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Betrayal & Survival

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The new law provides that an American citizen may expatriate by "making in the United States a formal written renunciation of nationality in such form as may be prescribed by, and before such officer as may be designated by, the Attorney General, whenever the United States shall be in a state of war and the Attorney General shall approve such renunciation as not contrary to the interests of national defense."<sup>1</sup>

On July 28, when evacuee representatives met with the Spanish Vice-Consul, resegregationist leaders asked him many questions about the renunciation, but the Vice-Consul told them that he had not received official interpretation of the bill and therefore could not answer their questions.

Meanwhile, Mr. Yamashita, Mr. Kira, and other resegregationist leaders were delivering "educational lectures" at small block meetings. They assured their listeners that Japan was winning the war and interpreted the reverses as a strategic trap into which the American forces were being drawn. They also informed their listeners that they were, with the assistance of the WRA, in the process of forming organizations which would provide the education and discipline needed by young people who intended to go or return to Japan. A young Buddhist priest, who was being used as a cat's-paw, approached the administration and received permission to use the high school auditorium for a series of lectures on Japanese history and culture. The first meeting was held on the evening of August 12. The priest and other speakers announced that the purpose of the meeting was to

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1. Cited from "The Spoilage," p. 310.



form a centerwide Young Men's Association for the Study of the Mother Country (the Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen - dan). The expressed aims of this organization were to prepare the members to be useful citizens of Japan after their expatriation through a series of classes on the Japanese language, history, and political ideology. The formal aims were expressed in a written manifesto, distributed on August 12:

Since the outbreak of war between Japan and America, citizens of Japanese ancestry have moved along two separate paths: (1) for the defense of their civil rights on legal principles, and (2) for the renunciation of their citizenship on moral principles. Each group has constantly expended its efforts for the fulfillment of its own aims.

After we were segregated to this center, we have, on moral principles, stood for renunciation, and have awakened the consciousness of racial heritage. Fortunately, the government, whose national policies are based on democracy, humanity and liberty, has now proclaimed by legislation that it officially approves our inclination. We are, indeed, delighted with this recognition. With the three principles listed below, we hereby organize the Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen-dan and resolve to devote ourselves for the achievement of our original aims.

1. To increase the appreciation of our racial heritage by a study of the incomparable culture of our mother country.



2. To abide by the project regulations and to refrain from any involvement in center politics. To be interested only in improving our moral life and in building our character.

3. To participate in physical exercises in order to keep ourselves in good health.<sup>12</sup>

When I discussed the newly organized Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen-dan with my respondents, none of them referred to the group's "stand for renunciation of citizenship." Many appeared to be reassured by the assertion that the organization would "refrain from any involvement in center politics." My conservative and cautious friend, Mr. Kurusu, assured me:

The Sokoku Kenkyu is not a pressure group. They just want to study Japanese culture. I know because I'm a member. That's why I joined. They're not going into politics. I guarantee they will not start any trouble in here. If I see any trouble I will resign. That three or four months trouble really gave us a good experience.<sup>23</sup>

Morning outdoor exercises were initiated and these gradually became increasingly militaristic. Bugles<sup>34</sup>, grey sweat shirts, and headbands bearing the emblem of the rising sun were purchased.

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~~2~~ 1. Thomas and Nishimoto, The Spoilage, pp. 311-12.



Each morning, before six o'clock, the young men would march through the firebreaks, shouting "Wash sho! Wash<sup>s</sup> Sho!" (Hip! Hip!) Some people approved of the Sokoku because it gave the many otherwise unoccupied young men something to do. Others disapproved. For example, on September 14 I was chatting with some women friends. A young woman remarked: "I say this new Seinen-dan is far away from me. They're far away from me." An older Nisei woman differed. She said:

But now they (the Sokoku men) have reasoned things out more... They've worked out some good things. Like these zoot-suiters, for instance. They (the Sokoku leaders) say they're going to have a heck of a time when they go back to Japan.

They say "We must train them," and I think that's right. (Mr. Wakida, my shrewd Kibei friend, remarked:)

They're not very well trained yet. If they get too much power and can't control it, they might do anything. A lot of people are against it, but they don't say anything. When they have those exercises a lot of the people say, "Crimeny! If you have a little baby or a sick person, it wakes them up." Also the secret way they do things makes people suspect.<sup>x5</sup>

During the first part of September, the rumor of a coming resegregation continued to create anxiety.



On September 5, I had my hair washed at the Co-op "Beauty Parlor." When I returned to my room I made the following notes: Mary Okita, who is from Topaz, cannot understand why "some people" want to be resegregated so much. After all, "We all came here because we wanted to go to Japan." She expects that these "people" will try to start some trouble if resegregation is denied them.

A young man, one of the barbers, then came into the beauty shop and began to gossip with the girls in Japanese. Even to my inexpert ear it was obvious that he was sneering at the news of American victories in the Pacific. Then he began to sing the Japanese National Anthem. The girls were very embarrassed. One said, "I wish he wouldn't do that." Then Miss Okita said, "Well, Miss Hankey understands, He's always rude."

That evening, Mr. Currie, the new Caucasian head of the Co-op, told me that the day before, at a meeting of Japanese American supervisors, a man had closed the meeting by looking him in the eye and asking, "Is there going to be any resegregation?" Currie said he did not know. The Board then explained that they were asking so that they could order more wisely in case a part of the population was removed from camp.

The next day, a Caucasian high school teacher told me that "she was being asked repeatedly by her students if there were any truth in the resegregation rumors." I thereupon proceeded to visit Mr. Yamashita, the Resegregation Group "advisor." He, however, made no mention of a resegregation. Instead, he spoke of the renunciation of citizenship:



I don't know how far this will go. But certainly those who wish for immediate repatriation to Japan, and at the same time don't wish to be inducted into service or re-located, wish to renounce their citizenships. We don't know how many will renounce their citizenship.

His wife then asked me if I knew if the renunciation of citizenship would apply to the other centers. ~~xx~~ I said I thought so. <sup>16</sup>

Four days later, my friend, Mr. Wakida, told me:

People are still talking a lot about resegregation. We don't know what will happen to us the next day.

During the second and third weeks of September rumors of and anxiety about a coming resegregation subsided. On September 14, two Nisei girls, who were covertly hoping to relocate, told me that the rumors were dying down. On September 15, Mr. Kurusu, my conservative block manager friend, told me happily, "Everything is quiet and peaceful now... I'm very happy nowadays. I don't have to worry very much... Everybody was happy when the stockade boys were left out." He also again assured me that the Sokoku Kenkyu was not a pressure group. "That's why I joined."

Only two persons mentioned the renunciation of citizenship. One was Mr. Kurihara, an intelligent and concerned man in his late forties. On September 8, he remarked: "I don't want to predict,



but as long as things go on in this way... and the Sokoku Kenkyu people do not get their wish, trouble will continue to brew." On September 19 he told me: "We are anxiously awaiting that questionnaire to decide our citizenship." On September 21, Mr. Kira, an underground Resegregationist leader, told me: The only thing the people are interested in now is the denunciation (sic.) of citizenship. Some people have sent a petition to Washington to request forms."



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9. THE SECOND RESEGREGATION PETITION

After my talk with Mr. Kira I called on Mr. Yamashita, the most influential and respected of the underground leaders. He appeared anxious and distracted. Instead of lecturing me or responding to my questions, he asked me questions so obtuse and complex that I was unable to answer them. Finally, his wife, who was sitting quietly and knitting, spoke up sharply: "Why don't you tell her the truth? You know you can trust her." Mr. Yamashita looked nonplussed for a moment, but then said solemnly:

Resegregation is going to be something eventually. The philosophy of the majority of the residents here and hereafter will be changed....

This petition will tell the Administration exactly what we are, and what we should be under the circumstances. We are certain that the Administration and WRA cannot distinguish between the loyal and the disloyal people congregated in this camp. Even though it is for disloyals, it is different from other centers. This is the reason for so much restlessness and unfortunate disturbance in camp.

We residents, the wiser people, cannot wait further anymore for the Administration to have the camp like this. The time has come whereby the Japanese residents wish to formulate and determine their belief of themselves.



Mr. Tachibana then asked me for my honest opinion of the petition and whether I thought presenting it now would be followed by the apprehension and incarceration of those who sponsored it. This was a stumper. However, the petition was sensibly worded and in no way arrogant. It was, moreover, very clear. I read it twice carefully, and said that I saw nothing which could give offense to a just Administration. However, I added, Mr. Tachibana knew, as I did, that Mr. Best was easily terrified and that the action would threaten the calm condition of the camp for which he takes so much credit. If he became too excited about it, no one could predict what he would do. Mr. Tachibana seemed satisfied with my remarks and continued:

*instant*

You know that the people behind this have been working underground for a long time. Anyone who would have come out openly would have been put in the stockade. We have been working on this since April, awaiting the moment, but we had to keep it a secret. Now the time has come.

We are of the opinion that we cannot be loyal to two countries. As long as we are living here, why not make up our minds to be real Japanese or not? As long as this is fully impressed on the residents, this camp will



become more peaceful than ever.

If the Administration recognizes this movement, we will have a good mutual understanding. Besides Mr. Myer sent us a letter and recognized this movement through Mr. Black.

If this proceeds successfully the time will come when the others (the fence-sitters) will go out and proceed according to WRA policy. Therefore, the time will come when we can accomplish our resegregation purpose by such a procedure. It will not be direct resegregation (but a process of resegregation by loyal persons leaving camp).

Those who refuse to sign this will have people asking them, "Are you loyal to Japan or not? If you are not loyal to Japan why don't you go out?" Naturally, those loyal to Japan will stay here until the war ends.

This way - the people will have to realize this - because as long as their appearance is Japanese, they will have to sign this. Being loyal to Japan is a very serious matter.

If they don't sign this they will be known to be not loyal to Japan and will be told in public, "You are not Japanese. Why don't you go out?"

*Indant* { Of course, many people who don't want to go back to Japan will sign this, but then they will go in a corner and keep quiet.<sup>1</sup>

On the night of September 24, the Resegregationists distributed an explanatory pamphlet entitled, "What is Resegregation and What Does It Mean." On the day following, Mrs. Wakida, a young Kibei, asked me what the administration was thinking about resegregation.



I said that their attitude had not changed. Then she told me that on the night before a "document" had been handed around from barrack to barrack.

They give you what resegregation is about and why they want to be resegregated. There are four or five statements there that you have to do and obey. The people who will live up to this can be resegregated.

We haven't even heard what it's about. There are so many people here of different opinions... I really don't know myself.

Some people are very much for it, but I believe there are more against it than for it. What the outcome of this will be I don't know. On the whole, most of the people are very doubtful about it.

I really don't see why we should resegregate. We're already repatriates. We've already signed for repatriation. The WRA and the people as a whole know that we're loyal to Japan. And a lot of the people think as we do. (I asked for details and was told that the people were not asked to sign the statement. It was passed from door to door by the block people themselves with the understanding that they were to sign later.)

On September 26, Mrs. Tsuruda told me that she and her family had been "asked to read a paper."

It was written in such awful English...I couldn't make head or tail out of it, I thought, "It couldn't be WRA.



Not with that English....You're just supposed to pass it on to somebody else. It's to separate the people who are here from the "real Japanese." I read it but I don't know what it's all about.

I called on another Nisei woman, who told me that her father had not even bothered to read the paper, but had passed it along to the next apartment. Her friends, she told me, were saying that you couldn't find out the real truth about it. "Everything you heard was rumors and you couldn't get any real dope."

On the afternoon of the same day, September 26, I called on my Issei friend, Mr. Itabashi. He obliquely referred to the petition by telling me:

I asked one man, "Why did you sign the paper? He said, "So-and-so said so-and-so and so I signed it. They do not have any judgement.

He openly disapproved of the Resegregationists' emphasis on the renunciation of citizenship.

My common sense opinion is this: from the Japanese part, the right of American citizenship is already denied. So it is not necessary for them to make formal declaration of it.

On September 27, an elderly Issei woman, an Old Tulean, visited me in my room in order to express her disapproval of the Resegregationists. The trouble in camp, she told me was:

..all made by a few people. If the Old Tuleans say anything, the others say they are "ikujinashi" (spineless). So they don't say anything. They don't want trouble. The way these few trouble makers behave is not true



Yamato damashii. The person who really acts according to Yamato damashii makes himself low and does not talk....

The people in Tule Lake think they will stay in Tule Lake and maybe go back to Japan after the war. Maybe they will stay in this country. But some of the people who came in, they want to go back right away. All they do is talk, talk, talk."

I said: "Yes, and now they are starting this paper around from house to house." "Yes," said the lady. They want us to sign to go back to Japan, but very few people are signing. We don't want to pack up and move out of here. Too much trouble."<sup>2</sup>

On September 29, I visited Mr. Kurihara. He vehemently disapproved of the petition, and of Mr. Kira, a Resegregationist "advisor" who, I had been told, was the covert leader of a group of "strong arm boys."

A pamphlet was left at each house. This block had more than enough.

With regard to signing the petition - it hasn't come around. In this block we haven't seen a thing. But we know just where to go to sign.

There's no name on it. "Who's trying to put this thing over?" That's the objection I've heard in many blocks.

We want to know who is responsible for it. We cannot be lead like a bunch of sheep without knowing the leader.



I could say definitely that he (Kira) is the one who originated it. But who's carrying it through, I just know some of their names.

In many blocks I've heard this - the people are against it. They are saying, "they're a bunch of troublemakers." I think they are right.

One point I really oppose -- they threaten to use force - and if they use that force, I'm not going to stay quiet.

Between ourselves, I have always told them that if to go too far with it I'll expose them myself. Whether they call me an inu or ~~mekko~~ not, it doesn't matter. ~~Explain~~ If I came out with the facts, I think I'll get most of the people to side with me.



Many people today are wondering whether they should sign or not. They're afraid. They're being led into it.

So far I didn't want to be an informer. I didn't want to be called a dog. But if anybody is seriously hurt or killed - why should I hesitate? My conscience tells me as long as I shield him (Kira) I'm responsible to the public. As long as he's at large he'll continue. But as long as he doesn't do it, I won't say a thing.

I've visited many people. The majority are considering. They're afraid something will happen. Those who have a mind of their own, they won't sign.

On September 27, an Assistant Project Director, Mr. Black, warned the block managers that the petition had no administrative sanction. On September 30, Black issued a memorandum emphasizing "that there will be no further segregation at Tule Lake or elsewhere, ...that resegregation is receiving no consideration from WRA either here or in Washington." He condemned the activities of the



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leaders, which, he said, were detrimental to the residents and tended to "incite unrest, produce confusion, upset peace of mind, and contribute to tension and nervousness."<sup>3</sup>

On the afternoon of the day Black's memorandum was issued I visited Mr. and Mrs. Tsuchikawa, who were among the most active of the Resegregationist leaders. They had read the memorandum and were furious. Mr. Tsuchikawa, asked me indignantly, "How can you get authority for a petition like this. The next time we put out something I'm going to take the paper to the block manager beforehand. And he better not say anything!"

His wife said: "We are going on as we were, even if the people squawk."

The memorandum also had a significant effect on the general residents. People who had been undecided felt that they could refuse to sign and still be "true Japanese." People who had been suspicious and critical <sup>of the Resegregationists</sup> became more open in their statements. When, on October 2, I called on Mr. Wakida, he burst out with the statement: "I say, 'Leave me alone and I'll leave you alone! If I feel like it, I'll sign. I haven't signed yet. I'm Japanese - no matter what they (Resegregationists) say. If we swear to be Japanese, we are Japanese!"

Mr. Wakida also told me that he had visited Reverend Aramaki, the nominal head of the Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen Dan and that they had argued for many hours without coming to an agreement. He had then visited Reverend Abe and Mr. Kunitani (who had been the leaders of the Daihyo Sha Kai) "but we were both being so careful what we said,

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~~3X. Cited from a copy given me by Mr. Kurusu.~~



that I couldn't get any clear picture."

In some wards the Resegregationists set up morning exercises for the children and refused to let the children of non-resegregants participate, which, some people told me, made the children feel ashamed.

On October 6, the formidable Mrs. Tsuchikawa told me that her cousin had asked for leave clearance and hoped to return to the Manzanar Center to care for her aged foster parents. Mrs. Tsuchikawa disapproved most strongly:

*Insistent* { She feels more giri to her foster parents than she does to her country (Japan.) I tell her that she was foolish and wrong and then she cries.



~~Rumor of Department~~  
~~RUMOR OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ASSUMING JURISDICTION OVER TULE LAKE~~

On September 25, Dr. Opler, the WRA Community Analyst, told me that there was a rumor in camp that Tule Lake was "to go under" the Department of Justice within six weeks.

On October 4, Mr. Robertson told me that Mr. Best had met with the committee which was trying to bring about the return to Tule Lake of the Issei stockade detainees who had been sent to the Santa Fe Internment Camp.

"Best told the group he had every reason to believe that the Justice Department would soon take over and that they might as well not kick up so much fuss."

Resegregationist leaders actively used this rumor to obtain signatures to their petition, pointing out when the Department of Justice assumed jurisdiction over Tule Lake, only aliens who were "true Japanese" and citizens who had renounced their citizenship would be permitted to remain.



Rumor of Opening the West Coast

On September 27, Mr. Black announced at a Community Management Staff Meeting that the West Coast was soon to be opened to relocation and that Tule Lake would then be closed to relocation. Many of the staff members were concerned and distressed ~~xxx~~ at this news. On October 1, one of them told me:

I said, "What concerns me is just how we can use this among the people if it is just a probability." Mr. Black said, "If you know anybody intending to leave you can tell them this." . . .

Cc Then some teachers asked what to do about the sixteen year old kids. Mr. Huy<sup>5</sup>ke answered that after the servicemen return, maybe things aren't going to be so rosy. Maybe we shouldn't pressure them.

I tried to get back to the subject and asked, "Why can't reasonable notice be given?" Then Mr. Gunderson and Mr. Black said simultaneously, "That's all Hearst would need!"

I said: "Are we running this camp for Mr. Hearst or for the people?"



Security for anything, said he. Do you want us all to get our throats cut?" Currie told me that he did not send the letter.

When I visited George Wakida on October 12, he said:

I don't like the way the Sokoku threatens people. They say, 'If you don't sign, you're going to be drafted.' So a lot of dumb people signed. But I think those who signed were wise. I'm too stubborn to sign and that makes me enemies. It's better to be like the proverb: Nagai mono ni wa makarero; Okii mono ni wa nomareru,<sup>45</sup>

If I were Project Director I would segregate them. I'd give each person a pink paper and a white paper and an envelope. Then those who wanted to be segregated could sign the pink paper and those who didn't could sign the white one. Then they could mail it to the WRA and nobody sees it. No block manager, nobody to see. Then I'd like to see how many would sign!<sup>46</sup>

As I walked back to the administrative section I noticed that a seagull flying overhead had a red circle painted on each of its wings and had thus become a flying Japanese flag. Previously I had seen children trying to catch them.

On October 10, I visited Mr. Itabashi, a gentle, soft-spoken Issei, who worked in the Social Welfare office. He was also a good friend of Mr. Kurihara. I was concerned and anxious about the frightening things Mr. Kurihara had told me about the Resegregationist

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1. ~~Let the long thing wind about you; let the great thing swallow you,~~

2. ~~Fieldnotes, October 12, 1944.~~



leaders and I opened the conversation by wondering aloud whether Mr. Kurihara was not putting himself in danger by trying to get information about the Resegregationist leaders. But Mr. Itabashi reassured me, saying, "I was going to tell Mr. Kurihara, 'Don't worry about it. It's not so serious as you think.'" He then told me that the majority of the people who had signed the petition had "signed under intimidation or ignorance." He added that "the majority of people are sick of all this trouble" and that he had been telling the Resegregationists "The Japanese government is not so narrow-minded as you..It wishes for the people in camp just to live in peace and keep their health."

He did not tell me that in September, he and several other elders of the Seichy-No-Ie<sup>1</sup> religious movement had addressed a meeting of their group and had exhorted them to follow the higher ideals of Japan which, he said, were not compatible with agitation and violence.

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I said that this camp is no place for young men to make trouble. They should study. I said, "Young men, behave yourselves."<sup>18</sup>

On the night of October 15, Mr. Itabashi and two other elderly men returning from a church meeting were attacked and brutally beaten by a gang of young men.

I was coming home from a religious meeting at block 52 - I heard noisy footsteps. One of my friends was at my side and the other was 15 feet ahead. I turned around and saw that big stick. I can still see the club like a frozen picture but I don't know anything after that.<sup>19</sup>

... The very first word I uttered right after the attack was "baka." (Fool) I rather feel sorry for those who attacked me because they do not know what they were doing.<sup>20</sup>

The Japanese American police refused to handle the case<sup>21</sup> and the men who had been assaulted refused to name or describe their assailants.

Mr. Kurihara told me, "Mr. Itabashi requested me to let the thing die out. They fear that neither they nor their families will be safe if I carry out my intentions."<sup>22</sup>



On October 21, Mr. Kira spoke to the young men at a Sokoku meeting and told them that he would take care of them if they got into trouble. He quoted a Japanese proverb: Dai no mushi wo tasu-keru niwa, shō no mushi wo korosanakereba naranu, which some people translated as, "To save the big shots we have to kill the small guys." (It may also be translated as, "To help the great cause we must destroy those who stand in its way.")

On October 23, I visited Mr. Kira, who was now calling himself an "advisor" to the Resegregationists"

I found him in a spacious office, the walls of which were covered with Japanese flags and scrolls in Japanese script. Two brawny and solemn-faced young men stood on either side of him and another young man stood at the door ... He himself sat behind a handsome desk.<sup>13</sup>

He gave me a long account of how he, "his boys", and "his residents" had had a confrontation with the Project Director about whether or not one of Mr. Kira's residents should be punished for illegally building himself an extra room.

At first Mr. Best threatened these people. "Do you want me to call the Army like last year and teach you folks a lesson?"

They said: "Do you think you can teach the people a lesson or are you going to be put in an embarrassing position?"



They said, "Go ahead and do it. We'd rather have the Army control the center than the WRA."

As soon as they said that, Mr. Best changed his tone.

Mr. Kira then commented on the renunciation of citizenship:

The people are anxiously waiting for the denouncement of it. When Mr. Best made the statement that within 60 days the camp would be under Justice, the people were delighted. We more or less expect it.

On October 30, Shinkichi Iwamoto, who was known as Mr. Kira's "hit-man," knifed and seriously wounded a young man. Mr. Itabashi told me that the young man's father had openly criticized Mr. Kira.



EFFLORESCENCE OF THE RESEGREGATIONISTS

During late October and November the Resegregationists increased their activities and practiced them overtly. They were given a staff office in Block 54 and they proceeded to cover<sup>ed</sup> the walls with Japanese paper flags and patriotic mottoes. Among these was a sign stating that anyone speaking English would be fined at the rate of one cent a word. They published a mimeographed weekly and a monthly newssheet. The predawn exercises for the young men now included drills, judo practice, and marches to the shout of "Wash sho!"

"Group exercise of a more highly nationalistic character were initiated, including an early morning ceremony on the eighth of the month, at which prayers for Japanese victory were offered."<sup>14</sup>

More and more of the young men began wearing the grey sweat shirt and head band bearing the emblem of the rising sun. In mid-November, the young<sup>men</sup> began to shave their heads, in imitation, they said, of the Japanese Army. By mid-December, even elders like Mr. Yamashita and Mr. Tsuchikawa had shaved their heads. The adult Resegregationists formally adopted the name, Sokuji Kikoku Hoshi Dan (Organization to Return Immediately to the Homeland to Serve).  
 ✓ The Sokoku or young men's group formally adopted the name Hokoku Seinen Dan, that is, instead of devoting themselves to the study of the language and culture of the homeland, they would now devote themselves to the service of the homeland.



As Mr. Yamashita told me, the young men are "preparing themselves physically and mentally" so that they could be utilized by the Japanese government "if they go on the exchange boat."

By getting up early in the morning, by exercise and training after worshipping, and praying for victory and eternal life for our Japanese soldiers, the young people can be deeply impressed . . . If we were training in open daylight, it will not impress people much . . . But getting up early in the morning is to feel that we . . . are not taking for granted that we can sleep long and at any time. We cannot live here luxuriously. We must do parallel to what our brothers in Japan are doing.<sup>15</sup>



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THE LEADERS OF THE NOVEMBER STRIKE CHALLENGE THE RESEGREGATIONISTS

From the beginning of their underground activity in January of 1944, the Resegregationist leaders had striven to give the impression that they were on the best terms with the prestigious leaders of the November strike, Indeed, they announced that obtaining the release of the detained leaders was their prime objective.<sup>16</sup>

But when Abe, Kunitani, and Tada appealed to the American Civil Liberties Union, the Resegregationist leaders refused to help them. And when the ACLU did bring about the release of the strike leaders, the relationship between them and the resegregationists remained polite but guarded. Though the Reverend Abe, George Kunitani and many of their friends were nominally members of the resegregationist organization, they did not participate actively and they declined the positions offered them.

In mid-November of 1944, with the imminence of the renunciation of citizenship and the "take-over" by the Department of Justice, the Resegregation group leaders decided to institute a membership purge. They posted statements in the latrines and laundry rooms which, in effect, said the following: True Japanese life was austere and full of sacrifice; people who could not do without American luxuries such as rich food, liquor, or cosmetics, and people who were addicted to degenerate vices such as gambling and sake drinking, had no place in



postwar Japan or in the membership rolls of the Resegregation group. Having defined the "true Japanese" and the "not Japanese" in this manner, the leaders sent curt notices of expulsion to some of their more moderate charter members and to a number of the friends of Abe, Kunitani, and Tada.

Though the expelled members had not approved of many of the policies and activities of the Resegregation group, they resented being cast off in this rude manner and being derogated as "not Japanese." Some also feared that their removal from the membership list might make them ineligible for repatriation. There now emerged the potential of a confrontation between the two groups, and, as usual, the warrior champions were the initiators. When a crowd of several hundred people had gathered on the evening of 19 November to bid farewell to a number of families who were on their way to join interned members in the Department of Justice camp at Crystal City, Tetsuo Kodama, a noted judo champion and a close friend of Kunitani and Tada, approached Mr. Yamada (also a judo champion and leader of the Hokoku) and accused Yamada of having called him an inu. This was a challenge to fight, which Yamada ignored.

✓ This open and aggressive defiance thoroughly upset the Resegregationists, Mrs. Tsuchikawa told me that  
✓ young men of the Hokoku were guarding the apartments of the Resegregationist leaders night and day. On the other hand, many of the residents (those who disapproved of the



resegregationists) were intrigued by the prospect of a feud between the "superpatriots" and the members of the Abe-Tada faction. Mr. Kurihara voiced the hope that in the event of a violent fight or a gang war the administration would be forced to imprison the Resegregationist leaders, "and then the people could get rid of the gambling group." (many of the members expelled were young men who spent a great deal of their time playing cards. According to rumor, they also drank bootleg sake provided by the enterprising Mr. Tada. People called them "the gamblers," and it is my suspicion that they constituted a kind of young men's peer society.) ~~And~~ Since all the male members of the Resegregation group had shaved their heads to an egg-like smoothness, the friends of Kunitani, Kodama, and Tada now let their hair flourish luxuriously. People began to refer to the former as "shavedheads" or, more derogatorily, "baldheads," and to the latter as "longhairs."

On 15 December, the anticipated fight broke out. A certain Mr. Imachi went to the Resegregationist headquarters in block 54, discreetly accompanied or followed by fellow members of the long-haired faction. Imachi accosted the president of the Sokuji Kikoku Hoshi-dan, demanding the reasons for his expulsion, and the Sokuji official gave him a rude reply. Imachi then seized a long piece of wood from a nearby woodpile, the official grabbed a mop, and the two men had at it in what must have



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been a strange parody of a samurai sword duel. Meanwhile, Mr. Kodama, the judo champion, and several other longhairs also armed themselves from the woodpile and guarded the combatants, to see, as they later put it, that there would be fair play. Many strong-arm boys of the Hokoku and several hundred other spectators came running to the scene; but no one, apparently, dared to challenge the longhairs. After the fight, which lasted only a few minutes, Mr. Imachi addressed the assembled crowd, denouncing the Hokoku for gangster tactics and for the degradation of the true spirit of Japan.

This attack put the Resegregationists into a very awkward situation. If they ignored the attack they would lose face. If they responded with open violence they might be arrested, and all their elaborate plans for impressing the Department of Justice and achieving a re-segregation and repatriation might go astray. So they draw up a legal complaint against Imachi and ten other men and presented it to the project attorney. Forthwith, eleven longhairs were arrested by the Caucasian police and taken to the jail at Klamath Falls. Then the Resegregationists plastered latrines and laundry rooms with mimeographed statements to the effect that their peaceful organization had been attacked by gangsters. To me they voiced vicious threats of what they would do if they were not given justice.

The trial, which took place four days later, was a peculiar event. Kunitani and Tada had asked for and received permission to act as quasi attorneys for the defendants. The project attorney carried on the case for



the plaintiffs. Mr. Yamashita attended every session and interrupted frequently. The eleven defendants were all neatly dressed in what appeared to be their best suits. Their hair was noticeably long, and they bore themselves with something of the air of college boys about to be reprimanded for a prank. The Resegregationist plaintiffs and witnesses were dressed in the Hēkoku uniform, a grey sweat shirt imprinted with the emblem of the rising sun. Their heads were newly shaved and they glared at the longhairs with baleful eyes. Whether of one side or the other, the witnesses seemed to suffer from some optical defect. When the man for whom they were testifying had been struck, they had seen it. But when he had struck someone, they had momentarily glanced away, gone to the latrine, or just not noticed.

Ten days later the verdict was announced: Imachi was given a light sentence; two other defendants were given suspended sentences; the rest were acquitted.

The Resegregation group leaders were enraged. They denounced American justice and made terrible threats of reprisals. "Bombs and tanks won't stop our boys now if we give them the word," said Mrs. Yamashita.<sup>17</sup>

The fight and its aftermath significantly weakened the position of the Resegregationists. Many of my respondents began to criticize

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~~1. Ibid. pp. 163-166.~~



them and some people told me that they were resigning from the organization. On December 19, 1944, Mr. Kurusu said:

They (Sokoku) stated in their regulations that their organization is not political. But gradually they stepped into politics. I didn't like it and the people don't like it either. After I see this incident I feel it's better to stay out....I believe most of the members are really disgusted about the way the organization is running. They push people. Their idea is wrong. They are forcing all these things. Everybody is criticizing the Sokuji now. This is a good time to jump off.

But it was at this time that the representatives of the Department of Justice, John Burling, arrived at the center, to open the hearings for renunciation of citizenship.



AD THE RENUNCIATION OF CITIZENSHIP

Despite the Resegregationist leaders' enthusiastic sponsorship of the renunciation of citizenship, only 107 valid applications were received by the Department of Justice during November of 1944. But when Burling arrived at Tule Lake on December 6 to begin hearings, the Resegregationsists:

intensified their demonstrative activities, holding their noisy predawn militaristic exercises as close to the fence as possible and blowing their bugles louder than ever. Clearly, they hoped to impress the representative of the Department of Justice with their true Japanese character and their passionate desire for an immediate renunciation of citizenship, resegregation, and expatriation. Burling was impressed, but in a way that neither the Resegregationist leaders nor the WRA administration had anticipated. He told the Resegregation group leaders and their followers (and also announced to all the residents) that such Japanese militaristic activities were subversive and that if they did not abandon them at once they would be interned in a Department of Justice camp for potentially dangerous enemy aliens. He also took a very critical attitude toward the WRA for permitting young men living under their charge to drill themselves for service in the Japanese army.<sup>1</sup>

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~~4.~~ Ibid. p. 166.



By the middle of December the number of applications for renunciation of citizenship had risen to about 600.

The Resegregationists ignored Burling's warnings and drilled more ostentatiously than ever. On December 27, the Department of Justice interned seventy of the leaders and officers.

This act of official recognition seemed to encourage the membership. They gave their leaders a spectacular demonstration of farewell, sang Japanese patriotic songs, and shouted "Banzai!" They also immediately elected a new slate of officers to replace those interned. Under this new leadership and activities of the Resegregationists became fantastic. They stepped up their bugling, goose-stepping, morning drills, and Wash~~o~~sho chants. Elderly people and little children stood in rigid and motionless prayer in the bitter cold and sometimes marched with the boys so that, as a friend of mine put it, "even the old ladies are running around in slacks yelling "Wash-sho!"<sup>2</sup>

omit

They taunted non-members as follows:

"They say they are glad to be picked up. They say we, who are left behind in camp, are going to be kicked around, while they will be safe and sound in an internment camp."<sup>2</sup>

1. Ibid. p. 167

2. Statement by a mature Nisei woman, Fieldnotes, January 3, 1945.

omit



My field notes for January 1945 are filled with statements expressing anxiety, indecision, and desperation. On January 2, Mr. Kunitani, who had been a leader of the Daihyo Sha Kai, told me:

I think that the Hoshi-dan undoubtedly has started the rumor that by renouncing citizenship, the people will be allowed to stay here in Tule . . . If they keep on making more pickups it's going to excite the people.

On the same day, my Nisei secretary told me:

We wouldn't mind going back to San Francisco if we had everything as when we left. We'd jump right out. But we've lost everything.

On January 3, I called on an older Nisei woman friend and found her in a state of great distress.

The people picked up say they're glad. They say we (people left in camp) are going to be kicked around while they will be safe and sound.

I don't know what's going to happen to us! It's very confusing. I think everybody feels that. They don't know what's what yet. . . They can't say: 'Get out by a certain time. We'll give you twenty five dollars and car fare.' In the first place, why do they want to kick us out? It was their business we came here.

To tell you frankly, I'm in such a confused mind. Everybody is like that. California is the last place I'd want to go back to, with all I've been reading. We all feel, if somebody is going to go back, let's watch and see what happens to them.



Can people be thrown out even if they renounce their citizenship? Could they put you in the Army then.?

On 5 January, the WRA released and distributed to all the residents an official pamphlet in which Dillon Myer reaffirmed that it was the WRA's intention to close all of the relocation centers by returning all of the evacuees to "private life in normal communities." The WRA had announced this policy once before, in mid-December, but at that time most of the evacuees to whom I talked told me that they were sure that it did not apply to them. Now, however, many people who had been dubious about the wisdom of renouncing their citizenship--or urging their Nisei children to renounce--began to fear that if they or their children did not renounce they would shortly be expelled into hostile and, by now, very unfamiliar American communities. Newspaper reports in which relocated Japanese Americans or Nisei soldiers were threatened, attacked, shot at or had their houses burned were quoted to me.<sup>123</sup>

As Bob Tsuruda's sister remarked, "What do they want us to do -- go back to California and get filled full of lead?"<sup>2</sup>

On January 5, Mr. Itabashi told me:

WRA's plan to close the centers will fail. When we entered camp at the beginning of the war I heard that the German

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3x. <sup>1</sup>Doing Fieldwork, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>Fieldnotes, January 14, 1945.



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people who were interned during the First World War were paid \$1,000.00 each when they were allowed to leave camp.

They have nothing to depend on. A job can't be depended on. I feel the WRA plans for closing camp will be a total failure . . . I don't know one person who wants to go out. Of course, those who do, say nothing about it.

On the same day, Mr. Kurihara told me:

I have noticed that people are stiffening in their attitude. Last week some were saying, 'If they make us get out, we'll go.' Now they are determined not to leave.

If they use force, undoubtedly they will succeed in kicking them out, but undoubtedly, there will be trouble too. It might be possible to get out at least 50% of the people if they would pay them a part of the damages they have suffered. But the majority of people I have talked to recently say they're not going out.

On January 8, I spoke with Sam Niiyama, a Nisei, age 37, who had been Head of the Block Managers in November 1943. He had supported the Coordinating Committee and had been called an inu. He impressed me as a very intelligent and sensible man.

My impression is that the people are very much at a loss, due to the fact that they can't make a decision. The representatives of the government - they admit they're in the dark themselves. They don't know what to do or what it's all about . . . .



When they came out to ask us to make this decision, I told the Army colonel (at his hearing), 'If you set a deadline I will renounce my citizenship due to the fact that I have no place to go! . . .

I don't care who it is -- Nobody who can't see their way to their own living, nobody's going to start walking out in the dark. If they compel me - I'll stay here. At least by staying here I'll have a roof over my children and enough to eat, although I don't like the food . . .

The parents of people taken to Santa Fe are saying, 'My child became a Japanese today.'

If there was some one way that they were really trying to help me, I'll go out. But if they just show me, 'There's the gate - Go.' NO SIR!

After speaking with Mr. Niiyama, I went to the "beauty parlor" to get my hair washed.

My operator had nothing on her mind today except her worry about being forced out of camp. She asked me if they really would be forced out. She complained bitterly that her family had lost everything and they don't see how they are going to make out. She said everybody is saying they won't go out. <sup>24</sup>

On January 9 I called on Mr. Oseta, the evacuee aide in the Legal Department of the Project. He told me that resistance to the idea of going out of camp was growing but he was going to have no part of it. "What's the use?"



omit

His carefully considered apathy was somehow more depressing than the hopeless stubbornness of the less educated people in camp. I left feeling very depressed.

He told me that in his opinion the compulsory closing of the camps would be taken by the people just as they had taken the evacuation. There would be passive resistance but it would be useless.

"They've got you going and coming. It doesn't pay to raise hell. It's easy for a person without a family to raise hell, but with a wife and children it's another matter to think about.

Under the Geneva Conference, they can't kick the aliens out.

(I asked if fear of being forced out was the reason why so many people were renouncing their citizenship.) Sure, why not? If they were sincere about restoring our rights of citizenship, why didn't they call the women for hearings. They just want to get you in the Army. The trouble is, minority races suffer one way or another."

(Mr. Obata's carefully considered apathy was somehow more depressing than the hopeless stubbornness of the less educated people in camp. I left feeling very low in mind.) x5

On January 10 I called on Mr. Kunitani. He commented briefly:



I think it's a silly idea on the part of the WRA or the Army to get us out of here. . I think it's crazy. The Army can try, but the results will not be complimentary . . . Anything that will be forced on the Japanese people - they won't take it.

On January 11, I encountered John Burling and a concerned woman staff member having lunch in the mess hall.

Burling told us in confidence that as far as he has been able to determine, Tule Lake is not open. Civilian Restrictive Order No. 26 has never been rescinded. The WRA announcement that the people in Tule Lake are practically in the same status as those in the relocation centers in not so . . . He remarked that the longer he stays here the more he is impressed with the enormity of the confusion. Neither WRA, the Army, nor the Department of Justice seem to know what the other is doing, or even just what they themselves are doing.<sup>16</sup>

On January 10 I had a talk with my conservative friend, Mr. Kurusu. He told me:

People are really minded to stay in camp, where they think it's safe . . . There is so much to upset the people: the men picked up, the renunciation of citizenship, they all come at the same time . . . If this becomes a relocation center, they'll draft us. In that case, they say, we must get busy and send in our renunciation of citizenship.

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~~1. Fieldnotes, January 11, 1935.~~



On January 14, I called on the sisters of my friend, Bob Tsuruda. Tsuruda had relocated in September and I knew that his sisters also intended to relocate at some time in the future. Indeed, the elder sister's husband had been offered a job by his former employer in California. The sisters told me that they had been interviewed by the leave officer, who, they felt, had, had pressured them to leave immediately. Noriko, the younger sister said: "She sure wants us to go out. She says even those who renounce their citizenship will still get sent outside. Mrs. Sato, the elder sister said that she had told the leave officer:

What do you want us to do, go back to California and get filled full of lead?

She then told me:

I'm going to sit here and watch. How can a person make up their mind when they don't know anything? We can't depend on the WRA.

Noriko added:

We want to get out. But we can't with \$25. We have to buy a bed, blankets, and we've got to eat. It looks as if you <sup>eat you</sup> can't sleep.

The two women spoke scornfully of the "bald-heads." Noriko said she had been in the canteen with a boy friend who had not shaved his head. A Hokoku friend came up to them and said: "I'm not going to have anything more to do with you if you keep looking like that. Are you a Japanese or aren't you?" "That's how they keep talking all the time," said Noriko.



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On January 15, I visited Mr. Kurihara. He was depressed.

People with large families are worrying themselves to death. After all the wrongs they have done to the Japanese, nothing they do now will do any good . . . Right now the Japanese are most afraid of the hardships they are going to face. Also, a rumor is being circulated that five Japanese were killed in Fresno or Stockton.

On the renunciation of citizenship, he said:

I've seen a lot of young boys very anxious to renounce it. They are talking a great deal about it now. They aren't talking much about relocation.

8 On the 15th I also visited Mrs. Kawai, an ardent Resegregationist. She asked me to get special application blanks for renunciation of citizenship for her two daughters. She asked me repeatedly if the Department of Justice was going to take over Tule Lake on January 21. I made the following comment in my fieldnotes:

(There was a widespread rumor that the Department of Justice was going to take over Tule Lake on January 9. Now it's the 21st. Tule Lake is coming to resemble millenarian Europe as 1000 A.D. approached. The rumor about the Department of Justice has some of the appointed personnel worried also.)

8 On January 18 I called on my secretary, Mary Komura. For the first time in all of my visits, her father, a member of the Hōshi-dan, entered into conversation with me.



He remarked that in his opinion only 1% of the people in Tule Lake would relocate. The policy of the government in this relocation policy wasn't fooling anybody.

The newspapers were showing that the war was going badly for the Allies, and the U.S. attempt to increase man power by releasing the Japanese was well understood by the camp residents.

Mr. Komura also told me that he had just heard over the radio that a certain town in California had announced that they would resist the return of any Japanese. He and his daughter agreed that "Almost all of the people would like the camp under Justice. They'd feel much safer."<sup>27</sup>

On January 18 I called on Sally Wakida. Sally, who intended to expatriate with her husband, George, was relatively relaxed. She opened the conversation by telling me about the Hoshi-dan activities.

Since Mr. Burling is here, they blasted their bugles louder than ever. Even the old ladies are running around yelling, "Wash sho", with slacks on. I don't think that's very nice for old ladies 50 years old. The young women do it too.

She then told me about her husband's hearing on his application for renunciation of citizenship.



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When George went for his interview, the lady asked him if he were a member of any organization. He said he was a member of the Seinen-dan.<sup>18</sup> She said, "The Hōkoku Seinen-dan?" George pulled his hair and said, "No, can't you see?"

She laughed and said she was sorry.

Sally then told me: "Most people would like the camp to go under Justice."

...The food is getting worse. We've had wieners day after day...I guess the only people having fun in camp now are the Hōshi-dan people. They have something to do every day and meetings every night.

On January 19 I visited Mr. Kunitani. He told me there was a widespread rumor that all persons who have not renounced their citizenship by January 20 would be "kicked out of camp." He implied that this rumor was being spread by the Hōshi-dan. "Some people are also being told to answer in a radical way so that their citizenship will not be taken away."<sup>29</sup>

On January 19, Mr. Burling told me that the Department of Justice had received almost 6,000 applications for renunciation.<sup>310</sup> He also told me that he had asked Dillon Myer to make Tule Lake a refuge center from which no one would be forced to relocate for the duration of the war. Dillon Myer refused.

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On January 22, Mr. Kurihara told me:

The majority of people in Tule Lake believe they don't have to go out. They will not change their minds. Why should we come here in the first place if we didn't want to renounce our citizenship?..... The true motive behind the renunciation of citizenship is that they don't want to get out. They want to remain in camp for the remainder of the war. When WRA comes to realize their mistake, it will be too late.

On the same day, Miss Komura, my secretary, told me:

Quite a few of my girl friends are renouncing. I guess it's because they're repatriates and had a purpose for coming here. Most of my friends I meet at Japanese school: we all have the same feeling.

She then said with a smile: "You know why the boys are renouncing." I asked about the Resegregationists. She said that she thought that the Hokoku and the Hoshi-dan had been very influential in causing people to renounce.

On January 24, Mrs. Aida, my older Nisei friend told me:

They feel if they don't renounce their citizenship they can't go back to Japan. You might have to get out of camp. Frankly, that's how everybody feels . . . If the American people were all like you, I'd go out tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the Resegregationists, with exultant fanaticism, spread rumors that the families of the men sent to



Santa Fe would soon be sent to join them. Members of the Hōkoku who received notices from Washington approving their applications for denationalization waved them in front of nonrenunciants and urged them to make their own applications without delay. Renunciation became a mass movement. During January, 3,400 young persons (40 percent of the citizen population) applied for denationalization. The Department of Justice became alarmed. Burling tried to stem the flood by asking the national officials of the WRA to declare Tule Lake a "refuge center" from which no one would be forced to relocate for the duration of the war, and by trying to stamp out the Resegregationist organizations. But the WRA refused to yield in the matter of forced resettlement, and the only concession made was that "those who do not wish to leave the Tule Lake center at this time are not required to do so and may continue to live here or at some similar center until January 1, 1946" (Thomas and Nishimoto 1946; 356, italics theirs). The Department of Justice continued ~~its interments of~~ <sup>to intern the</sup> Resegregationists. On 26 January, 171 men were interned, on 11 February, 650, on 4 March, 125.<sup>1)</sup>

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1. "Doing Fieldwork," pp. 167-8.



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11, RENUNCIATION CONTINUES DURING FEBRUARY AND MARCH - 1944

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^ The following statement reflects the changing attitudes of my respondents during February and March.

On February 13, two days after 650 young men had been interned, I received the following letter from Mr. Kunitani: (Kuratomi)

February 12, 1945

Dear Miss Hankey:

Sorry I have delayed in answering your letter of Jan. 25. The condition in the center has been most unsettled because of recent mass pick-ups.

The current rumor which in my opinion is the most vicious has it that unless people (young men of course) sign up with the organization, they will be subject to draft by March of this year. There seems to be a great increase in the membership of said body. The people are under the impression that if you are a member, then your chance of renunciation is guaranteed; whereas, if you are not, you just don't know when you will be able to renounce your citizenship. Of course there is a connection with the recent announcement about the exchange-ship.

In fairness to everyone concerned, I am of the opinion that some kind of statement should be forthcoming from the Justice Department in this instance. The result if left unabated, will not only be tragic but dreadful. I don't know what you are able to do, but for justice's sake please take some action.

Hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,

George.



On my way to see Mr. Kunitani I dropped in on Mr. Kurihara and asked him about the current rumors. He told me:

Those rumors are being heard throughout the camp. It has a tremendous effect. People are joining the Hōkoku. It's going over like a wild fire. Those who were strongly opposed to the Hōkoku are trying everything to get in it. The membership is growing by leaps and bounds.

The membership was decreasing very rapidly but this rumor in the form of propaganda has spread throughout the camp. It began about Saturday morning.

Several people have come around to see me and ask for advice. Instead of giving them advice I gave them hell for not being able to judge the situation for themselves. Because it's nothing but outright lies which ordinary common sense would tell.

The people are in a quandary and don't know what to do. They just follow the mob. I told them, 'You're ~~your~~ <sup>your</sup> group are like a bunch of sheep.'

The hold of the Hōkoku is very strong now. They have taken root. The Administration must see that fact right now, because this thing is contagious. If any Japanese steps away from the Hōkoku he will be called a hikekumin (unpatriotic) - a traitor.

I wouldn't blame any of the parents here for not wanting to have their sons serve in the United States Army. To prevent that they will go to any extent.



These parents are advising their sons to join the Hōkoku-dan to avoid being drafted. They are taking the safer side.

I gave those parents hell for being so jittering and not having a mind of their own. Renunciation is the only idea. Parents want their sons and daughters to renounce, so that they can go to Japan with them.

Another rumor which has brought on this change of mind is that whoever joins the Hōkoku-dan will be the first to go to Japan.

If the exchange ship were to come and would take back only those who have stayed here quietly and obeyed the laws - boy - it will be a blow to the Hōkoku.

Another reason I think many of the young boys are joining is that when they leave here hundreds and hundreds of people come out to see them out. It gives them such a chivalrous feeling, seeing the boys being sent away with such a big farewell and such public acclaim. 'I must be the next one and be that way,' they say. That's a crazy idea which I don't see. Young boys' blood boils like that.

I proceeded to visit Mr. Kunitani and found him very distressed over the situation:

In the minds of the people of the center it has been the general impression that by going to Santa Fe they'll be recognized as aliens and they feel that their renunciation



of citizenship is granted. Whereas, if you are a gentleman enough to be peaceful and quiet, renunciation will not materialize ... Suppose you did renounce your citizenship and the Japanese government was not informed, how would you become a Japanese national? Suppose one doesn't have Japanese citizenship? Where would he be? ...The Japanese government might not accept him.

A lot of simple minded people think that being sent to Santa Fe is a glory for them. There should be some way you could disqualify this statement.

I wish Justice would keep in mind that there will be a lot of people who haven't renounced it as yet because of uncertainty and doubts. As soon as a clear-cut policy is presented before the people I would consider seriously about my own renunciation. Don't think for a minute that I won't go back to Japan. But even there I will run into a lot of difficulties. I am radical in my thoughts. I was a most ardent New Dealer until 1933..

Sociologically speaking, I wonder if the people have not been tortured in their minds for so long - all they can think of is what's happening right in front of their eyes, and they aren't looking forward to the future at all. None of them think that the war might end and then what position would they be in?

On February 16, my secretary, who expatriated and whose father was a member of the Hōshi-dan, told me that the prevailing rumor was not that you had to join the Hōkoku to get your renunciation of citizenship, but that if you joined, your renunciation was guaranteed.



You are safe if you join.

I've heard and know of several people who wanted to join and begged the organization to include their sons as members. In the cases where the parents were in the Resegregation Group, their sons were accepted into the Hōshi-dan.

✓ On February 16 I noted that the Hōkoku drilled before dawn with a "great noise of bugles". "A group of about 65 young men also drilled arrogantly in the firebreak this afternoon."

On February 28, a young Nisei girl visited me in my room and talked anxiously to me the entire afternoon.

I know boys who are having their heads shaved just to go to their hearings. To make a good impression, they shave off their heads. I don't understand them.

I heard about another fellow who applied to work in Mess Operations. Mr. Hayward held up his hat and when he saw he had long hair he said, 'OK, you're a good boy.'

Why doesn't the Administration make some definite statement? Who is in charge here anyway, WRA, the Department of Justice, or the Army, or what? Somebody ought to take more interest.

I know some poor kids, their parents made them shave their heads. But they still roll up their jeans to show their argyle socks. A lot of kids say that when they're 18 they'll have to join (the Hōkoku) due to their parents' pressure and the draft.



The women in the Jōshi are sure carrying on. They drill now and wear trousers like the women wear in the fields in Japan....

In our block a young kid was taken in the first bunch. In the second bunch, his older brother went. The old folks in our block went to sympathize. But the mother said, 'I'm proud of this. At last they've become Japanese - Nippon Seishin (Japanese Spirit).' We didn't know what to say .....

A young boy, the baby of the family was sent away. He sent his mother a note concealed in a rice cake, saying, 'I'm terribly lonely, mother.' Naturally, he wouldn't admit anything like that to his family before he was sent away. But he sent it to his mother.

On February 28, Mr. Kurihara told me:

Many Issei and families are forcing their sons to join the Hōkoku-dan merely to escape the draft. I told them, when they get back to Japan they will use some means to keep their sons out of the Japanese Army. They were very surprised to hear me say that.

On March 3, Mr. Itabashi told me:

Why the Hōkoku-dan got power was because when they started requesting for resegregation. They said that the WRA hinted that they would co-operate with the Hōkoku. That's what the Hōkoku people said. They claimed they had an understanding with WRA and even Secretary of the Interior Ickes. That's why even intelligent people were fooled.



On March 4, the Department of Justice interned 125 young men.

On March 9, I had a long conversation with two Nisei girls which moved me deeply. That evening, when I typed my notes, I opened them with the following statement:

Spent the entire afternoon gossiping with two Nisei girls, Mary Fuji and her friend. While the talk has little to do with current politics at Tule Lake, it taught me a lot and caused me to be pretty ashamed of myself. These poor kids, both of them Old Tuleans, are tied down here through segregation, don't want to go to Japan, want to go out to school most grievously, and are tied hand and foot by the fact that if they do go, they can't even come back to visit their parents and may never see them again. We discussed prejudice in this country and they asked my advice on how to meet prejudice, saying many times that it was the little things that one cannot protest legally that hurt the most. Knowing that they may be stuck in Tule Lake if the authorities decide to swing one way I advised them to relocate together and go to a nursing school if they really wanted to live in this country. They told me that they had been trying to do that for three years.

We'd be RN's by now, if we'd gone at the beginning, said Mary. But they wouldn't let us come back and work here at the hospital even at 19 dollars a month. Think of all the money they'd save!



(I sympathized about the difficulty of leaving ones parents, saying that I had had the same problem.)

'But did your mother cry and plead with you to stay?' asked Mary's friend.

'It isn't only that,' said Mary, 'We'll be all right if we go out, but think how our families will suffer.'

'Will they (other segregants) really hold it against your family if you go out?' I asked.

'You bet they will,' she assured me. 'If only this hadn't been made a segregation center.'

We discussed prejudice all over the world and they decided that there were no good bets except Soviet Russia and perhaps Brazil. Neither country appealed, so they decided to stay here and face out the matter.

Both girls, like many persons in camp, were impressed with the recent terrorization of Nisei at San Jose. Mary told the story of another Japanese group near Stockton who were living on the Fair Ground and the men had to go to work with a military guard to protect them.

If this were a relocation center and open, lots of people would go out and come back if they could. We were all set for going out ourselves, but after Military Registration and Segregation our parents wouldn't hear of it. They wouldn't listen to us about going out.



At the end of my writeup I commented: "This talk hit me<sup>8</sup> harder than this writeup shows. You might extend my personal apologies to any Nisei who happens to be about." I added that I was becoming very depressed and that it was "about time I finished up the job."

On 16 March the WRA belatedly announced that all resegregationist activities were unlawful and punishable by imprisonment. But none of these repressive measures stopped the flood of renunciations. In all, 70 percent of those eligible renounced their citizenship.<sup>9</sup>

1. The Spoilage, p.

My Japanese American friends continued to express their anxiety ~~anxiety~~ and insecurity, ~~continued~~. On March ~~XX~~ 17, two Nisei girls called on me and asked ~~of xxxxxxxx~~ if I knew what was going to happen to the people who were not interned. "Some of the people are just ~~worried~~ worried to ~~death~~ death," said one. They also wanted to know<sup>W</sup> what would happen to people who had not renounced their citizenship.

9 On March 18, a young man, ~~xxxxxx~~ who had been born in Hawaii, told me: "I really don't know whether the Japanese government will accept me or not. I'm just like a man without a country. . . Do you want me to ~~xxx~~ talk like a Japanese, like a Nisei or like an American? . . Since I've been interned there are three ways of thinking: sometimes I'm Japanese, sometimes, I'm Nisei, sometimes I'm an American and sometimes I think like a Jew without a country. . . I don't know what status I belong to. If the government recognizes me as a ~~xxx~~ citizen of America, then I'll make a statement as a citizen of America. But if I'm Japanese, I'll speak as a Japanese. But I'm still going to keep on fighting for my rights!"

This young man then told me that ~~xxxxxx~~ he had been studying Buddhism and other ~~religions~~ religions in camp. He then asked me to arrange a correspondence



course in English for him, which I did.



On April 16, Dillon Myer, the National Director of WRA, visited Tule Lake/. He delivered a long address to the administrative staff, ~~urging the staff to do all in their power to further the relocation of the Japanese American block managers~~ explaining why he ~~wished~~ wished to close all the centers by the end of ~~1945~~ the year and urging the staff members to do ~~in~~ all in their power to further the relocation. He also ~~spoke to the block managers~~ addressed a meeting of the block managers//, although Japanese Americans who were present told me that his speech was not translated and the some of the block managers did not understand what he was saying.

On April 26, I received a letter from Sally Wakida,~~xmXfxxpxxhxixioxxin~~  
~~xamxmhmomomemencacmqicabmonmadayncmThempandoh barucheanumquithemcmannemedcas~~  
~~kxnhykfxnMyerxxaxmhman~~ telling me that the people were "quite concered  
as to why Mr. Myer was ~~xxxx~~ here." She ~~xxx~~ said that many people believed  
that 500 additional men would be interned and "the rest will all be forced  
to relocate.~~#~~ The people are murmuring now that the WRA has forgotten  
that they and not only the Hokoku are disloyal to the U. S. That they  
have also renounced citizenship. That they have also signed for repatriation.  
. . They all got the jitters. Gee Whiz, I wish somthing would happen and  
happen quick to make these people live not in fears and worries but in peace."

Mrs. Wakida lived in a very pro-Resegregationist block. When I spoke to other respondents about these rumors and ~~anxieties~~ anxieties, they assured me that "things were quieting down". On April 25, an older Nisei woman told me: "We heard a broadcast from Japan. It says that the people are to ~~xx~~ prepare for a twenty ~~years~~ years' war, So the people here say, 'That's the best part of your life.' The ~~xxx~~ broadcast also said that the chances of an exchange boat is going to be very small. As for us here - we're convinced - we feel that we couldn't do very much for our country if we did go back. We're not very important."

On April 30, Mr. Kunitani told me: "There is a lady in block 36 who has gone crazy. Three of her sons have been interned and she goes around telling



people not to blow the bugles. They have boys guarding her house now, so that she won't ~~grrr~~ go around saying thinga about the Hoshi-dan. The woman who committed suicide the other day was also connected with the Hoshi-dan."

On May 8, I asked Noriko Tsuruda, who lived in block 36 about the demented woman. She told me:

There was one case in this block of a woman whose three sons were taken. Their father died in Poston. He left the mother with four sons and four daughters, When the Hoshi-dan started, they all got pulled in. One boy is still here but he's only twelve years old.

This lady didn't like the idea of the Hoshi-dan business... . When her sons were taken (interned) she lost her mind. She went around saying, "What is this Hoshi-dan anyway?" Then she'd pound the table. She'd keep on repeating the names of the people who talked her sons into the Hokoku. She feels all the time that these men who came and argued and forced them are coming to see her. She ~~said~~ says, "He's here again. He's here again." And she keeps hitting on the table.

The Hoshi-dan ~~wouldn't~~ wouldn't let <sup>her</sup> ~~the~~ daughter take her mother to the hospital. . The Hoshi-dan people wouldn't even let us go ~~near~~ near there. The next door lady wanted to go and help, but they wouldn't let her go into the house.

So the lady's family went to a Nichiren reverend. ~~Whammayama~~ The prayers of the Nichiren reverend seem to have a mysterious effect in that kind of illness. He came over every night for weeks. He said, "From tomorrow night she'll really quiet down." All through the prayers, they say, she was just as quiet as can be. But as soon as he was gone she was at it again.

But from the third night on, she really did begin to quiet down. She's really well now. She was really grieving over her sons.

The Hoshi-dan people told us not to write to the boys about ~~this~~ their mother. So we don't say anything.



Since I was obliged to leave Tule Lake in May of 1945,<sup>1</sup> I have no statements or reports after that date.<sup>2</sup> But in ~~xx~~ 1981 and 1982 some respondents spoke of ~~xxx~~ their experiences in the fall and winter of 1945 and a few described their attempts to regain American citizenship. I will therefore include here an account of ~~xxx~~ this period as it has been described by Michi Weglyn in Years of Infamy and by Jacobus ten Broek et al. in Prejudice, War and the Constitution.

The following quotation is from ~~tenbroek~~ *ten Broek*.



~~ATTEMPTS TO REGAIN AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP~~

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During the summer of 1945 many approved renunciants wrote to the Department of Justice and asked for permission to withdraw their renunciations; some also asked to leave Tule Lake. (The department sent form letters to all such persons explaining that it was not within the power of the Attorney General to restore citizenship once lost through the procedure followed). The number of applications for cancellation of renunciation increased sharply in the fall.

Although many were seeking to cancel their renunciation, the Department of Justice was moving to send them all to Japan. On July 14, 1945, under the authority of the Alien Enemy Act of 1798, President Truman issued Proclamation 2655 which provided that all interned alien enemies deemed by the Attorney General to be dangerous to peace and safety "because they have adhered to afore-said enemy governments or to the principles of their government shall be subject ... to removal from the United States." Regulations governing their deportation were published by the Department of Justice on September 26, 1945. On October 8 the department began the registration of the renunciants, who were fingerprinted and photographed. They were informed that they were now classed as "native American aliens." On October 10 the department announced that on and after November 15 "all persons whose applications to renounce citizenship have been approved by the Attorney General of the United

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States, will be repatriated to Japan, together with members of their families, whether citizens or aliens, who desire to accompany them."

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The renunciants were startled by the announcement of their imminent removal to Japan, and many who did not wish to be sent there took action to prevent it. A group who had been in contact with Wayne Collins, a San Francisco attorney and a representative of the American Civil Liberties Union, formed a small committee which began to raise funds to finance court action. On November 5, Collins entered two suits in federal courts asking that certain named renunciant plaintiffs be set at liberty, that the deportation orders be cancelled, that the applications for renunciations be declared void, and the plaintiffs declared to be nationals of the United States, At the time of filing these suits there were 987 plaintiffs. Many more were added during the following weeks and the number rose to 4,322. The litigation thus initiated lasted many years.

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On December 10, 1945, Department of Justice officials at Tule Lake announced that deportation, or so-called "mitigation," hearings (similar to those held in all cases of deportation of aliens to discover whether undue hardship would be occasioned by the move), would be held for all renunciants who did not wish to go to Japan, as well as for aliens who had been interned and who were now at Tule Lake under special-segregation or parole



orders. Aliens or renunciants who did not ask for a hearing, those who expressed a desire to be sent to Japan, and those aliens and citizens removed from Tule Lake during the winter of 1944-45, would not be given hearings and would be sent to Japan.

In the fall of 1945 a movement from Tule Lake began. With the cessation of hostilities with Japan, the WDC released all those it had been holding. After the Department of Justice took over on October 10 only renunciants and "segregated parolees" were detained, and resettlement of the eligible was speeded. The population of the center dropped from 17,341 on August 1, 1945, to 7,269 on January 1, 1946. On January 31, 1946, the center held 5,045 persons, consisting of only detainees and their families.

In January, 1946, there were approximately 3,200 renunciants at Tule Lake and a small number in the Department of Justice internment camps. After the announcements of the mitigation hearings, 3,161 at Tule Lake and 25 in the internment centers applied for a hearing; 107 at Tule Lake did not do so.

The mitigation hearings were held at Tule Lake and at the internments camps at Ft. Lincoln, North Dakota, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, between January 7 and April 1, 1946. Fifteen hearing officers, secretaries, and translators arrived at Tule Lake on New Year's Day with Rothstein in charge. At the hearing the applicant could present



ST Renunciants  
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evidence and witnesses in his behalf but was denied the right to counsel. On February 12, 1946, when 1,800 hearings had been completed at Tule Lake, the Department announced the names of 406 renunciants who had received unfavorable recommendations and against whom deportation orders were to be issued. The remainder of the applicants were unconditionally free. The 406 and their 43 family members were removed to camps at Crystal City, Texas, and Seabrook Farms, Bridgeton, New Jersey. Removal orders were issued "only where a renunciant was a dual national prior to his renunciation....A number of removal orders had to be <sup>✓</sup>re~~vo~~ked upon the discovery that renunciants were not Japanese citizens under the law of Japan."

The second group of individuals held at Tule Lake, the segregated parolees from Department of Justice centers, were also given hearings. In January, 1946, a special alien board, composed of the Dean of the Law School of the University of California, Edwin BeWitt Dickinson, and two attorneys, was set up by the Department of Justice to hold hearings for the 47' segregated parolees at Tule Lake. After hearings and review of the board's recommendations by the Attorney General, all of the groups were released unconditionally on March 18, 1946, and informed that they could remain in the United States; two preferred Japan. On March 20, 1946, the last inmate of Tule Lake departed.



By July, 4,724 persons had left for Japan from Tule Lake and other centers. By September 27, 1948, there were 1,444 renunciants who had not applied for hearings and had left for Japan, and 1,480 were residing there on April 26, 1949. Those leaving from Tule Lake or other WRA centers and the internment camps of the Department of Justice, were joined by over three thousand who had relocated or had been outside of the evacuation areas. "All in all, some eight thousand persons of Japanese descent left for Japan between V-J Day and mid-1946."

*Imp.*

Legal attempts to recover citizenship.-- The renunciants sought the restoration of their American citizenship and freedom from the threat of deportation in the courts. Two suits were entered in the federal district court for northern California on November 5, 1945--a petition for a writ of habeas corpus, Abo v. Williams, to free the petitioners from the deportation orders of the Department of Justice and to set them at liberty, and



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a plea in ~~equity~~ <sup>equity</sup>, Abo v. Clark, that the renunciation applications be declared void and the plaintiffs be declared nationals of the United States. The briefs for the plaintiffs in the two suits made the same claim: that the signing of the renunciation applications was the result of duress and coercion and was not a free and voluntary act.

The renunciants won the first round in both suits in the district court. In the habeas corpus action Judge A. S. St. Sure issued a temporary injunction against the deportation in late 1945 and the case was heard during 1946. On June 20, 1947, Judge Louis E. Goodman (the two cases having been transferred to him when Judge St. Sure became ill) granted the application for a writ of habeas corpus, holding that the plaintiffs were not alien enemies and hence could not be detained for deportation from the country. On August 11, 1947, he issued the writ commanding the district director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to release the plaintiffs from custody. Advised that the Department of Justice was intending to appeal the decision, on September 8, 1947 Judge Goodman placed all the renunciants held by the Department of Justice, including the 138 who were plaintiffs in the habeas corpus proceedings as well as the 164 who were not, in the custody of Wayne Collins, their attorney. The government agreed to bear the cost of



transporting the group from the internment camps in New Jersey and Texas to their former homes in California. The appeal from the district-court decision was finally filed by the government on February 28, 1949; the time for the filing was extended several times by the court at the request of the department.

Hearings on the suit in equity, Abo v. Clark, began in 1946. More than four thousand plaintiffs petitioned to be declared nationals of the United States and their renunciations set aside. In support of its contention that the renunciations were the free expressions of the renunciants, the government submitted among other items a lengthy affidavit by Burling describing his visit to Tule Lake in 1945-1946 and the conduct of the renunciation hearings. Four shorter affidavits by the other hearing officers were also introduced. On April 29, 1948, Judge Goodman issued an opinion cancelling the renunciations and declaring the plaintiffs to be United States citizens. However, admitting that it might be possible for the government to present evidence that some of the plaintiffs did act freely and voluntarily despite the weight of evidence that they did not, Judge Goodman gave the government ninety days in which to "file a designation of any of the plaintiffs concerning whom they desire to present further evidence."



After many extensions of time granted by the court, the Department of Justice, on February 25, 1949, filed a "Designation of Plaintiffs" which stated that the evidence which would be introduced "against each such designated plaintiff proves or tends to prove that each...renounced United States nationality and citizenship of his or her own free will, choice, desire and agency, and shows that such renunciation was not caused by duress, menace, coercion, and intimidation, fraud and undue influence." This evidence consisted in showing that of every one of the 4,322 plaintiffs one or more of the following statements was true: that he or she was a Kibei; had been a leader of a pro-Japanese organization at Tule Lake; had applied for repatriation or expatriation either before or after renunciation; had been segregated at Tule Lake because of a negative answer to question 28 or because of a denial by the WRA of leave clearance; had gone to Tule Lake Center voluntarily to be with his or her family; was now in Japan; was under alien-enemy removal orders. The court rejected the "Designation" on March 23, 1949. Judge Goodman found that it did not present evidence overcoming the presumption that the renunciations were the result of coercion and pressure. On April 12, 1949, he issued his opinion stating that the renunciations were void as they were the product of such influences. The government appealed.



On July 6, 1949, while the habeas corpus and equity actions were before the courts, a suit was entered by Andrew L. Wirin, a Los Angeles attorney, in behalf of three renunciants, Murakami, Sumi, and Shimizu, who had been refused passports by the State Department on the grounds that by virtue of their renunciations at Tule Lake they were no longer American citizens. On August 27, 1949, Judge William C. Mathes rendered a decision for the plaintiffs. The government appealed but lost. Judge William Denman of the court of appeals held that the findings of the lower court that the renunciations were the product of oppressive conditions at Tule Lake was fully supported by the evidence and that further findings by his court gave additional support to the judgment. Many of these points were documented by references to Thomas and Nishimoto's Spoilage, which had also been introduced as documentary evidence in Abo v. Clark. The government decided not to contest the decision and not to oppose suits by renunciants to affirm their citizenship unless its files "disclose evidence of loyalty to Japan or disloyalty to the United States."

However, the plaintiff Japanese lost both their habeas corpus and equity suits in the court of appeals. The judgments of the district courts were reversed and the cases sent back for further proceedings. In the habeas corpus suit, Barber v. Abo, the decision that the



renunciations were void was denied except for minors who were held to be legally incapable of renouncing. However, the threat of removal to Japan was dissipated when the Department of Justice cancelled the removal orders. On April 20, 1952, Acting Attorney General Philip B. Perlman cancelled the outstanding orders against the 302 renunciants in the Department of Justice camps. On May 6, 1952, Wayne Collins petitioned for a dismissal of the suit in the district court on the ground that the cancellation rendered the issues moot, and the motion was granted that day by Judge Goodman.

The renouncing Japanese no longer needed to fear deportation to Japan. However, their American citizenship was not affirmed, for the decision in the appeals court in the equity case also went against them. Judge Denman ruled that the renunciations were valid for all adult plaintiffs other than the fifty-eight who went to Tule Lake to be with family members and that in future proceedings they would have to demonstrate individually that they had been coerced into renouncing. The Supreme Court denied a writ of certiorari on October 8, 1951. Since the return of the case to the district court no action has yet (1954) been taken by the plaintiffs and their cases have yet to be heard. They remain "native American aliens."<sup>23</sup>

The following account is from Years of Infamy by Michi Weglyn:



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May 20, 1959. Fourteen years after the inception of the mass suits, much fanfare and publicity attended an unusual public ceremony in the office of Attorney General William P. Rogers. Assembled newmen and invited dignitaries were informed that the administrative review of the renunciatinn cases had been completed. Attorney General Rogers then made public the restoration of "precious rights of citizenship" to 4,978 Nisei, declaring: "Our country did make a mistake. We have publicly recognized it and as a free nation publicly make restoration."

Edward J. Ennis, one of the guests of honor and then general counsel to the natinnal office of the American Civil Liberties Union (Chairman of the ACLU in 1969), stated in an address: "I think the Department of Justice has responded magnificently to the problems presented by taking practically all the 'divorced' citizens back into the family of our American country."

"I would like to believe that our liberal policy of citizenship restitution has conformed to the hope and promise of sound American ideals," responded Assistant Attorney General George C. Doub, who further expressed the hope that the Nisei would "have the charity to forgive their Government." Doub added:



It is a remarkable tribute to the fortitude of the Nisei that comparatively few surrendered their American citizenship under the prevailing hysteria conditions in the WRA camps. They were indeed so loyal that from them came the soldiers of the 442nd battalion whose casualty notices were delivered to parents behind the barbed wires of the camps.

Media reaction throughout the nation was eulogistic. The Christian Science Monitor of May 22, 1959, announced editorially that "the federal Justice Department deserve(s) gratitude from Americans for painstakingly righting a grave injustice ...." The Washington Post and Times Herald of May 28, 1959, followed with lavish praise:

Today all the Nisei who suffered in this wave of hysteria have been generously compensated for their property losses and all of the renunciants against whom no other evidence of willful disloyalty could be found have now been restored to full civil status. The great credit for the completion of this program of restitution belongs to Assistant Attorney General George Cochran Doub, who heads the Civil Division of the Department of Justice.

Mr. Doub's energy in pursuing the settlement of the Nisei claims proves . . . that although we have shown ourselves "as a Nation capable of wrongs," we have also shown ourselves capable "of confessing and of seeking to expiate them." Or



as a celebrated historian, describing a somewhat similar change of heart and reversal of judgment by the citizens of another democracy, put it: "The morrow brought repentance with it and reflection on the horrid cruelty of a decree which had condemned all to the fate merited only by a few."<sup>15</sup>

Probably the only person outraged by the whole proceeding was the fiery San Francisco attorney, for with all the self-congratulatory platitudes and rhetoric of expiation, this was no blanket amnesty, as had been demanded by him for over a decade as rightly due a group of citizens who had been abandoned so utterly. Seventeen years after they had been driven into peonage--some into insanity--and defrauded of their rights, mercy was still begrudgingly withheld from 350 renunciants. "We will vigorously defend our adverse determination of these comparatively few cases in the courts..."<sup>16</sup> the Assistant Attorney General had thrown out the challenge, as though to Collins personally.

By this time, 2,031 renunciants had gone to Japan. Of the 3,735 who remained in the United States, all but eighty-four had regained their citizenship.

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1. Washington Post and Times Herald, May 28, 1959.
  2. Pacific Citizen, May 22, 1959.



The discredited ex-Americans again turned to Collins in their lonely Armageddon, although a number of them abandoned their fight; some decided to remain in Japan; a few passed away. Collins: "The maintenance of the stigma of wrongdoing was consistent with Justice's obsession with face-saving. Having inflicted the gravest type of injury upon these blameless people, then criminally soliciting and taking renunciations from tormented persons, the Justice Department sought to whitewash its own reputation by persisting in blackening those of young Americans who had courage enough to stand up and fight for their rights--Americans who would not brook insults forever. Practically all the young men denied their citizenship rights were Kibei. Their mistreatment is unprecedented in American history."

Contrary to the pronouncement of the Justice Department to all assembled that "this ceremony today concludes a colorful chapter of American history," the issue of citizenship restoration dragged on into the late sixties. And as aptly underscored by authors Girdner and Loftis in The Great Betrayal: "Wayne Collins was the agent for democracy in correcting this most diast<sup>s</sup>rous of all<sub>^</sub> evacuation mistakes." Not the Justice Department.



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28. Life and Hopes Before The Evacuation.

At the beginning of the interview I asked my respondents questions like, "Would you like to tell me anything about your life before the evacuation?" or, "First, I'd like to know a little bit about your life before Pearl Harbor?" Responses to this question varied in content and in length.

Boys and Men

Thomas Kikuchi, (11) wrote:

Born August 13, 1930, at Newcastle, California, a small farming community north of Sacramento, California. My parents were fruit farmers, raising peaches, prunes and grapes. I went to school before evacuation; working after school picking tomatoes and working in the orchards in the summer time. I would say life was hard during my early years, but as the boys in the family grew, we were able to purchase a gas stove, refrigerator, washing machines -- things people take for granted now, but then it was for our family luxuries. My family expected me to go to college, and there was no doubt in my mind that I would. At the risk of sounding conceited, I was a good student.



His brother, Arthur, age 15, told me:

We were living in a place called \_\_\_\_\_ and it's about 30 miles from Sacramento, and our family was, of course, in farming. When the war came we had just started to do quite well economically; the reason being that the times had changed for the better and we had gotten off of leasing and share-cropping, and we were doing quite well. Between four to six people were working from our family. Up until that time farm life was a very rugged life... and finally, washing machine, and refrigerator started to come in and things were looking really great.

At that time, age 15, I was in high school, a freshman. I was the first male in the family to be able to go through high school. My older brothers, unfortunately, because of economics, had to stop after the 8th grade. They continued to support us and I think that was a real deprivation for them to sacrifice.

Joseph Takeshita, age 15, was born in San Francisco. In 1926, when he was 2 years old he and two older brothers were sent to Japan "for their formal education." In Japan, they lived with their maternal grandparents. In 1931, when Joseph was 7, the brothers returned to the United States.



I started Emerson Grammar School. From Emerson, which is primarily upper-lower class, we moved to an upper-upper district of Pacific Heights, which meant that I was with all the children of the upper-upper income group. All of my class, other than two other boys, went on to Lowell High School. Lowell High School, you may or may not know, is the public school that's college preparatory and it's still considered college preparatory to 1982... As a matter of fact, I went to Lowell High School in a chauffeured limousine belonged to Art's (a classmate) grandmother..

That was real upper class and again, if I may be tangential here, the car never came to my door. I had to go two blocks away.. They could not send their chauffeured car to pick up a son of a ... you see, my parents were domestic servants.. But Art said, "Joseph, if you come to Presidio and Jackson, we will pick you up." Art and I in our own ways were very close. But not in the social circles.

Robert Oda, age 9, told me:

I lived near Sacramento in a rural area and was still in high school at that time. My parents were both Japanese language school teachers. I was



a junior in high school at the time of Pearl Harbor and I was very much interested in aeronautical engineering.

John Sawada, age 20, was also the son of a farmer living near Sacramento. He told me:

I was going to first year in college.. All my high school was my commercial studies. That is to say, bookkeeping, accounting, and this line. I loved accounting so much that I planned to go into higher accounting jobs, CPA, and this and that. This was my goal.

Ben Kodama, age 24, was born in Hawaii. When he was 3 years old, his father, who was a veteran of World War I, took him to Japan and he finished high school there. When he was 18, he returned to San Francisco where he attended junior high and high school.

After that, we didn't have any job, so I went to Sacramento, and, you know, farmer work. And I come back and go to barber school. And then I finished barber school here. And then I was barber.

I was drafted in 1941, so I say, "Why, I'm going to volunteer." So I volunteered, and at that time the Japanese community - they give us a medal for that, you know. (laughs)... And then I went before the war to Monterey.. First of all we went



into Presidio, Monterey for about a couple of months. And then we went into Fort Ord.. Then, I had the education in Japan so they discharged me - honorable discharge. Actually, I was in the Army for one year... It's really sad, but it's pretty hard to express.

Robert Kurusu, age 27, was born in Sacramento. His mother died when he was six years old and his father returned with him to Japan. In 1932, when he was 18, he returned alone to the United States, graduated from the Pasadena Junior College and spent one year at California Institute of Technology, studying engineering. "Though of course I'm troubling because of language problems.. I had hard time... I was supposed to go into the Army in 1942... One week prior to my induction, I got notice of "cancellation for your induction." So I had no choice."

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Peter Morimoto, age 34, was born in Japan and "finished grammar school, high school and college in Japan. "I came from Japan as an exchange student, and I studied in Colorado and I went to NYU. And then, in 1933-1940 I was teaching a Sakura Gakuen (Middle School) in Sacramento:



When I asked June Iwohara, age 16, about her life before the evacuation, she responded: "I was born and raised in Tacoma, Washington. I lived a very happy life there. I remember Tacoma very fondly and I was there until the war started. I remember 9th grade in Stadium High School."

RW: Did you have any plans for the future or were you just sort of enjoying yourself?

JI: I was just having a good time.. My father had a grocery store.

When I asked Jennifer Hara, age 15, about her life before the war, she responded. "It was normal and I was a student, a junior in high school."

RH: What kind of life did you hope to have?

JH: To get an education, a good job, get married and have a family.

Joyce Kunitani, age 19, responded to my first question by saying, "Oh, my goodness! I was just a schoolgirl."

RW: What grade were you in?

JK: Oh, I was out. I had just gone to Sacramento Junior College, but I had dropped out.

RW: What kind of life did you hope to have?

JK: (disparagingly) Ahh! What I did was apply for a Navy nursing job, but they wouldn't let me in...



go first. I had a brother right behind me. So she wanted me to work for about a year and help enter him in college, which I was happy to do.

Mary Iida, age 21, was the only woman respondent who gave me a detailed account of her life before the evacuation. "I was born and raised in Stockton, California. I went to school there. And then, prior to the evacuation I was working at a theater, selling tickets. Box office."

RW: And how did your parents earn their living?

MI: Oh my father used to be.. well, my mother just.. There were so many of us. She was just a plain housewife.

RW: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

MI: Eight. And I'm the oldest of eight. Back in those days when nothing was automatic or electric, we used to do everything by hand. So I would always be the one to help. My parents are from the old country where being the oldest I had to set the example for the youngsters. So I always had to be good, do well in school and everything else.

And because of the language difficulty, we went to the American school in the daytime and right after that, we had to go to private Japanese school. I went twelve years of that.



Right after American High School we had to hurry home.. We take the bus and go home and then, right away, turn right around and go to Japanese school. It started about 5:00.

RW: How long would it last?

MI: I'm not sure now because we had to take our turns and clean the blackboard and the floor.. The classes were fairly large, about 30 to a class. So when we got home it was 6:00 or 6:30...

Because of the private school I went to, I do read, write, in Japanese. I have been able to retain what I learned.. Read, write, speak.

Yuriko Kurusu, 27 years old, was born in Japan. Her parents came to the United States when she was a small child. After attending High School in the United States she returned to Japan. She did not tell me how or why she then returned to the United States. I met Mrs. Kurusu and her husband at the Gila Center and continued to call on them at Tule Lake. At these visits she rarely expressed her views. In 1981 she was still very reticent.

RW: Can you tell me a little about your life before Pearl Harbor? How would you describe your life?

IK: Pleasant.



RW: Were you in school?

YK: No, I was out.

RW: Oh, what were you teaching?

YK: Music. (At Tule Lake I once called on the Kurusus and found her teaching a little girl how to play the Japanese harp.)

RW: What kind of life did you hope to have?

YK: Oh, I don't think I ever even thought of that.