

21:16

I

1945

78/177

c

5705-17

Tulelake, California  
September 20, 1945

SEP 28 1945

Mr. Ernest Besig  
American Civil Liberties Union  
216 Pine St.  
San Francisco 4, Calif

Dear Sir:

Thanking you gratefully for the past effort on the part of your organization to bring forth a wider interpretation of the American civil liberties in this nation. I wish to ask you to take further action in a effort to have restored our citizenship which we renounced en masse.

I am sure that you understand very well the fact at the time of renunciation of our citizenship rights, it was not through clear, open thinking that we had made our decision. I am not making any effort to place blame upon any organization or person, but only to blame myself for the past action. I have ultimately come to the realization that our efforts can only be appreciated among the American society, which I hope will be the general opinion of others.

I trust that your endless effort will continue to further educate the principles of American civil liberties among the people, public agencies, government agencies etc. I assure you that upon having our citizenships restored, our efforts will be in retaining it, and fully appreciate the importance.

Yours truly,  
Kazuma Ishihara

SEP 28 1945

5705-H

Tulelake, California  
Sept. 20, 1945

Mr. Ernest Besig  
American Civil Liberties Union  
216 Pine St.  
San Francisco, 4, Calif.

Dear Sir:

Thanking you gratefully for the past effort on the part of your organization to bring forth a wider interpretation of the American civil liberties in this nation. I wish to ask you to take further action in a effort to have restored our citizenship which we renounced en masse.

I am sure that you understand very well the fact at the time of renunciation of our citizenship rights, it was not through clear, open thinking that we had made our decision. I am not making any effort to place blame upon any organization or person, but only to blame myself for the past action. I have ultimately come to the realization that our efforts can be only be appreciated among the American society, which I hope will be the general opinion of others.

I trust that your endless effort will continue to further educate the principles of American civil liberties among the people, public agencies, government agencies etc. I assure you that upon having our citizenships restored, our efforts will be in retaining it, and fully appreciate the importance.

Yours truly,  
Tomoye Ishihara

October 3, 1945

Tomoye & Kazuma Ishihara  
5705 A  
Newell, California

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Ishihara:

This will acknowledge the receipt of your recent letters requesting our help in securing the restoration of your citizenship. Our advise to all renunciants has been that they should write to the attorney general without delay repudiating their action in renouncing. And by repudiating I mean that you should absolutely disown, disclaim and revoke the renunciation.

Thereafter, if you do not have sufficient funds to hire an attorney of your own, you should join with others at Tule Lake in pooling your financial resources and hire a counsel. It seems to me that is the only practical way of solving the problem of thousands of people at the center. If you wait until you are transferred to an interment camp, the chances of getting help will be poor.

With reference to the present alien registration, if you are required to register, you should do so under protest, asserting your United States citizenship. The registration blank should carry a statement that you claim United States citizenship, or you should submit a letter to that effect at the time of registration.

Sincerely yours,

Ernest Besig, Director

3907-B  
Newell, California  
August 30, 1945

AUG 31 1945

Mr. Ernest Besig  
c/o American Civil Liberties Union  
216 Pine Street  
San Francisco, California

Dear Sir:

I have been informed from a friend to write to you and receive your good advices.

Please excuse me for taking the initiative to write to you.

I believe an explanation is in order before I ask for your advices.

I have been placed in this camp as a segregee because of my answer of "no" "no" to questions number 27 and 28 on the Army questionnaire of which I presume you already know about.

I answered "no" to those questions because I considered it unfair and unjust to ask me to serve in the Army after evacuating me from my home without any charges and placing me behind barbed wire fence under armed military guard.

If I had done any sabotage or espionage work or having been involved in any un-American activities, then I would consider it just to be placed behind barbed wire fence; but I have been a law-abiding citizen.

As my internment within such an encampment passed from days to months and on to years the feeling of discontentment increased because the treatment given the Japanese people in the camp was not satisfactory.

As the days passed by my hopes of being given fair and equal treatment by the American people after the war vanished.

Therefore, I requested expatriation to Japan through the Spanish Embassy.

Mr. Ernest Besig--2

I also made an application for the renunciation of my citizenship.

I was given a hearing on the renunciation application by one of the representatives from the Justice Department but to date I have not received an approval.

Few days ago I heard over the radio that the American government is going to deport to Japan 6,000 Japanese living in the United States.

I wonder if you could let me know whether I would be considered in that group of 6,000 deportees for the actions that I have taken.

By listening to radio and reading the newspapers there also seems to be a movement by the government to close this camp and put us out of the camp.

If this should happen it would mean that we would have to stay here in the United States.

If I should stay in America, is it possible to regain my citizenship?

If I cannot regain my citizenship, will it be possible for me to stay in America on an alien status?

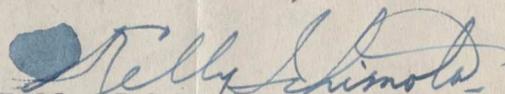
I'm sure that you have a better knowledge of the legal trend concerning our problems being taken by the government.

I would appreciate very much if you would advise me on these matters.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for your efforts in seeing that the people of Japanese ancestry get fair and just treatment.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain

Sincerely yours,

  
Kelly Ishimoto

AUG 27 1945

c/o Miss Mary Durkin  
Tule Lake Center  
Newell, California  
August 23, 1945

Mr. Ernest Besig  
American Civil Liberties Union  
216 Pine Street  
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Besig:

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter  
written to Mr. Edward J. Ennis, Enemy Alien  
Control Unit, Department of Justice,  
Washington, D. C..

Any help or legal advice on my  
situation would be appreciated.

Sincerely,  
Toshio Ishimoto

c/o Miss Mary Durkin  
Jule Lake Center  
Newell, California

August 21, 1945

AUG 27 1945

Mr. Edward J. Ennis  
Enemy Alien Control Unit  
Department of Justice  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Ennis:

I have hesitated to write this letter appealing for cancellation of renunciation because when I asked project officials about it here they always told me that it was up to the Department of Justice; and, never being notified by your Department of acceptance, I assumed that I was automatically rejected because of my hearing. If this is so, I am glad since I was renouncing only because of pressures upon me, and the hearing officer of your department seemed to understand that. In the course of my hearing, the officer who knew that I was not doing this voluntarily and of my own free will stopped in the middle and said he knew that I was acting under pressure and, after telling the Secretary to strike it all out, asked me again if I wanted to live in this country. Of course I answered affirmatively but the pressures and danger of bodily harm were so threatening that I felt constrained to go through with the far-  
A  
cial hearing to the end.

Perhaps I should go back and tell of the stresses on me since the time of voluntary evacuation. This is necessary in order to show truly and accurately that I have been beset by various kinds of pressure and circumstances throughout my history as a center resident. I had lived all my life in Fresno, California; and had never been abroad except for a very short summer trip of slightly more than a month accompanying my aged and ailing father in 1938. I never intended to live abroad, not only because of the fact that I am highly Americanized and California is the only home I ever knew, but also because I have no dual or foreign citizenship; am illiterate in Japanese, and have always planned my future in this country. <sup>That</sup> This is no new decision on my part is proved by the fact that I have never requested expatriation.

Before evacuation to the Gila Center, I was in my sophomore year at Fresno State College. At that time, I hoped to evacuate directly to one of the eastern states to continue my education. I would have done so, escaping all the ugly situations and pressures that followed, had it not been for the fact that my father developed a cancer condition which only gave him three more months of life. I could not take care of him outside so I accompanied him to Gila where he passed away on October 23, 1942. From that time on

it was because of family pressure and the insistence of two older brothers and an older sister that I remained in Gila, and following the family decision, accompanied the family to Tule Lake.

Because of my completely American background and democratic principles, I began to get labeled even at Gila as a "loyal American", "informer", and whatnot. I joined the American public school system and taught the sixth and eight grades. My reputation later at Tule Lake was such that I was forced to withdraw from a similar teaching position. There was plenty of reason for my reputation as "an American" at Gila, having been Cubmaster of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as a teacher and a typical plainspoken American ~~the~~ youth.

At Tule Lake, I was practically labeled as a sort of "voluntary segregant" who was on the American side. Here I lived in Block 50, which was unfortunately right next to Block 54, the headquarters of the fanatical Hoshiden. While I and the members of my family were able to withstand pressure to join the organization, I particularly was suspect to them. I got myself further on the spot by bringing books from the American school to people of my block at a time when these fanatics had rules against reading anything but Japanese.

During the mass renunciation program, they suspected anyone who did not request renunciation forms from Washington. And everyday watchers were stationed in the block office to check the incoming mail. They seemed to know by contact with the Justice Department where everyone stood. I was practically told what to do and how to answer. There was no holding back at the hearing. At the height of the hysteria, they claimed they knew who would be accepted or not, and at the period they knew I was not a renouncee and they would activate even non-members who failed to do their biddings. I was so visibly upset during the hearing that it was hard to be myself as the hearing officer noted, stated above. I'm sure he knew I was under pressure.

I am only 23 and have been subjected to a series of unfortunate events and it seems to me, after reflecting on the injustice of the case, that <sup>it</sup> is wrong to throw Americanized persons like myself into such situations allowing them to be crippled for life by a hearing of only 2 or 3 minutes long which apparently the officer himself couldn't help but see through.

I therefore plead for cancellation of the hearing now that pressure is off me and I can speak out my mind. In any event, it would prevent unnecessary hardship if I could in the meantime be paroled and return to Fresno State College, where, due to no fault of mine, my career has been interrupted for the past three years. I have an excellent chance for a scholarship there and in September if I am not at the college I shall lose it and further injustice would occur in my case.

Sincerely,  
Yoshio Ishimoto  
(Ja. No. 48710)

from letter  
Sept 22

4901-E  
Tule Lake, Calif  
Aug 27, 1945

AUG 28 1945

Mr. Ernest Besig  
American Civil Liberty Union  
716 Pine St.  
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Sir:

Being too hasty in renouncing my citizenship and regretting it I am taking this opportunity to inquire whether I could regain it for myself and wife.

Kindly advise me of any procedure because I may need it when I re-estate again.

Thanking you very much for your kind attention, I remain

Yours very truly  
James M. Wata.

August 28, 1945

Mr. James M. Owata  
4901 - E  
Newell, California

Dear Mr. Owata:

I have your letter of August 27 inquiring what you and your wife can do to regain your citizenship which you renounced.

If the Justice Department has not already advised you that your renunciation was approved, I would notify them of your desire to cancel and revoke the renunciation. It may turn out after a legal test that a renunciant has the right to withdraw his renunciation if it has not yet been acted upon by the Attorney General and if he has not been advised thereof.

It is our intention to bring a test suit and scores of letters from renunciants have been referred to one of our attorneys. Of course, we will not be able to handle the 75 or more complaints that have come to our desk. We are going to select the best possible case as a test and that may serve to help other people in the same predicament. I would suggest that one who has the money to hire an attorney to test the renunciations in the courts ought to do so. It seems to us that the very fact of imprisonment at Tule Lake prevented renunciants from exercising a free choice. Of course, there are other facts showing duress which might be raised in particular cases.

Unfortunately, renunciants will not be released from the Tule Lake Center after the formal signing of surrenders. The authority of the Justice Department to hold renunciants has been questioned, particularly where the renunciant has never held dual citizenship. In such a case, he would seem to be stateless and therefore not subject to internment as an enemy alien.

Unfortunately, I do not know at this time how long the Department of Justice intends to hold renunciants, but I am encouraging persons to sue out writs of habeas corpus testing the Justice Department's power to hold renunciants as enemy aliens.

Sincerely yours,

EB:AR

Ernest Besig, Director

IYAMA, TERUO  
, EVELYN

*Form letter  
Sept. '3*

AUG 27 1945

Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

August 23, 1945

Attention Mr. Wexler:

Referring to the telegram sent on August 11th, and letters sent on the 17th, we wish to add the following:

My wife and I have heard from different sources that regaining our citizenship at present is impossible. If that is the case, we earnestly wish to be released as parolees.

For the past three years being in this center we had been subjected to and became very vulnerable and susceptible to distorted misinformation, rumors, and group pressures. Blinded by these we have taken a very drastic and wrong action, which we are now deeply regretting. Brought up with the American ways of life, we did not realize what it meant to be an American, until we had lost everything that America stood for. Deep in our hearts we still possess the love for the land which gave us birth, home and education.

Now that this truth dawned on us, we would earnestly desire to amend our mistakes. From the bottom of our hearts, my wife and I pledge our loyalty to the United States of America and our sincere wish is to build a home and bring up our daughter under the Stars and Stripes. My parents and my youngest brother have relocated to Berkeley, and my eldest brother is in Cleveland, Ohio. My wife's brother has relocated to Chicago.

Artist is my profession, and am a graduate of San Francisco's School of Fine Arts. My wish and hope is to be someday, reconized as an American painter.

My wife is a Californian State licensed Hairdresser & Cosmetician. My mother-in-law had a beauty shop for 13 years in Oakland in which my wife worked for about 5 years. We would like to relocate with my wife's family as soon as possible and at the first opportunity offered, we would very much desire to open a beauty salon since all my in-laws are licensed beauticians.

Hoping you will give this your special attention to our plea for parolee, and thanking you in advance, we remain

Sincerely yours,

*Teruo Iyama  
Evelyn Iyama  
#13504  
Newell, Calif*

(COPY)

Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

AUG 27 1945

August 14, 1945

Attention Mr. Wexler:

My family and I expatriated while in Topaz in the year 1943. The reasons for my actions were caused by:

My parents have come to live in America to find a "new world" of their own. They had raised their family and educated their children in the United States. It was at that time that was the happiest moment of their life. I did not have a luxurious means of living but had a comfortably means of livelihood. It was during this harmonious time that war had suddenly begun in 1941. It was to this affect that all Japanese descents were ordered to go to different designated assembly center.

Thirty year of a happy home and livelihood my parents had so painfully worked for were suddenly uprooted overnight. The shocks we had encountered at that time cannot be dreamed of unless that person were one of us. It was at that time that future looked very desolate and dark for us.

My wearied aged working parents and I who had lived in California all our lives were suddenly ordered to move in mass to the desolate dry desert of Utah surrounded by barbed wired fences. It was here that we had undergone disappointment, frustration of mind and lost all hope in the future. It was at this critical moment that my parents decided to repatriate and at which time I decided to follow them by expatriating myself. In the year 1943 my eldest brother Masayuki Iyama, who was americanized and who was against expatriating suddenly decided to relocate secretly from his parents. It was then that my parents had decided to cancel their repatriation. As for myself, I was secretly engaged to a girl who had repatriated and decided to follow her here. She is now my present wife.

On Spet. of 1943 we were segregated to the Tule Lake center with both my parents accompanying me as volunteers. It was during my wife's five month pregnancy that my parents decided to go back to Topaz with intentions of relocating from there. As for myself, the expectant baby had placed undue responsibility on my part in the future livelihood. I heard that Tokyo's art world was very progressive. It was this that I had made my decision to go to Japan.

(COPY)

-2-

In the meantime hysteria rumors had been circulating around that Japan would not accept any American Citizen of Japanese descent unless they've renounced their citizenship. That is the reason why I applied for renunciation. Living in a center for three years subject to internal group pressure, one is keenly vulnerable to misinformation and distorted information and I have been no exception. Off and on we've received letters from friends on the outside stating that they were well received and were doing well. It was thru this that I had discussed with my wife and my in-laws in relocating to which we had all taken interest. About a week ago, I received a letter from my parents who had suddenly left Topaz notifying us of their arrival in relocating at Berkeley. Our day by day thought and late decision was due to listening to rumors in the camp, accumulated vicious discrimination and personal attacks on the outside. Since renouncing and attaining fatherhood I finally realized that the step that I took was a mistake and have deeply regretted this.

Knowing that really inside of me, I had cherished everything that American ways of living stands for, I had seriously reconsidered what citizenship in this country meant to me and my family and my family's future. If it is not too late and since I have not yet been informed that my application for renunciation has been accepted by the United States government, I earnestly desire to have that application cancelled.

I would like to relocate in the near future with my family and my in-laws. I intend to remain a loyal American citizen.

I have written to the Swiss Embassy and the State Department to cancel my expatriation.

This is to note that I have sent a telegram to your Department on August 11, 1945, Saturday wishing to cancel my application for renouncing of citizenship.

Very truly yours,

---

Teruo Iyama  
Family #13504  
4605-A Tule Lake Center  
Newell, Calif.

(COPY)

AUG 27 1945

Attorney General  
Department of Justice  
Washington, D. C.

August 14, 1945

Attention Mr. Wexler:

I was brought up in a home where my mother's religion is Catholic. We had a peaceful and cheerful life americanized in its ways until war was declared in 1941. In 1942 all Japanese descents Alien, American Citizens alike were ordered to evacuate in mass to a designated assembly center.

We arrived in Tanforan Assembly Center in 1942. It was there that we received a shock that cannot be described in words unless the person was there to experience it. Our living quarters consisted of one horse stall 10x20 with five canvas cots and ticks. The walls were decorated with freshly sprayed calcimite on cowwebs, bites by insects, whiffs of manur and dust caused many a sleepless night. In order to eat we had to stand in a so-called breadline for an hour to two hour carrying our own plate, cup, fork, spoon, etc. One cannot realize the hurt this action imbedded in us. We were bitterly dissallusioned, everything looked desolate and dark for us. It was then that my parents and I decided to repatriate. After signing our names weeks of worry and anxiety with sealed up emotion suddenly gave away with all of us. The loneliness that came up were inexplicable.

In 1942 we were evacuated to the dusty desolate Utah desert surrounded by barbed wire fences. We were again asked to sign the repatriation forms. We had lived there scarcely an year when we were again segregated to the Tule Lake Center. It was here, that my marriage took place. Everything looked peaceful until about eight month ago when rumors had been circulating around that Japan would not accept any American Citizen of Japanese descent unless they've renounced their citizenship. That is why my husband and I applied for renunciation.

Living in a center for three years, subject to internal group pressure one is keenly vulnerable to misinformation and distorted information and I have been no exception. I realize now that the step I had taken was a mistake and have deeply regretted this. I earnestly feel that I would like to live and rear my daughter in the United States. I have sincerely reconsidered what citizenship in this country meant to me and my family and my family's future. If it is not too late and since I have not yet been informed that my application for renunciation has been accepted by the United States government, I earnestly desire to have that application cancelled.

(COPY)

-2-

I would like to relocate in the near future with my husband, daughter and my parents. I intend to remain a loyal American Citizen.

I have also notified the Swiss Embassy and the State Department to cancel my expatriation.

This is to note that I have sent a telegram to your Department on August 11, 1945, Saturday wishing to cancel my application for renunciation of citizenship.

Very truly yours,

---

Evelyn Iyama  
Family #13504  
4605-A  
Tule Lake Center  
Newell, California