

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND CIVIL RIGHTS

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Eleanor Roosevelt is an American heroine. Stories and anecdotes illustrated her strength of character, warmth, charm, and empathy. Historians, consequently, have found it difficult to achieve a fair and balanced perspective of this much-loved woman. Her activities on behalf of civil rights, the focus of this essay, are especially hard to evaluate. Indeed, no scholarly work has evaluated her civil rights position through her speeches and writings by comparing it with those of contemporaries in government or with those of the civil right leaders of her day,¹ as this essay will do.

Recent books on the experience of blacks in New Deal criticize New Dealers' limitations on race issues, but Eleanor is treated as an exception.² She was the New Deal's conscience. She resigned from the Daughters of the American Revolution after they denied Marian Anderson permission to perform at Constitution Hall. She agreed to be a patron of an anti-lynching exhibit sponsored by the National Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in New York city. These dramatic gestures supporting her beliefs contributed to her reputation as a humanitarian and civil rights advocate, and perhaps also to the exceptional status she holds in current studies of the New Deal and black civil rights.

In many ways Eleanor created the role of the modern First Lady.

She broke precedents by serving as assistant to her husband and establishing publicly her own opinion, which in many ways were different from his. When Franklin Roosevelt could not promote civil rights because he needed the cooperation of southern Democrats, first for economic recovery measures and later for defense expenditures, Eleanor was willing to espouse her concern for civil rights. In the social and political climate of the day, it was bold of her, as First Lady, to take any position on civil rights.

This essay evaluates Eleanor Roosevelt as a civil rights advocate within the context of the civil right movement of her time. It will demonstrate through her writings and speeches that although Eleanor's civil rights ideals evolved and progressed, her tactics for the realization of these goals remained static. Even though her philosophy was openly egalitarian, she did not endorse any strategy other than gradualism. Her resistance to direct action as a strategy was symptomatic of an enduring core of prejudice.

This study concludes with a discussion of why Eleanor could not bring herself to agree with changes in the philosophy, organization, and tactics of the domestic civil rights movement as it evolved during the Second World War. By 1941, when A. Philip Randolph and other civil rights leaders proposed the March on Washington, a large portion of the black community considered her gradualism unacceptable. Her early advocacy of black rights was courageous but she was unable to advocate more justice than she felt the majority of white Americans could accept.

I

Like her husband, Eleanor entered the White House with neither much knowledge of nor empathy for the problems of blacks. Eleanor

felt that almost all difficulties that communities faced originated in housing problems.³ This conviction is traced to her early involvement with social work at the Rivington Street Settlement House in New York City. There she witnessed the deprivation of the poor and the courage of slum dwellers who sought to improve their living conditions. Throughout Franklin Roosevelt first two administrations, Eleanor stressed improvement in housing as the basis for better racial relations. She supported more and better housing for low income groups. In a speech written in 1935, she said:

I feel sure that any of us who are sufficiently interested to watch it, will find that in the course of ten years, our communities where better housing for the lower income groups is achieved, will receive dividends in better citizens and more self-supporting people.⁴

While she felt it was the government's responsibility to provide adequate low-income housing for blacks, she also felt that those who occupied these dwellings had to prove that they deserved them by maintaining them well.⁵ In another speech she asserted that:

From time immemorial it has been told that it is useless to provide good housing for our people because they do not care for cleanliness or modern improvements; they will insist on bringing into new houses the same conditions which have existed in the old. On you who now occupy these houses rests the responsibility of proving that given good houses, within your incomes, you know how to keep them up and how to make of these houses real homes. In these your children can grow healthy and strong in body with a back-ground. [sic] which will make it possible for them to take full advantage of educational opportunities available and to become the citizens of the future who will constantly improve our

civilization.⁶

Education was the other formula for improved race relations. She stressed again and again “improved” or “equal” opportunities. She said that blacks should “concentrate their efforts on obtaining better opportunities for education for their people throughout the country.”⁷ Sounding remarkably like Booker T. Washington, she urged:

As this need of vocational education and guidance is necessary for all youth, we must use every vigilance so that colored youth obtains equal opportunity. They must stress that fact that they are ready and willing to acquire skills and will take advantage of every opportunity offered to them.⁸

While she emphasized the need for education, her speeches reveal her susceptibility to accepting a stereotype of blacks, as in the following declaration:

I believe that the Negro race has tremendous gifts to bring to the country in the way of artistic development. I think things come by nature to many of them that we [whites] have to acquire, such as an appreciation of art and of music and of rhythm.⁹

Eleanor believed that unequal opportunities in education and housing were the two chief perpetuators of racial inequality. This belief could have let her to advocate desegregation in these areas. She, however, consistently refused to be more specific in the resolutions she proposed. One incident indicates where she stood at that time. It was in 1936, when she entertained delinquents from the National Training School for Girls at a White House garden party. The races were segregated while refreshments were served. Eleanor had to confess later that “while I live in the White House I must conform to the laws of the District of Columbia,” under which the National Training School practiced segregation.¹⁰

Her unwillingness to challenge local laws and customs, however, was somewhat affected by the anti-lynching bill that passed the lower chamber of Congress in 1937 and again in 1940. The bill's support reflected the emerging potential of both the black urban vote in northern and midwestern industrial states and the coalition that the NAACP and the NAACP's first black executive secretary, Walter White, and other leaders had been nurturing among black activists, liberal politicians, labor leaders, reform-minded churches, civil libertarians, and certain ethnic and women's organizations.¹¹ This time Eleanor played the role of go-between to Walter White and Franklin Roosevelt, processing many letters from White and persuading Franklin to endorse the bill. The president thought it was unconstitutional for the Federal government to step into the lynching situation and determined to avoid the issue.¹² The bill was killed by a southern filibuster in the Senate and never became law.

Eleanor's involvement in anti-lynching measures served, however, to inform her of the gravity of the problem, and significantly, of the contradictions to her own beliefs that unchallenged local laws and customs represented. "The more I think about going to the exhibition, the more troubled I am," wrote Eleanor before she decided to attend an NAACP-sponsored exhibit against lynching. She asked Franklin's advice. He said it was quite all right for her to go, but warned against publicity.¹³

She was the first to come this far as the First Lady, but as we saw earlier, essentially she accepted the doctrine of "separate but equal" in her notion of better opportunities for blacks. During the first two Roosevelt administrations, she placed her emphasis upon the black's rather than the white man's responsibility to prove his good faith. She did not anticipate the role that rising expectations and restlessness

with the status quo would play in the black's fight for justice in America and for the legal dissolution of "separate but equal" in the public sphere.

Eleanor's presence at the anti-lynching exhibit, which took place around 1935, was therefore all the more meaningful because of her acceptance of the "separate but equal" doctrine. Her presence demonstrated that she, as the most influential woman in America, judged lynching so abhorrent and severe a national problem that she must be personally involved in opposing it. Her recognition of the NAACP's efforts to outlaw lynching, despite her disagreement with that organization's opposition to the doctrine of separate but equal, underlined her support of anti-lynching measures.

II

With the advent of war, some of Eleanor Roosevelt's positions concerning race relations matured and progressed. This response to an eloquent letter from a young black activist to President Roosevelt illustrates Eleanor's deepening sensitivity to the discrimination practiced against minorities in America.

How many of our colored people in the South would like to be evacuated and treated as though they were not as rightfully here as any other people? I am deeply concerned that we have had to do that to the Japanese who are American citizens, but we are at war with Japan and they have only been citizens for a very short time. We would feel a resentment if we had to do this for citizens who have been here as long as most of the white people have.¹⁴

Pauli Murray, who wrote the letter in July, 1942, was then a teacher in the Works Progress Administration program. Angered with the continued brutal treatment of blacks in the South, Murray had written

that "If Japanese Americans can be evacuated from the West Coast for their protection, then certainly you [the president] have the power to evacuate Negro citizens from lynching' areas in the South."¹⁵ Murray was astonished to have received a reply from Eleanor writing on behalf of Franklin. Feeling that Eleanor's response gave her an opening to make the First Lady more fully aware of the mood of bitterness among Negroes, Murray began to write to Eleanor periodically.¹⁶

Eleanor was responding to rising tension among black Americans. She began to understand that one of the most important issues of World War was the question of race. The Nazis subscribed to a "master race" ideology while the Japanese, with the notion of a "Greater East Asia Coprosperity Sphere," argued that they were fighting to oust white imperialism in Asia. Increasingly, Eleanor felt that problems in race relations were not limited to the United States. In her words:

If we are to have peace, we must cooperate with and treat fairly all the peoples of the world and the white people of this earth are in the minority. Our treatment of our colored citizens has made many non-white peoples afraid to trust us to be fair.¹⁷

During the war years, Eleanor's thinking concerning the race question evolved. The irony of fighting a war to secure democracy abroad while racial discrimination was still virulent at home did not escape her, just as it did not escape the American black community. "We are fighting a war today so that individuals all over the world may have freedom," she wrote, and:

If we believe firmly that peace can not come to the world unless this is true for men all over the world, then we must know in our nation that every man regardless of race or religion, has this

chance. Otherwise we fight for nothing of real value.¹⁸

Most importantly, however, Eleanor began to see the racial question as an international problem that would have to be faced when the peace was finally won, as well as a central issue of the war. In July 1942 she stated that:

One phase of the world revolt from which we could not escape concerns something which people do not like to talk about very much—namely our attitude toward the other races in the world. Perhaps one of the things we can not have any longer is what Kipling called “The White Man’s Burden.” The other races of the world may be becoming conscious of the fact that they wish to carry their own burdens. The job which the white race may have had to carry alone in the past, may be in the future a cooperative job.¹⁹

Increasingly, she felt that the world’s colored peoples would become alienated from democracy as a form of government and a way of life, if its chief representative could not overcome its internal racial problems. She was aware and sensitive to the fact that while white people were a majority they were a minority of the world’s peoples as a whole. Above all, however, she thought that some progress must be made, at least as a show of good faith, in order to ensure international peace and unity.²⁰

This vision of the war, coupled with her perception of the bitterness that was rampant in the American black community, enabled her to understand that white people, as well as black people, had responsibilities. Again, in July, 1942, she pleaded for white Americans, as well as for black Americans to display their good faith. She expressed the belief that the clear intention of the white population to fulfill its pledges for equal civil rights for blacks was “perhaps the greatest

safeguarded" for that promised equality. Emphasizing the importance of declared white commitment, she asserted that it was a safeguard even "greater than moderation on the part of the Negro press or on the part of the leaders of the colored people." She continued with the assertion that:

The burden of action should not fall on our colored citizens, for that is probably dangerous, but I think we must give constantly increasing proof that we white people mean what we say. The Negro must be able to count on a rising economic status because he will have fair play and equal opportunity in industry, in which he engages. If the Negro is sure his cause is marching on, I think we can count on an attitude of moderation from him, but if no one keeps his cause moving perhaps it will seem to him that only the spectacular and the dangerous can eliminate the things which have made him apathetic in this war.²¹

Eleanor was keenly aware of the heightening tensions and the increasing urgency in black Americans' quest for equal civil rights. Ideas about the use of nonviolent resistance to racial injustice, modeled on Gandhi's movement in India, were in the air. A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, announced publicly that the March on Washington Movement was considering a campaign of civil disobedience and non-cooperation. At first Randolph stood virtually alone among established black leaders in advocating this form of protest. The influential black weekly, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, denounced his action, declaring editorially. "Randolph is guilty of the most dangerous demagoguery on record."²² Young black leaders were eager to adapt this new technique to their struggle.

Eleanor continued to stand for moderation and gradualism, but she began to move close to outright support of desegregation. In the

article "Abolish Jim Crow," written in August 1943, Eleanor declared:

Here at home I think we have to fight for these four simple freedoms.

Equality before the law, which assures us of justice without prejudice, for Jew or Gentile, for any race or any color as far as human beings can obtain justice.

Equality of education for everyone, because of the need for an equal opportunity in life.

Equality in the economic field which means we are so organized in our communities and in our system of economics that all men who want to work, will have work and that work will be suited to their capacity and will be rewarded equally without prejudice.

Finally... we must give all the citizens of a democracy, a chance for equality of expression. We believe that there should be no impediment which prevents any man from expressing his will through the ballot.²³

The black community had adopted the slogan "Fight on two fronts" as its battle cry. Eleanor came very close to that position when she pressed for an application of her husband's war aims at home as well as abroad.

In response to a question at a Workshop for Democracy that was sponsored by the Downtown Community School, she said that she thought the desegregation of housing would greatly ease American racial tensions.²⁴ By the end of the war, the need to desegregate was clearly established in her thinking. Freed of her husband's political concerns, she no longer needed to fear political repercussions from declaring it a social necessity. Still, while she finally recognized that segregation only exacerbated racial tension, and wrote on many occasions that "sooner or later we must recognize the obligation to

move toward the full acceptance of the meaning of the word [desegregation].”²⁵ Eleanor never abandoned her conviction that gradualism and moderation were the only ways to approach the race problem in America. Regardless of the radical ends she envisioned, she was a conservative in terms of means, which we will see in her correspondence with black activists.

III

Despite her willingness to intercede on the behalf of individuals who wrote to her and her public gestures of sympathy toward black America, Eleanor continually urged blacks to be patient with white society during the war years. In answer to a question posed in her column, “If You Ask Me,” she admitted that she would resent submitting to segregation if she were a black woman, but she added:

I think if I were either a colored soldier or his sweetheart, I should try to remember how far my race has come in some seventy-odd years. The change is very great and, hard as the present seems, there is much already for which to be thankful and the progress will probably accelerate as time goes on.²⁶

Eleanor continued to believe that gradual and steady work against racial prejudice was the best way to eradicate it. She was not blind or insensitive to mounting racial tension in America, even before the race riots of 1943, as we have seen. Yet she could not support a policy of more rapid change. She understood that the riots were a by-product of growing impatience in the black community, but she did not know how to respond to the situation except to advise both sides of the color line to be patient and moderate. In October, 1943, Eleanor received a letter from a woman who, discouraged with the racial situation in America, wanted to do something to speed up the rate of progress against

racial intolerance and discrimination. Eleanor's reply made apparent her own priorities, and confusion:

I think we should concentrate now on equal opportunity for education and equal opportunity to hold jobs when we are capable of holding them.

Where there is segregation it will have to continue, because many Negroes have not had the two opportunities I listed above and, therefore, are not ready for a free relationship with white people, but that is something which will change over the years•••if we approach the problem with courage and patience and do not try to do antagonistic things, I think we can bring good from this present situation.²⁷

Yet at the same time, we find her synthesis of ethics drawn from democracy and Christianity. She was able to treat people as individuals rather than as members of classes or races. This was a radical stance for a woman of her background and position. She affirmed her belief that:

Democracy is based on Christianity. Christianity gives us no excuse for racial inequality. People may have different opportunities for development and some people of every race and religion may have developed beyond what others have. Those who have had the greatest opportunities may be pleasanter companions, but God made it clear that all people were his children no matter what race or religion they belonged to, and if we would stop lumping people together and thought of them as individuals and not as groups we would soon live up to what our constitution guarantees.²⁸

In a paper marked "Confidential—*Not* for release" that she wrote for the Joint Commission on Social Reconstruction at the close of World

War II, Eleanor included this paragraph concerning racial intermarriage, one of the most volatile and emotional topics in American society.

Many people will tell you that they object to breaking down the barriers between the races or to allowing them to associate together without self-consciousness from the time they are children because of their disapproval of inter-marriage between races. They feel that races should stay pure-blooded as far as possible. When people say that to me, I sometimes wonder if they have taken a good look at our population. If there ever was a nation where people have mixed blood, it is right here in the United States, and yet we seem to have remained a strong and virile nation. Besides, this particular objection which people advance is somewhat irrelevant since when people want to marry, they are usually passed reasoning with! Reason is swallowed up by emotion and the people involved usually say to all objections: "This is my life and I shall live it as I see fit." It is such a peculiarly personal thing to decide as to whom to marry; that I have a feeling it is a very bad basis on which to decide how people shall live in the year 1945 in a free country under a democratic form of government.²⁹

After reading this paper, Bishop William Scarlett was astonished. Believing that the paragraph implied Eleanor's approval of interracial marriage, he asked her to delete it. Without objecting, Eleanor assented to the bishop's request.³⁰ Her ready compliance demonstrates how difficult it was for her to translate her personal egalitarianism into more radical action against racial prejudice and discrimination, even when she no longer needed to exert political caution in consideration of President Roosevelt's strategies and priorities.

It has been well documented that in many instances that were potentially volatile politically, Eleanor consulted the President before

making any reply or taking any action. One of her biographers stresses that Eleanor had to move cautiously with her husband (who “did not consider himself a second Emancipator”) and observes that:

Fundamentally she accepted [Franklin D. Roosevelt’s] judgement of what was politically impossible because she knew that he wanted the same things for the country that she did, and that when he said he could not push a particular program it was not for lack of caring but because Congress was opposed and the country unreceptive•••It was not a one-way relationship. She learned from him and under his tutelage became one of the most accomplished politicians of the time.³¹

Eleanor was radical and idealistic. Her thought fused pragmatism and caution in terms of action with an idealistic faith in the human race that was grounded in her religious beliefs. Personally, she believed that black Americans should be treated equally, educationally, socially, politically, and economically. Privately, she felt that social equality would “settle itself,” once equality of opportunity in education and law were secured. And she said that she did not advocated social equality because she felt it was “beyond legislation.”³² She kept her definition of social equality limited deliberately to what people did in their own private lives. This is clearly seen in her 1944 response (marked “*Personal, not for publication*”) to a letter she received from an individual who chastised her for advocating social equality when she did not understand the “true conditions” in the South, Eleanor wrote:

You are quite mistaken in thinking that I have advocated social equality for the Negro. That is something which is personal and no one can advocate it for anyone else. What I have stated frequently is that every citizen in a democracy has certain basic right under our constitution and under the kind of usage which

has grown among us, and which we call the democratic way of life.³³

Titles like "If I were A Negro," which she gave to an article for the *Negro Digest*, captured the black attention. In the article, however, she wrote, "I would accept every advance that was made in the Army and Navy, though I would not try to bring those advances about any more quickly than they were offered."³⁴ She was a gradualist in civil rights at a time when gradualism as a tactic to gain social justice was being thoroughly repudiated.

IV

By Franklin D. Roosevelt's third term, Eleanor's civil rights goals closely matched those of black Americans and their leaders. Yet although she joined blacks in espousing a common set of long-term goals, she departed from a growing portion of the black community over the issue of means. Her emphasis upon gradualism increasingly separated her from the most vital, and ultimately, the most successful, body of thought in the civil rights movement.

During the war years, a small group of civil rights leaders shifted their emphasis from "what" to "how". They criticized more traditional and conservative strategies for their failure to achieve concrete results. They exhorted the black community to move beyond advocacy to activism. As black masses began to respond, a new vanguard of the civil rights appeared.

The March on Washington Movement (MOWM) that emerged early in 1941 was "the granddaddy of all black protest that proliferated through the 1960s."³⁵ Its leader, A. Philip Randolph, had by then realized the crucial unity of strategy and goals:

It is one thing to want a thing and another thing to get it. The

whole world wants peace but how shall we get it? Hence, there is nothing more important than method, technique, strategy in planning the solution of a problem.³⁶

Responding to the threat of the impending March on Washington, Roosevelt issued in June, 1941, executive order 8802 prohibiting discrimination in war industries and the government and establishing Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC). The President's dramatic response vividly demonstrated the effect of mass activism to many blacks. Although there would be much criticism of the Fair Employment Practices Commission later, the strategy initiated by MOWM "demonstrated to the doubting Thomases among [blacks] that only mass action [could] pry the iron doors that have been erected against America's black minority."³⁷

Randolph's focus on strategy, tactics, and power reflected a fundamental shift in ideology in a wing of the war-time civil rights movement. What was perceived by many as a "Negro problem" was perceived by these thinkers and strategists now as a "Caucasian problem."³⁸ Their insight that the white man's real "burden" was his inability to accept racial equality shifted the responsibility for racial problems from the black community to the white community. And this transfer itself helped to justify the use of direct action, en masse.

Eleanor tried to dissuade A. Philip Randolph from staging the March on Washington:

I feel very strongly that your group is making a very grave mistake •••to allow this march to take place. I am afraid it will set back the progress which is being made, in the Army at least, towards better opportunities and less segregation.

I feel that if any incident occurs as a result of this, it may engender so much bitterness that it will create in Congress even

more solid opposition from certain groups than we have had in the past.³⁹

By 1943, however, Randolph was openly articulating that the responsibility for racial violence rested with the white racists, who refused to change, and with a government that moved sluggishly, at best, to destroy racial discrimination. Concerning the 1943 riots in Detroit and Harlem, as well as the nonviolent direct action tactic in general, and the possibility that it might produce a violent response, he wrote:

Let the Negro place the blame for these riots right where it belongs, namely at the door of the past and present administrations... [We] wish to avoid race tension and conflict, but major responsibility for avoiding conflict rests with those who refuse to change their thinking and practices in a period when great social changes are taking place.⁴⁰

After the establishment of the FEPC, Randolph expanded and spelled out his nonviolent, direct action ideology. Clearly, he was not dissuaded from action for fear of a violent, white backlash. Randolph was searching for an appropriate vehicle for channeling black discontent into fruitful action. He advocated a plan to organize millions of blacks into blocks, whose captains could mobilize them overnight. He also saw the formation of a non-partisan black political bloc as a powerful weapon in the black struggle for equality. Randolph, George S. Schuyler, and a few other black leaders realized that "only power can effect the enforcement and adoption of a given policy" and the "techniques of fighting" were the key to power.⁴¹ Now the *Pittsburgh Courier* editorialized that, before the war, Negroes

made the mistake of relying entirely upon the gratitude and sense of fair play of the American people. Now we are disillusioned. We

have neither faith in promises, nor a high opinion of the integrity of the American people, where race is involved. Experience has taught us that we must rely primarily upon our own efforts••• That is why we protest, agitate, and demand that all forms of color prejudice be blotted out.⁴²

There was also the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) that was founded in Chicago in 1942, by a small group of pacifists and students. They were members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), an organization of Christian pacifists that was founded during World War I. CORE, unlike MOWM, began as an inter-racial group. CORE, however, also adopted a strategy of nonviolent, direct action as an alternative to the legalistic strategies of the more traditional and established civil rights organizations.⁴³ The key to membership in CORE was activity rather than dues. Each member was required to serve on a committee or action unit. For example, the three action units investigated discrimination and planned action in response to it in the public accommodations of schools and hospitals.⁴⁴

Although CORE's actions during the World War II period took place on a small scale and were relatively unpublicized, they became a model for "basic civil rights strategy down through the famous 1961 Freedom Rides."⁴⁵ Their strategy, with its Gandhian influence, was very similar to the steps A. Philip Randolph had outlined in his own version of direct action.

Both MOWM and CORE represented the wave of the future in the American civil rights movement. Its focus was shifting from the re-education and conversion of white America, to the use of direct action that in later decades, would become its mainstay under the leadership most prominently of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Eleanor was not in step with the most progressive and the most

effective wing of the civil rights movement. To Pauli Murray, who helped organize the first nonviolent sit-in demonstrations in 1943 and whose letter kept Eleanor informed of the restlessness of the black community, Eleanor repeated not to move too fast. "I do not want it [segregation]," she declared "until we have achieved the four basic citizenship rights because I do not think it wise to add any antagonism that we do not have to have."⁴⁶

V

After her husband's death and despite the fact that she had no political ambitions of her own, Eleanor maintained her gradualistic approach to civil rights achievement. Her behavior at the 1956 Democratic convention illustrates this. Even Joseph Lash, her sympathetic biographer and personal friend, admitted that in this instance, "she [was] so heavily committed to the success of the Stevenson candidacy, [that] she...failed to do justice to the urgency of the civil rights issue."⁴⁷ Eleanor supported a convention plank that excluded an endorsement of the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools.

To Negro leaders who were bitter over the exclusion of the Supreme Court decision, she said: "You can't move so fast that you try to change the mores faster than people can accept it. That doesn't mean you do nothing, but it means that you do the things that need to be done, according to priority."⁴⁸

Eleanor always thought that speed in achieving racial justice was not only unnecessary, but dangerous. Other white leaders, who were more attuned to the war-time and post-war mood of the black community understood that in order to avoid racial violence, rapid change was crucial. Eleanor's position was more representative of

most of white America than it was of black America, because only white America felt it could afford to wait for racial justice.

Eleanor Roosevelt's role in the civil rights movement was really that of a liaison between the races rather than that of a spokesperson for one side or the other. She truly wanted to eradicate racial intolerance in America as we saw but she was unwilling to consider a process of social change that involved any social risk. Her support for equal civil rights for blacks was founded in deeply held religious beliefs and principles of political and social justice. Nevertheless because she placed so much emphasis upon moderation, it is difficult to say that she truly empathized with the black community. She was accepted by black masses and black leaders because they knew that she, personally, was a genuine egalitarian and because she was an influential public figure, not because she represented a strategy for civil rights progress that they could believe in. She was never their leader, but she was ever their friend.

Notes

1. Eleanor's position in women's history received thorough treatment recently. See for example, William H. Chafe, *The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991, Blanche Wiesen Cook, *Eleanor Roosevelt 1884—1933*, New York, The Viking Press, 1992, Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1992, and Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981.
2. Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Right as a National Issue—The Depression Decade*, Oxford University Press, 1978., Nancy S. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR*, Princeton University Press, 1983. Joanna S. Zangrando and Robert L. Zangrando, "ER and Black Civil Rights" in Joan-Hoff Wilson and Marjorie

- Lightman eds., *Without Precedent: The Life and Career of Eleanor Roosevelt*, Indiana University Press, 1984.
3. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft speech (Vassar) : "Housing", 1937, Speech and Article File, Eleanor Roosevelt Papers (ERP), Franklin D. Roosevelt Library(FDRL).
 4. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft speech: "Slum Areas", 1935, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
 5. Eleanor Roosevelt, *Ibid.*: and draft speech: "Slum Clearance Meeting December 3rd", 1936, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
 6. *Ibid.*
 7. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft of speech to Urban League, December 1935, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
 8. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft article, "Vocational Guidance For Colored Youth," 1940, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
 9. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft of speech to National Conference of Fundamental Problems in the Education of Negroes, 1934. Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
 10. Weiss, pp. 131—132.
 11. Zangrando and Zangrando in *Without Precedent*, p. 93.
 12. Eleanor Roosevelt to Walter White, March 19, 1936. series 100, ERP, FDRL.
 13. Eleanor Roosevelt to Walter White 1935?, series 100, ERP, FDRL.
 14. Eleanor Roosevelt to Pauli Murray, Aug. 3, 1942, series 100, ERP, FDRL.
 15. Pauli Murray to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 23, 1942 and Pauli Murray to Eleanor Roosevelt, Aug. 7, 1944. series 100, ERP, FDRL.
 16. Pauli Murray, *The Autobiography of a Black Activist, Feminist, Lawyer, Priest and Poet*, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1989, p. 190.
 17. Eleanor Roosevelt to J. Harvey Wright, 7 August 1944, series 100, ERP, FDRL.
 18. Eleanor Roosevelt Draft Article for *New Threshold*: "Abolish Jim Crow", August 1943, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
 19. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft article for *American Magazine*: "What Are We Fighting For?"; 19 July 1942, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.

20. Eleanor Roosevelt, transcript of broadcast to National Democratic Forum, 24 February 1945, Speech and Article File, ERP. FDRL.
21. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft article: "What Is Morale?", July 1942, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
22. Murray, p. 201.
23. Eleanor Roosevelt, draft article: "Abolish Jim Crow", August, 1943, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
24. Eleanor Roosevelt, transcript of Workshop for Democracy held at the Downtown community school, November 1945, Speech and Article File, ERP, FDRL.
25. Eleanor Roosevelt, undated, untitled "Foreward", c 1945, Speech and Article File, ERP. FDRL.
26. Eleanor Roosevelt, "If You Ask Me", August 1941, Speech and Article File, ERP. FDRL.
27. Eleanor Roosevelt to Mrs. Henry Fanger Jr., 22 October 1943, series 100, ERP. FDRL.
28. Eleanor Roosevelt to Mrs. Bonnelle Wertz, 12 January 1945, series 100, ERP. FDRL.
29. Eleanor Roosevelt, report to Joint Commission on Social Reconstruction: "The Minorities Problem", Speech and Article File, ERP. FDRL.
30. Bishop Scarlett to Eleanor Roosevelt, 19 March 1946, Speech and Article File, ERP. FDRL.
31. Lash, *Eleanor And Franklin*, pp. 511—513.
32. Eleanor Roosevelt to Mr. W. H. Williams, 23 September 1944, series 100, ERP. FDRL.
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