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ETHNIC AND MINORITY GROUPS IN WARTIME, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NEGRO

E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

ABSTRACT

Since the first World War, when we were made aware of the conflicting loyalties of minorities set apart from the rest of the population because of race, culture, and national origin, social scientists have given attention to the effect of changes in American life upon these groups. These minorities may be divided into three groups: those actually or potentially identified with our enemies, those friendly to the United States, and the American Negro. The first group is largely loyal to the United States, but it has been the object of much suspicion and discrimination. The pro-Nazi and pro-Fascist opinions of some German- and Italian-language newspapers and the activities of such organizations as the Bund have made it necessary for the government to suppress some foreign-language newspapers, to intern some of the leaders, and to suppress organizations fostering disloyalty. The most drastic action has been that taken against the Japanese community on the West Coast, which was broken up and both alien and native-born Japanese moved to the interior or interned. The minorities friendly to the United States are all colored peoples; but, because of our traditional attitudes toward colored peoples, they continue to suffer discrimination despite their loyalty to our cause. Unlike his reactions to the first World War, the American Negro has exhibited considerable militancy in regard to discrimination. Although the government has issued orders against discrimination, Negroes are still excluded from employment and training opportunities. Because of the war the inadequate housing of Negroes has become worse, their family life is suffering some deterioration, their colleges have lost students and teachers, and their welfare organizations have felt the strain of extra burdens. There are signs that the Negro masses are stirring themselves against the caste restrictions which are rooted in the South, where there is growing tension between the two races. A few liberal newspapers indicate that liberal southerners are willing to make some concessions, especially in regard to employment opportunities. On the other hand, there are signs that some caste restrictions are being relaxed where the government is concerned and in many places in the North.

The growing concern of the United States with the problem of immigration during the first decade of this century became focused upon the problem of Americanization during and following the first World War. Our traditional policy of equal treatment before the law and uncoerced assimilation in regard to the various racial and cultural minorities in our midst was to some extent abandoned.¹ The change in policy at the time was due partly to the spy mania and the hysteria of war and partly to the realization that the immigrant

whether naturalized or unnaturalized, tended to maintain his loyalty to the land of his origin, even when it seemed to conflict with loyalty to the country of his sojourn or adoption.²

Because of economic and political conditions in the world following the first World War,

¹ Louis Wirth, *Research Memorandum on the Effect of War on American Minorities* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942).

² Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, 1924), p. 773. See John L. O'Brian, "Civil Liberties in Wartime," *Sen. Doc., No. 434* (Washington, 1919).

the existence of large minorities set apart from the rest of the population because of race, culture, or national origin became one of our major national problems. Consciousness on the part of social scientists of the differential effect of the depression upon minorities was responsible for a special memorandum prepared for the Social Science Research Council on the subject.³ When our entrance into the present war appeared inevitable, the question of national morale and minority groups was treated in a special issue of this *Journal*.⁴ Today, when our nation is faced with a totalitarian war in which the conflict of ideologies goes to the roots of our culture, the need to inquire into the effects of the war upon various racial and cultural minorities assumes a new importance. Such a task is naturally beset with many difficulties because of our loyalty to our cause and our concern with winning the war

³ Donald Young, *Research Memorandum on Minority Peoples in the Depression* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1937).

⁴ Louis Wirth, "Morale and Minority Groups," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XLVII (1941).

and the inaccessibility of sources of information. Nevertheless, it is believed that objective studies of the impact of the war on minorities will not only contribute to our knowledge of assimilation but will provide a basis for an intelligent national policy.

I. MINORITIES ACTUALLY OR POTENTIALLY IDENTIFIED WITH OUR ENEMIES

The ethnic and minority groups discussed here include those groups who "because of physical or social and cultural differences receive differential treatment and who regard themselves as a people apart."⁵ Since we are interested in the impact of the war upon the various minorities, we may consider first those who are actually or potentially identified with our enemies. Of the foreign-born whites in this class, those born in Italy constitute the largest group, while those born in Germany comprise the second largest group.⁶ If we consider these minorities from the standpoint of descent, however, the Germans, who number almost five million, including a million and a half foreign born, are the largest group.⁷ Nearly two-thirds of the foreign-born persons of German descent are concentrated in five states: New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Wisconsin; while more than a fourth are in New York City and Chicago. Over a third of the close to four million persons of Italian descent, of whom a million and a half are foreign born, are concentrated in the state of New York and more than a third in four other states: Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California, and Illinois.⁸ In New York City

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 415.

⁶ *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, Series P-10, No. 4. The 1,623,580 foreign-born whites born in Italy constituted 14.2 per cent, while the 1,237,772 persons born in Germany constituted 10.8 per cent of the eleven and a half million foreign-born whites.

⁷ In 1940 there were in the United States 4,949,780 white persons of German mother-tongue (*Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, Series P-15, No. 2).

⁸ In 1940 there were 3,766,820 white persons of Italian mother-tongue. The decline in the number of foreign-born Italians between 1930 and 1940 was only 13.7 per cent. There were only 125,040 persons

there are nearly 400,000 Italians, while both Chicago and Philadelphia have colonies numbering 60,000. The Japanese, because of their non-European background, occupy a unique position among the minorities that are actually or potentially hostile to the United States. In 1940 there were only 126,947 Japanese in the continental United States, nearly two-thirds of whom were native born.⁹ Three-fourths of the Japanese are concentrated in California and an eighth in the state of Washington. There are more than two thousand domiciled in each of three states: Colorado, New York, and Utah. More than a sixth of the entire Japanese population of the country is in the city of Los Angeles. Since the declaration of war against Bulgaria, Hungary, and Rumania, the number of foreign-born whites who are actual or potential enemies has been increased by over half a million.¹⁰

Even before our entrance into the war, the triumph of the Nazis in Germany and their diplomatic and military successes created a "critical issue in relations between German and other Americans" as well as a chaos among the Germans.¹¹ Because of the general suspicion, German Americans were accused of fifth-column activities, and many were discharged from their employment or denied employment. The general suspicion in regard to the German Americans has been aroused by the pro-Nazi tone and editorials in the German-language newspapers and by the activities of such organizations as the Bund. Since our entrance into the war some of these newspapers have been suppressed, and the others have replaced their editors with men in sympathy with democratic ideals.¹² The Italian press, which has been

of Italian mother-tongue as compared with nearly a million persons of German mother-tongue who were born in the United States of native parentage (*Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, Series P-15, Nos. 2 and 3).

⁹ *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, Series P-3, No. 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Series P-10, No. 4.

¹¹ Carl Wittke, "The German Americans," *Common Ground*, I (summer, 1941), 8-17.

¹² At the outbreak of the war there were about two hundred German-language papers in this coun-

more restricted in its influence, was pro-Fascist before Pearl Harbor but has assumed a more sympathetic attitude toward democracy since our entrance into the war. In dealing with the foreign-language press and radio, the Foreign Language Division of the Office of War Information has attempted to bring these two agencies of communication in line with the war aims.¹³

The great body of German and Italian Americans are doubtless quite loyal to the United States, but there is seemingly a very active minority that is constantly attempting to win the sympathies of their fellow-countrymen for the country of their origin. The discrimination which has been practiced against many loyal members of these two groups provides fertile soil for the representatives of the Nazis and Fascists.¹⁴ That the activities of these representatives constitute a serious menace to the war effort has been shown by the drastic steps which the government has taken recently against the Nazi and Fascist organizations and their leaders.

The most drastic action against minorities who are regarded as potential enemies has been taken in regard to the Japanese.¹⁵ The removal of the Japanese, American-born as well as aliens, from the military area on the West Coast has destroyed the Japanese community and worked hardships on

try, or less than half the number at the outbreak of the first World War. According to a survey by Hilde Walter (*New Leader*, July 27, 1942), the majority of the German-language newspapers were pro-democratic, but there was a significant minority which was pro-Nazi, some of which have continued so since our entrance into the war.

¹³ It was recently charged by the Loyal Americans of German Descent that some German-language programs were aiding the Nazis (see *PM*, July 31, 1942, p. 20).

¹⁴ See *Employment Security Review*, Vol. IX (July, 1942), concerning employment problems of the foreign-born. See also Loula D. Lasker, "Friends or Enemies," *Survey Graphic*, XXI (June, 1942), 277-79, 300-302.

¹⁵ See *National Defense Migration: Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration*, Parts 29, 30, and 31 and Fourth Interim Report (Washington, 1942).

many loyal Japanese.¹⁶ The action against the Japanese has been protested by the Post War World Council on the ground that it was motivated in part by racial prejudice, but the War Department has insisted that national safety required such action and that it was taken in view of the fact that Americans on the West Coast were inflamed against all Japanese, "whether citizens or not, and irrespective of their good or evil records as citizens."¹⁷

II. MINORITIES FRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES

The minorities which are friendly to the United States or, because of their enmity to the Axis, may be presumed to be loyal to the United States are colored peoples. They include, first, the third of a million native American Indians who have remained isolated on the whole from American life. Next in numerical importance are the 77,504 Chinese, who have increased slightly during the past decade. Over a half of the Chinese are in California and a sixth in the state of New York. The third most important group is the 45,000 Filipinos, over two-thirds of whom are in California. The other two colored minorities, Hindus and Koreans, are relatively small and have decreased during the past decade.

There are two minority groups in the United States that straddle our differentiation between white and colored minorities. They are the Mexicans and the Puerto Ricans.¹⁸ In 1940 there were in the United States 1,861,400 white persons of the Spanish mother-tongue, one-fourth of whom were foreign born and the remainder equally divided between natives of native parentage and of foreign or mixed parentage. During

¹⁶ See George D. Nickel, "Evacuation, American Style," *Survey Midmonthly*, LXXVIII, 99-103.

¹⁷ Letter from the Secretary of War to Miss Mary W. Hillyer, of the Post War World Council.

¹⁸ Although the Mexicans are no longer given a special classification and are classified as white, this has not altered the attitudes of white Americans toward them because of their color. Likewise, although the majority of the Puerto Ricans are classified as white, they generally experience some exclusion because of their color.

the decade from 1930 to 1940 the number of persons of Spanish mother-tongue declined from 743,286 to 428,360, or 42.4 per cent. The vast majority of the population of Spanish mother-tongue was Mexican and was concentrated in the states of Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado and in the city of Los Angeles. The large group of persons of Spanish mother-tongue in the state of New York were Puerto Ricans, the majority of whom were located in New York City. Among the colored minorities we include the thirteen million Negroes

TABLE 1

NUMBER AND INCREASE OR DECREASE OF
COLORED MINORITIES IN THE UNITED
STATES: 1930-40

RACE	1940	1930	INCREASE OR DECREASE, 1930-40	
			Number	Per Cent
Japanese . . .	126,947	138,834	- 11,887	- 8.6
Indian	333,969	332,397	1,572	0.5
Chinese	77,504	74,954	2,550	3.4
Filipino	45,563	45,208	355	0.8
Hindu	2,495	3,130	- 725	- 23.2
Korean	1,711	1,860	- 149	- 8.0
All other . . .	788	780	8	1.0
Total	588,887	597,163	8,276	1.4

who are the chief concern of the present article.¹⁹

Although these various colored minorities are regarded as our allies, this fact has not changed fundamentally their relation to the rest of the population. While it is true that the Chinese have acquired a certain prestige and have been raised in the esteem of the American people, they are still ineligible for citizenship, and the social distance between them and the whites has not been markedly changed.²⁰ While the conquest of the Philip-

¹⁹ "The Negro group has ceased to exhibit the characteristics of a caste and has assumed rather the character of a racial or national minority" (R. E. Park, in Introduction to Bertram W. Doyle, *The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South* [Chicago, 1937], p. xxii).

²⁰ After considerable protest against the killing of a Chinese in a riot, when Chinese sailors at-

tempted to leave a British ship in New York City, the government has agreed to permit Chinese crews on British and Dutch ships shore leave (*PM*, July 31, 1942, p. 20).

pinas has made the Filipinos loyal allies, they continue to suffer discrimination in employment as well as in other phases of American life. Despite the improvement in our relations with Mexico and the good-neighbor policy, Mexicans are still the subject of much discrimination, requiring the attention of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice. The small Hindu minority has been vocal in seeking American support for Indian aspirations, while the still smaller Korean group has become articulate because of our war with Japan. The most vocal colored minority in our midst is the American Negro, who constitutes our largest minority.

III. THE AMERICAN NEGRO

The impact of the present war upon the American Negro presents a striking contrast to that of the first World War. Soon after the nation began its program of national defense, the militant mood of the Negro minority became apparent. This militant mood had been developing during the quarter of a century since the mass migrations from southern farms to metropolitan centers of the North. When the decision to support the democratic nations failed to include Negroes in the defense program, a march-on-Washington was organized by A. Phillip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping-Car Porters. After negotiations between the Administration and Randolph, the march-on-Washington was called off, and the President issued on June 25, 1941, Executive Order 8802.²¹ The Order reaffirmed the policy of nondiscrimination in government employment and forbade contractors handling government orders to discriminate against workers "because of race, creed, color, or national origin."²² In the same Order provision was made for the

tempted to leave a British ship in New York City, the government has agreed to permit Chinese crews on British and Dutch ships shore leave (*PM*, July 31, 1942, p. 20).

²¹ See Earl Brown, "American Negroes and the War," *Harper's*, April, 1942, pp. 548-50.

²² See President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, *Minorities in Defense* (Washington, D.C., 1941), pp. 15-16.

establishment of a Committee on Fair Employment Practice to carry out its purposes. Despite skepticism among some Negroes, Executive Order 8802 was generally hailed as the most significant declaration by the federal government concerning the Negro's status in American life since the Emancipation Proclamation. Since the entrance of our nation into the war, the Order has become for Negroes a covenant guaranteeing them equality and democracy as a part of the government's aims in the present war.

The purpose of the Order has not been realized today, though the Negro has made some progress in breaking down caste restrictions in employment. During the first World War, when there was a demand for large numbers of unskilled workers, Negroes succeeded in securing a place in industry; but during the years of the depression some of these gains were lost. When the national defense program was inaugurated, Negroes regained some lost ground, but they were still largely excluded from industrial employment because of caste restrictions maintained by the labor unions as well as the employers.²³ After our entrance into the war there was an increase in job opportunities for Negroes in industries where they had been traditionally employed, such as in the iron and steel and shipbuilding industries and in such government-owned and government-operated establishments as the United States Navy yards and the Army arsenals. According to Dr. Weaver, who was appointed director of the Negro Man Power Service of the War Man Power Commission, "the war industries have gradually followed the lead of the federal establishments in accepting Negro machine-shop trainees."²⁴ Moreover, because of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, Negro men and, lately, women are being employed in the airplane industry, which was originally opposed to the employment of Negroes.²⁵

²³ See Robert C. Weaver, "Racial Employment Trends in National Defense, Part I," *Phylon*, II, 3-24; and "Part II," *ibid.*, III, 22-30.

²⁴ Robert C. Weaver, "With the Negro's Help," *Atlantic Monthly*, CLXIX (June, 1942), 702.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 704-6.

Despite the gains which Negroes have made in breaking down the barriers in industry, a recent survey by the National Urban League reveals that considerable discrimination against Negroes in war industries still persists and that, because of this fact, a disproportionate number of Negroes are on relief in the cities of the country.²⁶ This situation is due partly to the refusal on the part of employers to hire Negroes and partly to the lack of provisions, especially in the southern states, for defense training courses for Negroes.²⁷ For example, in Atlanta, where there are fifteen defense training classes for white workers, the six thousand Negroes who have registered to work in the new Bell Aircraft plant near the city have vainly sought for nearly six months to secure training classes similar to those set up for white workers. In most cities of the North, the officials have accepted the principle that defense shall be open to all races, but Negroes still have difficulty in some cities in receiving the same training as white workers.

Negroes who have migrated to cities where defense industries are located have faced more acute housing problems than whites.²⁸ This has been caused by resistance to the normal expansion of the Negro community in these cities and to the lack of ade-

²⁶ *Report of Progress in the War Employment of Negro Labor* (New York: National Urban League, July, 1942). According to the United Charities in Chicago, 475 of the 791 industries in Chicago with defense contracts do not employ Negroes at all.

²⁷ In addition to the opposition of the authorities in southern states to training Negroes for skilled and semiskilled occupations, there are obstacles such as the lack of skilled workers among Negroes to serve as instructors; the failure of Negro educators to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the government; and the fact that Hampton Institute and Tuskegee Institute, which were founded to give the Negro vocational training, have not assumed the leadership in the movement for vocational education among Negroes.

²⁸ See *National Defense Migration: Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating National Defense Migration. House of Representatives. Part 23: St. Louis Hearings* (Washington, 1942), p. 8701; *Detroit Hearings* (Washington, 1941), pp. 7246-47; and *Baltimore Hearings* (Washington, 1941), pp. 5890, 5897, 5955, 6072-74, 6249, and 6253.

quate defense housing projects. Landlords have not failed to take advantage of the situation to exploit Negro tenants, who are generally packed in substandard houses. It is too soon to appraise the influence of such conditions and the war in general on Negro family and sex life. From general observations it appears that among Negroes as among other groups there is in this war as in other wars a relaxation of family morality.²⁹ Social agencies dealing with Negro families report that fewer families are applying for assistance because of improved employment opportunities. The general effect of improved economic conditions has not, however, been entirely favorable for family life. According to some reports, increase in work opportunities has tended to destroy family unity. Several agencies noted that, as women have secured employment outside the home, the children have been neglected, and some wives have left their families. Moreover, employment opportunities have enabled the older children to escape from parental authority. On the positive side it is reported that the Selective Service Act has caused Negro men to form legal unions or to seek legal means for severing marital ties, whereas they had formerly lived in common-law relationship with women or had deserted their wives.

The war has affected all institutions in the Negro community. If the results of a survey of Negro churches in Louisville, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia are representative of other cities, the war has occasioned some increase in church attendance, though not a corresponding increase in membership. Churches reporting a decline in attendance attributed it to Sunday war work. Most of the ministers continued to emphasize the "spiritual" values, peace, and the brotherhood of man. Most of the ministers reported that the gospel of Jesus Christ was adequate for the present crisis. One minister specified that he preached patriotism to the extent that it did not do violence to Christianity, while the majority of them were op-

posed to preaching hatred. A pastor of a highly educated congregation stated that his sermons dealt with the sorrow occasioned in families by the draft and with the aims of a constructive post-war peace. On the other hand, all except a few of the churches had organized activities to provide recreation and religious services for the soldiers or had provided for the meetings of air-raid wardens or Red Cross training.

The majority of Young Women's Christian Associations in various parts of the country reported that there has been an increase in membership. The increase in employment and better wages of the members had increased the income of some of these organizations. In cities to which women have migrated in quest of employment there has been a demand for dormitory space which only a few of the associations could provide. Practically all the associations reported that counseling services had increased, because newcomers are seeking advice concerning employment and especially housing facilities. All the associations had modified their programs to include recreation for soldiers, consumer education, defense classes, first-aid courses, and training in special techniques such as stenography and operation of comptometers. The Young Men's Christian Association reported a decline in membership because of the draft and a decrease as well as a large turnover in personnel. In some cases the loss of the younger members had been offset by an increase in the number of older members. These organizations have been besieged by applicants for dormitory and housing facilities and have modified their programs to meet the recreational and other needs of draftees.

Reports from twenty-five Negro colleges indicate that three-fourths of them have lost in some cases as much as 25 per cent of their male students because of the Selective Service Act and to a less extent because of job opportunities. The decline in the enrollment in Negro colleges in the lower South was attributed by some administrators to the fact that Negro college students had been drafted because of the illiteracy of the

²⁹ See Willard Waller, *War and the Family* (New York, 1940), *passim*.

Negro population.³⁰ All the twenty-five colleges had lost a number of faculty members, amounting in one case to 10 per cent of the faculty. Four-fifths of the colleges have modified their curriculums in order to give courses preparing students for practical defense work, such as radio and physics, or defense courses. A fourth of the colleges have extended the length of the school year either by adopting the quarter system or by extending the length of the summer session. One college was emphasizing the training of women, and another had worked out a plan for a split-week program whereby the male students could work in a defense plant.

The present war has brought to the surface the changes that have taken place in the Negro's attitude toward his status in America during the past quarter of a century. Although the first World War was a struggle for democracy, the most radical leaders expressed the faith that the Negro's status would be improved after the war and advocated the "closing of ranks" and forgetting of wrongs and injustices. During the last twenty-five years the isolation of the Negro has been broken down, and he has been brought into contact with a larger world of ideas. The traditional relationship of loyalty to whites has been destroyed, and race consciousness and loyalty to his race have taken its place. In northern cities he has enjoyed a greater degree of civic equality, he has learned to use his political power, and during the depression he learned the power of mass struggle. A new leadership with more education and sophistication has come into existence. All these changes are being reflected in the attitude of the Negro toward the present war.³¹ The appearance

³⁰ An editorial in the *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, commenting on the inadequate provisions for Negro education, stated: "It is no wonder Negro draftees are being turned down by draft boards because they do not have as much as a fourth grade education. We thought we were smart in getting by with this neglect staring us in the face. Now we are having to send our own boys as cannon fodder for the Germans in order to fill up the gap left by Negro illiterates" (reproduced in *Pittsburgh Courier* [Louisiana edition], July 4, 1942, p. 14).

³¹ "Because he must fight discrimination to fight for his country and to earn a living, the Negro

of the new weekly, the *People's Voice*, which, though published in New York City, is widely read, is indicative of the present militant mood of the Negro. In fact, throughout the country Negro newspapers report an increase in circulation, and the Associated Negro Press reports that five additional papers are buying their services. Some of the larger newspapers report an increase of as much as 20 per cent in circulation. While the newspapers support the country in the war, they are carrying on a vigorous fight for democracy and equality for the Negro at the present time. After the attack upon Pearl Harbor they toned down their demands and pledged loyalty to the country's cause but immediately resumed the fight against discrimination and oppression. Under the sponsorship of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a "Double V" campaign, "Victory at Home and Victory Abroad," has received wide support.

The Negro's struggle for equality and his attitude toward the present war have been influenced to a large extent by the racial aspect of the conflict. Though Negroes as a group are aware of the implications of Fascist racial theories for their own future status, many Negroes would like to see the Axis powers punish England for her treatment of the darker races. In fact, many Negroes view the present war as a struggle among the white imperialist nations for the control of the world's resources. As indicated in two magazine articles, the arrest of a Negro in Philadelphia for calling a Negro a fool for fighting in a "white man's" war was more significant than was indicated by this isolated case. Both articles defined the present war as a struggle of the darker races, including the American Negro, against white arrogance and imperialism.³² From

to-day is angry, resentful, and utterly apathetic about the War" (Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 546). See Kenneth B. Clark, "Morale among Negroes," in *Civilian Morale*, ed. Goodwin Watson (New York, 1942), pp. 228-49.

³² In Adam C. Powell, Jr., "Is This a 'White Man's War'?" *Common Sense*, XI (April, 1942), 111-13, the writer states that "Hitler was, and is, just another name for Cole Blease, Gene Talmadge and The Man Bilbo." In Roi Ottley, "A White

the comments of Negroes in every part of the country as well as the tone and opinions in the Negro press, it is apparent that the sympathies of American Negroes are on the side of the darker races. They do not put Japan in the same class as Germany, for they believe that Japan is fighting the battle of the darker races, whether or not it is her intention. The Negro's conception of the present war as a struggle of the darker races, including American Negroes, has received support from whites.³³ The outstanding support of this conception of the war has come from Pearl Buck, who has reiterated the theme in a number of addresses and articles. Three weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor she wrote in a letter to the *New York Times*:

For in many educated colored Americans hopelessness results not in simple crime but in a rejection of patriotism. There are those, and some of them leaders, who favor Japan in the present crisis, seeing in Japan the future leader of all colored peoples in the world. There are those who prefer Hitler to British imperialism feeling that, if English rule over colored races

can be destroyed, then Hitler can be dealt with afterward as the less established evil. At home and abroad the white race has the choice to make—whether it will follow the totalitarian principle of ruler and subject races, even to the inevitable end of rebellion and the worst of wars, or whether peoples of all colors will decide to work out ways of living in mutual harmony and freedom.³⁴

A second letter addressed by Miss Buck to the Negro press several months after our nation entered the war, warning Negroes against the results of a Japanese victory, was not received so enthusiastically as the first letter.³⁵

The march-on-Washington organization has become an incipient mass movement, gathering within itself the present upsurge of the Negro masses.³⁶ Every attack upon the Negro's rights as a citizen or affront to his status as a human being has provoked protests. When the government hesitated to turn over to Negro occupants a housing project designed for Negroes in Detroit, it aroused indignation in various parts of the country and resulted in rioting in Detroit. The initial refusal of the Red Cross to accept Negro blood and its later conditional acceptance by segregating Negro blood have aroused much bitterness among Negroes. There have been conflicts between whites and Negroes resulting in the killing of Negro soldiers in army camps in New Jersey, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Louisiana. These incidents as well as minor incidents among civilians are indicative of the mood of the Negro in the present war. Throughout the South there is developing considerable tension between the races as the Negro is beginning to resist the caste restrictions which

Folks' War?" *Common Ground*, II (spring, 1942), 28-31, the author points out that the attitudes of the United Nations are not "reassuring to darker peoples, who, in spite of inadequate communication, are developing a broad unity because of common oppression by imperialistic nations."

³³ An editorial entitled "A Minority of Our Own" in the *New York Times*, April 3, 1942, contained the following: "If the United Nations win this war the principle of world-wide legal equality of races will have to be recognized. Since this is largely a war of ideas, and since racial equality before the law has become one of the central ideas on the democratic side, we can almost say that this principle, in itself, may be the deciding factor. The Chinese, the East Indians, the numerous African peoples and many other groups are on our side, or would be so if they were completely convinced that we mean what we say by equality just as unreservedly as the Nazis mean what they say by inequality. . . . But we Americans cannot very well talk convincingly in these terms unless we prove our sincerity in our own country." The columnist, Westbrook Pegler, who once accused the Negro press of creating dissatisfaction among Negro soldiers, stated recently that if he were a Negro he "would live in constant fury" because of the discrimination practiced against the Negro.

³⁴ See Pearl S. Buck, *American Unity and Asia* (New York, 1942), p. 17.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-42.

³⁶ While the leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People recognize the significance of this upsurge of the masses and cooperate with the march-on-Washington movement, they are not disposed to absorb the movement but continue their more conservative program. See Horace R. Cayton's account of the thirty-third convention of the N.A.A.C.P. in Los Angeles in the *Washington Pittsburgh Courier*, July 25, 1942.

the whites are determined to maintain. It is against the "caste system maintained by the southern states" that the march-on-Washington movement focuses its attack.³⁷

The recent barbarous beating and jailing of Roland Hayes and his wife and the statement on the part of Governor Talmadge that Negroes who do not like segregation in Georgia should stay out of the state are indicative of the attitude of a large section of the white South toward the Negro's demand for democracy.³⁸ On the other hand, the liberal press of the South has been disposed to treat the Negro with greater consideration during the war. For example, the *News and Observer* in Raleigh, North Carolina, has adopted the policy of using "Mrs." in referring to upper-class Negro women. But even the most liberal southern newspapers, such as the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, warn the Negroes against attempting to break down racial segregation, which they defend on the ground that it is a part of the southern mores. Because of Mark Etheridge's unexpected defense of racial segregation, Negro leaders have demanded that he resign from the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice.³⁹ In the border states, especially the District of Columbia, there has been a marked change in the manner in which the Negro is treated in the newspapers. Pictures of Negroes are presented along with whites, and news items concerning Negroes are presented in practically the

same manner as similar items concerning whites. *PM* has been outstanding among the northern newspapers which have been sympathetic, on the whole, toward the Negro's demand for equal treatment.

Taking the country as a whole, one may observe many tendencies to relax the caste restrictions upon Negroes. First should be noted the partial relaxation of the traditional restrictions upon Negroes in the Navy. In the field of government employment Negroes have secured more white-collar and professional positions than at any time in the history of the country. The present negotiations concerning Negro players on major-league teams are indicative of similar changes. Even more important from the standpoint of the economic condition of Negroes is their employment on a large scale as motormen and conductors on streetcars in Detroit and on the buses in New York City. If the present fight for the repeal of the poll tax is successful, it will have far-reaching effects upon the political status of the Negro.

While the present war shows the extent to which "our society has not yet been fully knit together into a single, integrated, national unit," it reveals at the same time that our democratic tradition has prevented us from becoming a hopelessly culturally fragmented nation.⁴⁰ For the minorities who have cultural roots in the Old World, the imperfectly realized democratic ideals of the United States hold a greater promise than the new order in Europe. The hope of American life has been the basis of our national unity. Even the Negro, who has formed a separate caste, has shared this hope. If because of his greater sophistication he now carries on his struggle for the rights of other American citizens, his battle is not a negative force in the present war. The gains which he is able to make in this war will strengthen the will of the nation to achieve victory in the democratic struggle abroad.

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³⁷ This organization holds that the caste system is the source of Negroes' disabilities and demands the end of "Jim Crow in education, in housing, in transportation and in every other social, economic and political privilege" (*Eight Point Program*). At large mass meetings attended by 20,000 persons in New York City and 17,000 persons in Chicago, the demand for equality and democracy was voiced by the leaders of the movement.

³⁸ See *Time*, XI (July 27, 1942), 17. See also *Washington Afro-American*, July 25, 1942, for Mr. Hayes's statement.

³⁹ When Negro leaders protested the recent transfer of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice to the War Man Power Commission, the President reassured them in a public statement that there would be no abatement of the Committee's fight against discrimination in employment.

⁴⁰ Wirth, "Morale and Minority Groups," *op. cit.*, p. 416.