Right to Kill, Right to Make Live: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans During WWII

Introduction

While it is common to imagine the Japanese and American regimes during the Second World War as having had very different characteristics, their relationships to the deaths and lives of two of their most despised (yet useful) populations shifted in strikingly similar ways in that historical moment. Each of these nation-state-based empires discriminated against subpopulations of their own people (Korean Japanese and Japanese Americans, respectively), and treated them with extreme cruelty and violence. The exclusion of Japanese Americans from the West Coast of the United States and their confinement in camps under armed guard is of course the most well-known example of such brutality against this American minority. The officially and institutionally sanctioned sexual enslavement of Korean women and the coerced mobilization of hundreds of thousands of Korean laborers are likewise well known.

Yet at the same time both regimes sought to enhance the aggregate life and welfare of these subpopulations in unprecedented and perhaps unexpected ways. A historically responsible and empirically sound critique of wartime racism in these two nation-state-based empires cannot simply deny their life-enhancing efforts, but must somehow account for the uneasy fit between what can only be recognized as their gross cruelty toward minority and colonial subjects and their apparent concern for the life, reproduction, welfare, and sometimes even happiness of these same peoples. In much of this essay I shall focus upon the figure of the Japanese American soldier and his counterpart, the Korean Imperial soldier, because it was the demand for their labor and lives that most significantly propelled
the United States and Japan to disavow racism, to act as if they practiced
equality, and to welcome these despised populations into their nations in
unprecedented ways.

Korea

From the Outside to the Inside of the Japanese Population. In its official
history of thirty years of Japanese rule in Korea, the Korean Government
General noted that a fundamental transformation in the state’s under-
standing of “population” had taken place since the beginning of the Sino-Japanese
war in 1937. Previously, the population problem had been understood as a
matter of an excess—that is, of such issues as the imbalance between a sur-
plus population, on the one hand, and available food and employment on
the other. However, due to the wartime need for “human resources” and
future demands for “limitless [population] growth,” this logic had been
completely reversed. “In this way,” the history stated, “now the weight of the
problem has shifted from what had been a matter of a surplus to its com-
plete opposite, the problem of a population deficit.”

Although the Government General’s description of the state’s new un-
derstanding of “population” is deceptively simple—we formerly had too
many people, now we do not have enough—this reconceptualization of the
Korean people as an object of study and intervention had profound and in
some ways ironic repercussions that may be appreciated by first considering
Michel Foucault’s formulations of “bio-power” and “governmentality.” Ac-
cording to Foucault, a fundamental transformation in the exercise of power
over the lives and deaths of populations emerged in the eighteenth century
and then took hold from the nineteenth. In an older historical moment, as
typified by the rule of a transcendent sovereign, power over life and death
had operated primarily through a negativity. The sovereign exercised power
through the right to kill, or put in the obverse, by allowing subjects to live.
From the nineteenth century especially, however, this old right came to be
complemented by a right that had exactly the opposite character in its rela-
tion to life and death. In contrast to the deductive logic of the right to take
life, the new mode of power, which Foucault called bio-power, is exercised
by making live—by a productive or positive logic. This bio-power is a “power
that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavors to administer, opti-
mize and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive
regulations.” Thus power comes to be concerned with matters such as the
ratio of births to deaths and mortality rates. It targets living human beings,
gathers knowledge about them, constitutes them in their aggregate as
populations, and then seeks to enhance their health, sanitation, birthrate,
longevity, and so on. Population became a political problem and a target of regulation.

Similarly, for Foucault it is precisely the discovery of population as the ultimate end of government that characterizes what he calls governmentality, or how governing is thought about and how power is exercised in the modern period. Here it is not the rationality of government in and of itself that is of primary importance, “but the welfare of the population . . . and the means that the government uses to attain these ends are themselves all in some sense immanent to the population.” Further, in the modern regime of governmentality, practices of governing seek to optimize the life of populations by guiding conduct through a vast and deep assemblage of authorities, technologies, and knowledges and operate through the mobilization of desires and interests.4

But how are these sweeping Foucauldian claims about bio-power and governmentality relevant to analyzing the understanding of population under the Japanese wartime regime? In the first place, it should be noted that the optimization of population characteristic of bio-power and modern governmentality was applied only sporadically and inconsistently in Korea prior to the 1930s, without significant attempts to constitute the people of Korea into a population in a Foucauldian sense. Thus scholars have already noted the half-hearted attempts to establish schools, social services, and welfare for Koreans during the colonial period.5 Moreover, while before the 1930s there were certainly surveys of the Korean people and their customs, reports on laborers, and so on, even as late as the final years of the war the colonial government still found itself scrambling to put Korean household registers in order.

In other words, the colonial state had not established one of the first requirements for constituting the population into the foremost object of government—namely, a technology to account for it, to know it. The Government General could not determine the precise number and whereabouts of Korean people living in the colony, let alone in Manchuria, metropolitan Japan, China, and elsewhere. In this sense, the entire Korean population was more outside than inside the Japanese regimes of bio-power and governmentality. Power was still exercised primarily in its negativity, by the power to take life, and by a strategy of limiting or suppressing the activities of those deemed dangerous, such as Communists and ethnic nationalists.

However, once wartime conditions transformed the population problem into one of a lack, the policies of the metropolitan and colonial governments toward their colonial subjects in Korea began to shift dramatically. Now, like “metropolitan Japanese” (Naichijin), Koreans were to be made to live. They were to be targeted as living human beings and constituted in their aggregate as a major subpopulation. I do not mean to suggest
that the efforts of the colonial authorities to enhance the lives of Koreans equaled measures taken for the metropolitan Japanese population. And of course various social services, including medical care, were on the whole far inferior to those available in the metropole. Nor did this transformation result in the disappearance of sheer power in its negativity—that is, the right to take life, as exercised directly by the emperor’s officials, the police, and laws.

Nevertheless, what we can perceive in so many official documents and policies of the period, especially from 1937, is the new commitment of colonial administrators and others serving in unofficial organizations to better the lives of the Korean people. Whether or not their intentions were noble or sincere does not concern me here. The point is that in this new governmentality, colonial power began to constitute Koreans as a population that in the aggregate should be healthy, reproductive, and long lived.

And what about the matter of racism or discrimination? Foucault is again suggestive. Under the bio-political regime racism—both in its narrow sense and its most general sense of discrimination against all those considered inferior in a normalizing society—operates in the determination of who must live and who must die. It creates caesura; it fragments the biological field of the human to identify threats to the population, whether internal or external. It distinguishes between those who will foster the life and welfare of the population and therefore must be made to live, and those who hinder the life and welfare of the population and must be made to die. It necessitates the killing of those considered threats so that the population can thrive. In the face of war, a determination had to be made about how to locate Koreans in relation to the Japanese metropolitan population. Were they to be considered a threatening Other that had to be kept apart from the core of the Japanese population, treated like slaves and exposed to death? Or were Koreans to be reconstituted as a subpopulation worthy of life because they could help foster the life and welfare of the metropolitan Japanese population?

While there was no absolute resolution of this problem during the war years, as the population shortage in Japan and its colonies came to be felt more and more acutely, the ruling elite increasingly demanded that Koreans be made to live and prosper as part of the Japanese population. The war years, in other words, were a transitional moment in the passage of Koreans from the outside to the inside of the “Japanese” population, which was managed by the logics and technologies of bio-power and governmentality. Such a passage to the inside also required a disavowal of racism and a rearticulated understanding of the Korean people that emphasized the sharing of ancestors with the Japanese and the “unity of the metropolitan Japanese and the Koreans” (Naisen ittairon). To be sure, such ideas had existed since at
least the late nineteenth century, but they had been translated into political practice only in fitful and inconsistent ways until the population shortage crisis of the war years. In some cases, contrary to common stereotypes about Japanese colonial discourse, the multi-ethnic character of Japan’s expanding empire and the inclusionary drive to mobilize them for the war effort resulted in cultural productions, such as literature and film, that seemed to transcend the symbolism of blood and racial difference altogether. Paralleling this passage from the outside to the inside of the Japanese population we find a transformation in the type of racist discrimination against Koreans—that is, a movement from what might be called an unabashed and exclusionary “vulgar racism” to a new type of inclusionary and “polite racism” that denied itself as racist even as it operated as such.6

Contradictions of Military Service. The military provides a particularly compelling site from which to witness this passage since the more the Japanese empire came to depend upon the Korean population for soldiers and sailors, the more difficult it became to exclude them from the nation—in both the conventional meaning of a political community and in Foucault’s bio-political sense. Scholars have often noted that the strategic necessity of augmenting Japan’s supply of military personnel provided the main impetus for the decision to allow Koreans to volunteer for the military and then to make them subject to military conscription. Korea, with a population approximately one-fourth the size of metropolitan Japan’s, seemed to offer a vast pool of human resources that could not be ignored given the enormous demands of fighting the war on the home- and battlefronts. Thus the intensification of all-out war with China in 1937 propelled the Japanese military and government to open the army to Korean volunteers beginning in 1938 and then to make Koreans subject to conscription through revision of the Military Service Law effective 1 August 1943. Higuchi Yuichi, who has conducted the most meticulous research to date on the topic of Koreans in the Japanese military, has estimated that a total of some 213,723 Koreans served in the Japanese army and navy from 1938 to 1945. These included roughly 190,000 conscripts; 16,830 army volunteers; 3,893 student volunteers; and 3,000 navy volunteers.7

Given this view, it is common to charge that the military mobilization of Koreans was purely utilitarian and that the Japanese military and colonial authorities’ pronouncements about equality were completely insincere. They emphasized unity, it is said, only insofar as to exploit the Korean people. While this is undoubtedly true, a considerably different reality emerges when we shift the problematic away from the question of intentions to the effects of the disavowal of racist discrimination. Once the utilitarian strategy of mobilizing Korean volunteer soldiers began in 1938 it became increasingly difficult for officials to espouse vulgar racist views openly, to appear
unconcerned about the health and welfare of the Korean people, and to ignore Korean desires for increased political rights.

To be sure, even after the volunteer system had been in place for several years, some Japanese officials still often referred to Koreans as completely alien to the Japanese people. For example, in its immediate post–Pearl Harbor attack study of “national strength in human resources,” the Ministry of War’s Military Preparations Section equated the Japanese people with the Yamato ethnics while referring to others within the colonial empire as “outside peoples” (gaichi minzoku). In arguing that Japan’s military manpower and civilian labor needs could not be met by the Yamato people alone, the Military Preparations Section clearly considered Koreans and other colonial subjects as ethnic groups external to the core Japanese population, or on the outside of, as it put it, “our people” (waga minzoku). Likewise, many within the colonial government and most within the military and metropolitan government feared that the strategy of employing a discourse on equality so as to convince Koreans to serve willingly in the military would spin out of control, leading the Koreans to demand equal rights to participation in government. For instance, just before the Japanese cabinet’s formal decision to implement the conscription system in Korea, a special committee within the Korean Army Headquarters charged with deliberating on this matter continued to stress that “the rights to vote and hold office should not be given in compensation for implementation of the conscription system in Korea.”

Nevertheless, military and colonial officials concluded that the mobilization of Koreans would be effective only if carried out on the basis of an official stance of equality—otherwise, why would Koreans agree to fight for Japan and how could interethnic conflicts among the troops be avoided? It then became impossible simply to block the trajectory toward eventual inclusion of Koreans into the national community. It is possible to see glimmerings of this movement in a June 1937 source authored by the Korean Army Headquarters. Although the headquarters urged the Government General to emphasize the military duty of Koreans and to stifle any demand for expansion of their political rights, the strength of its recommendation to promote the complete identity of the two peoples clearly invited the erosion at least of formal distinctions between metropolitan Japanese and Koreans. The headquarters warned that Japanese residents in Korea could not simply expect Koreans to become Japanese without demonstrating reciprocity. If Koreans were expected to think of themselves as Japanese without “metropolitan Japanese” in Korea thinking of themselves as “Koreans,” the policy would “in the end appear to be a unilateral measure.”

Furthermore, the headquarters noted in no uncertain terms that without genuine efforts to put egalitarian policies into practice, the mobilization of Koreans for the war effort would end in failure:
Insofar as adoption of the volunteer soldier system is recognized and implemented, the treatment of Koreans after their induction must necessarily be based upon the fundamental principle of making metropolitan Japanese and Koreans uniform and equal. Any discriminatory attitude in dealing with this matter, stemming from some trifling reason, must be absolutely eliminated. Otherwise, adoption of this system will end in harm rather than benefit.\footnote{11}

After the May 1942 announcement that Koreans would become subject to conscription, and especially after concrete preparations began, it became impossible to sustain the strict line of exclusion between Koreans and metropolitan Japanese by ethnicity, by worthiness of life and welfare, and even in terms of political rights. As a 1944 report on the “Question of Peninsulars (Koreans)” produced by the semi-official Kyōchōkai put it, “Now that the decision has been made to implement military conscription in Korea, in the future we shall have no choice but to place our fullest trust in the Peninsulars.”\footnote{12} And in direct contrast to the earlier cited exclusionary notion that Koreans might be mobilized for the military as an “outside people,” the Inspectorate General of Military Training declared in its 1944 manual instructing Japanese officers on how to train Korean conscripts that these soldiers from Korea were nothing less than “members of the leading race of Greater East Asia.”\footnote{13}

The Politics and Bio-Politics of Inclusion. Koreans and Taiwanese received the right to vote for and send representatives to the national Diet through two laws promulgated on 1 April 1945. Law Number 34 provided that all male imperial subjects residing in Korea and Taiwan, twenty-five years of age and older, and who also paid a minimum of fifteen yen in direct national taxes, could vote in elections for representatives to the Diet’s Lower House. Korea was allotted twenty-three Lower House representatives and Taiwan, five. It matters less that the war ended before the law went into effect than that this represented a radical revision of the political relationship between the metropole and its two largest colonies—opening up the possibility that Koreans and Taiwanese might even cast deciding votes on critical issues. In fact, after the war former high-ranking colonial officials recalled that Japanese politicians had been very much concerned that granting enhanced political rights to Koreans might lead to difficulties similar to Britain’s “Irish problem.”\footnote{14} Imperial Ordinance Number 193 opened a substantial avenue for selection of Koreans and Taiwanese to the House of Peers in that it stipulated that ten male residents of Korea or Taiwan, of at least thirty years of age, would serve for seven years in the House as direct imperial appointees. As a result, seven Koreans and three Taiwanese joined the one Korean in the House of Peers who had been appointed earlier through another route.\footnote{15}

Beyond their inclusion into the national political system, however, wartime mobilization of Koreans also led directly to their constitution as a
population worthy of life, health, reproduction, and happiness—in other words, to their inclusion in the regime of governmentality and bio-power. As in all modern nation-states, one of the basic requirements for enabling the state to intervene in the lives and deaths of the people in these ways was the establishment of an accurate and comprehensive administrative technology by which the state could identify and monitor the population. In Japan proper this had been accomplished in the late nineteenth century by putting the theretofore highly inaccurate household registers in order. The immediate impetus for doing so had been the introduction of military conscription in the 1870s, because this new military recruitment system required a method by which to locate young men subject to the draft.16

In Korea, a similar process unfolded during the war years. The colonial state began its comprehensive campaign to put the household registers in good order only with commencement of preparations to implement the military conscription system in the colony. Prior to the May 1942 announcement concerning the extension of military conscription to Korea, the Korean household registers were in shambles, and the authorities were well aware of this deficiency. Koreans frequently neglected to establish independent registers when setting up new households, many did not register women and children, many individuals appeared in more than one registry, and, conversely, households in which all members had perished frequently remained on the records, resulting in “ghost registers” (yurei koseki). Moreover, household registers often noted the age of individuals inaccurately and in many cases did not give their sex. The very mobile character of the population, especially men of working age, also exacerbated the situation. Although many regularly changed their domiciles to other locations within Korea as well as to places as far off as metropolitan Japan, Manchuria, and North China, most did not bother to submit temporary domicile notifications.

In order to carry out the military draft effectively and to mobilize the population as civilian labor, the Korean Government General enacted the Korea Temporary Domicile Ordinance in September 1942 and soon thereafter started a concerted effort to keep an accurate record of those residing in areas outside their native places. While these relatively successful attempts to make the population visible to the state might at first appear unconnected to bio-power and governmentality—that is, as technologies to make the population live—it is relevant to note that one of the factors contributing to the relative success of the effort was the colonial state’s attempt to make proper registration a condition for receiving wartime rations. By utilizing such slogans as “from temporary domicile notifications, also [get your] ration tickets” the authorities turned the effort to register and monitor the people into
a means of both mobilizing them for death (conscription) and sustaining their lives.\textsuperscript{17}

In fact, throughout the period of the Asia-Pacific War, but particularly in the war’s last years, the colonial state, as well as extragovernmental organizations closely tied to the state, increasingly targeted the Korean population at large for expanded social services and social welfare. For example, during these years tens of thousands of communal day-care centers were established to enable the increasing mobilization of women workers. The Korean Disaster Relief Foundation Ordinance, promulgated in August 1938, facilitated the collection of funds for disaster victims. Enactment of the Korea Relief and Protection Ordinance (\textit{Chōsen Kyūgorei}) on 1 March 1944, although more limited and coming some twelve years after its counterpart in metropolitan Japan, marked the high point of legal efforts to facilitate aid and protection to the elderly, children, pregnant and nursing mothers, and the mentally and physically ill or handicapped.\textsuperscript{18}

Administratively, paralleling the establishment of the Ministry of Health and Welfare in the metropole in 1938, the Government General set up its own Bureau of Health and Welfare in November 1941. As Vice Governor General Ōno Rokuchirō explained, this independent bureau had been established to administer matters concerning labor mobilization and “health, hygiene, the improvement of physical strength, as well as various types of social and welfare institutions—in short, the various ad hoc and permanent measures concerning the basic cultivation of human resources.” Without going into all the details, it may be noted that the Bureau of Health and Welfare dealt with matters as diverse as the improvement of physical strength, maternity, infants and young children, public health issues, food and water, labor and unemployment, social and medical relief, disaster aid, housing, military relief, and juvenile reformatories.\textsuperscript{19}

While other scholars have researched this much-expanded attention to social services and social welfare in Korea, they have tended to dismiss these as distorted projects intended only to prevent social discontent and benefit the Japanese state and war program. However, focusing solely on the incompleteness and duplicity of measures to provide Koreans with social welfare precludes us from recognizing that the Japanese national community was being reconstituted through the inclusion of colonial subjects, regardless of what state and military officials had originally intended. The war years were a transitional moment, when the demands of total war forced these officials and so many lesser bureaucrats and prominent civilians to act as if they genuinely welcomed Koreans into the Japanese nation and truly cared about their happiness and welfare. Regardless of their intentions or sincerity, the necessity of “acting as if” created its own effects, resulting in a number of contradictions that were never to be completely resolved.
Some of the most important contradictions included the following:
First, acting as if the Japanese empire did not condone racism meant not
that racism disappeared, but that it could operate even while being dis-
avowed. Rearticulated under the banner of equality, this late colonial neo-
racism would be what Etienne Balibar has called an “inclusionary racism”—
not an “exclusionary racism” of extermination or strict exclusion but an
incorporation into a hierarchical order. The new racism would stress the
cultural or historical backwardness of most Korean people, but not their es-
sential inferiority.20
Second, regardless of the limitations of these new colonial policies, the
necessity of mobilizing the Korean population for the war resulted in the
institutionalization of practices to enhance the life, welfare, prosperity,
happiness, and even increased political rights of Koreans as an aggregated
population. This does not mean that all Koreans prospered, and many were
surely exposed to death, but it does explain why some Koreans received ben-
efits to their lives and why colonial officials could boast that in some im-
portant statistical regards the population in the aggregate was prospering. For
example, in its compilation of materials prepared in anticipation of the
Eighty-Fifth Session of the Diet (September 1944), the Government General
stressed that over a five-year period from 1938 to 1942, the Korean popula-
tion had experienced an average natural growth rate that far exceeded
metropolitan Japan’s.21
Third, to recognize that late colonial power operated through the posi-
tive management and enhancement of life, and not just through negative
means, also helps us to confront the views of late colonial authorities and
their postwar apologists, who have made the claim that Japanese colonialism
simply benefited the lives of the Korean people.22 Such apologists forget or
ignore that the nurturing of Korean lives was part of a system that was
preparing them for their deaths—as soldiers, sailors, and workers of various
kinds. Conversely, those who respond to such apologists by categorically
denying the Government General’s efforts to enhance the lives and happy-
ness of Koreans during the war years are unable to respond adequately to
the empirical record.

The Japanese in America

Disavowing Racism: Or, From Vulgar to Polite Racism. On 23 January
1943 ten teams of American soldiers reported to Washington, D.C., for a ten-
day training program. Each team consisted of a white officer and three
sergeants, two white and the other Japanese American. The purpose of the
program was to prepare these men for the task of determining the loyalty of
each of the American citizens of Japanese ancestry who were then confined
in ten internment camps. The training program had become necessary because the War Department had recently reversed its earlier post–Pearl Harbor policy to prohibit Japanese Americans from serving in the military and also because a labor shortage had pressured the government to release internees for work outside the camps. Following completion of the program, the trainees would depart for the camps, where one of their primary tasks would be to take the lead in determining individual loyalty through interviews and questionnaires so that those deemed loyal could, if they wished, join the army or work in the civilian sector.

During the training program the teams’ members heard a number of speakers, including representatives from the War Relocation Authority (WRA, the civilian agency charged with administering the ten “relocation camps”), the Office of Naval Intelligence, and various offices and agencies within the War Department. Collectively, the speakers revealed that a massive shift had taken place throughout the civilian and military bureaucracies with regard to the official view of the Japanese in America. The premise for the mass evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast had been that they were considered racially different, inassimilable, and that no individual determinations of loyalty to the United States could be made. These speakers now attempted to reverse this logic, however, and to convince the team members that, except in some very superficial ways, Japanese Americans were not biologically different from whites, that they were in most cases loyal to the United States, and that they were not all alike. They stressed that every Japanese American was an individual and that therefore loyalty could be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Some speakers went even further, emphasizing the importance of caring for the lives and welfare of Japanese Americans. Paralleling the wartime movement of Koreans from the outside to the inside of the Japanese population, the Japanese in America ironically found themselves transported from the outside to the inside of the American population, only shortly after roughly 110,000 of them had been removed from their homes on the West Coast and confined in camps.

In his introductory remarks to the team members, Colonel A.C. Miller, who had been charged with conducting the program, explained that Japanese American citizens were on the whole loyal and that it would be “foolish for loyal United States citizens to be deprived of the opportunity to render useful service in winning this war.” Colonel William P. Scobey, from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, further emphasized that “a great many, virtually all, Nissei [sic] or American-born Japanese, have had the same cultural background as you and I. Their color and their eyes are a little different but they attended the same universities, ate at the same soda fountains, played the same games.”
Perhaps the most enthusiastic denunciation of vulgar and biological racism came from Lieutenant Commander Cecil H. Coggins of the Office of Naval Intelligence, whom military and civilian government leaders widely regarded as an expert on the Japanese and Japanese Americans. Coggins argued that Japanese Americans were no different from any other Americans. As he put it:

It is a very fundamental mistake in the United States that because a man is a descendant of Japanese that he thinks as Japanese do. That is entirely wrong. A Nisei [sic] thinks like any other American boy who has lived in the same environment exactly. There is nothing in his brain cells or in his cerebral contributions which make him think along oriental lines, none whatever.25

Civilian and Military Labor Utilization. Two major forces propelled this transition from “vulgar” to “polite racism,” and the Japanese American passage from the outside to the inside of the U.S. population: namely, the need for civilian and military labor; and the desire to launch a global propaganda campaign to demonstrate that the United States was a nation dedicated to racial equality.

It might be thought that the utilization or nonutilization of Japanese Americans for civilian and military labor was not a major issue for the wartime regime, since the total numbers of Japanese Americans in the mainland United States (126,947) and the colony of Hawaii (157,905) were very small relative to the total population of the continental United States (131,669,275) and its colonial empire around the time of the Pearl Harbor attack.26 However, under conditions of total war the logic of manpower utilization did not operate in such casual fashion. It is known that by early April 1942—that is, only days after the army began systematically to force Japanese Americans to evacuate from their homes on the West Coast—agricultural interests were already requesting the release of evacuees so they could provide farm labor. In May an agricultural leave program began, and by mid-October 1942 there were about ten thousand evacuees at work on seasonal leave. In fact, by the beginning of October an elaborate set of rules allowed various types of leave, including extended leave for an indefinite amount of time. By the end of the year, the WRA had committed itself to a policy of leaves and resettlements of evacuees in communities outside of the camps.27

During the January 1943 training program, the WRA’s Thomas Holland clearly revealed how the wartime labor shortage was pressuring the government to reverse its policy of Japanese American segregation and confinement. After first explaining that the great majority of internees were loyal American citizens who were “quite thoroughly Americanized,” he went on to say:

Then there is another reason for not keeping a padlock on the door, and that is we have a tremendous shortage of labor in this country. We need the labor. We have
got all kinds of people in those Centers. We have got the best farmers in the world, we have got chemists, architects, doctors, baby tenders, cooks. You have got almost everything you can mention is [sic] out there.²⁸

The total war logic of labor utilization extended to the military as well, further forcing the government and the Roosevelt administration to denounce racism and eventually to reject the mass confinement of Japanese Americans. At the time of the Pearl Harbor attack there were around five thousand Americans of Japanese descent serving in the U.S. Army, the majority of whom had been drafted. However, the possibilities of military service for Japanese Americans became gradually restricted after the Pearl Harbor attack. While hundreds of Japanese Americans continued to receive draft notices and report to local draft boards after the attack, many already in the army were released without explanation. Eventually the Director of Selective Service instructed local boards to cease acting on eligible Japanese American registrants, and in June 1942 the War Department explicitly declared all Japanese ineligible for induction, regardless of citizenship. Finally, on 14 September 1942, a board of officers within the Office of the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army recommended against further utilization of Japanese Americans. The only exceptions to this general trend to exclude Japanese Americans from the military existed within military intelligence, where they were needed as interpreters and translators, and in one offshoot of the Hawaii National Guard, the 100th Battalion. The latter was a special battalion made up of the Hawaiian Nisei who had been separated from their non-Japanese fellow Hawaiian recruits just days after Pearl Harbor.²⁹

Thus by September 1942 it appeared that Japanese Americans would no longer be accepted into the military and that the camps would physically and symbolically embody their exclusion from the national community. However, after much study and in consultation with representatives of various military and civilian agencies within the government, in January 1943 the War Department completely reversed its earlier decision and declared that it would begin admitting Japanese American citizens to the army. Moreover, it also established an all-Japanese American special combat team that was meant to represent not only America’s acceptance of them but also the nation’s categorical denunciation of racism. These were the events leading up to the January 1943 training program analyzed earlier. In the following year, Japanese Americans also became subject to the draft.

So what were the considerations that weighed so heavily on the June and September 1942 decisions to exclude Japanese Americans from the military, and by extension the nation; and what were the factors that led to a complete repudiation of this original decision in early 1943? The earlier disqualification of Japanese Americans as full-fledged citizen-soldiers was in large
part the result of an uncomplicated and “vulgar” racism. In this “naturalistic” vision of the Japanese race difference, it was believed that Japanese Americans were so fixed in their physicality and temperament that they were in fact outside of history and that for them assimilation into white America was an impossibility. The report of the board of officers within the Office of the Army Chief of Staff makes very clear that such a racism outweighed considerations of their potential as military or civilian labor.

Confirming that any decision about mobilizing minorities as civilian or military labor power under conditions of total war would have to begin by calculating their utility with numerical data, the board determined that there were about thirty-six thousand male Japanese American citizens of military age, of whom roughly fourteen thousand could potentially be inducted. However, the board indicated that despite their potential and its hope that “an appropriate placement may be found for such a distinctive class of individuals [in the war effort],” this group was “so marked by racial appearance, characteristics and background, that they are particularly repulsive to the military establishment at large and the civilian population of the United States.” “The lone fact that these individuals are of Japanese ancestry,” it concluded, “tends to place them in a most questionable light as to their loyalty to the United States.”

Furthermore, the board stated that the commanding generals of the Services of Supply and the Army Ground Forces—in other words, two major commands under which such soldiers might be utilized—had indicated that they did “not favor the unrestricted military use of United States citizens of Japanese ancestry, either as combat troops in active theaters or as organized units for other purposes.” To be more precise, in his 12 August 1942 letter to the board, Major L. Duenweg, writing for the Army Ground Forces, reasoned in terms that would be echoed in the board’s final report. He noted that the “adherence of the Japanese to their national customs, language and schools aggravates a natural distrust of all of their race in the present conflict,” making it difficult to employ them in the military because other troops would not want to work with them.

The commanding general of the Services of Supply had been less categorical in opposing military utilization of Japanese Americans, but he informed the board through his assistant chief of staff for operations that the absorption of large numbers of Japanese American soldiers into the units under his command was “impracticable.”

The board had also solicited the opinions of Lieutenant General John L. Dewitt, who had directed the mass evacuation of Japanese Americans. Like most of the others, Dewitt made it clear that he understood that the total war situation necessitated serious consideration of employing Japanese Americans as a military personnel resource, despite his complete distrust of them. Therefore, he recommended that Nisei be employed in military units, but
with many precautions and limitations such as placing them in “service units only, unarmed.” Dewitt’s remarkable recommendations may be read for the starkness with which they show that the need to mobilize all sources of labor in the total war effort exerted tremendous pressure on the military to end its exclusionary practices. But unlike the (polite racist) liberals who would prevail in the end, he did not understand that it would be impossible simply to make use of Japanese American labor without formally admitting them into the national community as loyal Americans. His plan unabashedly called for their sheer exploitation under grossly discriminatory conditions without any compensatory benefits to the soldiers or their communities.

Against this generally negative view, the board also heard the more liberal opinions of the WRA’s Thomas Holland who, as we have seen, would in a few months be called upon to speak at the January 1943 training program, and Colonels Moses W. Pettigrew and Rufus S. Bratten. They all believed that Japanese Americans should be allowed this opportunity. The two colonels concurred that these men represented a “considerable quantity of very good man power” that should not be wasted and that they were on the whole a very loyal group of Americans. But the views of these liberals on the “Japanese problem” would not prevail at this time.

In its final decision, the Board recommended that “in general, the military potential of United States citizens of Japanese ancestry be considered negative because of the universal distrust in which they are held.” The only exception to this exclusionary policy would be their possible utilization for “intelligence or for [unnamed] specialized purposes.” Thus in the short run not even the pressure to mobilize all possible sources of human power for the war effort could break down the vulgar racists’ resistance. This was a view fully in keeping with the U.S. government’s general attitude and policy toward Japanese Americans at the time. Yet the civil and military leadership would soon come to regard this vulgar racist stance toward the Japanese in America, as well as the military’s rejection of their utility in the armed forces, as an impediment to America’s national interests.

In addition, as I have written extensively elsewhere, by early October 1942 military and civilian leaders began to be convinced of the utility of Japanese American soldiers in a global propaganda campaign to demonstrate that the United States did not practice racism. Within the American empire domestic minorities and colonial subjects could not have been successfully mobilized for the war effort unless the government and the military at least strongly gestured toward the denunciation of racism. These people needed to be convinced that it would be in their interest to participate on the U.S. side—not against it—in the war effort at home and on the battlefield. Furthermore, if Japanese Americans could be shown participating in the war effort, even soldiering for America and enjoying fair and equal
treatment, they could demonstrate to nonwhite peoples throughout the world that America’s war against Japan was not an effort to preserve Western and white supremacy, but a “good war” fought for the freedom and equality of all peoples. As one Japan expert put it in September 1942, the figure of Japanese American soldiers fighting for America could subvert the Japanese empire’s strategy of turning the conflict into a race war, a “holy crusade of the yellow and brown peoples for freedom from the white race.” Such a performance of America’s disavowal of racism was critical to the U.S. leadership’s wartime and postwar strategy of achieving global hegemony, particularly in East Asia.

The Passage from the Outside to the Inside of the U.S. Population. The utilitarian decisions to mobilize Japanese Americans as civilian and military labor while also exploiting them in a global propaganda campaign had profound repercussions for the racial management of Japanese Americans. Once these decisions had been made, this minority could no longer be excluded from the national community and the benefits of the welfare state, so that, paralleling the case of Koreans within the Japanese empire, Japanese Americans too became targets of bio-power and governmentality. Furthermore, the program to determine Japanese American loyalty that began in February 1943 resulted eventually in the wartime release of tens of thousands of internees, their resettlement into mainstream society, and rescission of the legal exclusion of the Japanese from the western states in December 1944.

Throughout the prewar years the Japanese minority had been more outside than inside the national community, and technologies of human accounting, such as the census, had operated more to exclude them from society, in fact to defend society from them, than to include them within the political and bio-political space of the nation. This outsideness had been sustained symbolically as well as administratively and juridically by bureaucratic practices of population management and the well-known web of federal and state laws that had not only shut off the flow of Japanese immigration to the United States but also kept those who had already immigrated and their children at a distance from the properly (and propertied) white civic population. I have in mind the Immigration Act of 1924, which effectively ended almost all Japanese immigration until passage of the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952; naturalization laws that allowed only “free white persons” and those of African descent to become naturalized citizens; state-level alien land laws that prohibited those ineligible to become naturalized citizens from owning land; the numerous state antimiscegenation laws; and the like.

In terms of technologies of population management, the 1940 census, which was used to facilitate the evacuation of the Japanese from the West Coast, accounted for the Japanese population in a way that was completely
different from the manner in which it treated those of European ancestry, including those from German and Italian backgrounds. While the Census Bureau employed the concepts “German” and “Italian” only to signify countries of birth, the term “Japanese” indicated both a birth country and a race of people. Put differently, according to the census, Japanese Americans remained conceptually “Japanese” regardless of their birth in the United States, while German Americans and Italian Americans did not remain “Germans” and “Italians.” This meant that almost immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack the Census Bureau could and did produce tabulations for the Japanese in the United States based upon the race item—but not for their European counterparts.40

Moreover, recent work on public health measures for the Japanese in the United States makes it plain that even the extremely limited state measures to improve the health of Japanese Americans were almost exclusively intended to segregate and sanitize them so that they could not medically and racially “contaminate” the white communities. Power and numbers worked to exclude Japanese Americans and to let them die—not to make them live. Natalia Molina has shown, for example, that even during the 1920s when public health officials in Los Angeles began to provide a modicum of health care for Mexicans, including well-baby clinics, the same officials almost totally excluded the Japanese from such measures. The difference in medical care provided for these two communities stemmed from the fact that in the twenties large employers did not consider the Japanese an important source of cheap labor. To be sure, Los Angeles public health officials collected vital statistics about the Japanese, including data on births and deaths. But as Molina demonstrates, the city was less concerned to improve the health and extend the lives of the Japanese than it was to monitor their birth rates out of fear of their hyperfecundity and, by extension, the “race suicide” of whites.41

It cannot be denied that the civil and military authorities as well as the general white population that actively or tacitly approved of this state racism were at least in part sustained by their ability to regard the Japanese in the United States as not completely human. On the eve of the final decision to evacuate Japanese Americans from the West Coast, for example, the Los Angeles Times famously opined that “a viper is a viper wherever the egg is hatched—so a Japanese American, born of Japanese parents—grows up to be a Japanese, not an American.”42 In May 1942 the governor of Idaho advised that all the Japanese in his state should be sent back to Japan and the island then sunk. His reason: “They live like rats, breed like rats and act like rats.”45 This reflects not so much a looseness of language as a vulgar racist belief that the differences that warranted maintaining the Japanese on the outside of America were of a natural or biological kind. And we can see the
easy slippage from metaphor to state practice in the first phase of the evacuation, before the permanent internment camps had been constructed, when Japanese Americans were often housed in quarters that had just been used by livestock. At the “assembly centers” established at the former Tanforan and Santa Anita racetracks, for example, Japanese Americans spent from the spring to the fall of 1942 living in converted horse stables.\textsuperscript{44} Animality, as Achille Mbembe suggests, fostered the view of the other as having “no freedom, no history, no individuality in any real sense.”\textsuperscript{45}

But it is precisely during the period of total war, when contempt for Japanese Americans had risen to such a level that they had been forcibly expelled from the West Coast and then penned in camps like animals that we witness a rather unexpected turn of events: namely, a previously unheard of effort beginning in early 1943 to include this despised population in the American nation. Even as the animal metaphors continued to be used by many—but this time to argue that the sheep could be separated from the goats and that even they possessed history and individuality—it became increasingly difficult in public circles and in state policy to sustain the vulgar racists’ line of exclusion. In this period the state and its officers were compelled to claim that they did not practice racism, that they welcomed this population into the nation, that they would make available to these people the benefits of life, health, education and happiness, and that since America did not practice discrimination it would also allow the young men of this population to die for the national community.

In this sense the American concentration camps with their schools, libraries, hospitals, gymnasiums, baseball fields, community councils, town meetings, elections, nominal freedom of speech and religion, newspapers, gardens, beauty pageants, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, YMCA, YWCA, and even a showcase orphanage in Manzanar—these were constructed so as to replicate (albeit with pathetic results) what were regarded as the best features of liberal society.\textsuperscript{46} Through the space and mechanisms of the camp, Japanese Americans became constituted as a subpopulation worthy of life and sustenance, even as the barbed wire continued to mark them as a danger. In many ways the camp was the liberal nation-state writ small (with obvious differences—most glaringly the racialized makeup of the internees and the severely compromised conditions for maintaining nuclear families and domesticity). And in the same way that we have traced the “governmentalization of Korea” as a Japanese colony, it is possible to identify what we might call the “governmentalization of the American concentration camps.”

During the January 1943 training program this ironic wartime incorporation of Japanese Americans into the welfare state was most explicitly expressed by E. R. Fryer, Deputy Director of the WRA, and Calvert L. Dedrick,
Chief Economist, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War. Fryer first informed the teams that the “hysteria of Pearl Harbor” had died down and that the “growing demand in the country for manpower” had led to some significant changes in “public attitude.” He went on to explain that camp internees were being provided with what he called “community services,” including schools, elected community councils, hospitals, nursing services, and various types of “curative and preventive medicine, all things having to do with sanitation, sanitation inspection and so forth.”

With the cold rationality of a man dedicated to employing statistics to monitor and control populations, Dedrick informed the program participants about the U.S.–Japanese population’s characteristics and how the Census Bureau had used this knowledge toward the swift removal of this group from the West Coast. He was certainly in a position to know, since, as one of the most senior of the Census Bureau’s technical staff, he had been sent to San Francisco in late February 1942 to assist the army’s Western Defense Command in the evacuation and internment of Japanese Americans. Dedrick explained how knowledge compiled by the Census Bureau had been used to locate, assemble, and evacuate this group en masse with no intention of assessing the loyalty of any individual.

At the same time that Dedrick’s lecture showed how cold, calculating, rational, and unconcerned with the question of loyalty the military and civilian authorities had been at the time of the evacuation, he also called attention to the medical and health services eventually provided to the evacuees. From basic medical services to women’s prenatal care, hospitalization, food, clothing, and counseling with social welfare workers—all these, he noted, had been provided at government expense. In addition, each evacuee had been given a medical inspection at the assembly centers, and those suspected of having contagious diseases were isolated. Finally, after noting the presence of hospitals in both the assembly centers, which were the first places in which the evacuees were housed, and at the ten permanent “relocation centers” that were used through the rest of the war years, he again stated as a matter of plain fact: “As far as I have been able to determine by statistics, there were fewer deaths out of the Japanese population from March to November (1942) than during the past. There were fewer Japanese who died before reaching a proper age. There was a general prolongation of life.”

It would be naive to believe that the military and civilian authorities had prioritized the “general prolongation of life” of Japanese Americans at the time of their removal. To be sure, the authorities clearly wished to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and toward that end had administered medical examinations and inoculations. But this was not only for the benefit of the evacuees, since epidemics could spread to outside communities.
Moreover, the authorities obviously had little initial regard for the health of evacuees when they placed them in extremely crowded and unsanitary conditions in the assembly centers, the majority of which had been converted out of public facilities for animals. Reports by the United States Public Health Service as well as the army admitted as much.49 The locations for the ten “relocation centers” had likewise not been selected with a concern for the health of the internees. As is well known, the WRA built the camps in extremely inhospitable desert, high plains, or swampland conditions that even beyond the factor of crowding presented special health problems that few Japanese Americans would have faced had they remained in their communities. These included extreme heat leading to infant deaths, food and water contamination, dust-related illnesses, and malaria.50 In other words, from the spring to the fall of 1942 when Japanese Americans were evacuated, confined in assembly centers, and then transferred to more permanent “relocation centers,” the military and civilian authorities had exposed this population to many new health challenges.

What Dedrick’s statement on the “prolongation” of Japanese American lives nonetheless reveals is that, at least by January 1943, with the WRA clearly responding to the need for civilian workers and with the decision firmly made to open the army to Japanese American volunteers, the military and civilian authorities and bureaucrats were in a position to boast that their treatment of the evacuees had led not just to their successful segregation and confinement, but to the enhancement of their life and welfare. The policy of universal access to health care for internees, which had begun under the assembly centers, was now ironically to develop in tandem with putting the “relocation centers” in order. For example, according to one nurse at the Granada camp, the medical staff kept files on all babies and preschool children, providing “well-baby care” as well as education for mothers.51 The internees even received dental care, a form of medical attention that many Japanese Americans had gone without or utilized only for emergencies before internment. While certainly far from comprehensive, even this service improved in the internment camps.52 Shortly after closing the camps, the WRA issued reports indicating that the internees had been provided with excellent health care, even noting that they had better overall survival rates than the U.S. population at large.53

The limited, if empirically pioneering, scholarship on health care for Japanese Americans in the assembly centers and “relocation camps” has been divided between those who have given the health services in these places relatively high marks and those who have emphasized their deficiencies.54 However, rather than assess them with such sweeping moralistic appraisals, it seems more appropriate to understand this public health issue in
its contradictoriness, especially in conjunction with the temporal shift from vulgar to polite racism. There can be no doubt that the assembly centers and “relocation camps” were established on the basis of a vulgar racism that had conflated the treatment of Japanese Americans with animals and in which limited thought had been given to their health. However, paralleling the shift toward incorporation of those deemed loyal into the civilian and military labor force and the global propaganda campaign to demonstrate that the United States condemned racism, administrators increasingly attempted to respond to their health needs.

**Concluding Thoughts**

It may be concluded that the Japanese and American wartime regimes reacted in very similar ways to the material demands of waging total war. Rather than strictly segregate or even exterminate their minority and colonial subjects, these two nation-state-based empires were forced to begin a process of including these previously despised populations into their nations in unprecedented ways, while at the same time denouncing racial discrimination and even considering these peoples as part of the national populations and, as such, deserving of life, welfare, and happiness. But one might ask, given the shift in both nation-state-based empires from “vulgar racism” to “polite racism,” and from the “right to kill” to the “right to make live,” why did minority and colonial subjects experience so much death and brutality during the war and after? Furthermore, does this mean that “vulgar racism” was completely eclipsed by its more polite form? These questions can be answered in two ways.

First, it is important to recognize that in Foucault’s formulation, under the bio-political regime the right to demand death is the flip side of the “right to make live.” As Foucault explains, “Since population is nothing more than what the state takes care of for its own sake, of course, the state is entitled to slaughter it, if necessary. So the reverse of biopolitics is thanatopolitics.” And with even more irony, he says: “One could symbolize such a coincidence by a slogan: Go get slaughtered and we promise you a long and pleasant life.” However, in the cases of Japanese in America and Koreans in the Japanese empire, I need to reiterate that these people were only very incompletely constituted as populations worthy of the positive workings of government before the war. Thus, before they could be asked to die in order to defend society, they had to be welcomed into the nation and enticed to enjoy the benefits of their inclusion. So, in the case of these two subpopulations during the war, I would have to add a preface to Foucault’s slogan: “Welcome to the nation; go get slaughtered and we promise you a long and pleasant life.”
Also, as Foucault recognized and as Giorgio Agamben and Achille Mbembe have further theorized, despite the advance of bio-power in modern times, a sheer necropolitics—or the sovereign power to take life without regard for law—has never disappeared. Paralleling this nesting of apparent opposites, “vulgar racism” was forced to go underground during the tran-swar years—by which I mean the period stretching across the Second World War and the Cold War—but has never disappeared. To borrow a musical metaphor, it continues to stay with us as a kind of ground bass working sometimes against but also to supplement and enable “polite racism.”

In the case of Japan’s and America’s minorities and colonial subjects during the war years, even as they entered the mainstream populations in some important respects, they continued to be marked as somehow different, usually characterized within the discourse of cultural difference. This inclusionary racism made it possible for these regimes, and in general for modern regimes premised upon bio-power, to separate out subpopulations as a whole or segments of them, especially by class, and then to constitute them permanently or in moments of crisis into states or zones of exception—exceptional for the ways in which they operated to deprive life through a sheer negativity. Such is the way I understand the institutionalization of the “comfort women” and forced labor systems in the Japanese empire and the continuing everyday brutality against targeted subpopulations in the United States. As an example of the latter I would at least mention the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis Study that began in 1939 and did not end until 1972. In this experiment hundreds of mostly poor black sharecroppers were denied medical therapy for syphilis as subjects in a study of the effects of the untreated disease. Tellingly, during the war years the United States Public Health Service, the agency that headed this study, was also responsible for nurturing the lives of Japanese Americans in the camps.

Finally, we might ask what is to be gained from drawing comparabilities between the United States and Japan during WWII, as opposed to the more conventional gathering together of Japan and Germany under the rubric of fascism or totalitarianism? While each of these three histories must be understood in their singularities as well as in their imbrications and continuities, and while there is much to be learned from the Japan/Germany comparison, I have tried to resist the comfort provided by the fascist/nonfascist binary in order to suggest that American liberalism during wartime (then and now) shares much more with what has been called Japanese fascism than most scholars and the general public might like to admit.

To be sure, the legacies of the Second World War are complex, and Japan’s defeat had a very different impact on the Korean population than the Allied victory had on Japanese Americans. Japan’s surrender disrupted the trajectory of the Korean people’s inclusion into the political and bio-political
nation, and shortly after the war the Japanese state unilaterally stripped all of them, including those residing in Japan, of their legal status as Japanese nationals. In so doing it deprived them of not only their political rights but also their rights to life through welfare. Power in that relation then reverted back to the mode of the “right to kill,” a power that had never ceased to operate in the first place. Japanese Americans, in contrast, continued their passage into the mainstream American population, and since the 1960s have been celebrated by the media as America’s “model minority.”

Despite these differences, however, it is also important to recognize that in the postwar order—in the wake of Nazi defeat and the widespread disavowal of racist discrimination by all those nations and empires that had sought to mobilize multi-ethnic or multiracial political communities for the war effort—few countries could for long sustain racism in its “vulgar” form alone. Postwar Japan’s political leaders, for example, even as they expelled their former colonial subjects from the national community and promoted what Oguma Eiji has called the “myth of [Japanese] ethnic homogeneity”—through the postwar constitution they also guaranteed that “all of the people are equal under the law and there should be no discrimination . . . because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin” (Article 14). Regardless of concrete differences from nation to nation, then, one of the most profound legacies of the Second World War is the haunting presence of racism and its disavowal, which remain with us in their uneasy compatibility.

Notes

This is a revised version of an article originally published in Japanese as “Korosu kenri, ikasu kenri: Ajia-Taiheiyo sensō no Nihonjin toshite no Chōsenjin to Amerikajin toshite no Nihonjin,” in Dōin, teikō, yokusan, ed. Kurasawa Aiko et al., vol. 8 of Iwanami koza: Ajia-taiheiyo sensō (Tokyo, 2006): 181–216. All translations from Japanese into English are my own. I thank my Japanese publisher, Iwanami Shoten, for allowing me to retain the copyright, and my editor at Iwanami, Hara Ikuko, for her thoughtful comments on the original piece. Many colleagues in Japan, Korea, and the United States have helped in one way or another with improving the ideas presented in this article. Although I cannot name them all, I would especially like to thank Jody Blanco, Fatima El-Tayeb, Henry Em, Yen Espiritu, Higuchi Yūichi, Sara Johnson, Lisa Lowe, Colleen Lye, Curtis Marez, Mizuno Naoki, Roddey Reid, Nayan Shah, Stephanie Smallwood, Shelley Streeby, Danny Widener, and Lisa Yoneyama, as well as participants in the “After Orientalism: Working Across Disciplines” colloquium at UC Berkeley in April 2006.


4. For the quote, see Foucault, “Governmentality,” 100. A full discussion of Foucault’s concepts of governmentality and government would make this essay excessively long and distract the reader from my main arguments. I hope it will suffice to say that in a forthcoming book with the tentative title *Racism Under Fire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans in WWII* I attend more closely to a central aspect of Foucault’s explication of governmentality that I cannot explore here—namely, to the question of how modern practices of government involve not only the management of aggregated populations (“all”), as I argue in this article but also the self-government of individuals (“each”). In other words, Foucault’s understanding of government concerns the governing of self-governing in that it aims to constitute formally free and responsible subjects while guiding them toward normative choices. In the book I argue that Japan’s and the United States’ wartime regimes respectively sought to constitute Koreans in the Japanese empire and Japanese in the United States as not only subpopulations in the aggregate that could be included in the more expansive Japanese and American populations but also “free” subjects mobilized toward the effective conduct of total war.


11. Ibid., 8.
17. Although my argument concerning the relationship between bio-power and governmentality, on the one hand, and the household registration and temporary domicile notification systems on the other is unique, this paragraph and the one that precedes it rely heavily upon Higuchi Yūichi, Senjika Chōsen no minshū to chōhei (Tokyo, 2001), 35–51; for the quote, 45.
22. For a representative work see, Fujioka Nobukatsu and Izawa Motohiko, NO to teru kyokasho: shinjitsu no Nikkan kankeishi (Tokyo, 1998).
25. “Talk by Commander Coggins,” 26 January 1943, 1b, 6b, in “Training Program.”
26. These figures are from relevant volumes of the United States Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940 (Washington, D.C., 1943).

30. The expression “naturalistic racism” is borrowed from Goldberg, Racial State. In addition to the factor of “vulgar racism,” in Racism Under Fire I show that in this period some military leaders resisted the further inclusion of Japanese Americans into the military because they feared that these soldiers might play a role in mobilizing African Americans against white privilege.


38. The entire memo by Edwin O. Reischauer has been published in ibid.; for the quote, 401.


42. As quoted in Roger Daniels, Concentration Camps, USA: Japanese Americans and World War II (New York, 1972), 62.


44. These facts are well known. See, for example, United States Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Personal Justice Denied, 137–40.


46. While scholars have for some time remarked in passing on the close relation between liberalism and the internment, several recent works have in different ways raised the level of analysis of this fit to a new level. See Brian Masaru Hayashi,

47. “Talk by Mr. Fryer,” 26 January 1943, 9–10, in “Training Program.”
49. Daniels, Concentration Camps, USA, 89.
54. Jensen offers the more critical view in ibid., while Fiset gives the more positive assessment in “Public Health,” 565–84.
56. Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, 1998), and Giorgio Agamben, State of Exception, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago, 2003); Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” Public Culture 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40. Although this article is fully consistent with David Scott’s admonition to historicize the political rationalities of colonialism, I part company with him on the issue of sovereign power. Scott writes of the “displacement of the problematic of sovereignty by [Foucault’s conceptualization of] ‘government.’” However, I am arguing that the power of sovereignty in its negativity, especially the right to take life, continued and continues to exist alongside the positivitiy of government. This parallels the continuing effects of vulgar racism, despite the everyday dominance of polite racism. See David Scott, “Colonial Governmentality,” Social Text no. 43 (Autumn 1995): 191–220; for the quote, 202.