

**COOPERATION OF
RACIAL GROUPS IN HAWAII
DURING THE WAR**

ROBERT L. SHIVERS

RC 14, 109

**COOPERATION OF THE VARIOUS
RACIAL GROUPS WITH EACH OTHER
AND WITH THE
CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES
BEFORE AND AFTER DECEMBER 7, 1941**

Statement Presented Before Sub-Committee on Statehood
United States House of Representative at
Iolani Palace, Honolulu, Hawaii, U. S. A.
January 15, 1946

BY ROBERT L. SHIVERS
*Collector of Customs and
Former Special Agent in Charge
Federal Bureau of Investigation*

Printed and Distributed By the
TERRITORIAL EMERGENCY SERVICE COMMITTEES
HONOLULU, HAWAII, U. S. A.
1946

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It was the duty of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to make a thorough appraisal of all factors which had a bearing on the internal security of these islands. Such an appraisal was instituted immediately upon my arrival in August, 1939. A very complex racial situation then existed in Hawaii—one third of the total population being of Japanese extraction, the presence of large groups of people (Filipinos, Koreans, and Chinese) whose homelands had long been or would surely come under the heels of the Japanese Army (as later events proved to be true) in the event of a war in the Pacific, and the undercurrent of suspicion and growing fear of the behavior of the Japanese population in Hawaii. It was readily apparent that unless all the racial groups were held together and worked together as a united community in a common effort, not only would Hawaii's contribution in the event of war be seriously hampered, but it would be most difficult if not impossible to maintain the internal security of these islands and free the Army and Navy for their main task of prosecuting the war against the enemy without the necessity of using a part of their forces in maintaining order behind the lines among the civilian populace. A united front in this complex, cosmopolitan community was vitally necessary for the successful prosecution of the war in this theatre.

Steps were accordingly taken to insure this united front. In some cases, the initiative was taken by my office or by the intelligence offices of the Army and Navy; in other cases, it became voluntarily and spontaneously from the civilians of the community.

A complete survey was made of every phase of life in this community to determine if there were, in fact, any reason for the suspicion which had for years been directed toward the loyalty of the Japanese population. This survey included the religion, education (the various language schools then in existence), and civic, economic, and social status of all the racial groups. As these surveys progressed, it became increasingly apparent that there was no reason to question the loyalty of the citizens of Japanese ancestry, except for a small number of Kibeis who constituted about one third of one per cent or .345% of the citizen population. It was also very clear after these surveys

had been completed that a very small percentage of the alien Japanese in the Hawaiian Islands would be actively disloyal to the United States in the event of war between this country and Japan. Steps outlined in this statement were taken for the purpose of conditioning the racial populations for war and for dealing directly with the small disloyal element in the Islands.

To give you some concrete evidence of the size of the disloyal group in Hawaii, I would like to point out that from December 7, 1941, to the end of hostilities, there were only 1,441 persons of Japanese ancestry who were picked up for internment, or .9% which is less than one per cent of the total alien and citizen population of Japanese ancestry. This group may be further broken down to show that of the total interned, 879 were Japanese aliens. The total number of Japanese aliens who were picked up for internment was 879, and of that number, 301 were subsequently released or paroled after being brought before the internee hearing boards. There was a total of 534 American citizens of Japanese ancestry picked up for internment, and of that number, 160 were released or paroled after they had been given a hearing before the internee hearing board. In the citizen group there were 468 Kibei. There were 28 expatriated citizens of Japanese ancestry who were also interned. This means that there were 980 citizen and alien Japanese who were actually interned and sent to war relocation camps on the mainland. You will better understand the significance of those figures if you know that at the time of Pearl Harbor there were approximately 120,000 citizens of Japanese ancestry in the Hawaiian Islands and 40,000 aliens. I do not intend to try to create the impression that the intelligence agencies picked up all of the disloyal subjects of the Japanese empire, or for that matter, all of the disloyal citizens of Japanese ancestry, but it is my purpose to show that the overwhelming majority of the citizen group was loyal to the United States and that if there were disloyalty among the alien Japanese who remained at large, that disloyalty was never translated into action against the United States.

It would be impossible to describe in detail every step that was taken before and after December 7, 1941, but the following will give some idea of the plans which were laid before that date and the implementation of those plans during the entire period of the war. It is my hope that, among other things, this brief description will serve to show:

1. The cooperation and assistance given the constituted authorities by the civilian populace of all races in preparing the community for the exigencies of war and in maintaining a united effort during the war toward a common goal.
2. The active cooperation between the races, particularly among their leaders, and the lack of any serious open friction between the racial groups during the war—a fact which augurs well for the future welfare of the Territory or state.

3. The cooperation of the Japanese group and the valuable assistance given by certain members of this group, not only to the F.B.I., but to the intelligence services of both the Army and Navy. An accurate appraisal of the situation, insofar as this group was concerned, would have been impossible without their cooperation. Certain projects initiated and carried out by the Army (e.g., the recruiting drives for interpreters, the call for volunteers for the 442nd Combat Team in February and March of 1943) would also have been impossible without the active and valuable assistance which came from the leaders among this group.

ORGANIZATION OF GROUPS AND OTHER STEPS TAKEN PRIOR TO DECEMBER 7, 1941

1. *Advisory Groups Composed of Americans of Japanese Ancestry.* Two of these groups were organized between April and June, 1940. The personnel of these groups was carefully selected on the advice of men of non-Japanese ancestry who knew them personally and who also knew the Japanese community rather intimately through long years of study and direct contact with its members. It consisted of men drawn from various walks of life, men of intelligence and ability whose loyalty to the United States was unquestioned. These groups met separately with me and with one of my agents to discuss and appraise all aspects of the Japanese community which might have anything to do with the maintenance of internal security and the probable behavior of this particular racial component in the event of war with Japan. Meetings were held at least once a week, sometimes oftener. The information which we were able to secure from these men through their keen insight into the psychology of the Japanese people in Hawaii and their accurate and wide knowledge of what went on among them helped immeasurably in our appraisal of the situation and in taking the necessary preparatory steps prior to Pearl Harbor.

These groups also helped to lay definite plans aimed toward the control of any subversive elements among their segment of the population. Some of these plans were placed in operation months before Pearl Harbor; the rest were either absorbed and implemented by other groups which were later organized, or found to be unnecessary or impracticable by the events which followed the outbreak of war.

2. *Oahu Citizens Committee for Home Defense.* This was an outgrowth of the plans laid by one of the advisory groups mentioned above and embraced a wider range of the trusted leadership among the Americans of Japanese ancestry. The Committee was formally organized early in 1941. Among its purposes were the following:

a. To work with the constituted authorities in the continuing task of evaluating what went on in the Japanese community.

b. To plan for and carry out the task of bringing out more positively the inherent loyalty of the Americans of Japanese ancestry toward the United States.

c. To prepare the Japanese community psychologically to their responsibilities toward this country in the event of war and for the difficult position in which the war would place them in their relationship with the rest of the general community.

One of the first and outstanding achievements of this Committee was the sponsorship of a "patriotic rally" in June, 1941. Some two thousand citizens and aliens of Japanese ancestry in addition to about 200 invited guests of other races, filled the McKinley High School auditorium on the night of June 13, 1941 to hear Colonel (now Brigadier General) M. W. Marston, then Assistant Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence, Hawaiian Department, U. S. Army, deliver a message on behalf of Lt. General Walter C. Short, the then Commanding General of the Hawaiian Department, in which he enunciated publicly for the first time the official attitude of the U. S. Army toward those of Japanese ancestry, both citizens and aliens, in the event of war, and urged people of all races to place their trust in the constituted authorities and refrain from any acts which might disrupt a united citizenry and place the Army in the position of having to enforce peace and order in the civilian community. He promised just treatment for all citizens, regardless of racial ancestry; swift and severe punishment for any and all those acts are detrimental to the welfare of the United States; and fair treatment to the aliens of Japanese ancestry in the event of war so long as they conducted themselves in a manner uninimical to the United States. This meeting helped immeasurably to allay much of the fear and insecurity which were then developing in this community as the war clouds gathered more ominously over the Pacific. It also provided some definite and clear-cut criteria to guide the behavior of the Japanese as well as the rest of the community in the event of war.

3. *Committee for Inter-Racial Unity in Hawaii.* The seeds for this group were sown as early as December, 1940, almost exactly a year before Pearl Harbor, at a meeting called significantly enough by an American of Chinese ancestry at a time when the Sino-Japanese war was at its height. Present were representatives of most of the racial groups in Hawaii—Chinese, Japanese, Caucasian, and Hawaiian. The group met to consider ways and means of combatting the growing resentment of certain of the racial groups against those of Japanese ancestry which resulted from the aggressions of the Japanese government and its various moves leading toward a general Pacific war. It was, however, fundamentally interested in the preservation of Hawaii's traditional pattern of race relationships, knowing full well that a war between Japan and the United States would place a severe strain on the racial harmony

that was part of Hawaii and that unless something was done to prepare for the war which seemed inevitable, that pattern might be seriously disrupted.

Several subsequent meetings were held to consider the problem and to secure the active participation of as many as possible of the key leaders, both civilian and military, in the community. Following these preliminary organizational meetings, a Steering Committee was set up to carry on a quiet but aggressive program with the aid of a larger advisory committee which included representatives from every major racial group in Hawaii. The Steering Committee itself was inter-racial in character. It also included many of the key civilian leaders, both business and professional, and the heads of the Army and Navy Intelligence Services as well as the head of the local office of the F.B.I. who was selected to be its chairman.

Space does not permit a detailed description of the bi-weekly meetings held by this group and the many ways in which it helped to prepare the way for what followed in this community when the war finally came. The following aims, however, quoted from its report, guided its work and will give some idea of its scope and functions:

a. "It is interested not only in the immediate problem of national defense as far as these islands are concerned, but also in the way the people of Hawaii are going to live together after the emergency is over. The latter is based on the assumption that if the people here of various races can continue to live together harmoniously during the emergency, trust each other, and cooperate even more closely than they have in the past, then a basis for a still better human relationship will have been established for the future. The contrary will be equally true.

b. "As far as the immediate present is concerned, unity of purpose and action is absolutely necessary for a strong national defense. We cannot afford to have a divided citizenry—one race set against another, or one class against another. The people of Japanese ancestry, both citizens and aliens, compose about one-third of our population. Accepted and united in purpose and action, they are an asset to the community. Rejected and treated as potential enemies, they are a burden, even a danger, to our security.

"To achieve this unity and to preserve the relatively fine human relationship which has so far prevailed in Hawaii, the people must:

(1) "Feel that Hawaii has something unique and worthwhile to preserve in a way of human relationships.

(2) "Accept the idea that a united citizenry is essential to our defense.

(3) "Have faith in the American way of life and be willing to protect it.

(4) "Place absolute reliance in our constituted authorities, confident that they will treat everyone with equal fairness and see to it that he is so treated by his fellow citizens, and that everyone acting in any way inimical to the

general welfare will be promptly and severely dealt with. There is no need for and there must not be any vigilanteism on the part of any group.

(5) "Overcome fear—fear on the part of the nationals of those countries with which we might become involved in a war that they will be mistreated and persecuted, and fear on the part of the rest of the people that these particular aliens might actively assist our enemies.

(6) "Develop a sense of personal responsibility to do everything possible to make Hawaii and the entire nation strong militarily and otherwise. This includes the aliens who must accept the fact that they owe a certain obligation to the land in which they are now living and that they will be protected and allowed to enjoy all normal privileges only as long as they obey our laws and conduct themselves constructively.

(7) "Be willing to give every loyal citizen, regardless of race, a place in the scheme of national defense. No group should be denied the opportunity to do its share merely because of racial considerations.

(8) "Remember that loyalty grows only when it is given a chance to grow. It does not flourish in an atmosphere of suspicion, discrimination, and denial of opportunities to practice that loyalty."

Among the most important phases of its work were the meetings of various racial groups, particularly the Filipinos, called and addressed by Col. (now Brig. Gen.) Kendall J. Fielder who succeeded Col. Marston as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence and who is still head of the Army G-2 in this theatre, and by myself as head of the F.B.I. The Filipinos were of special concern to the group because of their impulsive characteristics and because it was obvious that their homeland would be one of the first places to be invaded by the Japanese Army. The Japanese aliens were also an important group not only because of their large number but because under control and, better still, with their active cooperation, they could become a real asset to our war effort. The point stressed to them was the one already enunciated by the Army, namely, that so long as they conducted themselves in accord with law and did nothing detrimental to this country, they would be treated fairly and given every protection of the law. Civic and business groups were also addressed by Col. Fielder, Col. Marston and myself in our respective official capacities and by certain lay members of the Committee who also talked to groups of mainland defense workers who were beginning to come to Hawaii in larger numbers.

Many governmental (including the Governor of the Territory and the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu), civic, business and racial leaders were also contacted by members of the Committee.

These informal contacts and the meetings which were held throughout the territory and which, in many instances were publicized in the English and foreign language papers to insure adequate coverage, contributed much

toward conditioning the civilian populace toward the idea of working together in the event of war and trusting the constituted authorities to handle the task of dealing with any subversive groups.

4. *Cooperation of Individual Members of All Races.* Aside from the groups mentioned above, the F.B.I. received willing and valuable assistance from men and women of all races. Many of these people were concerned not only with the preservation of internal security in the event of war; they were genuinely interested in the American principle of fair play, wanted to see every racial group given the opportunity to contribute its just share toward the war effort and to preserve the Hawaiian way of racial harmony and cooperation.

I think the broad conclusion can truthfully be drawn that the people of Hawaii were conditioned for war by the long history of race harmony and cooperation, even more than by the special methods used just before and after the outbreak of the war. And, I believe the behavior of the population and its magnificent contribution to the war effort fully justify this statement.

ORGANIZATION OF GROUPS AND OTHER STEPS TAKEN SUBSEQUENT TO DECEMBER 7, 1941

1. *Cooperation on December 7, and During the Critical Days Which Followed.* Many of the individuals associated with the various groups mentioned in the foregoing section reported of their own accord to my office on the morning of December 7 to offer their assistance in putting into operation the plans they had helped to evolve during the months preceding the outbreak of hostilities.

2. *The Morale Section of the Military Governor's office.* This was the direct outgrowth of the preparatory work carried on by the Committee on Inter-racial Unity. Representatives of this Committee called on me and on Col. Fielder soon after the Japanese attack on Hawaii to offer their services in implementing the plans made prior to the attack. They also discussed their plans with the head of the local Office of Civilian Defense. As a result of these meetings, a Morale section was created in the Office of Civilian Defense on December 18, 1941. This later became the Morale Section of the Office of Military Governor on January 26, 1942.

Appointed to the Morale Section were a Caucasian (Charles F. Loomis), Chinese (Hung Wai Ching), and a Japanese (Shigeo Yoshida)—all American citizens, of course. All three had been very active on the Committee on Inter-racial Unity and on other similar committees which functioned prior to Pearl Harbor.

To tell adequately the story of the Morale Section and its affiliated groups would take more space than is available here. Briefly, however:

a. It was appointed by the Army and worked under the immediate supervision of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Military Intelligence.

b. It maintained a close liaison with the F.B.I. and the Military Governor's Office.

c. It naturally worked in close cooperation with and often times through the civilian leaders and organizations in the community.

d. Its membership was inter-racial and it had an inter-racial advisory group which it consulted from time to time.

e. Its primary puposes were to:

(1) Serve as a liaison between Army and the civilian community on matters relating to public morale.

(2) Work toward maintenance of a unified and cooperative community.

f. To carry on its work, it organized several racial sub-committees to work among their respective peoples. These sub-committees assisted in keeping their people informed of Army orders affecting the civilian community, strove to maintain a maximum war effort, assisted in preventing racial feelings from becoming aggravated, and in general contributed much toward maintaining a sense of unity among the various racial groups in the community. In the case of the Japanese on Oahu a sub-committee known as the Emergency Service Committee was formed. Similar groups were organized on each of the other islands and, in addition to the work common to the other racial sub-committees, did much to assist the Army in all its recruiting drives for interpreters and to bring out positively and aggressively the inherent loyalty of the Americans of Japanese ancestry in Hawaii as well as to keep the aliens on our side.

g. Through its affiliated committees and through the channels it had opened to it among various segments of the community as well as the Army, it contributed a great deal toward maintaining the united front which I believe was most essential to our war effort in Hawaii and of which the people of Hawaii can be justly proud.

3. *The Emergency Service Committee.* This was one of the racial sub-committees organized by the Morale Section. It is included here for special mention because it was the group which spoke for and worked among the Japanese and because its work has been so outstanding. Its purposes as outlined in their progress report of March 25, 1944, were as follows:

a. "To carry on a program of education which will strengthen the loyalty to America of both the citizens and aliens of Japanese ancestry.

b. "To help them demonstrate their loyalty in concrete ways to speed the defeat of Japan and all other enemies.

c. "To help them face realistically and cooperatively the difficult situation in which the war has placed them.

d. "To cooperate with the authorities in meeting the many problems which affect the security of the islands and the welfare of all the people.

e. "To work for the application of the fundamental values of American democracy in the treatment of all Americans, regardless of racial ancestry,

fully realizing that military and other requirements sometimes make impossible the full application of this principle.

f. "To meet, in cooperation with the Army, the Red Cross and other local, Federal and Territorial agencies, certain morale and personal needs of our boys in the service and of their families at home.

g. "To organize and carry out, again in cooperation with other established agencies, definite plans for the rehabilitation of our returning disabled soldiers and for the solution of the many complex post-war problems of re-employment and readjustment.

h. "To work with the leaders and organizations of other racial groups for the preservation of Hawaii's traditional harmony among all races and the promotion of a united home front."

Its accomplishments are too numerous to mention. Suffice to say that its influence was positively American, its work appreciated by the community, the Army and the F.B.I. and its contribution toward the maintenance of inter-racial unity in Hawaii during the critical years of the war outstanding. A copy of their report is attached herewith.

4. *The Honolulu Police Contact Group.* This was a group similar in many respects, certainly in its major purposes, to the Emergency Service Committee except that it was sponsored by the Honolulu Police Department under the able aggressive leadership of one of its officers, Capt. Anthony Burns, who for many months headed its Espionage Division which worked under the direction of the F.B.I. Its work was largely among the Japanese people of Oahu. Preparatory plans for it were laid long before Pearl Harbor but its actual organization was delayed until some weeks after Pearl Harbor. It, too, helped to allay the fears of the alien Japanese and to channel their efforts toward an American victory, as well as to encourage active participation of the Americans of Japanese ancestry in the war effort. Indirectly, it also helped to allay the fears of the other racial groups where the Japanese were concerned, thus contributing to the overall unity of this community.

5. *The Citizens' Council and Other Groups Organized to Promote Unity.* The Citizens' Council was composed of many of our leading professional and business leaders. Among its aims was to keep this community united in purpose and action. It, together with other more informal groups, sprang up spontaneously throughout the Territory, particularly in Honolulu, and did much to avert frictions and tensions in the Territory's polyracial communities.

SABOTAGE AND FIFTH COLUMN ACTIVITIES

There was not one single act of sabotage committed against the war effort in the Hawaiian Islands during the course of the entire war. Nor was there any fifth column activity in existence or in evidence here. As a result of disclosures before the committee now investigating the Pearl Harbor disaster

that fifth column activity was present in Hawaii during the early days of the war, I made a statement to the press on December 21, 1945 as follows:

"In spite of what Admiral Kimmel or anyone else may have said about the fifth column activity in Hawaii, I want to emphasize that there was no such activity in Hawaii before, during or after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Consequently there was no confusion in Hawaii as a result of fifth column activities.

"I was in a position to know this fact, and I speak with authority when I say that the confusion in Hawaii was in the minds of the confused, and not because of fifth column activities.

"It was not the civilian population who was confused. Nowhere under the sun could there have been a more intelligent response to the needs of the hour than was given by the entire population of these islands.

"As a matter of fact, had it not been for the lack of hysteria in the civilian community and the orderly manner in which they responded as a result of the preparation the civilian community had made for war, especially the doctors, the law enforcement agencies and the office of civilian defense, there would have been confusion with which the community would not have been able to cope.

"The civilians in this community have never received the praise to which they are justly entitled for their contribution to the armed forces on that day and in the years following.

"It is high time that the people of the United States should be told of Hawaii's contribution to this war, which is unequalled in the annals of our country."

I am sure you gentlemen have heard of 101 rumors that have been spread throughout this Territory and the mainland United States since the day of the attack. One of these stories was to the effect that some of the Japanese aviators who were shot down over Oahu that morning were wearing class rings of McKinley High School. Another was that arrows had been cut in the can fields by the Japanese population which pointed toward Pearl Harbor and guided the attacking force to their targets. Another was that a transmitter had been discovered in the possession of some Japanese who were transmitting information to the enemy. Another was that the sides of a milk truck at Schofield Barracks suddenly collapsed and machine guns manned by Japanese opened fire on the soldiers at the post. There were many more rumors with which you are familiar. There was not an iota of truth in any of them. During the whole course of the war not one single transmitter was discovered on the Hawaiian Islands which was being used to disseminate information to the enemy and at no time was there any radio interference with our own communications because of jamming or transmission from unknown stations in the Hawaiian Islands.

No amount of repetition before the investigating committee will alter the fact that sabotage and fifth column activity was never engaged in at any time prior, during, or subsequent to the attack on Pearl Harbor.

SOME GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This brief statement does not cover adequately the story of Hawaii's inter-racial cooperation before and during the war and the cooperation of the various racial groups with the armed services and other governmental agencies whose primary concern was the protection of internal security and the vigorous prosecution of the war. It certainly does not do justice to all the individuals and groups concerned, particularly to those whose names are not mentioned either because they are unknown to me or because space does not permit the mention of every name involved. It does, however, show that:

1. Hawaii's people of various racial ancestries can and do work together, particularly in the face of a major crisis.

2. What goes on in the countries of their ancestors is of minor concern to them as compared to what goes on in their own country, the United States of America. The latter is their major concern as Americans.

3. Hawaii's people of all racial ancestries did cooperate with the constituted authorities in preparing for and in prosecuting the war against Japan.

4. This community, despite its polyracial composition, is essentially American in thought, purpose and action.

5. The united effort of the civilian community during the war was the result, at least in part, of the preparations made jointly by the civilian and official leaders before the war.

6. If the actions of the people of Hawaii before and during the war is any criterion, they can be expected to work together in the future toward a common goal.