

PASSIVE RESISTANCE TO SEGREGATION

*Segregation Report
By Rev. D. Kitagawa*

I. Due to resentment against the Registration.

Segregation on the basis "of that registration" is basically unfair, hence, segregation hearing of which colonists are not enthusiastic. The term "loyalty," when used in connection with patriotism, has a strong connotation in the mind of Issei. As long as they remain subjects of the Japanese Empire, whether they are forced, obliged or choose to, they cannot be "loyal" to any other country. This is the Issei psychology. To them loyalty is a synonym with allegiance. The constant use of the term loyalty in connection with segregation is doing more harm than is usually recognized. Many Issei who answered yes to question 28 refuse to be transferred to other centers because it will mean, according to the statement made regarding the segregation program, he is "loyal" to America of which he cannot be a citizen.

II. Lack of confidence in WRA

One of the main reasons why there is no organized resistance to segregation is that people do not take it as seriously as the registration. In six months they say the policy will change and one of the two things will happen.

- A. Those who are now transferred will be forced to relocate in spite of the statement now made that relocation will never be compulsory.
- B. Those who remain in Tule Lake will be just as free to relocate as those in other centers, in spite of the statement now being made that those in the segregation center shall not have the privilege of relocation for the duration.

III. Troublesomeness of moving.

It must not be forgotten that the whole thing is closely to do with the human nature.

- A. People are to be transferred to other centers and not because they like to be transferred but for the sake of administrative expediency. There is nothing much to look forward to in any other center.
- B. Entering in the department of aged couple whose two sons are over-seas fighting in the United States army, this reporter has lost heart to tell these old couple that they should go to another center. They are determined to remain at Tule Lake no matter what is told to them. The small

III. B. (Continued) apartment is full of household and personal belongings--hand-made benches, screens, shelves, etc. A year ago when they first moved into the same apartment there was nothing else than a couple of beds there. They collected scrap lumbars and built those things necessary for their daily living. Now they are told to transfer to another center, where with all probability, they would have to start the same painful procedure all over again. This is pretty much the case with every family. Let it never be forgotten that we are dealing with families and not troops.

IV. Psychology of Defense.

People are tired of packing things and moving. There is no loyalty or disloyalty business involved. People just don't like to move, but in order to justify their dislike of moving out of the center they attack registration, administrative inability of WRA and thousand and one other thing.

V. Tackling an impossibility.

Segregation cannot be democratic by its nature. It is evident that pressure groups whose tendency is definitely anti-democratic has cause WRA to undertake this particular problem. WRA is not blame for this, but contradiction cannot be avoided if attempt is made to carry on fundamentally anti-democratic program in a democratic way. It simply cannot be done. As far as this reporter can see there is no difference in the attitude evacuees who would prefer to remain at Tule Lake, and those who are willing to be transferred to other centers. Both groups are law-abiding and perfectly harmless people just the same. Segregation on the basis of that registration for that purpose which is stated in the official announcement is as far as evacuees are concerned of utter nonsense.

VI. What good the segregation program does.

- A. It is useful as a means to destroy the complacency of the colonists.
- B. It helps to promote the relocation of some evacuees outside of these centers. To this reporter there cannot be seen much of an accomplishment by this program with a possible exception to satisfying pressure groups outside.

VII. In view of the above-stated passive resistances on the part of colonists, many of whom are those eligible to transfer, this reporter feels that the best thing to do is to transfer those who have freely expressed their desire to do so, and let those who do not want to be transferred remain here and without further attempt of persuasion, providing they understand that they will lose the privilege of relocation. A closer coordination between committees dealing with the segregation program is of vital importance. Lack of coordination causes repercussion which might lead to total defeat of the whole problem. For instance, the interviewers are instructed to assure the people that a selection of groups to respective centers will not be made until all interviews are finished, but before the interviews are finished the first and second groups have been already announced. At present we do not hear much complaint from the colonists, but this puts the interviewers into an embarrassing position and could very easily cause a serious trouble.

See

WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
COMMUNITY ANALYSIS SECTION

Tule Lake Project
Newell, California

CM

July 22, 1943

MEMORANDUM TO: Kenneth M. Harkness
 Harvey M. Coverley

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS OF SEGREGATION

This report does not attempt in any way to analyze the causes of the unrest resulting from the announcement of segregation, but is an attempt to point out the difficulties as they exist.

The problem of segregation of loyal Japanese-Americans and aliens from the disloyal cannot be adequately understood without taking into consideration the impacts upon the evacuees of the evacuation and registration. Basically, there are two separate levels of thought in regard to segregation upon which it is very difficult to find a common ground. The administration is thinking in terms of loyalty and disloyalty, the evacuees are thinking in terms of protest against pressure from the administration. Evacuees express their resentment not on a political basis, but on a personal and family basis. A connotation of "loyalty" does not apply to the reaction of the evacuee except among an isolated minority. The result of this disparity in attitude makes a measure of loyalty almost impossible to determine.

The unfortunate choice of Tule Lake as the segregation center brings up some very serious problems. It means, first of all, that the people who will be moved from the center are those who are ear-marked as loyal Americans. The converse is true that those individuals marked disloyal will have the greater stability of staying in their present homes. Every colonist so far interviewed has expressed the opinion that the segregation, therefore, places a premium upon "disloyalty". Due to the confusion of the issue regarding loyalty versus disloyalty, the loyal evacuees' reaction is that he will express disloyalty in order to remain in Tule Lake. The following statement is typical of aroused evacuee sentiment toward segregation: "During evacuation I urged cooperation with

the government. During registration I urged cooperation and was called "Imu". If the government forces me to leave Tule Lake, even with bayonets, I'll scream my disloyalty at the front gate, threaten sabotage and write to Martin Dies telling him that I am a disloyal Jap and the WRA is forcing me into loyal centers."

Elements among the evacuees who are sincerely interested in relocation and the public relations aspect of segregation are frantically searching for the solution. Briefly, they fear the following results of segregation with Tule Lake as the segregation center:

1. Complete passive resistance causing failure of segregation in the true sense of the word with consequent newspaper repercussions.
2. A false crystalization of disloyalty with appeal to inimical groups such as the Dies Committee (ammunition in their hands) resulting in dissolution of relocation and the substitution of army (or other rigid control) of the evacuees.
3. A crystalization of anti-government sentiment to the extent of identification of Japanese cultural affinities with true disloyal manifestations, a phenomenon which has never occurred before.
4. Individuals who, in Tule Lake, after a period of more than a year, have shown their capabilities and are in trusted key positions in the Administration will be starting in a new center where all such positions are taken and will thus be entirely ineffective.

Nearly all suggested solutions involve a reversal of the policy to utilize Tule Lake as the segregation center. Briefly they break down to several simple suggestions:

1. Utilization of a center where antagonisms are at a low ebb for the segregation center.
2. Utilization of an assembly center for the segregation center, thereby placing a premium upon loyalty rather than the reverse.

3. Utilization of an internment center or prisoner of war camp for the segregatees.
4. If there is no possibility of eliminating Tule Lake as the segregation center, then by individual counseling ascertain where the loyal evacuees being moved wish to go and respect those wishes.

The last suggestion is generally proposed as a last hope to alleviate the distress of segregation.

Reported by

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