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MY ONLY CRIME IS MY FACE

Should the American of Japanese ancestry suffer for Japan's sins? There are two sides to every story. Here is a moving plea by one who is on the other side

BY MARY OYAMA



"It certainly will be strange to have to live with nothing but Japanese! I wonder how we'll stand it?"

This was the comment I heard repeated over and over by American citizens of Japanese descent when the military decree which set us apart from other Americans and expelled us from our Pacific Coast homes went into effect. The evacuation was a bitter blow, but there was nothing we could do except grit our teeth and take it.

It did us no good to argue that we had sons and brothers in the Army, that we were loyal to this land of our birth, that we spoke only English, that we praised the Lord in Christian churches (and were ready

to pass the ammunition, if they'd only let us). Nobody would listen.

Swiftly and effectively the evacuation was accomplished. The streets near the point of departure where we were to take the buses to the first camp—called the Assembly Center—were jammed. Kids stared in pop-eyed fascination at military police on motorcycles and in jeeps. An elderly woman, passing by, stopped to say indignantly, "This is a shame! You are just as much Americans as anybody else!"—an unexpected bit of sympathy from a total stranger that heartened us. Several church groups passed out hot coffee and sandwiches to us, for the morning was early and cool, and in our hurry to be on time many of us had come without break-

fast. Then we got on the buses and said good-by—perhaps forever—to that old free civilian life we had loved so well. Now we were prisoners in custody of the Army.

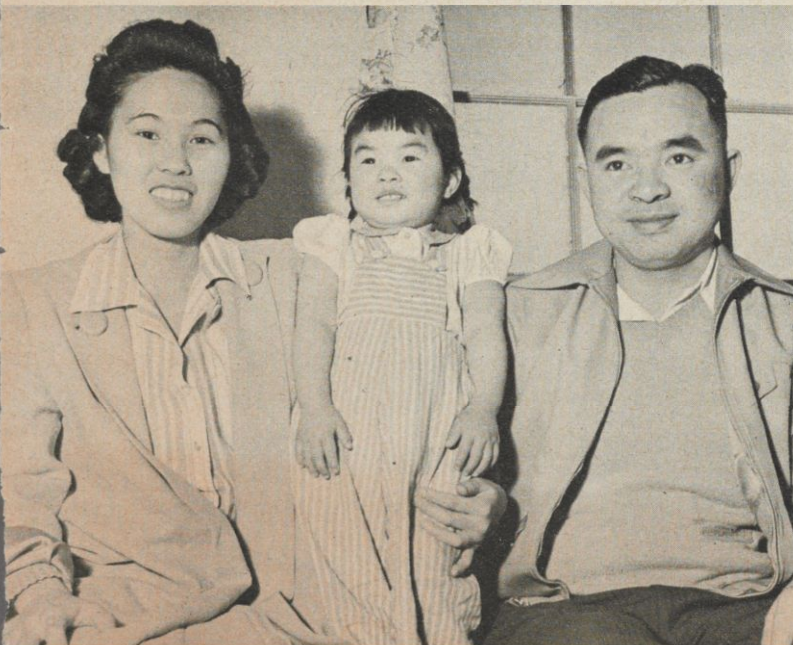
But young people are never down-hearted. In my bus a group of exuberant lads joked and sang to the accompaniment of a ubiquitous ukulele. *Plunk-plunk, plunk-plunk*—"You're the one rose" *plunk-plunk* "that's left" *plunk-plunk* "in" *plunk* "my heart—" A little later, however, when the drone of the bus motor had smoothed down to an even hum, and first enthusiasms had worn off, I heard a softer harmony: "Rock of ages," *plunk-plunk* "clef for me," *plunk!* "Let me hide [Oh, let me hide.] myself in Thee—"

In front of me a sleepy little child complained to her parents. "Home, mama. Home, daddy—want to go home." But neither daddy nor mama knew what to reply, for where was "home" now?

Arriving at the Assembly Center we found hundreds of our friends who had been evacuated before us. We stared at them glumly until a young fellow got a laugh when he cracked, "Oh, lookit the Japs!"

There were all kinds of people: hard-working farmers and their families; city folk; occasional blondes and even redheads: Caucasian Americans of mixed marriages and their exceptionally beautiful Eurasian children; college students who had picketed the shipping of scrap iron to Japan long before December 7; the young man who threw the Jap-

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Dave and Ruth Natike had an orange ranch in El Monte, California. Now, with daughter Judy, they're at Heart Mountain Relocation Center.

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anese consulate into a dither when he worked for China Relief; pious churchgoing people; and ne'er-dowells. But, whatever we were, we stared in unbelief at the camp's sentry watchtowers and the barbed wire (looking for all the world like the pictures of Nazi concentration camps in Poland).

An elderly Japanese doctor remarked, "I feel sorry enough for us, the Issei [alien Japanese], but at least we have a country. I feel sorer still for you Nisei [American-born citizens of Japanese descent], because it looks as if your own country, the United States, has repudiated you."

That was the worst blow of all. We wondered bitterly if the harsh words he uttered in his meticulous clipped English could be true.

But as we trudged through the gates to our prison—the horse stables of the Santa Anita race track—I decided only to look forward with hope; never to look back at the happy life we were leaving. Today, free again, I am glad I did. Then, however, as my little family was directed to the dark stall which was to be our "home," I couldn't resist one last memory of the real home we had had to leave—the brand-new "dream house" which had sat on top of a hill, a little white six-roomed cottage with sky-blue shutters and gay tinkly door chimes. How happy we had been there with our children, Rickey, aged four, and Eddie, not yet one! But that moment—when we first looked at the dark musty horse stall and had to tell our two little sons that this was "home"—when can it be forgotten?

I am thankful now that Fred, my husband, gave no sign of his own depression but, instead, briskly set about getting the iron army cots, mattresses, and army blankets which were assigned to us.

ON the days following we busied ourselves trying to make the stall more homelike as we unpacked our few belongings, made shelves from salvaged packing crates, laid out straw mats on the asphalt floor, tacked up a few familiar pictures from the home we had just left.

We named our evacuation home Valley Forge and I had an American flag sent in from the outside. Flag after flag was put up in those stalls "so that"—as one young mother expressed it—"the very young children will always know that this is America. Locked in here with alien Japanese, we mustn't ever forget that we are Americans."

At first the crowd noise of 18,500 people jammed in together was so terrific that I thought I could never become accustomed to it. As the partitions between the stalls reached up only a few feet, we could hear every sound made by neighboring families. It was a vast composite roar, an ocean of sound made up of

talking people, crying babies, shouting voices, blaring radios, the tramping and shuffling of feet, and even more unpleasant noises.

But on visiting days, to bolster up our morale, came fellow Americans I shall never forget: college students, former employers, teachers, ministers, Y. workers, laborers, soldiers and sailors.

They laughed, they cried. They brought fruits, cookies, candies, books, magazines. In the thick dust and sticky summer heat, above the dinning babel of voices, old friends jammed up tightly against the wire fence, shocked to see their Nisei friends "caged in." There was the day when some one brought a dog which had formerly belonged to a Nisei couple with a small baby girl. The dog wagged his tail violently upon recognizing his former owners.

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A squad of Russian soldiers caught a Rumanian spy. One of the Russians was ordered to take him to a specified spot outside the little town and shoot him. As the guard and the spy were walking to the ordered destination, the condemned man said, "It is bad enough that you are going to shoot me, but why do you make me walk twenty miles besides?"

"What are you complaining about?" the Russian soldier pointed out. "I've got to walk back."—*Pocketbook of War Humor.*

The Nisei mother pushed the perambulator closer, right up against the fence. (The M. P. guard looked as if about to say something but didn't; instead, like a good egg, he walked off in the opposite direction.) The child stuck a chubby fist through the fence. The dog licked the little hand affectionately and he kissed the tops of her tiny shoes. Some people took out their handkerchiefs and blew their noses hard. . . .

Our visitors were usually tongue-tied and uneasy, in fact more embarrassed and ill at ease than we. They would stare at us with the saddest expressions in their eyes while their lips would try to murmur polite banalities. But, God bless them, we loved them—they gave us courage in our lowest moments.

Our young people took things more in stride, forgetting their troubles in playing baseball or in jitterbug jam sessions when they were not attending educational classes or working. They played bridge, went out for Red Cross classes, organized Boy Scout troops and Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. groups, and the musically inclined even formed an orchestra.

When these American boys and girls walked down the camp street romantically holding each other's hands, the alien Japanese older gen-

eration were shocked at this typically Occidental frank display of affection between the sexes—something unheard of in Japan. They were embarrassed at the unembarrassedness of their American offspring. When the pretty Nisei girls walked by in ultra-modern play suits with abbreviated shorts, "bra" tops, and bare midriffs, the oldsters shook their heads. "Hadaka!" they exclaimed. "Nude!"

But the younger generation merely remarked, "This isn't Japan," and chattered among themselves in their jitterbug slang—to them Japs were "Boochies" and Japan was "Boochland."

Once, after a long hot afternoon, I heard an Issei father singing an old Japanese song in a plaintive minor key. Darkness had settled; the after-twilight coolness had brought everybody out of the overwarm quarters. Through the dusk I heard a very young voice protesting, "Oh, gee, pa—not so loud! Everybody can hear you a mile off!" It was twelve-year-old Elsie being adolescently sensitive about her alien father.

So the days passed, summer into autumn, and the time came for us to be moved from the temporary Assembly Center, under Army control, to the Relocation Center, which would be under a civilian administration, farther inland, out of Military Zone No. 1.

THIS time we hopefully crowded into ancient and shabby day coaches, glad to leave the restricted life behind barbed wire, the flickering searchlight flashes at night, the watchtowers of our guards. Our particular group was assigned to Wyoming. The trip, despite overcrowding, was fairly tolerable, although rather trying for mothers with very small children. But we still felt like jailbirds under the surveillance of M. P.s who wore the same uniforms as did our sons and brothers in the Army. I wondered what the youthful sergeants would think if I told them about my blond Nordic "Aryan type" cousin (by marriage) who had enlisted in the U. S. Navy a few days after December 7. . . .

As the train pulled in to a small town that evening and we saw neon lights for the first time since our evacuation months before, we felt almost weepy. How we envied the "free" citizens of that town walking so unconcernedly up and down those brightly lit sidewalks, gazing into store windows, not knowing how lucky they were!

But the crowning bit of irony came on the last night of the trip. After a sweltering, nerve-racking day of desert summer heat and bawling babies, our crowded car stopped momentarily alongside another train headed in the opposite direction. Our day-coach windows evened up alongside of windows which showed the cool, dim-lit, spacious interior of a de luxe dining car. A dozen well dressed people were sitting com-

fortably at table eating what seemed to us a royal feast. The soft glow of shaded lamps was reflected by the white tablecloths. The contrast was so painful that every mother in our car groaned. For the rest of the evening we were glumly homesick.

Arrived at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, we found the tarpaper-covered barracks more substantial than the Santa Anita stables. We were assigned a family unit, and found therein a good-sized heating stove, army cots, mattresses, blankets, a bucket, and a broom. Just as before, we had to get busy and build our own tables, benches, and shelves out of salvaged lumber. With practiced ingenuity we were now able to make our new home considerably more livable than the horse stall which we had just left.

This was pioneering of a sort: every one helped everybody else in the same spirit of comradeship as did our early American pioneers who pitched in to put up log cabins for neighbors. Rich or poor, we all lived in the same barracks, got up at the same seven-thirty gong, ate at the same rough wooden camp tables, shared the same stall showers and open toilets, tried as best we could to help each other in our regimented communal life.

At first the natives of the neighboring towns of Cody and Powell felt uneasy about this teeming community of "Japs" which the government had forced into their midst. But the sudden boom in business which our presence brought broke the ice, and the good church women of Powell sent a contribution of clothing for our needy. Later our men volunteered for work in the sugar-beet harvest during an acute labor shortage. Ex-professional men, white-collar workers, and students gladly did their best at the back-breaking harvesting. Farmers reported they had never before had such devoted help.

Within a short time the Niseis' quiet demeanor and thorough Americanization of speech, manners, and dress created a favorable impression throughout the countryside. The Powell Tribune, which had first reported in a surprised tone that the new farm helpers "talked good English," later had a Nisei writing a column on Heart Mountain activities.

WE finally settled down to taking everything in stride, attending school and night classes, going out for sports, building up a recreational program, and carrying on church work.

Older women gave their services to a USO which was organized in the Center to provide hospitality for visiting Nisei servicemen.

We had twenty-five veterans of the last war at the Center, most of them members of the American Legion. Mr. Hitoshi Fukui, past commander of the Commodore Perry Legion Post No. 525 of Los Angeles, had served in the Ninety-first Division, A. E. F., and saw action at St.

Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, and Ypres, and was gassed. While he reports that "my life's savings were lost, due to the evacuation," Mr. Fukui still retains a strong faith in American democracy and believes that ultimately the Nisei Americans will be fully vindicated. When another Center Legionnaire, Mr. Clarence Uno, passed away from a heart attack, the Legion posts of Powell and Cody accorded him a full military funeral with color guard, rifle salute, and guard of honor. The body was cremated in Mr. Uno's old American Army uniform.

I gradually got over the pangs of homesickness as new impressions constantly crowded my thoughts. There were, for instance, the young Nisei parents who criticized the English of the Caucasian-American teacher who had asked their child, "Do you play the pianner?" The father had protested, "We don't want our children growing up saying 'pianner' instead of 'piano.'"

And Armistice Day. On that slushy after-snow November 11, mist blurred my eyes as I watched the pa-

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Real happiness don't consist so much
in what a man don't have as it duz
in what he don't want.—Josh Billings.

rade of Nisei Boy Scouts (those who could afford it, in uniform) marching behind the flag, splashing through the "streets" of the Center which had turned into almost impassable mudholes. Our flag behind barbed wires—and these Nisei Americans nevertheless gallantly upholding it! That was the only time I ever permitted myself the luxury of tears.

November was remembered, too, for the double-wedding ceremony of Privates Glenn Oku and Shigeto Toyoshima of the United States Army to the Misses Edna Koga and Kikue Suzuki. The Heart Mountain Sentinel, our mimeographed Center paper, stated that Privates Oku and Toyoshima would return to their outfits. "Both new brides," concluded the laconic announcement, "will remain here when their husbands leave for duty."

As Christmas drew near, the Girl Scouts of Powell came to go a-caroling with the Girl Scouts of the Center. Christmas parties were held in every block for the children. Gifts for them came from all over the United States from churches of every denomination, telling us better than a thousand words that America was still a Christian nation. Of Christmas Eve, Kay Tanouye wrote in the Sentinel:

"The night was cold and sharp. The watchtowers stood out bold in the moonlight. The searchlight sprayed the boundary of the forbidden area, picking out the cruel barbs of the wire fence.

"Six Nisei gathered below the tower and formed a circle. The leader lifted his hands. The words came softly and beautifully in the quiet night: 'Silent night, holy night. All is calm; all is bright.'

"As the last notes drifted away, the Army sentry spoke. His voice caught a little as he said, 'Thank you, fellows. . . . Merry Christmas.'

With the coming of the New Year of 1943 the évacués faced a brighter outlook, for the government then announced its new policy of gradually releasing those who had a definite assurance of employment. To date, more than 3,000 have been released.

Our little family was released in February. When we passed through Powell, the editor of the Tribune and his wife presented us with candy and toys for the children. Our last memory of Wyoming was pleasant.

ON the train my Richard and his brother played with some tow-headed, blue-eyed children who were in our coach. (I couldn't help but reflect that the only true democracy there is is the democracy of childhood—before a child's mind is contaminated by the prejudices of adults.) A kindly soldier offered his coat "in case they're cold," when the children napped. I can still see his friendly face.

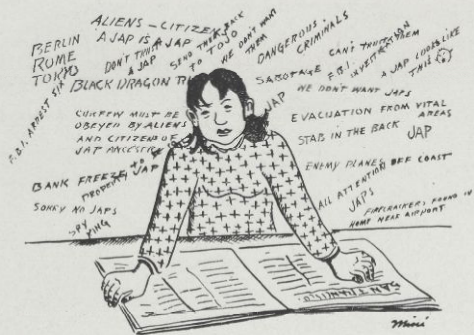
We were sent to Denver, where my husband had work. I can tell you it's great to be free after months of confinement in a regimented, communal existence. We are living in poorer circumstances compared to our pre-evacuation status, but we are not unhappy. I'll never, never take freedom for granted again.

I used to tell myself in the camp that my only crime was my face. But now, when I look in the mirror, I remember what a friend once said: "When I first met you, Mary, I just couldn't get over the novelty of your Japanese face. Strange that an American like you should look like that. First it was ninety per cent strangeness and novelty and maybe ten per cent friendly interest. About the second time I saw you, it was fifty per cent novelty and fifty per cent friendliness. Now I begin to notice less what you look like and to know more what you really are. Pretty soon I'll forget what you look like altogether. I'll know you only as another fellow American."

I hope every one will be like that. Although we still feel that the basis on which we were evacuated (because of racial extraction) was unjust, and although we believe our incarceration was illegal (because of our American Bill of Rights!), we have decided that the fullest cooperation with the government is the very best way to prove our loyalty to our country.

More of us who have been released, and those of us still held in the camps, can say this has been our contribution to the war effort.

THE END



ISSEI, NISEI, KIBEI

THE U.S. HAS PUT 110,000 PEOPLE OF JAPANESE BLOOD IN "PROTECTIVE CUSTODY"

The line drawings on these pages are part of an extraordinary graphic diary of 235 drawings by Miné Okubo (above) California-born artist. Gathered in by the roundup in March, 1942, of all persons of Japanese blood on the West Coast, Miss Okubo spent six months in an Army assembly center at Tanforan, and sixteen at Topaz in the Utah desert. Her drawings, begun as a record for her friends in Europe and America, became a document remarkable for humor, poignant observation, and above all objectivity. Miss Okubo plans to make a book of them. For more about her and her work, see FORTUNE's *Wheel*, page 2.

WHEN the facts about Japanese brutality to the soldier prisoners from Bataan were made known, Americans were more outraged than they had been since December 7, 1941. Instinctively they contrasted that frightfulness with our treatment of Japanese held in this country; and, without being told, Americans knew that prisoners in the U.S. were fed three meals a day and had not been clubbed or kicked or otherwise brutalized. Too few, however, realize what persistent and effective use Japan has been able to make, throughout the entire Far East, of U.S. imprisonment of persons of Japanese descent. This propaganda concerns itself less with *how* the U.S. treats the people imprisoned than *who* was imprisoned. By pointing out, again and again, that the U.S. put behind fences well over 100,000 people of Japanese blood, the majority of them citizens of the U.S., Japan describes to her Far Eastern radio audiences one more instance of American racial discrimination. To convince all Orientals that the war in the Pacific is a crusade against the white man's racial oppression, the enemy shrewdly notes every occurrence in the U.S. that suggests injustice to racial minorities, from the Negroes to the Mexicans and Japanese.

The enemy, of course, deliberately refrains from making distinctions among the various kinds of detention we have worked out for those of Japanese blood in this country. Unfortunately, Americans themselves are almost as confused as the Japanese radio about what has happened to the Japanese minority in this country—one-tenth of 1 per cent of the nation's total population. There are three different types of barbed-wire enclosures for persons of Japanese ancestry. First there are the Department of Justice camps, which hold 3,000 Japanese aliens considered by the F.B.I. potentially dangerous to the U.S. These and these alone are true internment camps.

Second, there are ten other barbed-wire enclosed centers in the U.S., into which, in 1942, the government put 110,000 persons of Japanese descent (out of a total population in continental U.S. of 127,000). Two-thirds of them were citizens, born in the U.S.; one-third aliens, forbidden by law to be citizens. No charges were brought against them. When the war broke out, all these 110,000 were resident in the Pacific Coast states—the majority in California. They were put behind fences when the Army decided that for "military necessity" all people of Japanese ancestry, citizen or alien, must be removed from the West Coast military zone.

Within the last year the 110,000 people evicted from the West Coast have been subdivided into two separate groups. Those who have professed loyalty to Japan or an unwillingness to defend the U.S. have been placed, with their children, in one of the ten camps called a "segregation center" (the third type of imprisonment). Of the remainder in the nine "loyal camps," 17,000 have moved to eastern states to take jobs. The rest wait behind the fence, an awkward problem for the U.S. if for no other reason than that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were severely stretched if not breached when U.S. citizens were put in prison.

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CITIZENS AND ALIENS, all people of Japanese blood on the West Coast were carted off to custody.



THE TANFORAN RACE TRACK, near San Francisco, was one of fifteen Army assembly centers.



HORSE STALLS had to be cleaned, for human use, but the smell of manure persisted for months.



ISSEI, NISEI, KIBEI [Continued from page 8]



FOR THEIR FOOD HANDOUT, the *évacués* waited in long queues at the central mess hall.



REGIMENTATION for men, women, and children made these little Tokyos more ingrown than ever.



PRIVACY was gained only by hanging curtains between crowded beds. There was too much idle time.

Back in December, 1941, there was understandable nervousness over the tight little Japanese communities scattered along the West Coast. The long coast line seemed naked and undefended. There were colonies of Japanese fishermen in the port areas, farmlands operated by Japanese close to war plants, and little Tokyos in the heart of the big coastal cities. There were suspected spies among the Japanese concentrations and there was fear of sabotage. Californians were urged to keep calm and let the authorities take care of the problem. In the first two weeks the Department of Justice scooped up about 1,500 suspects. A few weeks later all enemy aliens and citizens alike were removed from certain strategic areas such as Terminal Island in Los Angeles harbor, and spots near war plants, power stations, and bridges. But Californians did not completely trust the authorities. While the F.B.I. was picking up its suspects, civilian authorities were besieged with telephone calls from citizens reporting suspicious behavior of their Oriental neighbors. Although California's Attorney General Warren (now governor) stated on February 21, 1942, that "we have had no sabotage and no fifth-column activity since the beginning of the war," hysteria by then had begun to spread all along the coast. Every rumor of Japanese air and naval operations offshore, and every tale of fifth-column activity in Hawaii, helped to raise to panic proportions California's ancient and deep antagonism toward the Japanese-Americans.

For decades the Hearst press had campaigned against the Yellow Peril within the state (1 per cent of the population) as well as the Yellow Peril across the seas that would one day make war. When that war prophecy came true, the newspapers' campaign of hate and fear broke all bounds. And, when Hearst

called for the removal of all people of Japanese ancestry, he had as allies many pressure groups who had for years resented the presence of Japanese in this country.

The American Legion, since its founding in 1919, has never once failed to pass an annual resolution against the Japanese-Americans. The Associated Farmers in California had competitive reasons for wanting to get rid of the Japanese-Americans who grew vegetables at low cost on \$70 million worth of California land. California's land laws could not prevent the citizen-son of the Japanese alien from buying or renting the land. In the cities, as the little Tokyos grew, a sizable commercial business came into Japanese-American hands—vegetable commission houses, retail and wholesale enterprises of all kinds. It did not require a war to make the farmers, the Legion, the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, and the politicians resent and hate the Japanese-Americans. The records of legislation and press for many years indicate that the antagonism was there and growing. War turned the antagonism into fear, and made possible what California had clearly wanted for decades—to get rid of its minority.

By early February both the Hearst press and the pressure groups were loudly demanding the eviction of all people of Japanese blood—to protect the state from the enemy, and to protect the minority from violence at the hands of Filipinos and other neighbors. A few cases of violence had, indeed, occurred, and spy talk ran up and down the coast. On February 13, a group of Pacific Coast Congressmen urged President Roosevelt to permit an evacuation; a week later the President gave that authority to the Army. On February 23, a Japanese submarine shelled the coast near Santa Barbara. Lieutenant

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THEY PACKED UP AGAIN, after six months, and were all herded out of the Army centers.



JAMMED INTO TRAINS, they were sent farther inland into new soldier-guarded camps.



DEPOSITED IN A DESERT CAMP, whipped by sandstorms, they were put in new barracks.



Issei, Nisei, Kibei

[Continued from page 22]

General John L. DeWitt, on March 2, issued the order that all persons of Japanese descent, aliens and citizens, old and young, women and children, be removed from most of California, western Oregon and Washington, and southern Arizona. The greatest forced migration in U.S. history resulted.

MIGRATION EASTWARD

At first the movement inland of the 110,000 people living within the prohibited zone was to be voluntary. The Japanese-Americans were merely told to get out. Within three weeks 8,000 people had packed up, hastily closed out their business affairs, sold their possessions or left them with neighbors, and set forth obediently toward the east. But Arizona remembered all too well how California had turned back the Okies in the past, and many Japanese-Americans were intercepted at this border. Kansas patrolmen stopped them. Nevada and Wyoming protested that they did not want to receive people found too dangerous for California. About 4,000 got as far as Colorado and Utah. It became apparent that the random migration of so many unwanted people could result only in spreading chaos. By March 29 voluntary evacuation was forbidden, and the Army made its own plans to control the movement.

The *évacués* reported to local control stations where they registered and were given a number and instructions on what they could take (hand luggage only) and when they should proceed to the first camps, called assembly centers. Although they were offered government help in straightening out their property problems, many thousands, in their haste and confusion, and in their understandable distrust of government, quickly did what they could for themselves. They sold, leased, stored, or lent their homes, lands, personal belongings, tractors, and cars. Their financial losses are incalculable.

The Army, in twenty-eight days, rigged up primitive barracks in fifteen assembly centers to provide temporary quarters for 110,000. Each *évacué* made his own mattress of straw, took his place in the crowded barracks, and tried to adjust to his new life. By August 10 everyone of Japanese descent (except those confined to insane asylums and other safe institutions) was behind a fence, in "protective custody." They were held here (still within the forbidden military zone) until a newly created civilian agency, the War Relocation Authority, could establish other refuges farther inland. WRA's job was to hold the people until they could be resettled in orderly fashion.

WRA appealed to the governors of ten nearby western states. With one exception, Colorado's Governor Carr, they protested that they did not want the Japanese-Americans to settle in their domain, nor did they want any relocation center erected within their borders unless it was well guarded by the Army. Finally nine remote inland sites were found, all of them on federally owned land. (One assembly center in eastern California became a relocation camp.) Most of them were located, for lack of better acreage, on desolate but irrigable desert tracts. More tar-papered barracks were thrown up, more wire fences built, and once more the people moved. By November, 1942, all the *évacués* had packed up their miserably few possessions, had been herded onto trains, and deposited behind WRA's soldier-guarded fences, in crowded barracks villages of between 7,000 and 18,000 people.

They felt bitterness and anger over their loss of land and home and money and freedom. They knew that German and Italian aliens—and indeed, Japanese aliens in other parts of the U.S.—had been interned only when the F.B.I. had reason to suspect them. Second-generation citizens of German and Italian origin were not evacuated from California; nor were the second-generation citizens of Japanese descent elsewhere in the U.S. put behind fences.

Although the *évacués*' resentment at regimentation within WRA's little Tokyos is deep, it is seldom expressed violently. Considering the emotional strains, the uprooting, and the crowding, no one can deny that the record of restraint has been remarkable. Only twice have the soldiers been asked to come within a WRA fence to restore order.

CODDLING, AT 31 CENTS A DAY

But WRA and its director, Dillon Myer, have been under almost continual attack by congressional committees in Washington, and by a whole long list of badgering groups and individuals on the West Coast. The Dies Committee goes after WRA* and the Japanese minority at frequent intervals. Even Hedda Hopper, the movie gossip, prattles innuendoes. Not wishing to "imply anything," she noted last December that "we've had more than our share of explosions, train wrecks, fires, and serious accidents" since WRA has released so many of the *évacués*. Actually, not one of the 17,000 has been convicted of anti-American activity.

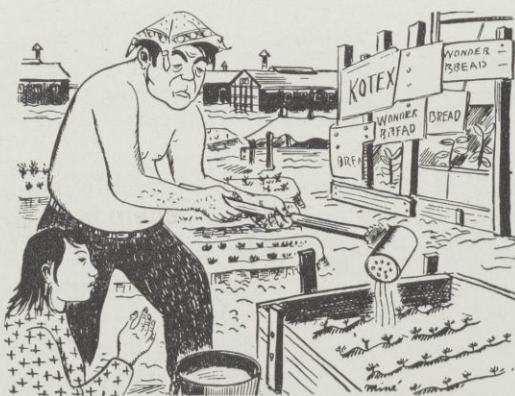
WRA has usually been criticized for the wrong reasons. It
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*Herman P. Eberharter, a member of the Dies Committee, has said of its September, 1943, findings, "... the report ... is prejudiced, and most of its statements are not proven." The committee wound up by suggesting three policies, all of which the WRA had already adopted.

CROWDED into a single room, this family managed to improvise a Christmas celebration.



VICTORY GARDENS are planted even though minimum food is given to everyone.



PUBLIC SHOWERS and latrines are provided but the Japanese tradition of tub bathing persists.



Issei, Nisei, Kibei

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has been accused of turning loose, for resettlement, "dangerous Japs." The implication usually is that no Japanese-American should be released, although from the very beginning WRA's prescribed purpose was to help the *évacués* to find some place to live outside the prohibited zone. Again and again, the pressure groups and California Congressmen have urged that WRA's ten centers be turned over to the Army. (In February the President, instead, dropped WRA intact, with its Director Dillon Myer, into the Department of Interior.) Most frequently Mr. Myer has been charged with pampering the Japanese-Americans. Almost every day the Hearst papers fling the word "coddling," with the clear implication that all persons of Japanese descent, citizen or no, women and infants, should be treated strictly as prisoners of war, which of course they are not.

No one who has visited a relocation center and seen the living space, eaten the food, or merely kept his eyes open could honestly apply the word "coddling" to WRA's administration of the camps. The people are jammed together in frame barracks. A family of six or seven is customarily allotted an "apartment" measuring about twenty by twenty-five feet. It is a bare room, without partitions. The only privacy possible is achieved by hanging flimsy cotton curtains between the crowded beds.

Furniture is improvised from bits of scrap lumber: a box for a table, three short ends of board made into a backless chair. The family's clothing and few personal possessions are somehow stuffed neatly away—on shelves if scrap lumber, a priceless commodity in all camps, is available. Otherwise, they are stuffed away under the beds. The quarters are usually neat. There are no cooking facilities and no running water in the barracks, unless the *évacué* has brought his own electric plate or had a friend "on the outside" send one in. As in Army camps, each block of twelve or fourteen barracks (250 to 300 people) has its central mess hall, laundry building, public latrines, and showers.

With faithful regularity, irresponsible yarns are circulated that the *évacués* are getting more and better food than other Americans. Actually, the food cost per day is held below 45 cents per person. For 15 cents a meal the food is possibly adequate, but close to the edge of decent nutrition. In most camps, located far from dairy districts, milk is provided only for small children, nursing and expectant mothers, and special

dietary cases. There are two meatless days a week and a heavy emphasis on starches. Nearly a third of the food requirements are grown on the irrigated fields of the camp itself. This reduces the actual cash outlay for food to 31 cents per person.

Practically everyone who wants a job can work, and most of the able bodied do. They plant and till the camp's vegetable acreage, prepare the food in the mess halls, do stenographic work for the Caucasian staff, work in the cooperative store.* In some centers they make furniture for the administration building or cotton mattresses to take the place of the hard straw pallets. Some are barbers and cobblers for the community, doctors in the hospital, scrubwomen in the latrines, garbage collectors. The maximum wage (a doctor, for instance) is \$19 a month; the minimum, \$12; the average, \$16. In addition, those who work get a clothing allowance for themselves and their dependents—at the most, \$3.75 a month for an adult in the northernmost center.

Individual enterprise is forbidden. To set up one's own dress-making service within the community, or to sell shell jewelry or anything else to the outside is prohibited. In order to keep the center wage uniform, all economic activities must be conducted through the community cooperative, which pays its barbers and other workers the standard stipend. With their small monthly wage, and by dipping into their prewar savings, most *évacués* buy extras to eat, but they can get only nonrationed food, since they possess no ration books. They send to the mail-order houses for some of their clothes, buy shoes, yard goods, and clothing at the cooperative store. Their children go to school in the barracks village, and when they are sick, to the center hospital.

Thus the pampering and thus the humiliation. A doctor distinguished in his profession, who lived with grace and charm in a decently comfortable home before the war, is today huddled in a small room with all his family. He practices his profession for \$19 a month at the center hospital, serving under a Caucasian of lesser accomplishments, hired for considerably more money. A man who spent twenty years building up his own florist business or commission house, or who operated a large vegetable farm in one of California's valleys, is merely "stoop labor" on the center's acreage.

The record of Japanese-Americans during the depression indicated that they did not take to public relief. They were too proud. They stuck together, helped each other, and almost

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*WRA has a lexicon of its own: *Caucasian* is the term for appointed administrative personnel, to distinguish them from the "évacués," sometimes called "colonists"; beyond the gate is "the outside."

THE RABBLERouser spreads disaffection among the *évacués*, distrusted and discarded by society.



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Issei, Nisei, Kibei

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never appeared on WPA or home-relief lists. To virtually all of them it is now galling to be distrusted wards of the nation, their meager lodging and food a scanty handout, the payment for their labor somewhat the same.

“POLITICS”

They have always been an isolated, discarded, and therefore ingrown people. Today this is more true than ever. The barracks village as a rule is literally isolated. At Manzanar, California, for example, the center is but a tiny square in a vast and lonely desert valley, between two great mountain ranges. Spiritually the people are just as isolated as that. Thrown together in a compact racial island of their own frustrated people, they grow in upon themselves and each other; they become almost completely detached from American life, the war, the world. Their small children speak more Japanese than they would if they competed daily with other American school children. The teen-age boys and girls are ostentatiously American in clothes, slang, and behavior. It is as if they were trying too hard to convince themselves that they *are* Americans. They know that they must and will go out the gate soon.

The adults think about themselves, and about the past they left. With time and distance, California's farm valleys, towns, and cities become more golden-hued than ever to the *évacués*. They brood vaguely and fearfully on the future; the war, sometimes, seems like a vague abstraction, the cause of their troubles. And they think about rumors—which they often trust more than they do printed, official announcements. It may be a rumor that the Army will take over. Or that the *évacués* in this center will all be transported to another. This is the most nightmarish rumor of all to people who have moved so much in the past two years.

They think, too, about the endless details of their camp life. Each group of 250 or so *évacués* has a block manager who gets \$16 a month for listening to their complaints and, if possible, straightening out innumerable daily problems. The food in the mess hall is badly prepared; there is no toilet paper in the ladies' latrine; the neighbors play the radio too late and too loud; the roof of No. 29 barracks has a small leak.

Finally, there are gossip and politics. The Japanese-Americans back in California went their way without much participation in politics as most American citizens know it. In the barracks village of WRA there is little real self-government. Most of the centers have a Council made up of block representatives or managers. But there is only a slight area within which such a congress can make community decisions. Usually at the meeting of the Council the members do little more than listen to new rules, new plans of WRA, handed down from Washington or the local director. The block representatives are expected to pass on this information to all the people.

Originally WRA ruled that citizens alone could hold office in the centers, but this proved to be unwise. Two-thirds of the *évacués* are citizens, but most of these American-born Nisei are from eighteen to twenty-eight years of age—too young to take on such responsible jobs as the block manager's. Besides, among the Japanese-Americans born here are hundreds of Kibei—young men who were sent to Japan for part of their education. Not all—but a large percentage of them—are pro-Japan, particularly those who gained the latter part of their

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Issei, Nisei, Kibei

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education in Japan. Disliked by the Nisei majority, outnumbered and maladjusted, the Kibei often have become a nuisance, creating little areas of disaffection in the center.

Thus it turned out that the Issei—the aliens, parents of the Nisei and Kibei—could best provide the authority, stability, and seasoned wisdom needed in a block manager. They possessed a tradition of family and community leadership, and had commanded respect in the past. Above all they usually have an earnest desire to make the block of 250 or more people in which they live function in an orderly and quiet fashion. They are aliens primarily because U.S. law forbade them to become citizens. Many of them have a real loyalty to the U.S., not because the U.S. has invited their loyalty but because they look to their children's American future for their own security.

Politics in the centers has nothing to do with office or votes or *apparent* power. But it *is* power—the power of demagoguery, of spreading the infection of bitterness, exaggerating an instance or affront into an issue that may even get to the point of a small strike against WRA. The leaders have not invariably been pro-Japan. Some, both aliens and citizens, who had been good Americans became indignant at their loss of freedom and their right to participate in the life of the nation.

It may be that the administration was not willing to permit a big funeral for a man accidentally killed when a work truck overturned; it may be that three or four of the Caucasian staff displayed signs of race discrimination; it may be a rumor more plausible than fact. The “politicians” take any one of these, or a series, and worry it into a big camp issue. How great an issue it becomes depends most of all on the degree of confidence the center as a whole has in its director and the coolness and fairness with which he customarily handles his people. Too often the administration is out of touch with the main issues and grievances within the camp. WRA suffers, like every other agency, from the manpower shortage. Competent center directors and minor personnel are scarce. Often enough the director finds his Caucasian staff more of a problem than the *évacués*.

The two so-called “riots,” which brought the Army over the fence, arose from the accumulation of small grievances, whipped up to a crisis by groups struggling for power and eager to put the administration on the spot. There was, in each instance, a strike. Actually a strike in a relocation center is self-defeating since almost all labor in the community works to provide goods and services for the *évacués* themselves; no more than a handful work in the staff mess and office building. Only when violence occurred, and the director thought he needed help in maintaining order, was the Army invited in.

But trouble rarely reaches either the strike stage or violence. The people in the Pacific Coast's little Tokyos rarely appeared on police blotters in the past, and now the crime record of WRA centers compares favorably with that of any small cities of their size, or, indeed, with any Army camp. Most of the policing is done by the *évacués* themselves, appointed to the “internal security” staff of each center.

Policing should be simpler than ever from now on. The ideological air has been cleared; the pro-Japan people have been moved out. The process of sifting the communities, separating the loyal and the disloyal, is virtually complete. The “disloyal”

have been sent to a segregation center in northeastern California, leaving the other nine centers populated only by the loyal.

REGISTRATION AND SEGREGATION

To all the *évacués* the two words, registration and segregation, are almost as charged with emotion as that disturbing term, evacuation. Quite simply the two nouns mean that a questionnaire was submitted to all adults in the centers to determine their loyalty or disloyalty. On the basis of this, plus F.B.I. records and in some instances special hearings, WRA granted or denied the *évacués* “leave clearance,” the right to go East and find a job. The same information was used as a basis for segregating the “disloyal” in a separate center. About 18,000 (the “disloyal” and all their dependents) will sit out the war at Tule Lake, within a high, manproof, barbed-wire enclosure, unless Japan shows more enthusiasm than she has to date for their repatriation. (These 18,000 must not be confused with the few thousand interned by the Department of Justice.)

But separating the loyal and the disloyal is not so simple a job as it might seem. Loyalty is difficult to measure accurately on any scales, and the sifting of the *évacués* was clumsily handled. The process began in February, 1943, when the Army decided to recruit a combat unit of Japanese-Americans. A registration form was printed containing twenty-eight questions to determine loyalty and willingness to fight. It was to be filled out by all men of military age. Someone realized that it would be well to have just such records on all adults in the centers. Plans were suddenly changed and everyone from seventeen years of age up was given the twenty-eight questions.

Nothing is more disastrous in a rumor-ridden, distrustful, neurotic community like a relocation center than to make one explanation of purpose today and a quite different one tomorrow. The people, newly arrived in the WRA centers, were still stunned by their evacuation, loss of property and freedom, and were acutely conscious of their stigma as “enemy.” There was misunderstanding about the purpose of registration at most of the centers. The questionnaire was so carelessly framed its wording had to be changed during the process of registration. A few thousand refused to fill out the form at all. Others, remembering that they had lost business, home, and their civil rights, wrote angry (“disloyal”) answers. They had no enthusiasm for defending a democratic America that had imprisoned them for no crime and without trial.

WRA, in an effort to be fair, has granted hearings in recent months for those who wished to explain the answers they made in anger or confusion. Pride made a few people stick to what they first wrote. There is little question that the majority of adults sent to Tule Lake feel loyalty to Japan, but there are also behind Tule's fences a few thousand who are not disloyal.

Most of the Issei who chose Tule Lake are there because of firm ties of loyalty to Japan, or strong ties of family relationships. Some Issei were afraid of bringing reprisals upon their relatives in Japan by affirming loyalty to the U.S. The parents who chose Tule Lake usually have taken all their children with them. Only a few sons and daughters over seventeen, who had the right to choose for themselves, could resist strong family pressure. It is ironic and revealing that at the high school at Tule Lake, civics and American history are popular elected courses.

Japan, however, makes no legal claims of protective interest in the Nisei or Kibei. When the Spanish consul visits Tule to report conditions to Japan, he is legally concerned only with the welfare of the Issei, the nationals of Japan. And,

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Issei, Nisei, Kibei

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under U.S. law, the Nisei and Kibei cannot abrogate their American citizenship during wartime, even if they want to. Their expatriation, and even the repatriation of most of the Issei to Japan, during the war, is unlikely. Negotiations for the exchange of civilian war prisoners have been slow, and the delay is due to Japan, not to the U.S. State Department.

To a minority living at Tule Lake, Japan's unwillingness to arrange frequent exchange of prisoners is not disheartening. This minority does not want to set sail for Japan; it wants to stay in the U.S. People are at Tule Lake for many complicated reasons besides "disloyalty" and family relationships. There is evidence, for example, that some chose this kind of imprisonment for reasons of security and weariness. This is indicated by the percentages of people in the various centers who said they wanted to be segregated. When the decision was made last fall to turn the Tule Lake camp into a segregation center, nearly 6,000 out of 13,000 residents of that center decided to stay put. This high percentage of "disloyal," the highest in any center, is explained in part by unwillingness to be uprooted and moved again. In the Minidoka relocation center, in Idaho, only 225 people out of 7,000 chose to go to Tule.

There are a few tired and discouraged people from other WRA centers who went to Tule Lake because they knew that the barbed-wire fences in that camp would stand permanently throughout the war. They reasoned that they would have certain refuge for the duration, while the other centers, according to *évacué* rumor, might be abruptly closed, and everyone turned loose without resources.

Some chose Tule Lake imprisonment as a gesture against what they consider the broken promises of democracy. For example, there is a young Nisei who enlisted in California early in 1941 because he felt strongly about fascism. He was abruptly thrown out of his country's army after Japan attacked the U.S. and put behind the fences along with all the other *évacués*. In February, 1943, when he was handed a questionnaire on loyalty and his willingness to defend the U.S., he was too angry to prove his "loyalty" that way; he had already amply demonstrated it. He is at Tule Lake, not because of his love for Japan, but as a protest to the government he honestly wanted to serve back in 1941.

There is the Japanese-American who fought in the last war in the U.S. Army, and is a member of the American Legion. When the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor, he offered his services to the Army and to industry in California. He was turned down. Sent to a relocation center he became a "troublemaker," with the slogan, "If you think you are an American, try walking out the gate." He was packed off to an "isolation center," and finally wound up at Tule Lake. Last year the U.S. Treasury received a check from him, mailed from behind Tule's barbed wire. It was a sum in excess of \$100 and represented his income tax for the calendar year, 1942, when he had received belated payment for his 1941 services as navigator on a Portuguese ship. He insisted on paying his tax, as usual. He has, of course, no wish to go to Japan. He too sits out the war at Tule Lake in protest against the failure of democracy.

The minority who are in Tule for reasons of weariness or protest are not important numerically. But they show what can happen to people who are confused, discouraged, or justifiably angry. They reveal some ugly scars inflicted by our society. It is too early to speculate about what will happen to these

18,000 prisoners. A few thousand, at the most, may get aboard the *Gripsholm*. Will all the rest be shipped finally to a defeated Japan? Or will they be a postwar U.S. problem?

RELOCATION

Where the Tule Lake prisoners will end their days is less important to consider than what is to become of those "loyal" *évacués* who are still in the nine other centers. Everyone deemed loyal, by the sifting process of registration and hearings, has been granted "leave clearance." Fortified with a handful of official papers, a numbered identification card bearing his picture and fingerprints, an *évacué* can set forth to the East. He gets his railroad fare, \$3 a day travel money, and if he has no savings, \$25 in cash.

During the last twelve months, 17,000 *évacués* have had the courage to go "outside." They are, with rare exceptions, young and single, or married but childless. A Nisei has to muster considerable courage to go out into the society that rejected him two years ago. From behind the fence "the outside" has become vague, enormous, and fearful. The huddling together, which is resented, is nonetheless a cohesive, protective force, hard to overcome. As he leaves the soldier-guarded gate, the young Nisei is about as lonely as any human being could be; he faces even more prejudice than his father did as immigrant contract labor.

The most powerful magnets to draw him out are letters from friends who have already gone east. Those who have made the plunge usually report back to their friends enthusiastically. The people who have started a new life—most of them from eighteen to thirty years old—are the pioneers. In the factories and in the restaurants and hotels, in the offices and in the kitchens where they work, they are building a future not merely for themselves, but for those who may follow. When they write back, "We can eat in *any* restaurant in New York," they spread a little hope. Or, "I attracted very little attention on the train." Or, "In Chicago, nobody seems to care that I have a Japanese face." They tell of the church groups who are almost alone in providing some kind of organized social protection for those who relocate in cities like Chicago.

They are being sent "outside" wherever a not-too-prejudiced community provides opportunity. Seven WRA regional officers have staffs scouting for job prospects, talking to employers of farm and industrial labor, sounding out public opinion, and, in general, smoothing the way. Illinois has taken more relocated American Japanese than any other state—4,000. Most of these have found jobs in and around Chicago. Winnetka housewives compete for Nisei servants, and even the Chicago *Tribune* has been calm. Only Hearst howls.

Ohio's industrial cities have taken about 1,500 from the relocation centers. Although special clearances have been needed for the eastern defense area, a few hundred have already gone to New York City, and the stream to the northeastern states will increase steadily. Scattered throughout midwestern states like Wisconsin, Montana, and Iowa are hundreds more.

There are, of course, areas of resistance. Antagonism to WRA's *évacués* is apt to increase not diminish when the European war ends and the casualty lists come only from the Pacific. Utah has taken about 2,000 *évacués*—mostly in Ogden and Salt Lake City where at first they were quietly absorbed. But last month the state A.F. of L. petitioned Salt Lake City authorities to deny business licenses to people of Japanese ancestry. Two thousand have gone to Colorado, but recent campaigns like Hearst's in the Denver *Post* and proposed new discriminatory

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Issei, Nisei, Kibei

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legislation keep the state aroused. Wayne W. Hill, a state representative in Colorado, wearing the uniform of a sergeant in the U.S. Army, got emergency leave from his camp last month to beg the Colorado Legislature not to pass a bill barring Japanese aliens from owning land. About to be discharged from the Army, he said, "I am just as willing to die a political death as I am to die in battle to preserve American freedom." He was warmly applauded, but the House passed the bill; the Senate turned it down fifteen to twelve.

Arizona has had such a spree of race hating in the last year that WRA does not try to place people of Japanese ancestry there. A year ago the governor signed a bill making it impossible to sell anything—even a pack of cigarettes—to a person of Japanese descent without first publishing in the newspaper, days in advance, one's intention to do so, and filing documents with the governor. The law was declared unconstitutional after a few months' operation. It was not aimed merely at the new WRA settlers who number fifty-seven. It was intended to strangle Arizona's prewar Japanese-American population (632), many of whom make a good living in the highly competitive business of vegetable farming.

With only 17,000 young, unencumbered, and fairly bold Nisei out on their own, the biggest and hardest job of re-settlement remains. The supply of young people without dependents is not unlimited. Early this year the Army, which had previously accepted only volunteers,* decided to draft the Nisei, like Negroes, for segregated units. This new turn of events will draw off a few thousand *évacués*. But the most difficult problems are obviously the large families and the older people. Depending heavily on the well-known tightness of the family unit of its *évacués*, WRA believes that many of the young men and women already relocated will soon bring their parents and small sisters and brothers out. Perhaps these Nisei who are so aggressively American themselves will not want their families held behind the fences.

However, in WRA centers there are hundreds of families with several young children, none old enough to leave alone. He is a courageous father who dares to start a new life with these responsibilities when, at the center, food, shelter, education, medical care, \$16 a month, and clothing are provided. Farm families are often afraid to go to the Midwest to try a totally new kind of agriculture. And many feel that they are too old to start again as day laborers. There are the men who had retail, export, import, wholesale, commission businesses. The concentrated little Tokyos in California made possible a whole commercial structure in which the Japanese provided goods and services for each other. Presumably there will be no more little Tokyos to serve.

Even if the *évacués* were allowed back on the Pacific Coast tomorrow, they could not readily establish themselves in the old pattern. Quite apart from race prejudice, the gap they left has closed in two years. Except for the few who own land, they would have to build in California as patiently as they now do in the East. They have been more thoroughly dislocated than they realize as they think nostalgically about California.

*No less than 1,200 Nisei have already volunteered from behind the wire fences of the centers. Including Hawaiian Nisei, the total in the armed forces in January was close to 10,000. Some are doing intelligence work in the South Pacific. An all-Japanese-American battalion did distinguished service in Italy, with heavy losses.

No one can gauge how soon the prewar unwillingness to accept charity or government relief deteriorates into a not-unpleasant habit of security. It is too much to expect of any people that their pride be unbreakable. Some of the old farm women who were "stoop labor" all their lives, even after their Nisei sons' landholdings or leased acres became sizable, have had the first rest in their history. Most of the old bachelors who had always been day laborers frankly enjoy the security of the centers.

If the war lasts two more years, and if WRA has succeeded in finding places for 25,000 more Japanese-Americans in the next twenty-four months (and WRA hopes to better that figure), it will be a job well done. That would leave some 45,000 in the relocation centers, as continuing public wards, not to mention over 20,000 at Tule Lake and the Department of Justice internment camps. Whatever the final residue, 25,000 or 45,000, it is certain that the "protective custody" of 1942 and 1943 cannot end otherwise than in a kind of Indian reservation, to plague the conscience of Americans for many years to come.

"MILITARY NECESSITY," "PROTECTIVE CUSTODY"

Meanwhile in the coming months, and perhaps years, a series of cases testing the constitutionality of evacuation and detention, even suits for recovery of property will come before the higher courts. Verdicts of "unconstitutional," or even eventual settlement of property claims cannot undo the record. It is written not only in military orders, in American Legion resolutions, Hearst headlines, and Supreme Court archives. It is written into the lives of thousands of human beings, most of them citizens of the U.S.

When future historians review the record, they may have difficulty reconciling the Army's policy in California with that pursued in Hawaii. People of Japanese blood make up more than one-third of the Hawaiian Islands' population, yet no large-scale evacuation was ordered after Pearl Harbor and Hickam Field became a shambles. Martial law was declared; certain important constitutional rights of *everyone* were suspended. The Department of Justice and the military authorities went about their business, rounded up a few thousand suspects. In Hawaii, unlike California, there was no strong political or economic pressure demanding evacuation of the Japanese-Americans. Indeed, had they been removed, the very foundation of peacetime Hawaiian life, sugar and pineapple growing, would have been wrecked. General Delos C. Emmons, who commanded the Hawaiian district in 1942, has said of the Japanese-Americans there: "They added materially to the strength of the area."

For two full years the West Coast "military necessity" order of March, 1942, has remained in force—an unprecedented *quasi*-martial law, suspending a small minority's constitutional rights of personal liberty and freedom of action. Those loyal *évacués* who can take jobs in war plants in the East have reason to ask why they are forbidden to return to California to plant cabbages. Mr. Stimson and Mr. Knox have assured the nation that the Japanese enemy is *not* coming to our shores. The Pacific Coast is now a "defense command," no longer "a theatre of operations," in the Army's own terminology. Each month the March, 1942, order seems more unreasonable.

Perhaps the Army forbids the *évacués* to return home less for military reasons than because of strong California pressures and threats. The Hearst papers on the Pacific Coast promise pogroms if any Japanese citizen or alien is permitted to come home. New groups like the Home Front Commandos of Sacramento have risen to cry: "They must stay out—or

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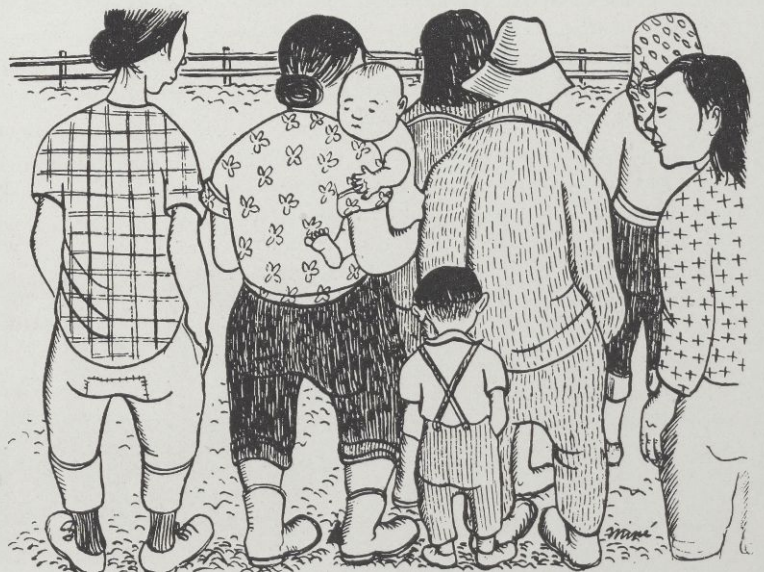
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else." The Associated Farmers and the California Grange, the American Legion and the Sons and Daughters of the Golden West reiterate the theme of *or else*. Politicians listen and publicly urge that the despised minority be kept out of California for the duration.

There are Californians who care about civil liberties and human justice and see the grave danger of continued *quasi*-martial law but they have difficulty getting their side heard. The California C.I.O., the League of Women Voters, and segments of the church are all putting up a fight against continued "protective security." They work side by side with the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play, a group that includes such distinguished Californians as President Robert G. Sproul of the University of California, Ray Lyman Wilbur, and Maurice E. Harrison.

Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, who ordered the evacuation in 1942, encouraged California's racist pressure groups when he said, "I don't care what they do with the Japs as long as they don't send them back here. A Jap is a Jap." General Delos C. Emmons, who succeeded DeWitt on the West Coast last September, says very little. He is the same General Emmons who decided *not* to order wholesale evacuation of the Japanese from Hawaii.

The longer the Army permits California and the rest of the Pacific Coast to be closed to everyone of Japanese descent the more time is given the Hearst papers and their allies to convince Californians that they will indeed yield to lawlessness if the unwanted minority is permitted to return. By continuing to keep American citizens in "protective custody," the U.S. is holding to a policy as ominous as it is new. The American custom in the past has been to lock up the citizen who commits violence, not the victim of his threats and blows. The doctrine of "protective custody" could prove altogether too convenient a weapon in many other situations. In California, a state with a long history of race hatred and vigilanteism, antagonism is already building against the Negroes who have come in for war jobs. What is to prevent their removal to jails, to "protect them" from riots? Or Negroes in Detroit, Jews in Boston, Mexicans in Texas? The possibilities of "protective custody" are endless, as the Nazis have amply proved.



An American With a Japanese Face

Byron
Eliot

By Robert Hosokawa

The following article, written by "an American with a Japanese face," presents the observations and reactions to the problem of resettlement of an individual who was among the thousands who were evacuated from their homes to barbed-wire assembly centers. The writer is a nisei, born in Seattle, just before the end of the last war. He was educated in Seattle schools and attended Whitman College, Walla Walla, graduating in 1940. At college his classmates elected him president of the senior class, and he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

GREENER FROM THE RAIN, the wooded hillside catches the morning sun. The air is cool and clean. By our window a huge locust tree, which has felt many springs, is budding once more.

Yesterday the old tree was full of blue-jays that sat and quarreled. Today there are only raindrops, clinging like glass beads to the tangle of twigs.

It is seven-thirty. We have had breakfast and my wife is washing the dishes. I am putting on my tie and coat and in a few minutes shall start my daily walk to the office.

The pavement is wet this morning, glistening like diamonds where the sunlight falls across it. It is good to be out, walking past houses with neat lawns, flowering tulips and greening hedges.

It is good to have somewhere to go in the morning, a place to work—and in the evening, somewhere to return. That may sound strange, it is so commonplace. But it is not so for me. Only three weeks ago we were behind barbed wire of a War Relocation Authority project, a drab desert city of tarpaper barracks.

I am an American with a Japanese face, one of 60,000 nisei-Americans born in this country of Japanese parents. The chronological facts of evacuation from our homes and the subsequent camp life have been publicized from time to time by various periodicals.

When the treacherous enemy struck Pearl Harbor, the frenzy on the coast whipped the racial coals which had been smoldering for a generation. Along with our alien parents, we were condemned as sneaking fifth columnists and saboteurs biding our time to spring for the kill.

♦ ♦ ♦

Possibility of invasion by the Japanese hurried the cry for our evacuation. Those were confusing days and, in spite of our resignation, it was a relief when the ordered movements began. By the middle of May, 1942, 110,000 coastal residents were behind barbed wire of hastily constructed assembly centers.

The soldiers who evacuated us were young and courteous, reminding me of college friends in the service. They aided the old, patted excited little children, and as we boarded buses with scant belongings they assured us, "It won't be too bad. We'll get this mess over with in a hurry and we'll all go home again." They were a credit to our country, and they did a difficult job well.

We moved in strictest co-operation with the Army and its agency, the Wartime Civilian Control Administration. We believed if our being removed was a military necessity designed to help our nation, then it was our contribution to its wartime welfare.

By mid-summer the movements from these miserable stopping-off places to more spacious relocation camps in the barren inland desert had begun. We were happy to leave the inadequacies of temporary encampment. Formerly it had been a state fairgrounds; its numerous booths, grandstand, and roller-coaster tracks were mute witnesses to remind us of happier days. After our transfer, the partitioned sheds were condemned as unfit for proposed Army quarters.

There were many physical inconveniences in the new center, but most of us never lost sight of the only thing which mattered—our country was at war, fighting totalitarianism in a desperate battle. Its complete victory over Japan and Germany was what mattered.

Contrary to accusations given wide pub-



RELOCATION AUTHORITY CENTER FOR JAPANESE EVACUEES
The Ice Cream Bar at the Community Store Supplies Entertainment and Refreshment. Top: Mt. Whitney, Highest Peak in the United States, Gives a Japanese Postcard Touch to This Camp Where American Japanese Are Finding Temporary Homes



Wide World, Associated Press, Francis Stewart Photos
GAMES FOR THE TOTS
Evacuee Children in Tule Lake Nursery School Built This Model of a Relocation Center

licity, we were never pampered, never coddled. Our living was crude and almost always limited to a plane of bare necessity. When we read reports in the papers of our luxurious quarters and lavish food, we resented deeply these untruths by ignorant politicians. When several Senators proposed investigation of conditions we encouraged just that.

Our inconveniences and misfortunes ceased to bother us. How could it be otherwise when we learned of the courage and sacrifice endured on Bataan and Corregidor and in the homes from which these heroes had gone. Most of us never lost faith in America, though sometimes faith in ourselves weakened.

If this was to be our home for the duration, it was a test of our courage and ingenuity. We worked to improve our homes, to develop recreation and to organize education. The War Relocation Authority officials were helpful and most eager.

But there was trouble brewing in the centers, the kind of thing only nisei completely understand. Months ago, in the hysteria after Pearl Harbor, nisei were accused as disloyal and dangerous, because

they would not indicate which among them and their parent generation were tools of the enemy. We suspected there were some who would choose Japan and its emperor to America and Democracy. There are bad apples in every barrel.

But we did not know who they were. We did not find out until we had been thrown indiscriminately within the perimeter of barbed wire. We did not know where to look, whom to watch until slowly from dark corners of boiler rooms, and behind barracks, came ugly discontent and seeds of agitation.

♦ ♦ ♦

They said, you nisei have boasted of citizenship as Americans. What has it done for you? Now you have finally begun to learn that you are no better than aliens who are denied that citizenship. You see that Democracy is only a word, something to be looked upon from a distance, never to have.

Some young nisei with confused minds were turned by this talk. The receptive weakness was there—bitterness and resentment of evacuation.

In Poston Center, Ariz., and Manzanar

and Tule Lake in California, the breach had widened between the handful of pro-Axis and the handful who were actively, vociferously American. The majority were unconcerned as usual. The split was not between issei and nisei. There were some of both on either side.

Indicative of the hostile circumstances was the Pearl Harbor anniversary riot in Manzanar and beatings in other centers. In Poston, seven thugs entered the room of a sleeping family at 2 a. m. to attack the nisei leader who had always been outspoken of his Democratic ideals and faith in America. With masks over their faces, they broke down the door, fell upon their victim in typical fascist manner. They were properly prosecuted.

The Manzanar riot followed attempt of minority pro-Axis forces to launch a celebration of the treacherous anniversary. This infuriated many local nisei. Trouble followed and military law was clapped on the project. Shooting by military police, resulting in death and injury to a few. It was during the pitch of excitement that 14 young nisei Boy Scouts surrounded a flagpole, armed themselves with rocks and

(Continued on page 13)

.. An American With a Japanese Face

(Continued from Page 3)

defied the Axis agitators to haul down the American flag.

These incidents opened many eyes. The Government and public realized the extreme danger of having good placed with bad without individual regard.

Other centers were not free of feeling, although the breach was never as evident. The unavoidable closeness of common existence could not help but bring to a head the counter-principles. During those weeks more than one sheep was converted to the goats. Psychologically helpful in this was the reality of citizens, accused of no crime, being held inside a fence of barbed wire interspersed with watchtowers.

Nisei are young as a group. Their age hovers above 20. They have undergone much in being uprooted from their homes and placed in camps. Before the solution is reached, they will undergo much more.

The procedure of resettlement to outside communities has just been instituted. It was initiated about Thanksgiving and was slow to get under way. Purpose and plans were indistinct. Evacuees were skeptical about benefits. What interest there was suffered because of shifting policies and red tape.

Employment offers in the first months of resettlement were scant, mostly menial. The WRA, looking out for its charges, discouraged evacuees from accepting jobs below their capabilities. Stories of unfriendly reception, housing difficulties and high costs of living were not brightening. Negotiations for employment were almost entirely by mail and required strict supervision.

Applicants for clearance were forced to wait months while their papers were held up in Washington, D. C. Thorough investigation of both employer and evacuee were necessary. For a time resettlement was remote and it seemed only college students continuing education could leave the centers.

Then came the announcement from Secretary of War Stimson on Jan. 28, 1943—a special combat team composed of loyal Japanese-Americans would be formed and enlistments would be sought in the relocation centers.

Most encouraging was the making public of a letter to Secretary Stimson from President Roosevelt, who had just returned from his historic Casablanca meeting. It said, "The proposal . . . has my full approval . . . no loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship regardless of ancestry. . . . Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; . . . Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy. . . ."

The Army recruiting team arrived, including a young nisei sergeant, one of over 5,000 Americans with Japanese faces in the Army before nisei were barred from selective service. Offices were established and preliminary explanatory meetings were held in each section of the sprawling camp with its 10,000 population.

The War Department made its idea clear. Rather than dilute the propaganda effectiveness, at home and abroad, of 5,000 or 10,000 fighting nisei Americans by diffusing them in an army of 8,000,000, it was better concentrated in a segregated unit. Some nisei understood, were far-seeing enough to realize this as their special chance to show who they were and in what they believed. Some did not understand. Others who might have volunteered under other cir-

cumstances hesitated to leave dependents as Government wards.

Many declined to volunteer, the majority among these indicating they would wait to be reinstated by selective service. Of those declining, a percentage is known to have refused forswearing allegiance to Japan. This group should never be released from watchful custody. These nisei should be treated not as citizens or as aliens but as enemies.

Enlistees included many older nisei, married and with children. They realized there was something to be done and were determined to create a permanent place in America for their posterity. The younger have begun to see the light. They needed leadership and education. If the recruiting procedure is repeated, many more nisei will volunteer.

It is interesting to note that Minidoka Center in Idaho, consisting of evacuees from the Pacific Northwest, a region more free than California of racial antagonism, had 300 volunteers, outstripping other centers. California nisei have always been more conscious of racial feeling through segregation, anti-alien land laws and stringent economic measures. The southern nisei have had to be staunch to stand up under attacks of skeptics and violent pro-Axis Japanese.

The Northwest nisei knew through their everyday associations that Democracy can be put into action and that is worth fighting for. When the postwar democratizing begins, a good starting point will be here at home—in generous quantities.

The West Coast Japanese problem is far from solved. Gradually evacuees will be resettled in communities outside. The present egress is a trickle. The cumbersome procedure is being eliminated, although Government investigation is still strict. Only those clearly established as sound and useful Americans are being released.

Both nisei and issei are eligible for resettlement. But the non-citizen parents are hesitating to leave. Some have accepted jobs, received clearance by passing the stringent scrutiny of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. These few are working at their simple trades and as domestics and farm helpers. Others may follow suit slowly as word comes from others that all is well. Communities will have to be understanding of issei. They are noncitizens, most of them only because they have been prohibited from naturalization through Congressional action. Among this aging group are those who have spent their best years in America, cutting all ties with the land of their birth. They have raised and educated their families, teaching children to be good Americans. In this foreign land they have had many heartaches and have seen many dreams fade away.

Most nisei reaching an age of independence and worthy of the opportunity should be induced to leave for employment and a chance to find a place in America. The solution should be reached through intensive aid by Government agencies for initial adjustment economically and socially. The solution is not mass deportation to Japan of all issei and nisei as some vociferous chauvinists have advocated. This would be final admission that Democracy has failed and all the sacrifices in its behalf have been in vain.

Dispersal of evacuees must be into the cities and towns, villages and farms of the Midwest and the East. A concentration in any section can only cause recurrence of distrust and retarding of assimilation. Large-scale return at the war's end to former homes on the Pacific Coast is impossible and inadvisable. Almost all evacuees have disposed of property, lost their businesses. They are economically unprepared to return. Should they do so in any numbers, they would be defeating every hope of vast resettlement, Americanization and assimilation now getting under way.

In some quarters, chiefly nisei, there is concern over constitutionality of the evacuation of citizens. Pending test cases are scheduled for early judgment in the United States Supreme Court, having been referred to that body by a bank of judges in the Federal Court of Appeals in San Francisco last month.

Nisei who look ahead are willing to forget the past until a more propitious time. Court judgment would be meager benefit, no matter what the decision. The only victory would be a moral one. If nisei evacuation is technically nullified, it would only remove in a technical sense the stigma implied by the movement. Evacuees would still be in centers. They could not return to the coast, even if it were advisable. They could not be released from the camps to go eastward without careful planning, and that is well under way.

In the final analysis, war and evacuation will have wiped out in a flash the socially undesirable ghetto Lil' Tokyos on the Pacific Coast. It will have scattered Americans with Japanese faces across the country, giving them a chance to prove their assimilability. For this, nisei must be thankful.

Illustrative of general nisei feel-

ing in the WRA projects is a story from a California center. A little child after one week in concentration said to his mother, "Mommy, I'm tired of this place, let's go back to America."

My wife and I have taken the opportunity and are now in the first stages of resettlement in a Midwestern community which had never had nisei. When its weekly newspaper hired me, by mail, sight unseen, to take the place of an army-inducted news editor, it was expressing its willingness to participate in a liberal experiment. I was happy to be a party in the trial. It has not been without interesting episodes.

Three subscriptions out of 3,700 were canceled when residents heard of negotiations for employment of a "Jap rat." Rumors flowed swiftly on my arrival. The best one said the News had imported a Jap spy. One church had a stormy session in a meeting of elders, because a suggestion had been made for inviting my wife and me to worship there. Two war workers walked out of a restaurant because of my presence.

On the other hand, people have gone out of their way to be kind to us. In spite of the housing congestion we have a neat little apartment. We have been invited to homes for dinner and attended church and concerts with new friends. At the conclusion of one Sunday service, one fourth of the congregation came

over to introduce themselves to us. People have been interested and friendly enough to stop us and talk to us in stores and on the streets. Neighbors have made us feel at home with the trifling thoughtful things that neighbors can do—sharing food, flowers from their gardens, exchanging recipes with my wife.

On Saturday afternoon, after I have cashed my week's check and pasted in my war stamps, we go shopping with ration books in hand. We work a victory garden on shares with our landlady.

It is with deep appreciation we walk in the evening along quiet streets, past homes with blue stars in their windows. We hear crickets making conversation and birds singing vesper songs. In the West there are no watchtowers, no fences with barbed wire, only the colors of dusk, houses warm with light, and in the sky, the evening star.

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