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Children in the Relocation Centers

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## CHILDREN IN THE RELOCATION CENTERS

In the spring of 1942, following the Japanese attack on the U. S. fleet at Pearl Harbor, some 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were taken from their homes on the West Coast and incarcerated by order of the U. S. government. None had committed any acts of treason or espionage and, indeed, there was no evidence that any of them contemplated such activities. They had, however, been the object of venomous propaganda from politicians, political organizations and newspaper columnists.<sup>1</sup>

About 70 per cent of these people had been born and educated in the United States and were either actual or potential American citizens. They were known as Nisei, that is, second generation immigrants.<sup>2</sup> About 30 percent had been born in Japan, and by the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1942 they had been denied the right to apply for American citizenship. They were known as Issei, that is, first generation.

For the Issei, the precipitous incarceration had resulted in an enormous economic loss. Most of them were obliged either to sell their property at distress prices or to give it away. Unable to liquidate their interest or properties, business men lost virtually everything.

Early in 1942 a group of social scientists at the University of California at Berkeley received a grant to study, record, and analyze the changes in behavior and attitudes and the patterns of social adjustment and interaction of the people to whom these policies and regulations were applied. In June of 1943 I became one of the research assistants employed in this study. My task was to live in the camps, talk with and interview these people, and record what they said. I remained in the centers (or camps) until May of 1945. Then, years later, in 1980 several colleagues



urged me to interview some of the Japanese I had known in the centers. I was able to obtain extensive interviews from 27 persons, most of whom had been in their teens or early twenties at the time of the evacuation. Four had been children.

Most of the evacuees were at first confined in Assembly Centers, that is, hastily converted race tracks, athletic stadiums, and fairgrounds. Guarded by military police, these centers were crowded, uncomfortable and often unsanitary. But most distressing to the evacuees was the insecurity of not knowing what would happen next. "There was despair, hope, apathy, and intense speculation, but no one knew what was in store."<sup>3</sup> A young woman, then 16, said that one of her girl friends had a nervous breakdown. Since there were no medical facilities available "they tied her down to a mess hall table and I heard her screaming all through the night...We were crowded together like flies. I remember thinking 'I can't stand it'."<sup>4</sup>

In the summer and fall of 1942 the Japanese Americans were moved from the Assembly Centers to ten large Relocation Centers located in isolated areas of California, Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. Each center housed from 10,000 to 16,000 people in tar-paper covered wooden barracks 100 feet long, grouped into what were called blocks. Each block was composed of two rows of six or seven barracks each, between which were a mess hall, a laundry room, latrine and lavatory buildings. The centers were placed under the jurisdiction of a civilian body, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), and each center was headed by a Project Director, assisted by 100 to 150 staff members who supervised community activities, the hospitals and schools, recreation, various work corps and internal security (the police). Evacuees were employed in these activities at salaries ranging from \$12 to \$19 a month. A unit of Military Police was assigned to every center.



Living conditions in these centers were far from comfortable. Depending on their number, families were housed in apartments of either 16 by 20 or 20 by 25 feet. The only furnishings provided were a stove, cots, mattresses and blankets. There was no privacy. Even the block latrines had no partitions between the toilet seats.<sup>5</sup> In 1981 a woman told me that for four years she and her mother had slept on one side of their little room while her father and brother slept on the other. Her parents did not think it proper for the girl and her brother to sleep together.

In these hot and dusty centers, both the evacuees and the WRA staff began their lives with a sense of desolation in the midst of isolation. Many of the barracks had not been finished. As Spicer says, "Everything remained yet to do to make the places habitable."<sup>6</sup>

At this time there were less than a hundred WRA employees in each center to administer and care for the needs of 5,000 to 10,000 evacuees. The administrators thereupon asked for and obtained the advice and assistance of some of the evacuees. Within a few months a considerable order was achieved. Block managers were appointed or chosen, mess halls established, and stores for toilet articles and other necessities were set up. School buildings were constructed and teachers recruited. Recreation programs were planned and men and women were found who could instruct in baseball, dramatics and many other activities.

But though life in the centers had become endurable, it was by no means serene. Some evacuees developed a hostility toward the Japanese Americans who were serving as block managers or working in the administrative offices, calling them rude, incompetent, or even stool-pigeons.<sup>7</sup> The quality of the food was a constant source of complaint. Many farm workers "resented being held responsible for the success of a farm which was not their own and being pressed by Caucasians



to speedup their work for a wage of \$16.00 a month."<sup>8</sup>

After Pearl Harbor many of the Japanese American children had been snubbed and avoided by their classmates. Some were told by their principal "not to come to school because they were Japanese." The feeling of rejection and unfair stigmatization continued in the centers. As Edward Spicer reports:

As the uprooted people came into the centers they suddenly found themselves in communities organized on the basis of two distinct classes of persons -- on the one hand "evacuees" and on the other "appointed personnel". Despite individual efforts of the WRA staff to act as if the distinction did not exist, the basic fact was inescapable...The feeling of being prisoners permeated the centers from the first...Being an evacuee involved being in a subordinate position. At some centers the commanders of the military police announced that "there was to be no fraternization with evacuees." Some project directors also let it be known among the staff that they did not encourage personal relations with the evacuees.<sup>9</sup>

A few staff members managed to bypass these regulations. In 1981-82 two men were asked what they remembered about the Relocation Centers. One, then 9, said: "I thought the school was real good. They had no facilities to speak of, but they were really dedicated. Quite a few were Quakers or Christians. This was really good, I think, because, at that time, when the popular thing to do was to hate the Japanese, these people committed themselves and helped us." The other, age 11, said: "The Christmas party of 1942 stands out in my memory. There was a party for the kids and I received a present donated by the people on the outside. Just when I thought everybody out there hated us, I get this present and it restored my



faith in mankind."<sup>10</sup>

But while the evacuees and the staff members were trying to work out some way of life in the isolation of the centers, the War Relocation Authority, bearing in mind what had happened to the federal government in the case of the American Indians, was trying to find ways and means by which they might safely be re-settled in areas other than the Pacific Coast. At the same time, the U. S. Army was engaged in developing a plan by which male citizens of Japanese ancestry might be drafted into the armed forces.

The Army program of "processing" citizens prior to enlistment was tied in with a hastily devised WRA program of "processing" the whole adult population prior to resettlement, and a joint agreement for the registration of all persons 17 years of age or older was reached....Two registration forms were prepared in Washington, one for male citizens of Japanese ancestry (17 years of age and over) with the seal "Selective Service System" at the top, and headed "Statement of United States Citizens of Japanese Ancestry", the other for female citizens and for Issei males and females. The latter form was headed "War Relocation Authority Application for Leave Clearance."<sup>11</sup>

The questionnaires were long and complicated, including some 30 questions. But the crucial questions were numbers 27 and 28. On the form for male citizens these read:

Question 27: Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?

Question 28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any or all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and



forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power or organization?

On the form for female citizens and Issei of both sexes they read:

Question 27: If the opportunity presents itself and you are found qualified, would you be willing to volunteer for the Army Nurse Corps or the Women's Army corps?

Question 28: Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and forswear any form of allegiance to the Japanese emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

Eighty-four percent of the total population and seventy-two percent of the male citizens answered these questions in the affirmative. In view of the unjust and disorienting experiences to which these people had been subjected, this is surprising. In those centers where the presentation of the questionnaire was carefully and intelligently handled, there were few non-affirmative responses. In those centers where the presentation was inept or confusing, there was much turmoil.

Some Nisei contended that the intent of the questionnaire was "to draft us from behind the barbed wire". Others argued that the only sensible policy was to express loyalty to the United States.

. . . At the Heart Mountain Center in Wyoming a group of protesting Nisei formed a Citizen's Congress to discuss the issue. . . The point of view was expressed by one speaker:

The minds of many of us are still shrouded in doubt and confusion as to the true motives of our Government when they invite our voluntary enlistment at the present time. It has not been explained why some American citizens who patriotically volunteered, at the beginning of the war, were



rejected by the Army. Furthermore, our government has permitted damaging propaganda to continue against us. Also she has failed to reinstate us in the eyes of the American public. We are placed on the spot and our course of action is in the balance scale of justice; for our Government's honest interpretation of our stand will mean absolute vindication and admission of the wrong committed. On the other hand, if interpreted otherwise by misrepresentations and misunderstandings, it will amount to renewed condemnation of this group.

Although we have yellow skin, we too are Americans. We have an American upbringing. Therefore we believe in fair play. Our firm conviction is that we would be useless Americans if we did not assert our constitutional rights now; for, unless our status as citizens is cleared and we are really fighting for the high ideals upon which our nation is based, how can we say to the white American buddies in the armed forces that we are fighting for the perpetuation of democracy, especially when our fathers, mothers, and families are in concentration camps, even though they are not charged with any crime?

We believe that our nation's good faith is to be found in whether it moves to restore full privileges at the earliest opportunity.

Such speeches were being made in nearly every center."<sup>12</sup>

The Issei had different resentments and different fears. For forty years they had been denied the right to apply for American citizenship. If they now renounced their allegiance to the emperor they would be people



without a country. Most of them had lost all their possessions. If they left the centers they would find themselves without resources in an outside world which, they had every reason to believe, would regard them with hostility. Their only remaining resource was their family and some argued and pleaded with their children until the latter answered the crucial questions in the negative. At the Tule Lake Center in northern California where many destitute farmers were confined, 49 percent of the male citizens and 42 percent of the Issei gave non-affirmative responses or refused to answer.<sup>13</sup>

In 1981-2, some of the most moving statement about the military questionnaire were made by teenagers who came to be stigmatized as "disloyal" because their parents or their elder brother had said "No-No". Their parents, they explained, could see no way that they could support a family in the hostile world outside the center. One young man, then age 15, told me, "I remember many a night when we discussed the possibility of relocating. But they would say, 'Where? With such a large family?' We had absolutely no resources." When these young people suggested that they relocate alone, their parents "would not even entertain the idea. They didn't want to split up the family."<sup>14</sup>

In May of 1943, Senator Albert B. Chandler, chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, publicly announced that 20 percent of the evacuees were disloyal to the United States and that these disloyal individuals should be separated from the loyal. Two weeks later, the War Relocation Authority announced plans for the "segregation." The Tule Lake Center was designated as the site of segregation.

I began my fieldwork at the Gila Center in July of 1943, a few months before the so-called "disloyals" were to be put on trains and sent to Tule Lake. During July and August I was able to talk to and make friends with a



number of the so-called disloyal Japanese Americans who were to be segregated at the Tule Lake Center in September. Many told me that they were not disloyal but that they had lost faith in America and felt they had no future in this country. On July 30, I talked to an Issei who had refused to answer the military questionnaire and was now struggling to make up his mind whether to become a segregant or not. We conversed for over an hour. Then he suddenly looked up at me, sat up straight and cried out bitterly:

If I go back to Japan, regardless of whether Japan wins or America wins, I can live free from such worry as being considered a dangerous alien. And once in my life I may have the right to cast a ballot as any human being should. But here, socially, politically, and economically, I'm shut out! No matter how hard it is to live in Japan, maybe it will be a better place for the freedom of the individual.<sup>15</sup>

At the Tule Lake Center many of the evacuees who had been classified as loyal were reluctant to leave. Eventually some 6,250 did leave but about 6,000 "remained at Tule Lake. Only 2,000 of these were in the categories of segregants defined by the WRA regulations. The other 4,000 were unauthorized; they had decided to remain at Tule Lake not because they had any particular sentiments of loyalty one way or the other but because they did not want to be pushed around, or they did not want to leave California, or because they did not want to be sent too far away from home, or because they just did not want to move again."<sup>16</sup>

Beginning on September 18, trainloads of segregants from other camps began to arrive at Tule Lake. They were dismayed at the sight of the "man-proof fence" - crowned with barbed wire and guarded by watchtowers and armed soldiers - with which the authorities thought it necessary to



surround the new segregation center, and by the impressive tanks which had been placed so that the segregants could see them. They were also dismayed at the quarters provided. Many of the vacant apartments (the single barrack rooms provided for families) were extremely dirty, and some had been stripped of wall board and stoves by the Old Tuleans. Some rooms, presumed to be vacant, were occupied by Old Tuleans who had moved into the vacated areas without administrative permission. The newcomers found almost all the facilities of their new home interior to those at the centers from which they had come; the food was poor, the latrines and laundry rooms dirty, even the weather was bad, and complaints were heard on all sides.

On October 12 a fire struck, speeding to answer an alarm, overturned, and three firemen were seriously injured. On October 15, a farm truck, carrying 29 workers, attempted to pass another truck, hit a soft shoulder, and overturned. All of the farm workers riding in the truck were cut and bruised. Six were seriously injured. A rumor quickly spread among the people that the driver of the truck was only 16 years old, and the WRA was blamed for negligence.<sup>17</sup>

On the next day, representatives of the farm crews met in a mess hall and agreed not to return to work unless safeguards were set up against further accidents and adequate compensation for the injured people was made. They presented their resolutions to the block managers who met the same day and decided to hold block meetings to elect representatives who would meet with the administration and resolve not only the farmers' complaints but "all important general problems pertaining to living conditions."<sup>18</sup> Block wide elections were held the same night and sixty-four representatives were chosen, one from each block. This elected body was called the Daihyo Sha Kai (Representative Body).



These activities were interrupted by the death of Mr. Kashima, one of the young men injured in the farm accident. Many people wished to honor him with a public funeral. "They felt that the people who got hurt represented the whole center. They wanted to give Kashima an honorable funeral because he represented all of us."<sup>19</sup> Several committees approached Mr. Best, asking for permission to hold a public funeral. Best refused. In defiance of his veto a public funeral was ceremonially conducted on a platform stage, customarily used for outdoor entertainment. The administration countered by turning off the power to the public address system, and the funeral service could not be heard.

On 26 October the project director met with the negotiating committee of the Daihyo Sha Kai, listened to their list of grievances, and promised to do what he could to relieve the situation. Meanwhile, he was recruiting additional farm laborers from among the evacuees in nearby relocation centers to harvest the valuable crop.

On November 1, Dillon Myer, the national director of WRA, visited the center. Seizing this opportunity to appeal directly to the highest authority, the negotiating committee engineered a mass demonstration, during which several thousand segregants surrounded the administrative buildings. Myer agreed to meet with the committee. The conference lasted for two and a half hours during which the great crowd of evacuees stood and waited. Myer, however made no significant concessions. When the meeting ended, he made a very brief speech to the people in which he asked them to cooperate with the administration in settling all problems. The people then left quietly.

Three nights later (4 November) a violent fight broke out between a group of young Japanese and a few Caucasian WRA employees who, the Japanese thought, were attempting to transport food from the project warehouses to



the strike breakers. According to the WRA report, the Project Director was a group of young men heading for his house shouting, "Get Best! Take Best!" Fearing that he was about to be attacked or kidnapped, he turned the administration of the camp over to the Army.<sup>18</sup>

These events took place late at night and most of the residents did not know that anything unusual had happened. The next morning, therefore, about a thousand of the Japanese began walking as usual to their work in the administrative section (for only the farm workers had stopped working at this time). In the area between the administrative and the evacuee sections, they encountered a cordon of soldiers who could only assume that these converging Orientals were the vanguard of another demonstration. The would-be workers were met with a barrage of tear gas, and bewildered and indignant, they fled to their quarters. The army then began to build a fence between the administrative area and the large section of the center where the segregants lived.

This unprovoked attack on the Japanese working staff greatly exacerbated the situation. Without Japanese workers - doctors, nurse's aides, typists, bookkeepers, warehouse men, police, garbage, coal and mess crews - the center could not function. Some means had to be found of getting at least some of the people back to work.

The Negotiating Committee of the Daihyo Sha Kai now faced the difficult task of negotiating with Lieutenant Colonel Austin, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army unit. They accomplished little because the Army was willing to allow only a small number of evacuees to return to work. Eventually it was decided to hold a mass meeting on November 13 at which reports would be made to the people by the Army, WRA, and the Negotiating Committee. But when the members of the Negotiating Committee presented this decision to the Daihyo Sha Kai there was much discontent. After a stormy session



lasting far into the night it was decided to cancel the proposed mass meeting. The next morning announcements to this effect were made in the mess halls. But no one, it seems, remembered or had the nerve to inform the Army or the WRA that there was to be no meeting. A few minutes before the appointed time, the colonel and a WRA field director entered the center with a strong escort of armored cars and jeeps. Thirty soldiers surrounded the open-air stage and fixed bayonets; other soldiers in military vehicles patrolled the nearby areas. But not one Japanese was to be seen. Thereupon the colonel delivered his address, announcing to the empty firebreak that the center was under complete military control, that a curfew would be enforced between the hours of 7 P. M. and 6 A. M., and that no ingoing or outgoing telephone or telegraph messages could be made without the approval of the military.

The Army now began to arrest the members of the Negotiating Committee and anyone else suspected of subversive activity. In all, some 350 men were arrested and imprisoned in a hastily constructed stockade. Life in the stockade was abominable. No prisoner was allowed to talk with a spouse or relative and none were ever brought to trial. Some were confined in the stockade until August 24, 1944.

As the weeks passed and the strike dragged on, life in camp became increasingly uncomfortable and depressing. An older Nisei man said: "During those dark moments of camp life many people with children had no shoes, no money, no clothing. Some of the children were beginning to go barefooted. The camp condition was critical."<sup>19</sup> A young Nisei girl said: "I just thought, 'What's this camp coming to?' After the Army came in, I really felt like a prisoner. . . We were sad. There were no activities. Everything stopped. We had a curfew. Oh, it was a miserable life. . We got baloney for Thanksgiving."<sup>20</sup> Many people began to long



for "normalcy" even if it meant yielding on matters of principle.

The WRA was equally anxious to get rid of the Army and establish a working relationship with the evacuees. In mid-December, Mr. Best approached a number of evacuees who were inclined to collaborate with the administration. With the cooperation of these men, who were called the Advisory Council, the administration arranged a referendum (on January 11) in which the residents voted whether they would maintain the strike or return to work. By the barest majority -- a plurality of 473 out of 8,713 -- the residents voted to abandon the strike.<sup>21</sup>

The army now announced the lifting of martial law, withdrew most of the soldiers from the center, and, except for the stockade, returned the management of Tule Lake to the WRA. The WRA now began to release individual men from the stockade, and by January 29, 55 "detainees" had been returned to the center.

Many people now returned to work after first having been "cleared" and given a pass which they were obliged to present daily to the sentries guarding the gates to the administrative quarters. On the other hand, almost half of the residents had voted to continue the strike, and some of these persisted in asserting that their still-confined representatives had been betrayed and that those who had negotiated the truce and referendum were inu, i.e., informers, literally, "dogs".

To be stigmatized as an inu brought social ostracism, which, in the crowded and confined life of the camps, was painful in the extreme. A suspected inu leaving his barrack room, might be barked at by his neighbors. If he seated himself in the mess hall, he was met with an uncomfortable silence and meaningful glances. If he entered a latrine or boiler room -- the common gathering places for gossip and discussion -- friendly talk or argument ceased. If tension between the administration



and the evacuees became severe, he might be assaulted and beaten.

I was still working at the Gila Center when these events took place. But after the "entrainment" I corresponded with the segregants who had been most helpful to me and, before Christmas, I sent some of them boxes of candy. I was surprised when they responded with extremely moving expressions of gratitude. One young man said that he would not forget this kindness as long as he lived. I did not, of course, at this time have any knowledge of the traumata to which these people were being subjected or what a friendly gesture from a Caucasian American might mean to them.

In February of 1944 I was permitted to visit Tule Lake for two days. On my arrival I was told that staff members or visitors like myself were not permitted to enter "the colony" unless they were accompanied by an armed soldier. With the assistance of Paul Robertson, an assistant project director, I was able to bypass this regulation; I was escorted by a co-operative member of the Internal Security (the police), who remained outside in his car while I made my visits. I was surprised at how delighted my Japanese Americans were to see me. Poor as they were, they had managed to get some refreshments. One family served me cocoa and puffed rice; another, by some miracle, had managed to procure a cake. Many gave me detailed accounts of what had happened to them during the strike. At this time I did not realize that they were assisting me, not because I was a skillful fieldworker, but because they interpreted my visits as evidence that I, a Caucasian American, regarded them as decent, law-abiding and trustworthy individuals. Several months later some of my friends told me that they had taken the precaution of telling their neighbors that a Caucasian friend from the relocation center was going to pay them a purely social call. By doing this they hoped to avoid being stigmatized as inu.

During this first visit I also met Joseph Yoshisuke Kurihara who was



to become one of my best respondents and my friend. Mr. Kurihara had been born in Hawaii, had enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1917, and had served abroad. During his confinement he wrote many papers about the evacuation but no journal would publish them. After our meeting he gave me a paper dated February 22, 1944, in which he urged the administrative staff to mitigate the social separation prevailing in the camp. "The fence that separated the administrative section from the area where the evacuees lived", he wrote, "was bad enough". There is "little or no chance for the residents and the officials to meet and cultivate friendship. Even a casual friendship would go a long way to maintain peace and order. The more the Project Director and his forces get in friendly contact with the Japanese, the better will be their understanding."<sup>22</sup>

In mid-March I was again permitted to visit Tule Lake and, once again, I was obliged to take an armed guard with me when I entered the colony. Most of my Japanese American friends were less anxious and much more open in their responses than they had been in February. Some said the people wanted "peace, quiet, and order". As one put it: "Let us roam around here and feed us three times a day...Nobody likes trouble. If they'll treat us like human beings and not like dogs, nobody starts kicking."<sup>23</sup> Others, however, expressed anger over the continued confinement of the men in the stockade and some denounced the members of the Coordinating Committee as inu. One friend told me that he thought that the Committee was trying hard, but that he felt that "another big trouble was brewing" because the people were still so strongly divided into "status-quo" (those who had supported the strike) and "anti-status-quo" (those who had voted to abandon the strike),

During this visit I was able to talk to a number of the Caucasian staff members and school teachers. When they learned that I was going into



the camp to talk to Japanese friends, some of them took me aside and told me that they sympathized with the segregants and would like to develop friendly relationships with them. But they did not dare initiate such relationships because they feared the bigotry and prejudice of their co-workers. "If they find out how you feel they'll start a war of nerves and torture you until you quit."

On March 14, Mr. Robertson, the Assistant Project Director who had helped me carry on my work, asked me to try to find out what could be done to mitigate the hatred and suspicion that many of the residents felt toward the administration. I told him that I would talk to people and tell him what I decently could. On March 17, Dillon S. Myer, the National Director of the WRA arrived at Tule Lake Center and delivered an optimistic and encouraging speech to the WRA staff. Two days later Mr. Robertson, the only staff member who made frequent visits to the evacuees, came to my quarters and asked me if I would mind talking to Mr. Myer about the state of the center. I agreed, and we went to the administration building. I told Mr. Myer that I did not think the situation was improving very much. Many people were apathetic; many, who were not "agitators," believed that the members of the Coordinating Committee were stool pigeons and grafters; and many, moderate or radical, still felt that their true representatives were "sitting in the stockade". Mr. Myer was not impressed and said "he felt the worst hump had been passed when the people went back to work." Then, with a glance at Mr. Robertson, he said:

I feel that it is futile to attempt to get relations with the colony when the appointed staff are not able to agree among themselves. I rely chiefly on Mr. Robertson to accomplish this. I believe this is a more important and pressing task than the establishment of personal contacts in the colony.<sup>24</sup>



On April 7 and 8 an underground group (whose members came to be called the "Resegregationists") circulated a petition asking for the signatures of all persons who "wish to return to Japan at the first opportunity" and who also wished to be resegregated, that is, live together in a separate section of the center. The petition was written in English and in Japanese, and in its Japanese form it implied that the results would be made the basis for administrative action. Some people were deeply disturbed by the petition. Many (though they did not say so) did not wish to commit themselves. Some feared that if they did not sign they would not be allowed to repatriate or expatriate. Several friends told me that the people behind the petition were "would-be big shots," or a "radical goon-squad business." An outspoken man said, "What do I care about Dai Nippon (Great Japanese Empire)! I came here to lead a peaceful life until the war's over."<sup>25</sup>

On April 10, the administration issued a memorandum stating that there was no intention of carrying out a resegregation and that the petition had not been authorized.

Mr. Best, the project director, now embarked on a policy very like that suggested by Mr. Robertson. He proposed a half holiday so that the people might celebrate the birthday of the Emperor of Japan. He ordered a big meal to be served on that day, and he threw the first baseball at the game held in celebration. Children were now permitted to visit the project farm outside of the main barbed wire fence, and the formidable fence that had divided the administrative from the evacuee area section was torn down. Entertainments and athletic events were initiated and encouraged -- movies, block entertainments, baseball and basketball. The quality and quantity of food served in the mess halls were significantly improved.

These changes in policy were greatly appreciated by almost all of my



respondents and the anxiety and confusion of the past six months began to dissipate.

The administration also radically changed its policy on self-government. On April 22, the project newspaper carried a statement by Mr. Black, an Assistant Project Director, inviting the residents to form an Arrangements Committee which would "work out the final plans and supervise the election of a permanent Representative Committee." The administration waited in vain for the slightest sign of initiative on the part of the residents. On May 4, Mr. Best made a similar announcement. Again there was no response. On May 8, Mr. Best made a more elaborate statement and announced that block nomination meetings would be held on May 18.

During this period 260 of the men imprisoned in the stockade were released. Fifty-five, among whom were the elected representatives of the Daihyo Sha Kai, were still confined. None of my respondents spoke of the releases. A few, however, told me that people were saying that they would not vote until all their representatives were released from the stockade.

On May 7, the secretary of the dissolved Coordinating Committee wrote me a letter in which she said that despite many trifling discords, "the place is so quiet". The Center's "social activities continue to function as if there's no trouble whatsoever. Baseball, basketball, dances, shows, engei kais (Japanese entertainment), bazaars, and various track games continue to enliven our almost 'dead' spirit."

On May 14, Mr. Kurihara, an older Nisei, told me: "Things have changed a great deal...I heard Mr. Best has been trying to regain the confidence of the people. One good thing has been done. They've taken down the fence. That has made the people feel better. If they would continue to tear the fences down, Mr. Best could regain a part of the confidence of the people." When I asked him about the Representative Committee, he replied, "People



are not very enthusiastic about it, but I think a body ought to be formed to try to cooperate with the administration and get things rolling harmoniously." On the other hand, he explained, representatives who "stood up and spoke for the rights of the Japanese" were likely to be thrown into the stockade." If they are quiet and fall in line they are all going to be called inu..."No respectable, well-educated Japanese is willing to attempt that position."<sup>26</sup>

On the same day I visited a Nisei man and wife whom I had known at the Gila Center. When I asked about the forthcoming meetings the husband said: "I personally would rather see the men in the stockade released...People are saying, 'What's the use? 'We elected representatives once and they (the administration) wouldn't recognize them.'" On the next day, another respondent said, "It doesn't seem as if this representative body is going to go through. I hear so many say that they will refuse to vote until their representatives are released from the stockade."

On May 18, I visited Mr. and Mrs. Wakida, a Kibei couple. Mr. Wakida, a very intelligent young man,<sup>27</sup> told me that he had been asked to be a representative in his block, but had refused. "Tonight every block is going to have a meeting (to nominate delegates), but I'm going to play baseball and have a lot of fun. If you do good for the people you get put in the stockade. If you do good for WRA you get called inu. So I'm going to play baseball."

Mrs. Wakida and her mother had moved to the back of the barrack room while Mr. Wakida and I talked. When I rose to leave, they came forward and said their farewells. I remarked on the removal of the fence and Mrs. Wakida's face lit up with joy as she explained how much more free they all felt. I made two more social calls that afternoon, and at each barrack my respondents told me how happy the removal of the fence had made them.



The camp-wide block nomination meeting were scheduled for that evening. Many blocks called meetings but so few people came that valid nominations could not be made. Fifteen blocks refused to hold meetings. On the next day, a Sunday, I made four calls and found no one at home. They were all attending athletic events, dances, or other entertainment.

During this period the members of the underground group that had tried to initiate a resegregation kept a very low profile. In a few blocks, however, they were able to organize Seinen-dan, young men's groups dedicated to the study of Japanese culture. In one block, I was told, the young men were being trained in Japanese military exercises. Two of the block residents, one of whom was a Japanese member of the police force, objected to these exercises, and, I was told, warned the young men's parents that "the Army might come in and arrest them." Subsequently, I was told, the young men had attacked the objectors and had locked them in the block laundry room. Only two of my respondents spoke of this incident and one of them, an ardent resegregationist, said the objectors were inu.

On May 20, a Nisei friend from Gila took me to visit a middle-aged man who had been interned in the Leupp Isolation Center in Arizona.<sup>28</sup> The Issei told me that people were refusing to nominate delegates "because of the men in the stockade. If they were all let out, the election would be proceeding in an entirely different manner." In the present situation, he added, "No intelligent man will accept the nomination." He then remarked that Mr. Robertson (who had been director at Leupp before coming to Tule Lake) "had a truly Christian heart". Whenever he left the center he always walked through the camp, "asking if he could get the boys something." He also told me that he had been a Christian before the evacuation but had become a Buddhist because he was determined to return to Japan. My Nisei friend remarked that there was little difference between "true practices in



both religions. The Christian says, 'Love thy neighbor.' The Buddhist says, 'Respect thy neighbor'." When I nodded in agreement, he told me that he was organizing a Seinen-dan (Young Men's Association) and that his chief aim was to give the many idle young people in camp something to do. Being occupied would keep them out of trouble. He then asked me very graciously if I would take a message from him to Mr. Huycke, the WRA head of the Community Activities Section, offering him the cooperation of the Seinen-dan in any activity which the CAS might wish to sponsor. I promised to do so.<sup>29</sup>

During the next three days, seven respondents told me that most people felt that as long as the men whom they had elected in November were imprisoned in the stockade there was no point in electing another committee. Several told me, "The people in the stockade are our representatives." Or, "The people didn't vote because that would make the men in the stockade guilty."

The high-ranking members of the WRA administration were well aware of these sentiments and on May 23 they prevailed upon the Army to withdraw from the stockade. On May 25, the project newspaper announced that the WRA had taken over the stockade from the Army.

Thus, it is possible that these complex difficulties might, in time, have been resolved. But on May 24, Mr. Okamoto, a Japanese American returning to the project from outside the area, had an argument with an armed sentry, and the sentry shot him in the abdomen. People who witnessed the altercation reported that the sentry had said, "You Japs and your WRA friends are trying to run the whole camp."<sup>30</sup>

On May 25, I called on my friend Mr. Kurihara, hoping that he would advise me whether or not it was proper or decent for me to visit people at this time. He appeared to be in a state of shock and spoke haltingly, "We



had an announcement here at noon...as I say, the Japanese could take it. They'll take it more than any race." I asked how the injured man was doing, and Kurihara told me that he was dead. Then he began to cry, beat his desk with his fists, and say over and over, "I wonder if there is a God."<sup>31</sup>

I might have stopped visiting people at this period, had I not made an appointment with my secretary, a Nisei girl who lived in the same block as Mr. Kurihara. She was so relieved to see me and so eager to tell me what everyone was saying that I concluded that she found my visit reassuring. I thereupon called on three other friends and was also well received. I found that they were not only very angry but afraid--afraid that the soldiers might shoot them and also afraid that there might be another uprising. Bob Tsuruda, a friend from Gila told me that the lid might blow off the camp in two hours and that if this should happen I should come to his barrack, which would be the safest place for me.

The edge was taken from many a person's resentment by the seemly and sensible behavior of the high-ranking members of the administration. Mr. Best and the three assistant project directors called on the dead man's family and made arrangements for a public funeral. Mr. Best attended the funeral and gave a memorial address. As Bob Tsuruda put it:

I will give the man (Mr. Best) credit. He really has done his best. He attended the funeral and called a half-holiday, and (in his speech) he said just enough -- no more...Regardless of why he did it, the fact stands that he did do it. It couldn't all have been prompted by selfishness."<sup>32</sup>

Mr. Best also called a general WRA staff meeting at which he asked all the staff members to do their best to reassure the evacuees that they would be adequately protected. On two occasions he called me to his office to



discuss the situation and advise him on policy. When, for example, an inquest was held by the Coroner of Modoc County and a verdict was released to the effect that Mr. Okamoto came to his death "by a soldier of the United States Army in the performance of his duty," Mr. Best told me that he was going to invite "the whole Okamoto family" to his office and "go over the entire transcript of the Coroner's Inquest with them." He told me that he would try to explain that the Coroner's Verdict was justifiable and would emphasize that the Court Martial would be held in an entirely different atmosphere. Soldiers connected with the local post would not preside. Mr. Best also complimented me on my practice of visiting and talking with "many different people in their homes."<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, many people continued to express their anxiety about the forthcoming verdict of the Court Martial. A young man said: "Things are still tense about the shooting. If the soldier has been acquitted, it would be better to come out with it rather than let people remain in this jumpy state of mind." A young woman said, "People haven't forgotten and they aren't going to forget the shooting." Simultaneously, almost everyone began to talk about the inu. Some people retold the story about the Issei policeman who had tried to stop the young men in his block from doing militaristic exercises. This man, I was told, was an inu. The Co-op board of directors were called inu because, according to rumor, they were enriching themselves at the expense of the residents.<sup>34</sup> Most of the complaints about the inu were made by people who had been associating with or assisting members of the administration. Indeed, the first people who complained to me were the wife and sister of my friend, Mr. Tsuruda, who was on very good terms with his Caucasian supervisor and accompanied him on visits to the mess halls. On June 4, the sister told me, "When we came to Tule Lake we thought we would be through with inus...but there are more of



them than ever." The wife added, "Every place you look you can see one." Mr. Kurihara told me that some people were calling him inu because I visited him occasionally. He added, "Having inu around keeps everybody on edge. Everybody suspects everybody else...It keeps the people in a constant state of tension.

Since no one in the camp except a few members of the underground Resegregation Group was doing anything that could get them into trouble with the authorities, I believe that these complaints about the inu were, in fact, expressions of the great anxiety and anger engendered by the shooting and by the deep concern over what the Court Martial's verdict would be. Indeed, several of my respondents told me, angrily and anxiously, "It all depends on the verdict."

On the night of June 12, the brother of Mr. Noma, the general manager of the Co-op, was assaulted and beaten so severely that he had concussion of the brain. The next night, the accommodating police warden was beaten. On the night of June 17, a gang of young men invaded the project high school, tore down all the moveable fixtures and flushed them down the toilet. On June 21, a mentally deranged Issei attacked his roommate with a hammer, almost killing him. Several people told me that "The old man had found out that his friend was an inu." On June 24 I called on my friends, the Tsurudas. Mrs. Tsuruda was looking so anxious and upset that I asked her if anything was wrong. Looking from right to left she whispered, "I think everybody is nervous in here. This place gives me the willies." Her husband astonished me by denouncing the "radicals" and the "pressure gang" and telling me that he was considering relocation. "The trouble is they expect you to act like a damn radical and go out and kill every hakujin (Caucasian) on the other side of the fence. And when you don't act like that you are an inu." (Forty years later his sister told me that he was



being threatened and called a dog because I visited him frequently and because he was working closely with his Caucasian supervisor in an attempt to improve the quality of the food served in the mess halls.) Other respondents were also nervous and ill at ease. One man said desperately: "If the agitators and spies would get out of here we'll be united. But it wouldn't matter if we didn't have unity, so long as we have peace!"

On June 28, nineteen Issei were sent from Tule Lake to the Santa Fe Internment Camp operated by the Department of Justice. Fifteen were taken from the stockade and four from the evacuee area. On June 30 another man was assaulted.

By this time I had had all I could take. Although the head of our research group had told me that I was never, under any circumstances, to talk to any members of the administration, I disobeyed, and, on July 2, I called one who, I knew, had often gone out of his way to help the evacuees. I told him that the situation in the camp was pathological and that I had a premonition of disaster. He indicated that he was aware of this but there was nothing he could do. Then he lowered his voice and told me that, on the night before, some of the leaders of the underground group (which sponsored the petition asking for a resegregation) had told him that the removal of the Issei to the Santa Fe detention center was "the last straw." They no longer could or would restrain their "strong arm boys." Future attacks might not be restricted to beatings. They might result in murder. That same evening the general manager of the Co-op, Mr. Noma, who had been stigmatized as a "Number one Inu," was found lying on his brother's doorstep with a knife pushed through his larynx to the base of his brain.<sup>35</sup>

The immediate reaction to the murder was a general state of panic. All members of the evacuee police force resigned. People rushed to the



Co-op to stock up on food supplies. Some collaborators, who feared they might be "next on the list", were taken from the center and housed in the administrative area.

On July 6, the verdict of court-martial was announced. The soldier had been acquitted. None of the persons responsible for the assaults of the murder were ever apprehended. The Japanese American police force was never properly reconstituted. And though some of the tension diminished, everyone remained aware that resistance to, or criticism of, the "strong-arm boys" would result in assault and that any attempt to obtain the protection of the authorities would only increase the danger.

There was now virtually no possibility of establishing any cooperative or social relationship between the evacuees and the administrative staff. I myself received a letter from Mr. Kurihara advising me "to stay out of the center for a while." Later, he explained that it was not his but my life he was concerned about. Immediately after Mr. Noma was killed, some fanatics had spread the rumor that "a Caucasian would be next." I wrote to my respondents asking them to let me know when it might be safe to visit them. By mid-July three replied and invited me to visit. Others suggested that I wait "until things settle down." Others asked me not to visit them because there were "too many hot-headed people in their block". A few who worked in the administrative section visited me during their lunch hour and one friend continued to write me very informative letters on general camp attitudes. Some of the Christian staff members, however, managed to hold church services and occasional social meetings. In 1980 a woman told me how she had been encouraged to read the Bible by a Japanese Christian and how she been visited by Christian staff members. She regularly attended services on Sunday, even though her neighbors called her an inu. When I asked her, "Is there any experience that you still carry with you--that she



can never forget?" she responded, "The people's kindness in the camp, I never forget. Some of the Christian staff members invited not only me, but all the Christian people" to social affairs where we could sit and talk together."<sup>36</sup>

By the end of July, rumors about the inu began to subside. First covertly, and then overtly many people began to express dissatisfaction with the unending tension. With increasing frequency they wished that there might be some "peace and order". No one, however, dared to suggest that anyone ought to co-operate with or assist the administration. The one spirit lifting event of August 1944 was the release of all of the men still confined in the stockade. After eight months of imprisonment without trial, they had obtained their release with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union.

But there was to be no peace and quiet. On July 13, the project newspaper reported that "a new law dealing with the relinquishment of their citizenship by American citizens had been passed by the Congress of the United States and signed by the President." Leaders of the pressure group who, in April, had circulated a petition asking for a resegregation, now began to deliver lectures at small block meetings. After assuring their listeners that Japan was winning the war, they announced that they were in the process of forming an organization which would give the young people in camp the discipline and education that they needed in order to become useful citizens of a victorious Japan. In August, this group obtained permission from the administration to use the high school auditorium for a series of educational lectures. At the first lecture, they announced that the meeting had been called to initiate the organization of the Sokoku Kenkyu Seinan-dan (Young Men's Association for the Study of the Mother Country). This organization they proclaimed, would stand for "the



renunciation of citizenship on moral principles." Its members would dedicate themselves "to increase the appreciation of our racial heritage by a study of the incomparable culture of our mother country, to abide by the project regulations, to refrain from involvement in center politics...to participate in physical exercises in order to keep ourselves in good health."<sup>37</sup>

To those evacuees who believed the organization's contention that it had no political aims, the proposed activities had a strong attraction. Many of the young Nisei who were contemplating expatriation had never been in Japan and many could not speak or read its language. It would obviously be of great value to them if they learned something of the way of life which they expected to pursue. Their Issei parents wholeheartedly supported such an endeavor, hoping thus to improve the young people's chance of economic success and social acceptance in Japan. On the other hand, many evacuees were suspicious of or disapproved of the new organization but "they are afraid to say anything."

Within a few weeks, several hundred young men had joined the Sokoku and every morning before daybreak one could hear them striding down the firebreaks, shouting "Wash-sho! Wash-sho!" (Hip! Hip!). By mid-September many people were complaining to each other about being awakened before dawn by the shouting of the exercising young men.

On September 21 the leaders of the Resegregation Group began to circulate a second petition, asking for the signatures of all people who wished to return to Japan at the first opportunity. The petition was accompanied by an explanatory pamphlet which stated that the Resegregationists were preparing a final list of repatriates and expatriates and that this list was to be presented to both the American and the Japanese government. This time, however, many people reacted with



irritation and exasperation. Some told me that they wished the agitators and the superpatriots would leave them alone and that people who refused to sign the petition were being threatened. One young man who subsequently did expatriate to Japan told me, "I'm Japanese no matter what they say...We don't show that we're Japanese by signing the petition!" He added, "When they circulated the petition, they said, 'If you sign this paper, you won't be drafted into the Army, and you'll be the first to get on the exchange boat.' So everybody signed it." The Resegregationists claimed some 10,000 signatures, but the majority of these were minors or infants.

A few elderly Issei openly opposed the petition, pointing out that they had already applied for repatriation through the Spanish consul. They advised young men not to renounce their citizenship, "because the right of their citizenship is already denied them," and they called on the young men to abstain from "radical activities". On the night of October 15, three of these anti-resegregationists were assaulted and brutally beaten. On October 30, the son of another anti-resegregationist was knifed. The victims refused to name or describe their assailants.

The Sokoku's early morning exercises now became more exhibitionally militaristic. Drills, marching in goose step, and judo practice, were added to the program. Bugles were purchased and the young men began to wear grey sweat shirts stamped with the emblem of the rising sun. The leaders changed the name of the organization from Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen-dan (Young Men's Association for the Study of the Mother Country) to Hokoku Seinen-dan (Young Men's Association to Serve Our Mother Country).

On October 26, the project newspaper reported that "The Citizenship Renunciation Law...is now operative," and that "forms may be secured from the Attorney General as soon as they are printed." Hokoku officers immediately applied for forms. When they received them, they typed dozens



of carbon copies, so the members might immediately renounce en masse. The Department of Justice declared the typed forms invalid and during November only 107 applications were accepted.

In mid-November, the officers of the Daihyo Sha Kai, who had been released from the stockade in August, began to oppose the Resegregation Group's organizations, and to advise the young men not to renounce the citizenship. They could afford to do this not only because they were widely respected, but because they too had a following of stalwart young men who could serve as bodyguards. As the feud continued, people began to resign from the Resegregation Group's organizations.

The Resegregationists were now threatened from another source. On December 6, John Burling, representing the U.S. Department of Justice, arrived at Tule Lake to open hearings for persons who had applied for renunciation of citizenship. Thereupon the Resegregationists intensified their activities, holding their noisy predawn militaristic exercises as close to the fence as possible and blowing their bugles louder than ever. Burling, however, proceeded to investigate the group and interview the leaders. He told them, and announced to the other residents, that their activities were subversive and, if continued, would lead to internment in a Department of Justice camp for potentially dangerous enemy aliens.

However, two administrative decisions, one by the Army and the other by the War Relocation Authority, transformed the general distrust of the Resegregationists' program into a wholehearted support of their major aim--the renunciation of American citizenship. On December 19, the project newspaper announced that "the new system will permit the great majority of persons of Japanese ancestry to move freely anywhere in the U.S. that they wish to go." On the same day, a mimeographed statement by Dillon Myer was distributed to all the residents, to the effect that "all relocation



centers will be closed within a period of six months to one year after the revocation of the exclusion orders." On the same day, Project Director Best announced: "The Tule Lake Center will be considered both a relocation center and a segregation center for some time to come. Those whom the Army authorities designate as free to leave here will be in the same status as residents of a relocation center."

The announcements bewildered and frightened the segregants. Before the evacuation most of the older people had been poor farmers or farm workers. In the process of evacuation, they had lost everything. If they now left Tule Lake, their sons would be drafted and they would be left alone and penniless in an alien and hostile country. Most of the younger people did not wish to abandon their parents and siblings, and even when they wished to leave Tule Lake, they were agonized by their parents' pleas that they not be left alone. And while some people genuinely wished to "get out of Tule Lake," they had second thoughts when they read or heard of statements like these:

"The people of California are overwhelmingly opposed to the return of any Japanese during the war...to allow the Japanese to return during the war is inadvisable because it would cause riots, turmoil, bloodshed, and endanger the war effort...Return of the Japanese Americans to the west coast is apt to result in 'wholesale bloodshed and violence,' Representative Engle, Democrat of California, said today."<sup>38</sup>

On December 19, an Army team of some twenty officers arrived at Tule Lake and began to hold hearings at the rate of 400 to 500 a day. Only males were given hearings, it being assumed that females would remain with the males of the family. Reports quickly spread that, regardless of the answers given to the soldiers, almost everybody was being given an



exclusion order, which meant that he would be expected to leave Tule Lake and take up residence outside the zones of exclusion. On December 24, a Nisei girl told me: "A friend of my brother told the soldier that he was a repatriate and loyal to Japan, but he was still handed a permit to leave camp provided he does not go to certain excluded areas." On the same day another young woman told me: "I am worried by the results of the hearings of some of the young men I know. In spite of their pro-Japan statements, they were not told that they would be detained."<sup>39</sup>

This growing conviction that security could be gained only by the renunciation of citizenship revived the power and influence of the Resegregationists. And when, on December 27, the Department of Justice removed seventy prominent members of that group to the detention camp at Santa Fe, the Resegregationist ideology once again came to dominate the camp. For months, they had been urging people to renounce their utterly depreciated citizenship. Now, they boasted, their leaders, by being interned, had been placed in a secure refuge and no longer needed to fear resettlement or military induction.

On December 29, a Nisei girl told me: "I heard the rumor that all those who renounce their citizenship will be taken to Santa Fe." A few days later a number of young people assured me that they would not mind relocating "if we had everything as when we left. But we've lost everything." In addition, many pointed out, they had no assurance to finding employment.

The intense anxiety and sense of helplessness were greatly increased when, on January 5, Dillon Myer, National Director of the WRA, reaffirmed his earlier statement that the WRA's prime objective... "is to restore the people residing in the relocation centers to private life in normal communities." An official pamphlet was distributed which stated that



families who left the center would receive as maximum of assistance their coach fares and a total of \$25.00.<sup>40</sup>

The Resegregationists now literally went berserk, performing their militaristic Japanese exercises with ever increasing noise and exaltation. Even old women now participated in the exercises, wearing slacks and yelling "Wash sho!" The parents of the young men who had been interned proudly told their neighbors, "My child has now become a true Japanese!" There was a widespread rumor that those who had not renounced were going to be kicked out of the camp. Newspaper reports of how Japanese Americans or Nisei soldiers had been threatened, attacked, shot at, or had their homes burned, were quoted to me.<sup>41</sup> In Idaho, a mob attacked a group of Nisei soldiers, and in California, shots were fired at the home of some relocating Japanese Americans.

As applications for renunciation continued to pour in, Burling, the Department of Justice Representative, tried to stem the flood by asking the WRA to declare Tule Lake a "refuge center" from which no one would be forced to relocate for the duration of the war. WRA, however, refused to yield on the matter of forced resettlement and the only concession made--on January 29--was an announcement that "those who do not wish to leave Tule Lake center at this time are not required to do so and they may continue to live here or at some similar center until January 1946."

During January, 3,400 young persons (40% of the citizen population) applied for denationalization. On February 12, Mr. Kunitani, who had been Chairman of the Negotiation Committee of the Daihyo Sha Kai, wrote me a letter telling of a current rumor that, if young men did not join the Resegregationist Group, "they will be subject to draft by March of this year." He continued, "I am of the opinion that some kind of statement should be forthcoming from the Justice Department...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."<sup>42</sup>

In all, 70% of those eligible renounced their citizenship. On March 16, the WRA belatedly announced that all resegregationist activities were unlawful.

In 1981-82 only 12 of my respondents chose to speak about the activities of the Resegregation Group, and most of these preferred to tell me how they avoided or resisted the proselytizing activities of the "superpatriots." In talking about that period, a respondent, then age 14, emphasized how disturbed the people in the camp were:

"Up to that point the people obeyed what the administration told us to do. And the line of communication in the block and all the way down to the residents was very strong. But when this force came, it really destructed the whole administration and the line of communication, because it split the camp in two. The one was you had to be a superpatriot to Japan. And the other was: you were just an internee, because you wrote "No-No" on your loyalty questionnaire. They really split the camp apart."

I said, "Yes, people were forced to sign." He responded: "Right, and they beat you up." He then told me that he and his friends never walked about the camp alone but always went in groups. "Because, if you weren't on their side, they would pick a fight."<sup>43</sup>

While a number of my respondents had renounced their citizenship, only two were willing to talk about this experience. One man told me:

"And that was another stupid thing that we got caught doing. Partly it was our stupidity, but it was also forced on us by the Congress and the people in power...After so many years in camp,



one becomes a different person...I know that psychologically we were not normal, and whenever we were up against some kind of problem, the environment affected the way we made decisions and we reacted.<sup>44</sup>

During the summer of 1945, many renunciants wrote to the Department of Justice and asked for permission to withdraw their renunciations. After the surrender of Japan more asked for permission to withdraw. The Department of Justice, however, was preparing to send all of the renunciants to Japan. On September 26, regulations governing their deportation were published and on October 8, the department began the "registration of the renunciants," who were now fingerprinted and photographed. They were told that they were now classed as "native American aliens." Thereupon, a group of renunciants obtained the support of Wayne Collins, a San Francisco attorney. On November 5, Collins entered two suits in federal courts asking "that certain named renunciants be set at liberty, that deportation orders be cancelled, that the applications for renunciations be declared void, and the plaintiffs be declared nationals of the United States." During the following weeks the number of plaintiffs rose to 4,322. On December 10, 1945, Department of Justice officials at Tule Lake announced that "mitigation" hearings would be held for all renunciants and also for those aliens who did not wish to return to Japan.<sup>45</sup>

During the period--September 1945 to January 1946--thousands of people left Tule Lake and resettled in other areas of the United States. On August 1, the population was 17,341. On January 31, it was 5,045, all of whom were detainees or their families. On February 12, 1946 the Department of Justice announced the names of 406 renunciants who had not passed the hearings and who were to be deported.



During the fall of 1945 and the early months of 1946 over a thousand renunciants and many Japanese aliens sailed for Japan. Through February 23, 1946, a total of 4,046 residents of Tule Lake had also left. Of these 1,116 were renunciants who did not apply for a mitigation hearing, 1,523 were aliens, and 1,767 were American citizens, all but 49 were the minor children of aliens or renunciants...All in all, some eight thousand persons of Japanese descent left for Japan between V-J day and mid-1946.<sup>46</sup>

The litigation initiated by Wayne Collins on behalf of the renunciants dragged on for many years. Detailed accounts are presented by ten Broek and by Michi Weglyn. Weglyn concludes her account with the following statement:

March 6, 1968. It was twenty-three years after he had brought the illegal, racially abetted deportation of the Nisei and Kibei to a screeching halt that Collins was finally able to write in the concluding renunciation proceedings (Abo v. [Ramsay A.] Clark) with an air of justifiable triumph: "A Majority of those who had been forcibly removed to Japan were restored to their home in this country. The fundamental rights, liberties, privileges and immunities of these citizens are now honored. The discrimination practiced against them by the government has ceased. The episode which constituted an infamous chapter in our history has come to a close."<sup>47</sup>

In 1981-82, most respondents were willing to talk about their postwar experiences and some gave me detailed accounts. One young man said that at Tule Lake he developed a friendship with a missionary teacher who advised him not to go to Japan with his parents and seven siblings. But "after my



family repatriated I was put on the deportation list. That was unthinkable because I expected to be released any day." But then "I joined the Tule Lake Defense Committee and Wayne Collins came to our rescue. His intervention prevented additional deportations." After the hearing, in which he was asked whether he would bear arms for the United States and whether he was loyal to the Emperor of Japan, he was released. He was drafted and served in the Army for 15 months. Then he went to San Francisco, and although he was a qualified X-Ray technician and jobs were available in his category, no one would give him a job. "And so I washed dishes and cleaned windows and put myself through college." Finally, with the assistance of a sympathetic Jewish doctor he was accepted as a student by the Stanford Medical School. At the end of our talk I asked him, "Looking back today, what part of your experience is still the hardest to bear?" He responded:

I think the incarceration without a hearing. I still wake up in a pool of sweat and I'm still in camp writing letters to the Justice Department and getting no replies...To this day I'm still in camp. It's a recurring nightmare.

He then told me that he had testified at the hearings conducted by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians but that most of the Nisei he knew were afraid to testify. "They still do not believe that their citizenship entitles them to legal justice."

Most of the people I talked to in 1981 and 1982 were permitted to relocate without being subjected to deportation hearings. But all of them experienced difficulties in finding employment. Several were promised jobs on the East Coast or the Midwest, but when they arrived they were told that the jobs were not available. A woman told me that she and her husband stayed at a Philadelphia hotel for six months, "visiting employment offices



every day" until her husband finally was given a job as a farm manager. Several teenagers described how they worked their way through high school and college as domestic servants or dishwashers in restaurants. A young woman whose parents repatriated to Japan leaving her alone in America had a severe nervous breakdown. A young man who, at age 15, accompanied his repatriating parents to Japan returned alone to the United States at age 17 and worked his way through high school and college. Eventually he became a physician. He told me, "Having survived that, I think I can survive anything. But I learned that with patience and determination you can overcome anything and succeed."

Many of my respondents spoke with deep appreciation of the assistance and support given them by a few sympathetic Christian staff members during the last agonizing year of camp life. They also spoke with deep appreciation of the assistance given them by Jewish and Christian groups who, after they had left the camp, took them in and helped them find employment. One young man said, "I learned that not all people hated us." Another said: "I learned that God loves us in spite of what we are." In describing her recovery, the young woman who had a nervous breakdown told me: "No matter what happens, God loves me without any strings attached!" About half of my Nisei respondents have become Christians and active participants in church groups.

Some of my respondents told me that they or their siblings "have never been able to cope" with the anxieties engendered by their experiences. Nevertheless, they have become personnel directors, architects, insurance salesmen, expert electricians, designers, professors, doctors, and in at least one case, dedicated and appreciated leaders in their communities.

On June 6, 1981 I interviewed a woman whose husband had been imprisoned in the stockade for nine months. When their first child was



born, she tried to show the baby to its father, but was brutally pushed away from the fence by an armed soldier. Such experiences might have left an enduring residue of bitterness, but in her case the effect over time has been to instill a powerful sense of faith in justice--for herself, her people, and the nation. For when, at the end of our talk I asked, "Was there anything that happened to you that helped you to become a wiser or better person?" She thought for a long time and then said, "The experience definitely made you wiser. There will not be a second time. Definitely!



## FOOTNOTES

1. To give only one example, on January 9, 1942, a columnist in the San Francisco Examiner stated: "Herd 'em up, pack 'em off and give 'em the inside room in the badlands. Let 'em be pinched, hurt, hungry and dead against it...let us have no patience with the enemy or with anyone whose veins carry his blood."
2. Persons born in the United States but educated in Japan were called Kibei. The literal meaning of 'Kibei' is 'returned to America'. For a detailed statement of its varied meanings, see Thomas, Dorothy Swaine and Nishimoto, Richard S., THE SPOILAGE, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946, p. 3.
3. Spicer, Edward H. et al. IMPOUNDED PEOPLE: Japanese Americans in the relocation centers. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1969, p. 61.
4. Taped interview, 1981-2.
5. For detailed descriptions of the centers during the first months see Spicer, pp. 61-83 and Thoman and Nisimoto, pp. 26-33.
6. Spicer, p. 72.
7. Ibid, pp. 81-2.
8. Thomas and Nishimoto, pp. 41-2.



9. Spicer, pp. 83-4.
10. Taped Interviews, 1981-2.
11. Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 56-8.
12. Spicer, pp. 150-1.
13. Thomas and Nishimoto, pp. 62-3. For a detailed and well documented description of complex events and developments, see Thomas and Nishimoto, *ibid.*, pp. 55-83 and Spicer, *et. al.*, 141-169.
14. Taped interviews, 1981-2.
15. Rosalie H. Wax, Fieldnotes, July 10, 1943.
16. Spicer, *et. al.* p. 177. In the spring of 1943 I asked an assistant project director how many loyal people had remained at Tule Lake. He said that the records were so confused that it was impossible to say.
17. He was actually 19 years old but one of the injured farm workers was 11 and another was 12. Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 115.
18. Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 144, citing WRA, Semi-Annual Report, July 1 to December 31, 1943, p. 23.
19. Rosalie H. Wax, Fieldnotes, January 8, 1945.



20. Ibid. August 30, 1944.
21. "Whereas there is no evidence to support the claim that force was used during the voting, it is a fact that the Army had picked up a number of Daihyo Sha Kai members and sympathizers early that morning. Thus the impression that a vote in favor of status quo might lead to arrest undoubtedly impeded freedom of action in some sections of the camp." Thomas and Nishimoto, pp.181-2.
22. Rosalie H. Wax, Fieldnotes, February, 1944.
23. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, March 1944.
24. Ibid.
25. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, April, 1944.
26. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, May 14, 1944.
27. In the fall of 1945 he and his wife returned to Japan where he became Chairman of the Board of Tokyo Railway Company.
28. In the relocation centers, men who were considered agitators or trouble makers were sent to the heavily guarded Leuppe Isolation Center in the Arizona desert. On December 2, 1943, this Center was closed and the remaining 55 men were sent to Tule Lake. Michi Weglyn, Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of America's Concentration Camps. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976, pp. 128-32.



29. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, March 20, 1944.
30. Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 250.
31. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, May 25, 1944.
32. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, May 27, 1944.
33. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, June 4, 1944.
34. On June 25, a benevolent elderly man told me, "All over camp people are saying that there are a few managers of the Co-op who are cooperating with the administrators to get graft out of the Co-op. They told me, 'If you say anything against the Co-op, you'll be arrested.'"
35. In 1981, a respondent told me that a few days before he was murdered, Mr. Noma had made a speech in the mess hall in which he called on the people to stop the violence and criticized the leaders of the underground group.
36. Taped Interview, 1981-2.
37. Manifesto cited in Thomas and Nishimoto, pp. 311-2.
38. San Francisco Chronicle, December 13, 1944.
39. Fieldnotes, December 24, 1944.



40. Thomas and Nishimoto, p. 343, footnote 45.
41. See, for example the SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, Jan. 5, 1945; SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, Jan. 18, 1945; PACIFIC CITIZEN, Jan. 13, 1945; ROCKY SHIMPO, Jan. 17, Jan. 24, 1945; COLORADO TIMES, Jan, 24, 1945.
42. Tule Lake Fieldnotes, February 14, 1945.
43. Taped Interview, 1981-2.
44. Ibid.
45. Tenbroek, Jacobus, Barnhart, Edward N. Matson, Floyd W. Prejudice, War and the Constitution. Berkley: University of California Press. pp. 178-9.
46. Ibid. pp. 180-1.
47. Weglyn, Michi. pp. 253-65.



## ROSALIE H. WAX - BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Began study of anthropology with Professor A. L. Kroeber at the University of California (Berkeley). In June of 1943 began fieldwork at the Gila Relocation Center in Arizona, as research assistant to the American Evacuation and Resettlement Study. In February of 1944 began fieldwork at the Tule Lake Segregation Center. In the nineteen-sixties did fieldwork among the Sioux and the Cherokee Indians, studying their educational system. In 1971 published "Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice" which some colleagues consider the definitive book on fieldwork.

I've never tried to write a biographical sketch before and am inclosing a vitae in case you wish to make any changes.



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