage network in the Western hemisphere. In May, Terasaki received one-half million dollars "for the development of intelligence," which included informants in the State Department and a U.S. Senator, and he cultivated "very influential Negro leaders" in hopes of directing racial discontent "to stall the program the U.S. plans for national defense and the economy, as well as for sabotage."⁵⁹

Regardless of motivation or basis, the essential fact is that the drive for mass removal and confinement was led by the executive branch

⁵⁴ tenBroek, et. al., *Prejudice*, p. 88.

⁵⁵ Weglyn, *Years*, p. 49; and Daniels, *Concentration*, pp. 35-6.

⁵⁶ In the fall of 1941, Curtis B. Munson, as Special Representative of the State Department, was instructed to collect information for the President on the degree of loyalty of Japanese Americans on the West Coast and in Hawaii. Roosevelt received his report in early November of that year; the report stressed the loyalty of the overwhelming majority but warned that dams, bridges, power stations, etc. were vulnerable to small groups of saboteurs. Wrote Munson, "there are still Japanese in the United States who will tie dynamite around their waist and make a human bomb out of themselves." Daniels, *Concentration*, p. 28.

⁵⁷ Weglyn, *Years*, p. 52.

⁵⁸ John Costello, *The Pacific War* (London, 1981), pp. 86-7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 613.

of the government. Daniels has shown the complexities of the decision, of the interplay among the President, members of the Cabinet, and the military,⁶⁰ but as early as December 19, 1941, the Cabinet recommended that all Japanese aliens in Hawaii should be interned, and the President and Navy Secretary Knox "persistently pushed for mass internment of the Hawaiian Japanese Americans."⁶¹ As shown above, the American public and the press did not share that opinion, and ironically it was the military who apparently restrained the President from interning all of Oahu's Japanese, on the grounds that they were essential for Hawaii's economic viability.⁶² J. Edgar Hoover objected to EO 9066 "on the contention that the roundup had encompassed all potential saboteurs." The mass removal and confinement of Japanese Americans was thus in Hoover's opinion a rebuke to the counter-intelligence work of the FBI and unnecessary for the national security.⁶³ The opinions of the military in Hawaii and Hoover simply reconfirm the well-known fallacies of the "military necessity" argument and reinforce the point that the decision was a political, rather than a military one. As a political decision the Administration needed not only the subterfuge of "military necessity," its legal basis, but also the support of the press and public opinion to facilitate its implementation.

Previous authors, including Grodzins and tenBroek, et.al., might have missed that crucial point because of their underlying pluralist assumptions. Pluralism, for many years in vogue in political science theory, designated the interest group as the principal instrument of the American democratic process. Public policy thus derives from the clash of interest groups vying for the attention of government policymakers. The Marxist critique of pluralism argued, first, that the process was not truly democratic in that only the most influential had their interests represented, and second, that the relationship between pressure groups and the government was essentially "cooperativistic" and not in conflict with each other. Interest groups, according to Marxists, are tied into a working partnership with the government in a "highest bidder" association.⁶⁴ Within that framework, the press, like other interest groups, are sometimes manipulated by the government but generally support the status quo.

Despite an occasional exposé, and for all the talk about "investigative journalism," the media . . . propogate conventional values, cooperate with government officials in withholding information from the public, have almost nothing to say about the more damaging aspects of the corporate politico-economy, refrain from any examination of fundamental precepts upon which policy is

⁶⁰ Daniels, *Concentration*, pp. 42-73; and Daniels, *Decision to Relocate*.

⁶¹ Daniels, *Concentration*, pp. 52, 72-3.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁶³ Kumamoto, "Search for Spies," p. 71.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism* (New York, 1969).

based... Far from being the independent "watchdogs of democracy," they are among the most representative products of the existing politico-economic system.⁶⁵

That view of the press stands in apparent contradiction to its more benign portrayal as a reflector of popular opinion; in the former, the press essentially functions as an accomplice with the ruling order to shape public opinion, while in the latter, the press, compelled by economic necessity, principally caters to mass appeal. Clearly, nonetheless, those two roles need not operate in mutual exclusion, and the wartime press appears to illustrate both functions, as a disseminator of government information and reflector of public sentiment.

First, we posited the hypothesis that the press generally reflects, not creates, public opinion, and tends to emphasize situational crises rather than developmental analyses. Second, the standard view of the press and its role in the concentration camps seeks its origins in the "yellow peril" journalism of the early twentieth century and depicts the press as a political pressure group for exclusion, and after Pearl Harbor, for removal and confinement. However, the evidence provided by Grodzins and tenBroek, et.al., revealed a more complex picture of tolerance for Japanese Americans during the first month of the war and a shift to intolerance by the end of January. That pattern was mirrored in the national press, including *Harper's* and the *New York Times*. Further, public opinion polls seemed to parallel the swings in press sentiment, tending to confirm the initial hypothesis. Third, we observed that the crisis-orientation of the press was evidenced in its shifts, which appear to have coincided with various actions of the government, particularly the executive branch, including FBI raids and arrests, the release of information in the Knox and Roberts reports, and the Dies committee allegations. Finally, the Marxist critique of the pluralist model of government provides a view of public policy as deriving from the top down, an elitist model. Using pluralist assumptions, Grodzins, tenBroek, et.al., and Daniels depict the press as a pressure group in the drive for stricter controls. The elitist model, on the other hand, perceives public policy to originate not among the masses but from the ruling elite. The contention of this paper is that the elitist explanatory framework and the documentary evidence suggest that the plan to remove and confine Japanese Americans was conceived in the government as a political act, that the press and public opinion did not favor such treatment, and that a series of events emanating from the government led to a shift in the attitude of the press and the populace enabling the implementation of EO 9066.

⁶⁵ Michael Parenti, *Power and the Powerless* (New York, 1978), p. 150.