

A Disturbing and Ominous Voice
from a Different Shore:
Japanese Radio Propaganda and Its Impact
on the US Government's Treatment
of Japanese Americans during World War II

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INTRODUCTION

On February 19, 1942, nearly two months after Japan's sudden bombing of Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, which forcibly removed approximately 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast to inland camps. About one-third of them were first-generation immigrants from Japan, or "Issei," while the remaining two-thirds were citizens of the United States by birthright, or second-generation "Nisei." For many, mass uprooting and confinement continued until the end of the war.¹

Since at least the early 1980s, the legitimacy of the federal government's wartime Japanese American policy has been denied almost unanimously

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by leading scholars and critics as well as the general public. As a result of the “redress” movement that progressed from the early 1970s to 1980s, a national consensus came to be formed to the effect that mass incarceration was a serious wrongdoing that needed to be rectified. By 1982, the government-sponsored Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) conducted comprehensive research and concluded that the mistake occurred due to “race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership.” In 1988, redress was finally enacted into law. Accordingly, an official apology and compensation were offered to all survivors of mass incarceration.²

However, what is commonly understood today as an infamous “dark spot” in American history was at the time accepted widely as an appropriate internal security measure. With authorization by the president, the army implemented mass incarceration under the name of “military necessity,” and the rationale was upheld by the majority of the Supreme Court. Coupled with long-standing hostility and prejudice against those originating from Asia, the federal government’s wholesale encampment of Japanese Americans enjoyed public popularity, too.³

Previous studies have shown that opposition was rarely heard at the time, even from the most liberal, pro-minority segments of society. Certain individuals and groups expressed humanitarian concerns and even raised critical questions. In a broader view, however, the overwhelming majority tacitly or openly approved of the coercive segregation of a small ethnic minority group that the military authorities categorically labeled as “potentially dangerous enemy aliens.”⁴

Meanwhile, academic literature, despite its enormous volume, has not paid due attention to one less visible, but exceptionally influential, voice of dissent: Japanese propaganda. The purpose of this article is to fill this gap by examining what a Japanese short-wave radio propaganda network known as Radio Tokyo said about the federal government’s treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II and what impact it rendered on government officials.⁵

When Pearl Harbor was attacked in December 1941, Japan owned two principal channels of foreign propaganda: wire service by the national news agency Domei and short-wave radio broadcasting by Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK). Controlled directly by the military-led Cabinet Information Bureau (Naikaku Joho Kyoku), both Domei and NHK served as Tokyo’s official voice throughout the war.⁶

The short-wave broadcasting of NHK, better known as Radio Tokyo,

was one of the most influential, widely recognized voices of wartime Japan around the world. Beginning from June 1, 1935, NHK kept increasing its short-wave broadcasts as Japan thrust its desire to build the so-called Greater Far Eastern Co-Prosperity Sphere over Asia. By 1941, NHK was running daily more than twenty-five hours of overseas programs in sixteen languages. Radio propaganda expanded even further as Japan entered World War II. By November 1943, the duration of broadcasting exceeded thirty-two hours daily, and the number of languages increased to twenty-five.⁷

Due to the unprecedented and wide-spreading nature of the research question, some practical boundaries have to be set here.

First, this article's time frame covers basically only the first year after the outbreak of war in December 1941, or the initial phase of mass incarceration.

Second, this article's main focus is on Japanese radio broadcasts that referred to the overwhelming majority of Japanese Americans herded into the "relocation centers" administered by the War Relocation Authority (WRA). Propaganda specifically referring to the few thousand Japanese nationals who were placed separately in the "internment camps" run by the Justice Department and the War Department is basically excluded.

Finally, this article examines only the short-wave overseas radio programs of Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK), the Broadcasting Corporation of Japan. Other forms and means of propaganda are not analyzed.

This article uses a variety of primary sources as well as previous literature. Especially important are the transcripts of Japanese short-wave broadcasts made by the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS) of the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC), a federal agency that monitored radio propaganda from abroad. These transcripts were all kept in English. Japanese-language programs were translated by bilingual staffers of the FCC. Archival records of other government agencies in charge of propaganda, intelligence activities, and Japanese American mass incarceration are also utilized.

THE US GOVERNMENT'S MONITORING OF FOREIGN RADIO PROPAGANDA

Seeing Japan as a potential enemy, the United States government had been carefully "listening to" the rapidly growing Radio Tokyo programming prior to Pearl Harbor. Monitoring agencies included the

Federal Communications Commission, the Office of the Coordinator of Information, and the intelligence branches of the US Army and Navy. The sudden outbreak of war inevitably intensified their monitoring activities, which produced voluminous intelligence material for various government institutions up until Japan accepted unconditional surrender in 1945.

The federal agency that most systematically monitored international radio propaganda was the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service of the FCC. The FBIS was formerly called the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS), which was established in February 1941 and was reorganized into the FBIS in July 1942. Throughout the war, as the army's internal memorandum put it, the FBIS "provided United States Government war agencies a global coverage of radio output of news and intelligence from enemy, neutral and allied transmitters."⁸

The FBIS confidentially translated, transcribed, and analyzed a great amount of short-wave broadcasts beamed across the world. As of August 1941, it was monitoring from 600,000 to 900,000 words of radio propaganda daily. Its monitoring service covered a variety of programs. "Speeches, newscasts, and entertainment to the inclusion of some musical programs, are carefully watched for intelligence and trends, which are reported immediately to Government officials responsible for counter-propaganda or other action," explained the FCC's general information release. To assume such an immense and highly specialized duty, the FBIS mobilized hundreds of technicians, translators, and stenographers. Bilingual Japanese Americans were among its employees.⁹

The intelligence activities of the FBIS contributed to the national war efforts in various ways. Its transcripts and reports were regularly sent to and actually utilized by a number of government institutions, including the Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), intelligence division (G-2) of the US Army, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Office of Censorship, Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Office of War Information (OWI), War Relocation Authority (WRA), and Western Defense Command and Fourth Army (WDC). As R. Keith Kane, an intelligence official of the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), which was later integrated into the OWI, stated, "The Monitoring Service [of the FBIS] has become a valuable weapon for the ideological war against the Axis and is undoubtedly destined to be one of the most useful instruments of grand strategy."¹⁰

Intelligence material procured from the Axis short-wave broadcasts was deemed especially valuable because sources of information were so

scarce. In the words of the FCC, “a considerable amount of news and intelligence information comes over the short-wave which is not available from other sources, and which must be transmitted immediately to the proper Government officials. The value of short-wave sources increases as it becomes more difficult to obtain news from various countries by other means.” Radio Tokyo was thus given keen attention by government officials, although they understood well that propaganda was in its nature biased in favor of the disseminator.¹¹

FOCUS ON INTERNAL RACIAL CONFLICTS

From the beginning, Japanese propagandists identified racial inequities and discord within the United States as one of the most desirable themes for propaganda. From this basic strategy many race-related radio programs developed. Saul K. Padover, an analyst of international psychological warfare, wrote in 1943 that Radio Tokyo’s exploitation of domestic racial problems was a serious menace to the national interest because “there is more than a grain of truth” in it.¹²

Government officials in charge of propaganda and intelligence activities were well aware of Radio Tokyo’s intention to widen internal divisions in/ among the Allies. The OFF’s Bureau of Intelligence examined the general tendencies of Axis propaganda from March to April 1942 and found that “Axis broadcasters make vigorous efforts . . . to magnify the differences between racial and religious groups. . . . The numerous nationalistic groups in this country are represented as the victims of discrimination and maltreatment.” Another internal report by the same office observed: “The strategy of Axis short wave propaganda—to divide country from country, class from class, race from race, religion from religion—remains the same. Only its tactics change as Axis propagandists come upon or manufacture new incidents and issues.”¹³

After more than fifty years since the end of the war, scholars have come to maintain that World War II was a major turning point for government policymakers in that they came to weigh domestic racial problems in considering international policies. Mary L. Dudziak in her 2000 book *Cold War Civil Rights* wrote: “During the war years the idea that a conflict inhered in American ideology and practice first gained wide currency.” Justin Hart has shown in more detail that officials of the State Department and OWI were concerned that enemy propaganda highlighting the unfavorable plight of Hispanic Americans and African Americans would

harm the nation's image abroad and eventually its foreign relations. As Hart explains, "information from abroad could shape debates about race in the United States; those debates would, in turn, play out before a global audience." Officials in charge of domestic policies such as Japanese American mass incarceration had similar concerns.¹⁴

RADIO TOKYO ON MASS INCARCERATION

The federal government's decision to single out one particular minority group and send them en masse to distant camps gave Radio Tokyo many opportunities to discredit the United States. As President Roosevelt in February 1942 authorized the army to execute mass incarceration, Japanese propagandists quickly jumped on it. A confidential report compiled by the FBI pointed out that "discrimination against the Japanese regardless of citizenship is making them vulnerable to short wave racial propaganda coming from the Japanese Broadcasting Company in Tokyo, Japan. This propaganda is to the effect that war between the Axis and [A]llies is based upon the difference of race rather than upon any political ideals."¹⁵

As the army actually carried out mass uprooting and confinement, it inevitably invited more propaganda attacks from Tokyo. Examining the transcript of the April 4 broadcast provided by the FCC, the OFF's internal memorandum summarized it as saying that, "while Japan is exerting herself to assure the comfort and well-being of enemy nationals in her care, the US is herding its alien internees from their homes to isolated regions of Montana and Arizona. The radio charges, further, that Japanese are being deprived of their constitutional rights."¹⁶

Radio Tokyo rebutted every justification or excuse for mass incarceration, particularly the "military necessity" rationale. A typical argument can be seen in the May 1 broadcast, which stated:

The official version [is that] the evacuation plan is designed to assure military security, but such is a phony excuse in view of the fact that a relatively few unarmed Japanese civilians surrounded by millions of Americans never constitute a military menace to the entire Pacific coast of the United States.

How could a "democratic" nation possibly indulge itself with such an "undemocratic" act? After raising the question, Radio Tokyo charged that "all this indicates 'good-bye to civilization,' for the Japanese in the United

States.”¹⁷

Radio Tokyo often addressed mass incarceration as evidence of moral superiority of Japan. In so doing, a stark contrast was made between Washington’s “barbaric” acts and Japan’s self-declared “generous” and “fair” treatment of US citizens in its hands. For instance, the March 5 broadcast alleged:

Japan’s fundamental policy towards civilians in the occupied areas is to allow them all freedom possible and every consideration and protection. This policy must mark a vivid contrast to the barbaric savagery of treatment by the US Government of an unfortunate percentage of its own citizens who have committed no sin, but made the fatal mistake of being born of the Japanese race and living in America.

The June 1 broadcast went so far as to say that Americans in Japan “roam streets” while the Japanese in the United States were “lynched.”¹⁸

To impress on listeners the greater morality of Japan, Radio Tokyo quoted “eyewitnesses” of Washington’s “inhuman acts.” Such “reliable” accounts became available due to the agreement between the two governments to exchange repatriates. On August 20, 1942, approximately 1,500 Japanese nationals living in the United States at the time of Pearl Harbor returned home aboard the *Asama Maru*. About two weeks later, on September 7, Radio Tokyo declared:

A very inhuman treatment of Japanese internees in the US by the American police has been brought to light by the Japanese who have returned here aboard the exchange liner. We should also like to inform the American people that, on the basis of reliable evidence, we are ready to disclose more about the inhuman acts of the American authorities toward the Japanese internees.¹⁹

Radio Tokyo kept its promise. Only three days later, on September 10, the following commentary was aired:

No words can adequately describe the reaction that is prevalent in the minds of the Japanese people today over the reports of indefensible torture that our nationals in the US were subjected to following the outbreak of the war. These reports are by no means relayed messages,

but eyewitness accounts brought home by those who were fortunate enough to return home on the repatriation vessels.²⁰

On another occasion, Radio Tokyo cast a narrator who allegedly visited a prisoner of war camp in Japan. In the December 18, 1942, program titled "Light from the East," the narrator described how favorably American captives were treated in Japan as opposed to the Japanese and their families living miserably in the United States. To the American audience, the narrator professed:

That is how Japan is treating your prisoners. American civilians who are interned are being accorded even better treatment and what did surprise me is that only a small fraction of non-combatant Americans in the Far East are in internment camp. Wherever possible the Japanese authorities are permitting Americans to go about their daily lives in a normal manner. How different this is from the shameful treatment to which your authorities are subjecting Japanese non-combatants [in the United States].²¹

It should be noted, however, that in the above broadcast and many others Radio Tokyo apparently overstated Japan's actual treatment of American civilians and prisoners of war. Japan's inappropriate treatment of captives has been documented in detail by a number of scholars and survivors.²²

In a similar vein, Radio Tokyo insisted that the United States was bullying Japanese Americans because Japan was winning the war. This type of propaganda appeared mostly during the first several months after Pearl Harbor when the Japanese military was in fact taking the upper hand over the United States. The aforementioned "Light from the East" commentary that was aired on November 3 contended that "Roosevelt suffered because of war losses, so he got revenge by rounding them up. The Roosevelt Administration has lost all sense of reason because of military defeats."²³

Radio Tokyo criticized not only the fundamental injustice of mass incarceration but also the policy's more specific aspects. Severe living conditions around or within camps were frequently mentioned. This type of propaganda increased around mid-1942 as the US Army completed transfers of uprooted Japanese Americans into hastily constructed camps.

Manzanar in California, the first camp, which opened in late March 1942, was Radio Tokyo's favorite target of attack. In a serial program

titled “American Pictures” that was broadcast sometime in 1942, Japanese propagandists complained that the environment around Manzanar was far below the bearable level for any humans to live in.

No one had ever heard of Owens Valley [where the Manzanar camp is located] before. [It is] beyond the desert of Mojave and beyond ranges of the Sierra Nevada. East of this spot there is an area bespeaking of tragedy of California—Death Valley. It is desert about 100 miles long and 30 miles wide. So barren and is below sea level. . . . Roosevelt and his henchmen are treating the Japanese in America terribly. Roosevelt has made the Japanese go to the Valley of Death.

Radio Tokyo added that the deadly Manzanar camp symbolized the immaturity of the United States as a civilized nation: “For the Americans this is a great disgrace. They are going against everything their ancestors cherished. We have overestimated American civilization.”²⁴

As more information about Manzanar became available through public sources, Japanese accusations also became more detailed. The October 10 broadcast, for example, argued that “the Japanese population in California has to lead a semi-primitive life in the so-called reception center of Manzanar. All Japanese evacuees were stripped of almost all their properties, except cooking utensils, clothing, tools of trade, and bedding, which it has taken them scores of years to procure.” Citing an article published in *Life* magazine, Radio Tokyo continued: “Although the American authorities called Manzanar a reception center, *Life* admitted this is no idyllic country club. It is [a] concentration camp.”²⁵

At the same time, Radio Tokyo kept pressing Washington to investigate and disclose the actual state of Manzanar and other camps. The September 16 commentary demanded:

Cases of outright robbery have been committed by officials of the detention and internment camps on the [Japanese] nationals who were herded away from their homes. . . . If the American people are sincere in their claims to humanitarianism, [they should let someone] investigate the actual conditions in these detention and internment camps.

Radio Tokyo then asserted that “the American people are kept in complete ignorance of the things that take place behind their backs” and that “it is

easy enough to preach the humanitarian rights of other people, especially when one is ignorant of such violations within his own country.”²⁶

Not surprisingly, Radio Tokyo reacted furiously when a large-scale uprising occurred in Manzanar in early December 1942. After presenting a factual summation that “a group of internees was fired on by the guard with a series of tear gas bombs causing the death of one and injuries to several others,” one broadcast contested in a decided tone:

The forcible evacuation of the Japanese nationals from the Pacific Coast area is in itself a violation of international law not to mention the brutal treatment accorded these nationals. . . . The American government leaders should at least conduct this war on a basis that will always mark them as clean fighters and not as ones who would vent their wrath upon such innocent people as the interned Japanese nationals.²⁷

The so-called Manzanar incident was a mass disturbance that developed in the camp when some two thousand inmates protested against the arrest and imprisonment of one popular man named Harry Ueno. Ueno was charged with beating a pro-camp administration Japanese American leader, who was suspected of being an “informant” (or “*inu*” in Japanese) for the camp authority and FBI. In order to silence the crowd that grew emotional and aggressive as they requested the immediate release of Ueno, on the afternoon of December 6 the military police sprayed tear gas and eventually shot into the crowd, killing two and injuring many others.²⁸

Shocking events such as this one frustrated the federal government by creating a spiral of criticism, at first causing sensational coverage by the domestic news media, then provoking Radio Tokyo to repeated condemnations, which further fueled the domestic press coverage of Tokyo’s angry allegations. An internal survey conducted by the OFF ascertains that the US news media customarily depended on Radio Tokyo and other Axis radio broadcasts for some of their news. The survey analyzed twenty-three major metropolitan newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Washington Times-Herald* from March 8 to 14, 1942, finding that 13 percent of the total column inches of news about the Axis was taken from short-wave material beamed from those enemy nations. There existed no restrictions against listening to foreign radio broadcasts, even those disseminated by the belligerent powers.²⁹

One may find it ironical that the constitutional principle of press freedom thus gave assistance to enemy propagandists abroad. Another confidential study of the OFF pointed out: “The enemy’s most direct avenue of communication with the American people, however, is by the shortwave radio—an instrument the effectiveness of which is multiplied by the currency given to its messages through regular American media of information.” Sherman H. Dryer, director of radio productions at the University of Chicago, also wrote in his 1942 classic, *Radio in Wartime*: “A free press is often an aid to the broadcaster, for it helps to carry his propaganda to a secondary audience. In this regard, the American press has been of inestimable help to the Axis, for it prints regularly ‘news’ received from enemy radio stations.”³⁰

THREAT OF REPRISAL AND CONCERNED GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

What bothered government officials most, however, was that Radio Tokyo indicated repeatedly that Japan might mistreat Americans in its captivity as a reprisal against mass incarceration. To take one typical example, the September 7, 1942, broadcast reminded, apparently conscious of the US government officials monitoring their programs:

The American people should remember that many Americans who are your relatives or friends are still interned in Japan and also remaining in various parts of the Greater East Asia. We sincerely hope that the US Government authorities will seriously reflect upon themselves for what they have done to the Japanese internees and tender sincere apologies to the Japanese.

Three days later, on September 10, Radio Tokyo dispatched an even more alarming message: “Let us remind you that there are many of your friends and relatives who reside in this part of the world, either as internees, like our nationals in your country, and a still larger number of war prisoners.” Similar warnings continued to be aired thereafter.³¹

Those threatening words were more than enough to alert officials in Washington, who had been mindful of the danger of retaliation from the beginning of the war. On December 9, 1941, only two days after Pearl Harbor, Attorney General Francis Biddle made an announcement that the FBI’s warrant-based arrests of nationals of the Axis powers were conducted with utmost carefulness so as not to endanger the welfare of

Americans in Axis hands.

The Department of Justice for some time has been preparing for this emergency. Those who have been apprehended have been carefully selected and will be dealt with according to prepared plans. These plans have been made in order to avoid disturbance and confusion, which would inevitably lead to retaliatory measures by the governments of these nationals towards Americans under the jurisdiction of those governments.

From this consideration did Biddle request the state and local law enforcement authorities to refrain from taking direct, arbitrary actions against aliens.³²

Reflecting the seriousness of the federal government's concern, next day, on December 10, the Attorney General issued another public statement that explicitly insured proper treatment of the nationals of the Axis nations: "[Aliens] may be assured, indeed, that every effort will be made to protect them from any discrimination or abuse. This assurance is given not only in justice and decency to the loyal non-citizens in this country but also in the hope that it may spare American citizens in enemy countries unjust retaliation."³³

As a matter of course, officials responsible for handling Japanese Americans were highly alarmed by Radio Tokyo's intimidation. Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy was one of them. In June 1942, McCloy requested the American National Red Cross to conduct a "prompt and thorough survey" of the army-controlled temporary "assembly centers." McCloy feared that a recent article published in the liberal weekly magazine *New Republic* regarding poor camp conditions might be picked up by enemy propagandists and, even worse, result in retaliatory actions. The article "Concentration Camp: US Style," written by Ted Nakashima, a second-generation Japanese at the Puyallup Assembly Center in Washington state, read in part: "The resettlement center is actually a penitentiary. . . . The food and sanitation problems are the worst. . . . Can this be the same America we left a few weeks ago? . . . I can't take it!"³⁴

Being well aware of Radio Tokyo's tireless efforts to play up the issue, McCloy admitted bluntly that Japanese propaganda and its threat of reprisal were pressing concerns for the military. In his memorandum to the Red Cross dated June 19, McCloy wrote:

The War Department has been disturbed at the publication in a recent issue of the "New Republic" of an article by a Japanese, which is definitely and, we feel, unfairly critical of conditions in the evacuation centers. It seems highly probable that this article may be cited in Axis propaganda, and it might conceivably be used as justification for the mistreatment of American prisoners in the custody of the Japanese.

McCloy added that an objective investigation was therefore necessary in the interests of not only Japanese Americans in camps but also American citizens abroad held by Japanese authorities: "Care has been exercised not only from humane considerations, but also because of the desire to set within this country a high standard . . . as an inducement to the Japanese to exercise a similar consideration for American citizens who have been interned by them."³⁵

Besides military officials, civilian staffers of the War Relocation Authority also found Japanese propaganda extremely disturbing. The WRA was a federal agency created by the president's Executive Order 9120, signed on March 18, 1942. The WRA took over the responsibility from the army to take care of uprooted Japanese Americans in permanent "relocation centers" throughout the war.

Archival records reveal that the WRA was regularly receiving up-to-date radio broadcasts from Japan and making policies accordingly. A short time after the authority was created, an information officer made a request of the Office of the Coordinator of Information: "We would be especially interested in knowing from time to time what the Axis radio and other propaganda outlets are saying about the alien resettlement program in this country and also in learning what sort of treatment is being accorded to the United States citizens caught behind the Axis lines." The WRA was frequently contacting the FCC, too.³⁶

In fact, the camp authority's highest-ranking officials admitted that they were highly mindful of Axis propaganda and the danger of reprisals. The first national WRA director Milton S. Eisenhower stated confidentially: "Our enemies are watching us even more closely than our friends—they are watching and waiting for any opportunity to turn our mistakes to their profit. . . . And, they are watching for pretexts—even the slightest will serve their purpose—to take terrible, unspeakable revenge upon [US citizens]." Sometime later, Eisenhower's successor, Dillon S. Myer, remarked: "Ever since the time of the evacuation, we have been aware that our progress is being watched by the Japanese government and that

it might provide a pattern for the treatment of American nationals—both soldiers and civilians—in Japanese hands.”³⁷

Primary sources further indicate that the WRA did consider Radio Tokyo’s threat of reprisal as an essential factor in its decision making. The agency’s internal policy guideline, “A Statement of Guiding Principles of the War Relocation Authority,” reflects the impact of Japanese propaganda. The statement read:

Steps which this government takes to suppress or discriminate against the people now in relocation centers give weight to the enemy’s argument that the [Allies] are waging a race war. This argument is used in propaganda directed at the peoples of the Pacific areas, and others whose collaboration with the [Allies] can help to speed up the day of victory.

Repressive or discriminatory treatment of people of Japanese ancestry in relocation centers will be used by the Japanese militarists as a pretext for reprisals against American prisoners of war and American civilians held by the Japanese government.

Radio propaganda beamed from Tokyo certainly affected the framing of the fundamental principles as well as the actual practice of mass incarceration.³⁸

Before concluding this article, it should be noted for the sake of contextualization that the WRA was then facing quite opposite accusations from some domestic critics that Japanese Americans in camps were “pampered” and “coddled.” At the forefront of this controversy were the anti-Japanese Congress members of the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities (the so-called Dies Committee). National WRA director Myer once refuted these charges: “They accuse us of pampering and coddling because we have not allowed the brutality of the Japanese enemy to influence our policies and program. I say to them: No, we have not taken Japan as a model—thank God!” Myer went on to say: “We are working to the best of our ability to avoid conditions and incidents that might encourage the Japanese enemy to inflict more suffering on Americans imprisoned by them.”³⁹

Government officials in charge of mass confinement were thus caught between conflicting voices from inside and outside the national borders. Constantly feeling the pressure of Japanese propaganda threatening reprisals, they had to handle at the same time an opposite adversary at

home. As national WRA director Eisenhower correctly observed as early as March 1942, “the evacuation and relocation of Japanese is a touchy and difficult task. . . . The program will require the full measure of tolerance and carefully weighed judgment, . . . bear[ing] in mind not only the domestic, but also the foreign repercussions of the manner in which Japanese evacuees are handled by the Government.”⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

From the earliest phase of the war, Radio Tokyo saw the federal government’s discriminatory policy toward Japanese Americans as a bonanza of propaganda opportunities. With the ultimate intent to widen domestic and international divisions among races, Japanese short-wave radio propaganda took advantage of the mass incarceration policy to discredit the United States and, at the same time, to proclaim Japanese superiority in both morality and military power. For militaristic Japan, mass incarceration was a sort of propaganda gift.

Radio Tokyo made various efforts to enhance the credibility and influence of its own claims. For example, it quoted “eyewitness” accounts of those who returned to Japan from the United States on the exchange ships. On other occasions, Japanese radio broadcasters cited articles published in the US news media. Such techniques made Radio Tokyo’s accusations even more specific and detailed. Extreme living conditions around or within the Manzanar camp in California were frequently mentioned. At the same time, the American press often relied on Axis radio broadcasts for news, and this gave further assistance to Japanese propagandists.

While federal government officials from the beginning were attentive to what Radio Tokyo was saying, they became especially anxious when enemy propagandists implied that there might be reprisals against Americans in Japanese custody. Radio Tokyo suggested repeatedly that Japanese authorities might mistreat American captives tit for tat. This made government officials frightened. Staffers of the WRA who took the immediate responsibility for operating Japanese American camps were particularly watchful so as not to provoke Tokyo to take retaliatory actions. The WRA was facing another dilemma, too. At the same time as they were being threatened by Japanese radio propaganda, they had also to cope with anti-Japanese critics on the home front who demanded harsher treatment of Japanese Americans.

In a broader picture, these findings demonstrate that the impact of Japanese American mass incarceration was much wider and deeper than previously thought. While previous literature has tended to discuss the policy in the domestic context only, it was actually a policy of an international scale, involving dynamic global propaganda warfare among the Allies, Axis, and possibly many other nations where the Japanese short-wave radio broadcasts could reach. Contrary to the intent of the federal government, the wartime measure meant to maintain *internal* security crossed the national borders and by that effect bounced back even harder from *abroad*. The echo was a disturbing and ominous voice from a different shore.

NOTES

¹ Major previous works on Japanese American mass incarceration include Morton Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed: Politics and the Japanese Evacuation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); Jacobus tenBroek, Edward Norton Barnhart, and Floyd W. Matson, *Prejudice, War, and the Constitution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954); Roger Daniels, *Concentration Camps, USA: Japanese Americans and World War II* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971); Roger Daniels, *The Decision to Relocate the Japanese Americans* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1975); Michi Weglyn, *Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps* (New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1976); Peter Irons, *Justice at War: The Story of the Japanese-American Internment Cases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Greg Robinson, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Brian Masaru Hayashi, *Democratizing the Enemy: The Japanese American Internment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

² The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), *Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 18. For detailed accounts of the redress movement, see William M. Hori, *Repairing America: An Account of the Movement for Japanese American Redress* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1988); Leslie T. Hatamiya, *Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and the Passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); Don T. Nakanishi, "Surviving Democracy's 'Mistake': Japanese Americans and the Enduring Legacy of Executive Order 9066," *Amerasia Journal* 19 (1993): 7–35; Charles McClain, ed., *The Mass Internment of Japanese Americans and the Quest for Legal Redress* (New York: Garland, 1994); Mitchell T. Maki, Harry H. L. Kitano, and S. Megan Berthold, *Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999); Robert Sadamu Shimabukuro, *Born in Seattle: The Campaign for Japanese American Redress* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

³ The 1993 survey by the *Journal of American History* found that the journal's readers ranked Japanese American mass incarceration eighth among the "dark spots" in

US history. (David Thelen, "The Practice of American History," *Journal of American History* 81 [December 1994]: 931–60, 1175–1217.) For the Supreme Court rulings, see *Kiyoshi Hirabayashi v. United States*, 320 US 81 (1943); *Toyosaburo Korematsu v. United States*, 323 US 214 (1944); *Ex parte Mitsuye Endo*, 323 US 283 (1944).

⁴ Major works that have highlighted opposition to mass incarceration include Grodzins, *Americans Betrayed*; Samuel Walker, *In Defense of American Liberties: A History of the ACLU* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Cheryl Greenberg, "Black and Jewish Responses to Japanese Internment," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 14 (Winter 1995): 3–37; Gerald L. Sittser, *A Cautious Patriotism: The American Churches and the Second World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Judy Kutulas, "In Quest of Autonomy: The Northern California Affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union and World War II," *Pacific Historical Review* 67 (May 1998): 201–31; Takeya Mizuno, "The Civil Libertarian Press, Japanese American Press, and Japanese American Mass Evacuation" (PhD diss., University of Missouri–Columbia, 2000); C. K. Doreski, "'Kin in Some Way': The *Chicago Defender* Reads the Japanese Internment, 1942–1945," in *The Black Press: New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Todd Vogel (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 161–85; Douglas Dye, "For the Sake of Seattle's Soul: The Seattle Council of Churches, the Nikkei Community, and World War II," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 93 (Summer 2002): 127–36; Takeya Mizuno, *Nikkei America jin kyosei shuyo to journalism: Liberal ha zasshi nihongo shinbun no Dainiji Sekai Taisen [Japanese American mass incarceration and journalism: Liberal magazines and Japanese-language newspapers during World War II]* (Yokohama: Shunpu Sha, 2005); Allan W. Austin, *Quaker Brotherhood: Interracial Activism and the American Friends Service Committee, 1917–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Greg Robinson, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Robert Shaffer's following articles deserve attention in that the author sheds relatively positive light on those who supported Japanese Americans: Robert Shaffer, "Cracks in the Consensus: Defending the Rights of Japanese Americans during World War II," *Radical History Review* 72 (Fall 1998): 84–120; Robert Shaffer, "Opposition to Internment: Defending Japanese American Rights during World War II," *The Historian* 61 (March 1999): 597–619.

⁵ Setsuro Kitayama's three-volume work *Radio Tokyo* is virtually the only previous examination in a more-or-less substantial manner of how Japanese radio propaganda commented on mass incarceration. But Kitayama's work is based on only a handful of Japanese sources. Unfortunately, most of the internal papers of the NHK and other relevant records of Radio Tokyo were destroyed right after Japan's surrender in 1945. No US government record is used in Kitayama's *Radio Tokyo*. (Setsuro Kitayama, *Radio Tokyo*, vols. 1–3, [Tokyo: Tabata Shoten, 1988].)

For other major works on Japanese propaganda during World War II, see, for example, Lucy D. Meo, *Japan's Radio War on Australia 1941–1945* (Carlton, Aus.: Melbourne University Press, 1968); Namikawa Ryo, "Japanese Overseas Broadcasting: A Personal View," in *Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II*, ed. K. R. M. Short (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), 319–33; John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986); Masaharu Sato and Barak Kushner, "'Negro Propaganda Operations': Japan's Short-Wave Radio Broadcasts for World War II Black Americans," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 19 (March 1999): 5–26; Jane M. J. Robbins, *Tokyo Calling: Japanese Overseas Radio Broadcasting 1937–1945* (Fucecchio, Ital.: European Press Academic Publishing, 2001); Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda*

(Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006); Frederick P. Close, *Tokyo Rose/An American Patriot: A Dual Biography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010).

⁶ Norio Tamura and Setsuro Kitayama, "Radio Tokyo and FBIS," *Journal of Tokyo Keizai University* 184 (November 1993): 82.

⁷ Kaigai Hoso Kenkyu Group, ed., *NHK senji kaigai hoso [Wartime overseas broadcasting of the NHK]* (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1982), ii.

⁸ Edwin Ware Hullinger, Assistant Director, and Spencer Williams, Chief Field Correspondent, to Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army (WDC), "Memorandum on Japanese-Language Work of the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service (FBIS) for the Commanding General, Western Defense Command, San Francisco," December 15, 1943, Record Group (RG) 338 (in 2001 RG 338 was reclassified as RG 499: Records of US Army Defense Commands [World War II]), entry 2, box 4, file 000.77, National Archives and Record Administration, College Park, Maryland (hereafter cited as NA).

⁹ General Information Release, Federal Communications Commission (FCC), "Dissecting Foreign Radio Propaganda: Purposes and Functions of the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service," August 25, 1941, RG 60, entry SWPU (Special War Policies Unit), box 75, file 148-301-1, section 1, NA, College Park, Maryland.

¹⁰ R. Keith Kane, "The O.F.F.," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 6 (Summer 1942): 208.

¹¹ FCC, "Dissecting Foreign Radio Propaganda."

¹² Saul K. Padover, "Japanese Race Propaganda," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 7 (Summer 1943): 197.

¹³ Enemy Source Section, Source Division, Bureau of Intelligence, Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), "Axis Short-Wave Propaganda Directed at the United States and Intended to Undermine Public Confidence in the American Government: Based on the Daily Reports and Weekly Analyses of the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service of the Federal Communications Commission for March 15–April 12, 1942," n.d., RG 208, entry 3D, box 10, file: Short Wave Broadcasts, NA, College Park, Maryland; Bureau of Intelligence, Office of War Information (OWI), to Archibald MacLeish, "Axis Short Wave Propaganda to the US for Period Jan. 22–30," n.d., RG 208, entry 3D, box 10, file: Short Wave Broadcasts, NA, College Park, Maryland.

¹⁴ Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 7; Justin Hart, "Making Democracy Safe for the World: Race, Propaganda, and the Transformation of US Foreign Policy during World War II," *Pacific Historical Review* 73 (February 2004): 69.

¹⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), "General Intelligence Survey," February 1942, RG 208, entry 368, box 350, file "L": US, 0.9, Serial Federal Bureau of Investigation General Intelligence Survey—German Activities, NA, College Park, Maryland.

¹⁶ OFF, "Axis Short-Wave Propaganda Directed at the United States and Intended to Undermine Public Confidence in the American Government."

¹⁷ Radio Tokyo, "US Viciously Discriminates against Japanese," May 1, 1942, Foreign Office of Tokyo, *We Fight through the Radio*, vol. 1, (Tokyo: Foreign Office, 1942), 215. This document was made available by the courtesy of Setsuro Kitayama.

¹⁸ Public Relations Division, Wartime Civil Control Administration (WCCA), "Copy of Excerpts of Foreign Radio Broadcasts which Make Reference to Evacuation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry or Collateral Subjects as Recorded by Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, Federal Communications Commission," n.d., RG 338, entry: Bound Volumes, vol. 21, NA, College Park, Maryland; Elinor J. Bauman, San Francisco Regional Office, War Relocation Authority (WRA), to R. B. Cozzens, Field

Assistant Director, "Japanese Propaganda in Office of War Information Files," July 27, 1943, RG 210, entry 42, box 1, file 001.4: Information on Evacuation and Evacuees, NA, Washington, DC.

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²⁰ WCCA, "Copy of Excerpts of Foreign Radio Broadcasts."

²¹ Public Relations Division, WCCA, "Supplement I: Foreign Radio Broadcast Intelligence Service, FCC: 'Light from the East Commentary,' Tokyo in English at 9:50 P.M. EWT, 12,18,42, to Eastern United States and Latin America," n.d., RG 338, entry: Bound Volumes, vol. 21, NA, College Park, Maryland.

²² Major published works on Japan's treatment of Allied captives include Scott Corbett, *Quiet Passages: The Exchange of Civilians between the United States and Japan during the Second World War* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1987); Gavan Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese: POWs of World War II in the Pacific* (New York: William Morrow, 1994); Robert S. LaForte, Ronald E. Marcello, and Richard L. Himmel, eds., *With Only the Will to Live: Accounts of Americans in Japanese Prison Camps, 1941–1945* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1994); Frances B. Cogan, *Captured: The Japanese Internment of American Civilians in the Philippines, 1941–1945* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000); Bernice Archer, *The Internment of Western Civilians under the Japanese, 1941–1945: A Patchwork of Internment* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); Bruce Elleman, *Japanese-American Civilian Prisoner Exchanges and Detention Camps, 1941–45* (London: Routledge, 2006); Greg Leck, *Captives of Empire: The Japanese Internment of Allied Civilians in China, 1941–1945* (Bangor, PA: Shandy Press, 2006); Karl Hack and Kevin Blackburn, eds., *Forgotten Captives in Japanese Occupied Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

²³ WCCA, "Copy of Excerpts of Foreign Radio Broadcasts."

²⁴ Public Relations Division, WCCA, "Supplement I: Foreign Radio Broadcast Intelligence Service, FCC: Tokyo, English, EWT to North America, 'Light From the East Program,' 3rd in series titled 'American Pictures,'" n.d., RG 338, entry: Bound Volumes, vol. 21, NA, College Park, Maryland.

²⁵ "Radio Tokyo English Commentary 1:30 A.M. EWT 10/10," October 10, 1942, RG 338, entry 2, box 4, file 000.77, NA, College Park, Maryland.

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²⁷ "Tokyo in English at 2:00 A.M. to Western US and Latin America," n.d., RG 338, entry 2, box 4, file 000.77, NA, College Park, Maryland.

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²⁹ Division of Information Channels, Bureau of Intelligence, OFF, "Axis News in United States Newspapers," Special Intelligence Report No.19, March 30, 1942, RG 208, entry 3D, box 10, file: Special Intelligence Reports, NA, College Park, Maryland.

³⁰ John R. Fleming, OFF, "Survey of Intelligence Materials," No. 28, June 17, 1942, RG 208, entry 3D, box 11, file: Survey of Intelligence Materials, NA, College Park, Maryland; Sherman H. Dryer, *Radio in Wartime* (New York: Greenberg, 1942), 40.

³¹ WCCA, "Copy of Excerpts of Foreign Radio Broadcasts."

³² Department of Justice, December 9, 1941, RG 208, entry 5, box 4, file 020, NA,

College Park, Maryland. Dating back to the 1930s, the FBI had been secretly probing “dangerous” aliens and citizens whom the bureau suspected to have close connection with nations potentially hostile toward the United States. Major previous works on the FBI’s prewar and postwar intelligence activities include J. Edgar Hoover, “Alien Enemy Control,” *Iowa Law Review* 29 (March 1944): 369–408; Bob Kumamoto, “The Search for Spies: American Counterintelligence and the Japanese American Community, 1931–1942,” *Amerasia Journal* 6 (Fall 1979): 45–75; CWRIC, *Personal Justice Denied*; Pedro A. Loureiro, “Japanese Espionage and American Countermeasures in Pre-Pearl Harbor California,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 3 (Fall 1994): 197–210; Tetsuden Kashima, *Judgment without Trial: Japanese American Imprisonment during World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

³³ Department of Justice, December 10, 1941, RG 208, entry 5, box 4, file 020, NA, College Park, Maryland.

³⁴ Ted Nakashima, “Concentration Camp: US Style,” *New Republic* June 15, 1942: 822.

³⁵ John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, to Norman H. Davis, Chairman, Central Committee, American National Red Cross, June 19, 1942, Papers of the US Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Part 1: Numerical File Archive, reel 6 (hereafter cited as Papers of the CWRIC). Pursuant to McCloy’s request, the Red Cross by August 1942 had conducted an investigation tour and concluded that both “assembly camps” and “relocation camps” were in general operated appropriately. (American National Red Cross, “Report of the American Red Cross Survey of Assembly Centers in California, Oregon, and Washington,” August 1942, Papers of the CWRIC, reel 10; American National Red Cross, “Report of the American Red Cross Survey of Relocation Centers in Arizona and California,” August 1942, Papers of the CWRIC, reel 13.)

³⁶ M. M. Tozier, WRA, to Robert Bishop, Office of the Coordinator of Information, April 7, 1942, RG 210, entry 38, box 13, file 210: General, NA, Washington, DC.

³⁷ Milton S. Eisenhower, Director, WRA, “Statement by M. S. Eisenhower, Director of the War Relocation Authority,” April 7, 1942, RG 210, entry 38, box 3, file 102: Meetings and Itineraries, 1942, NA, Washington, DC; Dillon S. Myer, Director, WRA, “The Truth about Relocation: An Address Delivered by Dillon S. Myer before a Luncheon Meeting of the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, California,” August 6, 1943, RG 210, entry 5A, box 3, file: WRA Publications, 101–210, NA, Washington, DC.

³⁸ WRA, “A Statement of Guiding Principles of the War Relocation Authority,” ca. 1943, Emery E. Andrews Papers, Accession no. 1908-003, box 2, folder 6, Special Collections, University of Washington.

³⁹ “Relocation Problems and Policies: An Address Delivered by Director D. S. Myer of the War Relocation Authority before the Tuesday Evening Club at Pasadena, California,” March 14, 1944, RG 210, entry 5A, box 3, file: WRA Publications, 101–210, NA, Washington, DC. The WRA was facing similar charges from some major news media such as the *Denver Post* in Colorado. For a detailed content analysis of the *Post*, see Kumiko Takahara, *Off the Fat of the Land: The Denver Post’s Story of the Japanese American Internment during World War II* (Powell, WY: Western History Publications, 2003).

⁴⁰ M. S. Eisenhower, Director, WRA, to Leland Ford, United States Representative from California, March 29, 1942, Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement Records, BANC MSS 67/14c, reel 19, file C1.02, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.