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NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

NOV. 8, 1945

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*Enclosure of
letter of 11/23/45*

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

DRAFT

Hon. Harry S. Truman
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

We address you in behalf of the Japanese minority in our country evacuated from the Pacific Coast defense area in the early months of the war with Japan as a measure of military security. It would appear now from the record that the fears then expressed that a substantial portion of this minority was disloyal were wholly without foundation. No case of espionage or sabotage occurred. Thousands volunteered for the armed forces and thousands more were drafted and served with great distinction on the battlefields of Europe.

It would appear, therefore, that so unprecedented an evacuation on purely racial grounds was not in the event justified by the fears of disloyal activities. Yet to thousands of our loyal citizens grave injustices have been done, and the entire social and economic life of a whole group of people long resident among us has been uprooted.

Since the relocation procedures went into effect in October, 1942, a substantial number of those evacuated have resettled away from the Pacific Coast and are making their way successfully in American life. But thousands returning to the Coast, now that the centers are being closed by December 15, 1945, are confronted with serious problems in securing housing, employment and assistance in re-establishing self-support.

Moved by the urgency of these problems, a national Conference on Japanese Americans was held in New York on November 8th, attended by 65 representatives of 40 national organizations engaged in aiding in one way or another the people of Japanese ancestry in re-establishing themselves. The conference was called together by the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans of the Home Missions Council of North America.

As a result of its deliberations, the conference desires to request you to take the following action. The organizations officially endorsing this request are represented by the signers. Representatives of other organizations present were in entire agreement but their official action has not reached us within the short time following the conference.

We request:

1. That you authorize by executive order the creation of a special agency within the Department of the Interior to continue the necessary Federal services to the evacuees after the War Relocation Authority goes out of existence next June. Our experience has shown that the several federal departments concerned with housing, social security and employment require coordination of their work in relation to this particular minority, whose problems are distinct and for whom the government has a peculiar responsibility, since the problems were created by the evacuation.
2. That you recommend to the Congress procedure for the consideration of the legitimate indemnity claims of this minority, whose property losses as a result of the forced evacuation were enormous. They were obliged to sell property at a fraction of its value or lease or rent it at nominal figures. Confusion reigned under the pressure of the army's orders for speedy internment and many lost land, buildings, and movable goods altogether. Since this was a war measure, it is clearly the responsibility of the federal government to make proper restitution. These war claims certainly have as strong a moral justification as others recognized by the government. But there is no way of meeting them without Congressional appropriations out of which the Federal courts may meet what they find to be legitimate charges against the government.
3. That the Department of Justice be requested to adopt a policy in the deportation to Japan of interned aliens and of those who renounced their citizenship not more onerous than that already in effect for German enemy aliens. That policy, we understand, provides for the deportation only of those who were leaders in pro-Axis organizations or who were otherwise actively pro-Axis. Consideration should also be given to the fact that many of the aliens have American-born children, some of whom have served honorably in our armed forces. Such families should not be broken up. These humane considerations, we understand, obtain in the case of German aliens and they should equally obtain with the Japanese. All aliens who desire to remain in the United States and concerning whom there is no convincing record of disloyalty should be given hearings.

We trust, Mr. President, that these requests will have your consideration with appropriate instructions to the administrative departments and with a request to Congress for consideration of the claims. We speak as American citizens concerned for justice to a minority which is the victim of wartime and other prejudices and whose integration in American life is a necessary obligation of our democracy.

We are, with great respect,

Sincerely yours,

George A. Wieland, Chairman
National Conference on
Japanese Americans

OUTLINE OF TALK GIVEN BY

Ruth W. Kingman

on

"CONDITIONS ON THE WEST COAST"

at

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

November 8, 1945

New York City

*Enclosure
of letter 11/23/45*

A. Conditions Prior to Evacuation

- I. Population
- II. Employment
- III. Public Attitudes
 - a. Education
 - b. Labor and Management
 - c. Social Agencies
 - d. Religious

Little Anti-feeling prior to Order

B. Summary of Effects of Evacuation Order on Public Attitudes

- I. Press, Radio, Screen
- II. Education
- III. Labor and Management
- IV. Law Enforcement Agency
- V. Anti Oriental Organization
- VI. Church
 - a. Protestant Church Commission
 - b. Staff for WRA, etc.
 - c. from Missionaries returning from Japan
(Too little recognition of needs of Nisei as
Americans, rather than as subjects of Mission-
ary program)

C. Situation facing returning Evacuees.

- I. January 1945 - June 1945
 - a. Largely antagonism
- II. June, 1945 - September 15, 1945
 - a. Decreasing overt antagonism
 - b. Increasing housing shortage
- III. September 15, 1945 - to present time.
 - a. Housing shortage increases
 - b. Antagonism lessens
(Subtle, economic)

- c. Lack of funds
- d. Pressure from WRA
- e. Lack of coordination of government and private agencies

D. Facts to be faced

I. Unfavorable

- a. Eastward trek of Nisei leaders.
- b. Recurrence of Li'l Tokyo
- c. Uncertified welfare cases.
- d. Distrust of WRA.
- e. Confusion among agencies as to scope of responsibility.

II. Favorable

- a. Public better informed, particularly re Nisei, due to reports on 442nd, Intelligence of Army and Navy.
- b. Dispersal away from Pacific Coast.
- c. Acceptance by social agencies of a special responsibility in solution of evacuee problems.

CONCLUSION

A. Outstanding problems still unsolved

- I. Housing - temporary and permanent
- II. Upgrading
- III. Legal questions
 - a. Renunciants
 - b. Deportation
 - c. Indemnification for losses suffered
 - d. Acceptance of federal responsibility for full restoration of evacuees' rightful place in communities.

B. Outlook for Future. Entirely up to Nisei and interested community and national groups.

- I. Nisei responsibility - Interpretation of Issei to Community and Community to Issei.
- II. Group responsibility

Nisei)	
Welfare)	A co-ordinated program of
Church)	<u>Integration</u>
Labor)	
Education)	not Segregation and Separation.
Management)	

AGENDA

*Enclosure
letter 7/11/23/45*

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

Sponsored by

Committee On Resettlement of Japanese Americans,
Home Missions Council of North America

Parkside Hotel, 18 Gramercy Park South, New York,
Thursday, November 8, 1945

Dr. George A. Wieland, Chairman, Presiding

- 10 a.m. "Conditions on the West Coast" (1) Up to the Evacuation
(2) Since the Return of the Evacuees
by Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman, Executive Secretary, Pacific Coast Committee
on American Principles and Fair Play.
- "The Closing of the Relocation Centers"
by Mr. Jobu Yasumura, American Baptist Home Missions Society.
- Noon Adjourn for lunch
- 12:15 p.m. Luncheon. Guests of Honor: Nisei Veterans of World War II.
"The Concern of Nisei Soldiers"
by Mr. Bill Ugifusa
- 2:00 p.m. "Unsolved Problems of Japanese Americans"
by Mr. Peter Aoki, Regional Representative,
Japanese American Citizens League.
- 3:00 p.m. (a) "Legal Problems".
Discussion led by Mr. Roger N. Baldwin, Director,
American Civil Liberties Union.
- (b) "Community Adjustment Problems"
Discussion led by Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman.
- 4:30 p.m. Closing Session

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Conference

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

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Since the relocation procedures went into effect in October, 1942, a substantial number of those evacuated have resettled away from the Pacific Coast and are making their way successfully in American life. But thousands returning to the Coast, now that the centers are being closed by December 15, 1945, are confronted with serious problems in securing housing, employment and assistance in re-establishing self-support.

Moved by the urgency of these problems, a national Conference on Japanese Americans was held in New York on November 8th, attended by 65 representatives of 40 national organizations engaged in aiding in one way or another the people of Japanese ancestry in re-establishing themselves. The conference was called together by the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans of the Home Missions Council of North America.

As a result of their deliberations, the members of the conference desire to request you to take the following action. Their names are attached hereunder, representing their personal endorsement of this letter to you.

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It would appear, therefore, that so unprecedented an evacuation on purely racial grounds was not in the event justified by the fears of disloyal activities. Yet to thousands of our loyal citizens *of Oriental stock* grave injustices have been done, and the entire social and economic life of a whole group of people long resident among us has been uprooted.

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evacuation were enormous. They were obliged to sell property at a fraction of its value or lease or rent it at nominal figures. Confusion reigned under the pressure of the army's orders for speedy internment and many lost land, buildings, and movable goods altogether. Since this was a war measure, it is clearly the responsibility of the federal government to make proper restitution. These war claims certainly have as strong a moral justification as others recognized by the government. But there is no way of meeting them without Congressional appropriations out of which the Federal courts may meet what they find to be legitimate charges against the government.

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We trust, Mr. President, that these requests will have

your consideration with appropriate instructions to the administrative departments and with a request to Congress for consideration of the claims. We speak as American citizens concerned for justice to a minority which is the victim of wartime and other prejudices and whose integration in American life is a necessary obligation of our democracy.

We are, with great respect,

Sincerely yours,

George A. Wieland, Chairman
National Conference on
Japanese Americans

minutes folder

SUMMARY OF
THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
JAPANESE AMERICANS

November 8, 1945
New York, New York

December 7, 1945

To the Delegates:

We felt greatly honored to have you at our conference. Such a meeting should probably have produced imposing minutes. But it was not an officially constituted conference of "constituent" bodies. So we have decided not to publish minutes. Instead we send you this summary.

There are also a number of suggestions and questions addressed to each organization represented. We look forward to your co-operation in considering and carrying them out.

We regret deeply that it has taken so long to get this summary to you.

I promised Mr. Dillon S. Myer that I would send him the report of this conference for any reply or comment he may desire to make. When I hear from him, I will send you his reply. I think it is only fair that we do this. So please consider his reply a supplement to the report of the conference. Also, to be considered part of the conference report are the two reports by Mr. Yasumura and the document submitted by the J.A.C.L. which were distributed at the conference.

The proceedings of the conference were recorded by Miss Carolyn Clifford, and the registration was taken care of by Mrs. Florence Hori, both secretaries of the Home Missions Council. Appreciation is due them.

Sincerely yours,

Toru Matsumoto

Toru Matsumoto, Director
Committee on Resettlement
of Japanese Americans

I. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

An executive committee was appointed which met after the conference adjourned.

The following members attended the Executive Committee meeting: Miss Violet M. Sieder, Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman, Messrs. Roger N. Baldwin, Jobu Yasumura, Peter Aoki, Royal H. Fisher, Bishop C. S. Reifanider, Dr. George A. Wieland, Mr. Robertson M. Fort, George B. Ahn, Jr., and Rev. Toru Matsumoto, (chairman).

1. The committee discussed the Letter to the President.
2. Appointed a three man committee to talk with the Social Security Board, as follows: Miss Mildred Esgar, Miss Violet M. Sieder, Dr. Mark A. Dawber (and Rev. Toru Matsumoto, ex officio.) The idea of the same committee seeing one or two Congressmen was abandoned. Please pardon us.
3. Agreed that the American Council on Race Relations is the most logical organization to handle the over-all problem if and when (mostly when) both the Committee on American Principles and Fair Play and the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans go out of business.

(The Staff will have a conference with the American Council in the near future. The Council is mainly a clearing house. How much service it can offer is the question we will discuss - T. M.)

II. THE LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT:

C O P Y

November 30, 1945

Hon. Harry S. Truman
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

We address you in behalf of the Japanese minority in our country evacuated from the Pacific Coast defense area in the early months of the war with Japan as a measure of military security. It would appear now from the record that the fears then expressed that a substantial portion of this minority was disloyal were wholly without foundation. No case of espionage or sabotage occurred. Thousands volunteered for the armed forces and thousands more were drafted and served with great distinction on the battlefields of Europe.

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As a result of their deliberations, the members of the conference desire to request you to take the following action. Their names are attached hereunder, representing their personal endorsement of this letter to you.

We request:

1. That you authorize by executive order the creation of a temporary agency within the Department of the Interior to continue while necessary federal services to the evacuees after the War Relocation Authority goes out of existence next June. Our experience has shown that the several federal departments concerned with housing, social security and employment require coordination of their work in relation to this particular minority, whose problems are distinct and for whom the government has a peculiar responsibility, since the problems were created by the evacuation.

2. That you recommend to the Congress procedure for the consideration of the legitimate indemnity claims of this minority, whose property losses as a result of the forced evacuation were enormous. They were obliged to sell property at a fraction of its value or lease or rent it at nominal figures. Confusion reigned under the pressure of the army's orders for speedy internment and many lost land, buildings, and movable goods altogether. Since this was a war measure, it is clearly the responsibility of the federal government to make proper restitution. These war claims certainly have as strong a moral justification as others recognized by the government. But there is no way of meeting them without Congressional appropriations out of which the Federal courts may meet what they find to be legitimate charges against the government.

3. That the Department of Justice be requested to adopt a fair and humane policy in the deportation of interned Japanese aliens and of those who renounced their citizenship. Consideration should be

given to the fact that many of the aliens have American-born children, some of whom have served honorably in our armed forces. Such families should not be broken up. All alien Japanese residents who desire to remain in the United States and concerning whom there is no convincing record of disloyalty should be given hearings, if necessary.

We trust, Mr. President, that these requests will have your consideration with appropriate instructions to the administrative departments and with a request to Congress for consideration of the claims. We speak as American citizens concerned for justice to a minority which is the victim of war-time and other prejudices and whose integration in American life is a necessary obligation of our democracy.

We are, with great respect,

Sincerely yours,

George A. Wieland, Chairman
National Conference
on Japanese Americans

(And 15 other names.)

III. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS:

ON FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY:

Personal as well as group problems of Japanese Americans were created by government action (i.e., the evacuation). The closing of the Relocation Centers is creating more and new problems for them. Many personal problems will remain even after the War Relocation Authority is no longer in existence, after June 1, 1946.

There should, therefore, be created a short time agency (say within the Department of the Interior) to assume the responsibility of the Federal Government for Japanese Americans, and coordinate the related work of social security (public welfare assistance), housing (Federal Public Housing,) and employment.

Write to the President, members of Congress, newspapers, your own periodicals urging the creation of such an agency and expressing your support should one be created. (See Item I in the letter to the President.)

ON WAR DAMAGE CLAIMS:

The evacuees' property losses through forced sale, etc., at the time of the evacuation were enormous. They are entitled to the same treatment as others who sustained losses due to war and war time actions of the government, e.g., industries. (The War Claims Bill). But Congress is not likely to get very much concerned on its own initiative about the property losses of Japanese Americans. They have no active friends in Congress. Some Congressmen are fair, however.

What we can do -- obtain as many claims as possible locally. Send them to American Civil Liberties Union; New York, 170 Fifth Avenue; San Francisco, 216 Pine Street. Write to the President, members of the Congress, etc., asking them to appropriate funds with which courts can pay indemnities. (See Item 2 in the letter to the President.)

ON DEPORTATION:

Some Nisei who renounced American citizenship under duress (i.e., community pressure) desire very strongly now to remain in this country.

Many alien Issei who are classed as deportees are parents of Nisei service men; some are wives. Even the aliens deemed disloyal did not engage in sabotage or espionage. They did not commit any crime. To all these who do not want to go to Japan because of family ties with American citizens, etc., fair consideration should be given individually.

Write to the President, the Department of Justice, etc. (See Item 3 in the letter to the President.)

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT:

The above three major concerns were voted to be presented to the President by a letter. Drafting of the letter was referred to the Executive Committee and signed by some members of the conference.

ON NISEI VETERANS:

It was voted that a letter be addressed to the President, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Interior, asking them to take steps to solve the problems of the families of Nisei veterans.

Such a letter was sent out from the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans. Will you also write? If you need data, please do not hesitate to call us or write to us. (GRamercy 5-3475, or 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.)

ON YOUNG PEOPLE:

The teen-agers who have lived in a Relocation Center for three years need much help. (Mr. Yasumura stressed this, you will recall.) They need recreational facilities and opportunities outside.

All youth serving agencies were urged to study effective ways to bring Nisei into a program of integration through social activities.

Many youth serving agencies represented expressed hope to get Nisei to be active in their local groups.

The most effectice way to accomplish this objective is to work out a plan in cooperation with an active Nisei. Please advise your local groups to "get hold of" a Nisei.

ON SCHOOL CHILDREN:

The effect of 3 years' segregation upon school age children is very noticeable. Children are good mixers, generally, but resettlers are oversensitive in their new schools. A great deal depends upon the

attitude of the teacher, here. School principals in the district expecting or have Nisei children might be called upon by local committee members. Also urge parents to join P.T.A.

ON COLLEGE STUDENTS:

Most families cannot finance Nisei in college. Let us help them with scholarships. Refer all matters pertaining to Nisei college students to: Miss Ann Graybill, Director, National Japanese American Student Relocation Council, 1201 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

The Council will be in "business" until June, 1946. After that ---?

TO THE SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES:

Shall we meet from time to time to coordinate our activities at the national level? How can we encourage our local groups to get together? Can we set up a joint-committee between the social agencies and church groups to work on this matter?

TO CHURCHES:

A strong plea was made by a church representative to remember our moral obligation to the evacuees. Will you not address a general letter to all your pastors, and leaders of church women and other groups covering suggestions for action made by this conference, asking consideration?

IV. ADDRESSES

MR. YASUMURA:

See reports distributed.

MRS. KINGMAN:

Mrs. Kingman's main points -

The W. R. A. program is good on paper. Reports sound wonderful. But the program has broken down: the people are not relocating; they are being dislocated.

There is a bottleneck between the Washington office of W.R.A. and local offices; the national plan is good, but it is not functioning locally.

The organizations and agencies here represented are in a tight spot too, because the W.R.A. program has broken down. The burden is falling upon our local groups, but the burden is too heavy, and the local agencies are not adequately prepared to carry the situation.

The people in California just don't like Orientals.

The Joint Immigration Committee has always been the principal spokesman for the anti-Nisei group, and has become a mouthpiece for the Growers-Shippers Association which controls the agricultural picture on the West Coast. They oppose all Japanese Americans, fearing their competition in agriculture, failing to recognize the fact that less than half of the

Japanese American population is agricultural. Incidentally, the Nisei are the most highly educated in America, and are represented in all professions and trades.

People in California are opportunists. They are opportunists politically, so it is difficult to get political support for Nisei. The same is true of most labor groups. Church people there cannot be counted on to help the situation basically. Hence this urgent appeal to you to help your agency people working on the West Coast. To be sure, social agencies are not familiar with Japanese, because Japanese used to take of themselves and do not like to accept charity. Their religious groups were purposely segregated. Integration of the persons of Japanese ancestry is the goal. Use of members of this group on your staffs is strongly suggested. The government used them to its profit. Why not private agencies?

The Relocation Center's institutionalized life is bad, but the actual living conditions to which the evacuees are forced to return now are much worse. The Pacific Coast cannot take care of the problems created by the closing of the camps. The people, both those friendly and those unfriendly to the evacuees, deem this to be a federal government responsibility. People inclined to help are not equipped.

Antagonism is decreasing. The War Department came through with good publicity stressing the activities of the 442nd Combat Team (all Japanese Americans), and the Intelligence units in the Pacific Theatre.

The W. R. A. does not consider a housing problem to exist when evacuees say they have a place to go. W. R. A. indeed found some housing. But the conditions existing in public housing projects are far from adequate. Hostels are over-crowded. Friends are putting up friends.

The churches have done a number of things, some of which were helpful. Church people are prominent among those who wanted to help persons of Japanese ancestry. But there is too much denominationalism. Their hostels are becoming cores for "Little Tokyos." The only solution is the integration of these people, but some officials of some denominations are not helpful at all. Interdenominational approach is the only way. Councils of churches have been most constructive in this direction.

Few social welfare agencies on the coast have gotten together on the question of administering a program of assistance to Japanese. There is a dire need for them to get together.

SERGEANT YEICHI KUWAYAMA:

The 100th Battalion was formed in large part of Americans of Japanese ancestry from Hawaii who were in the Army previous to Pearl Harbor. They came to the United States as a segregated group and were later sent to Italy (Anzio and Cassino). The War Department decided to have a larger unit so it organized the 442nd Combat Unit. Men from Relocation Centers, Hawaii, and elsewhere volunteered. They were trained for a year and then were sent to Italy.

We went into action right above Rome. We also went into combat in the Florence area. The Seventh Army in France decided they needed the 442nd to fight in the Alsace-Lorraine area. At that time we did a remarkable piece of work. We suffered many casualties. Later we were sent to the Italian border.

After the winter campaign, General Mark Clark recalled us for the spear-head drive in the Po Valley, to defeat as many German forces as possible. When the Po Valley region was hit, it was not many days before the war in Europe was over. At that time I was sent back to the States.

Now a little about these men. Many of them are from Relocation Centers. They are worried about their families and about jobs, etc. You, as agencies, must assist them as much as possible.

Displaced persons in Europe have created a bad situation. This will happen in the United States and the situation is bad. Nisei veterans are having difficulty in getting jobs and housing. They need the support of the general public of the United States. They just want to live and work here unmolested.

Upon the return of the 442nd there will be approximately 11 million other G. I.'s coming back. They will also need assistance of various kinds. In seeking jobs, there is a need of breaking down barriers. Most employers do not know the Nisei - how they will work, etc. The Veterans themselves cannot break these barriers; Caucasian Americans must do it.

I must warn against creating racial stereotypes. There are some good and some bad Japanese Americans. We must remember that they come from many different parts of this country and from Hawaii. We must treat them as individuals; we must evaluate each one."

* * * * *

"What was the occasion of your visit with President Truman?" Sergeant Kuwayama was asked. The reply:

"The occasion was the presentation of a check to the Roosevelt Memorial Fund. All of the 442nd had contributed and the check was for \$4,300."

* * * * *

MR. AOKI:

In the afternoon, Mr. Peter Aoki spoke as East Coast representative of the Japanese American Citizens League.

"These are the things that our organization considers to be urgent problems:

1. Naturalization for Issei. This question is our first concern, for it is a basic problem which has to be solved. Issei are not eligible to citizenship, which creates problems such as issuance of commercial fishing licenses, anti-land legislation, etc. We believe citizenship must not be based upon color or race. All minority groups have fought for this. The Chinese have been granted rights of naturalization. We asked that Japanese be included in this but we were advised by government officials to 'lay off' until the war is over. Yet if this type of discrimination is to be fully eradicated, it must be done as a whole.

2. Fairness in Deportation. Several types of alien Japanese are said to be subject to deportation. Such are:

- 1) Alien wives (who lack permanent residence status) of American citizens.
- 2) Illegal entrance people who came after 1924, illegally.
- 3) Children of international trades people, who were born in Japan but came here with their parents.
- 4) Students and temporary visitors and people who are refugees in a political sense.

We would like to see humane consideration given to each case.

3. Government restrictions. Certain departments of government have discriminated against Japanese Americans. (The Navy which has barred Nisei announced November 14, that they would be accepted.)

4. Legislation - F. E. P. C.

We consider this vital legislation. There is no disagreement on this among organizations interested in minority problems. We are anxious to see Federal and State governments act.

5. Anti-alien Land Act - This applies in California. This action is particularly aimed at Issei who are ineligible for naturalization by law. No property can be owned by them. This interferes with adjustment of Japanese American families in California. The state is trying to enforce this legislation quite strictly. Our stand on this is that it is discriminatory legislation.

6. Nisei Veterans. We believe that there is a great deal of work needed for Nisei veterans. We want one Nisei veteran appointed to the administrative agency. Nisei veterans have no place to go. They have to help re-establish their own families. Many things related to resettlement involve veterans."

"Which one of these problems do you consider most urgent?" Mr. Aoki was asked.

"The Alien Land Act of California. If it could be declared unconstitutional, it would be excellent. I believe this act also applies in Arkansas and Iowa."

MR. ROGER BAIDWIN:

Mr. Baldwin stated that the problems of the Japanese were at bottom moral, not legal, arising from race prejudice, but that they had to be attacked from the stand-point of constitutional rights. The Supreme Court had evaded both the moral and constitutional questions of the evacuation, declining to interfere in war-time with the discretion of the military. Similar results have marked the appeals of conscientious objectors seeking relief from arbitrary military judgments.

The legal questions now confronting the population of Japanese ancestry cover three groups, - the aliens, the so-called loyal Nisei and the so-

called disloyal Nisei who renounced their American citizenship.

As to the aliens, discriminatory state laws, especially in California, should be tested through the highest courts, in the hope of establishing the right to own land and to engage in fishing, an old occupation now denied to Orientals by a new California statute. Suits on both grounds are pending.

Deportations to Japan of interned aliens should be confined to those who were actively pro-Japan, and on precisely the same basis as the Department of Justice has adopted for German aliens. If discrimination between Japanese and Germans appears, it should be contested in the courts.

Our greatest racial injustice is the oriental exclusion act of 1924, from which as yet only the Chinese have been exempted, as a war-time tribute to an ally. Bills to exempt the Filipinos and East Indians have passed one house. But the entire act should be repealed if justice is to be done to the thousands of loyal Issei and their sons who fought in our armies, to say nothing of the other oriental peoples excluded from the national quota system and the right to become citizens if residents.

The loyal Japanese Americans now suffer no legal restraints. They are legally as free as any other citizens. But discrimination still exists, and where it appears in public agencies it should be contested, if necessary by court action. The evacuation caused such grievous property losses to so many later found loyal, and whose detention in camps was condemned even by the Supreme Court, that they have legitimate claims for damages from the federal government. But those claims cannot be met unless Congress authorizes the courts to appraise and pay them; and the chances of that in the present temper of Congress would appear remote. But the effort should be made. The American Civil Liberties Union offices on the coast and in New York will gladly accept all claims from individuals in order to build up a case for action by Congress.

The so-called disloyal Nisei who renounced their citizenship under the pressure of war conditions constitute the most serious and immediate problem in law and public policy. Their renunciations were not all free acts. Many, if not most, renounced at Tule Lake under coercion by the pro-Japanese organizations which dominated the community, and now regret it. They are seeking to cancel their renunciations by suits in the federal courts, charging duress by the community and by their very evacuation and internment. Minors between 18 and 21 seek to establish their legal incompetence to renounce. A thousand or more cases on behalf of all of these are about to be filed in Northern California. A further question involved is the right of the government to deport these former citizens to Japan. They were born here and, save in rare cases of registration at the Japanese consulates as Japanese subjects, they are not Japanese citizens. Most appear to be stateless. Can the United States legally deport to Japan stateless persons just because their parents happened to be born there? The question is without precedent.

Some feel that legal contests in the courts are futile, because even if they won, Congress would speedily adopt new legislation to legalize deportation. It is unhappily true that not a single member of Congress has yet spoken up for the rights of Japanese Americans in the face of overwhelming hostility aroused by the war and the campaign of hatred on the coast. But it is quite possible that even Congress would bow to

judicial judgments on ground as sound as these cases may well produce; and in any event the effort must be made to avoid the immediate tragedy of wholesale deportations. It would be a dereliction of duty **if** the supporters of constitutional rights did not challenge the Department of Justice in resorting to a never-used law, the aliens' section of the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798, to deport persons of guilty of no act save renunciation of citizenship under the confused pressures of war-time.

Redress by law for the colossal injustices and losses of our Japanese minority is impossible. Only comparatively little can be accomplished in the courts, and nothing, I think, in the legislatures. But the suits may help change attitudes and build a larger and more friendly public for the inevitable complete acceptance of the Japanese as part of our American democracy.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

Auspices

COMMITTEE ON RESETTLEMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS
HOME MISSIONS COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA
297 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, N.Y.

REGISTRATION LIST

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American Council on Race Relations

Mr. Clarence Pickett
President

COMMITTEE ON RESETTLEMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS

297 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, N. Y.

The Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans is a working unit of the Home Missions Council of North America which sponsors this National Conference on Japanese Americans.

The Committee has in its membership official representatives of 13 of the boards of home missions of the Protestant denominations which unite in the council's work. Five co-opted members represent the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, the American Friends Service Committee, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association.

The Committee, however, was originally sponsored in October 1942 jointly by the Federal Council of Churches and the Home Missions Council, with the Foreign Missions Conference cooperating. The purpose was to cooperate with the War Relocation Authority in opening up communities for the settlement of Japanese Americans evacuated to the Relocation Centers. An outline of the Functions and Services of the Committee appears in the attached memorandum.

Subsequent to the military proclamation of December 16, 1944, rescinding the evacuation orders, the Committee was transferred to the Home Missions Council effective on March 1, 1945. The work is now supervised by its committee on Administration of Japanese Work, of which Dr. George A. Wieland, who is presiding today, is chairman.

Outline of the Functions and Services
of the
Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans

I INFORMATION

1. To have on hand or accessible the facts concerning evacuation, the relocation centers, the resettlement program, the attitude of the Churches, and related matters, including lists of persons and groups interested in the subject. Also shelves of literature, free and for sale.
2. To add constantly to such information by securing material in reports, statistics, publications, addresses, letters, and interviews. To keep it always up-to-date.
3. To pass on information by replies to inquiries from various sources, by referring applicants to agencies competent to care for them, by suggesting solutions to difficult problems, by news releases and publications.

II INTERPRETATION

1. To keep before the church constituency and, through it, before a wider public the basic civil and religious issues involved in the evacuation and relocation program. To call attention to significant developments.
2. To place before the churches the Government program for relocation and indicate where they may help, making use of W.R.A. publications which may be distributed.
3. To transmit to the W.R.A. and its officials or staff opinions and suggestions from churches or their representatives in regard to relocation.

III INTEGRATION

1. To conduct the Resettlement Committee's work as a part of the entire work of the Home Missions Council, including their religious work in the relocation centers.
2. To draw together in some unity of program various agencies which may make a definite contribution in their several communities to the task of resettlement. This may be done by means of local committees.
3. To endeavor to relate cooperating groups not only to each other but effectively, to the work of the W.R.A. and its local personnel.

IV INSPIRATION

1. To endeavor to keep alive, both among the evacuees and their many friends outside, in particular through the Resettlement Bulletin, a keen interest in the desirability of resettlement. To assure those still inside of earnest, devoted friendliness outside.
2. To offer counsel by means of interviews, conferences, public meetings, etc., to resettlers, resettlement committees, and church and other groups.
3. To point up what others have achieved and to suggest new forms of service in resettlement.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.	Washington Committee for the Relocation of Japanese Americans Federation of Churches 1751 N Street, N.W. Washington, D.C.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

November 8, 1945

HARDSHIPS OF "SCHEDULED RELOCATION"

I Due to Operating Adjustments

Only a few mess halls are now running. It is necessary for some persons (young and very old alike) to walk 3-4 blocks for food three times a day, and right now it is quite cold early in the mornings (7-7:30) and stormy weather increases the difficulty.

Water and laundry facilities are being shut off in some blocks even when there are old and young folks as well as ill persons in these blocks. It thus becomes necessary to go 1 or 2 blocks (sometimes 3) to the toilet, wash rooms, etc.

The food condition has been cut in quality at least. No longer is bakery bread available to the mess halls.

II Due to Departures Per Schedule

All persons, regardless of their status in terms of families, single, repatriates, are to set or be set a date for leaving, a few weeks prior to closing.

Yesterday, ten families were served with a "three day notice" and are thus scheduled, by orders of the acting project director, to leave here for their place of residence from which they were evacuated. In this group, is a family of three persons -- father, mother and son (18 years). This young man became blind while in the center and is a medical case, having been in the hospital for a number of months as well as being treated by outside doctors -- including the Mayo clinic. This family has no place to go, is financially unable to do for the son what they desire and to keep them in decent living conditions. They have requested a discharge for their son who is in the G-2 of the U. S. Army and now enroute to Japan. This son was in the Philippine invasion. If this family could have been allowed to stay for another week they would have been at least that much closer to the time when the son in the Army could return and assist them.

The repatriates (some 108 in number) a few weeks ago, (September 22nd) did not have their dates set for departure. Three were served three days notices. Some trouble developed, and the repatriates wrote to the State Department for a statement as to when they could go to Japan, since they wanted to do that instead of going to relocate in America. The State Department contacted Mr. Myer. Mr. Myer re-stated that repatriates would have to leave the center by the closing date, and that he had never promised them that they could remain in the centers until they could go to Japan.

Persons with dates set may have their dates set-up in order to fill special cars going to the coast.

III On Arrival at Destination - Due to Lacks in Preparing

Some of these persons would have had, if they were allowed to remain a little longer, houses into which to move and in some instances jobs. With this stepped-up moving out they will be forced to go into already overcrowded hostels

or apartments for a week or more. One returned Nisei states: "I looked into the housing projects in Portland, - Vanport, St. John's Woods and University Homes. St. John's Woods is a better place than Vanport. More pleasant surroundings and the buildings are better - individual units. The only thing is that the occupant must provide his own furniture. A refrigerator, range, and stove, table, chairs, beds, etc. are provided. So all in all it's better than any in Portland. The distance from town is a great inconvenience however."

"The job situation in this town is bad - none except janitor, gardeners, and railroad section hands. The employment situation is so bad that Mr. Burroughs of the WRA has said that it can't get worse. Mr. Helling of the same office has admitted frankly of the discrimination. Many jobs are available but not for us - always the same answer.

"The young high school and junior high kids returning to schools on the coast are not having such a wholesome time.

"Due to the temporary housing, long distances from towns of housing FHA units, they have no social solidarity and very little -- if any -- recreational facilities.

"The attitude of the public in general was about the same as before the war. The Negroes are a little more friendly as are some of the servicemen."

IV Due to Lack of Correlation

In one case, block 15, 325 persons were being fed on rations from the Mess Division for 200 persons. This existed for sometime until the people in the block "kicked" about it. It was then found that the Mess Division did not have a record from the other sections on the project to the fact that the population eating in this block had increased, due of course to the closing of some of the adjoining mess halls.

Between Center and Washington:

It is understandable that the Washington office can hardly visualize the facts. Suggestions to the administration on the project are usually listened very politely but ignored because the Project Director and the local cabinets have certain amount of discretionary power. They interpret the central construction according to the way they want. For example, the instruction concerning the leave for aliens was ignored in one center. It is quite possible that some of the resettlers are going to find themselves in various kinds of difficulties later on.

Between Center and Field Offices:

All kinds of complaints from the seasonal workers poured in, saying that the employers do not pay the wages promised, or such contract like piece work or hour basis was not fulfilled. The project always blamed the field officers and they in turn blamed the project -- in between the "poor evacuees". If you point out the shortcomings of the policy and the arrangement, they are willing to admit it, but the damage is done as far as the evacuees are concerned.

Between Center Administration and Residents:

A good engineer recommended by Civil Service does not have to be a good man to deal with the evacuees, which is one of the important qualifications because the majority of the lower bracket of appointed personnels were hired locally. This group of ignorant folks can hardly understand the complicating

and confusing problems existing in the camp community.

Conclusion:

The residents are mentally sick on a group scale. They are lost to themselves. This is mainly due to the fact that they consider WRA to have lost faith with them; to have lied to them; and to be merely forcing them out to live up to a "program" and a "schedule" without considering them as personal liabilities of the government, since the government took them in against their will and destroyed their economic and social foundations that they had worked all their lives to build up in their pre-evacuation communities.

There is failure on the part of local groups outside to "get together" and forget petty differences and work out a cooperative program in this emergency. This means also that it is time to realize that the emergency relative to persons of Japanese ancestry is not over, but rather has just started, especially since there are many, many evacuees resettling who are now frustrated, feel highly insecure, and lost due to the techniques of WRA's forced evacuation from centers and to congested housing and living conditions.

From letters received from the Relocation
Centers and one returned evacuee.

Responsibility for statements contained herein
is assumed by the Committee on Resettlement of
Japanese Americans.

Oct. 31, 1945

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

Sponsored by

Committee On Resettlement of Japanese Americans,
Home Missions Council of North America

Parkside Hotel, 18 Gramercy Park South, New York,
Thursday, November 8, 1945

ATTENDANCE RECORD

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Dept. of Cities

Mr. Jobu Yasumura, Staff member, Dept.
of Cities

American Civil Liberties Union

Mr. Roger N. Baldwin, Director

American Council on Race Relations

Mr. Clarence E. Pickett, Director

American Federation of International
Institutes

Mrs. Edith T. Bremer, Executive Director

Miss Mary Dennis, Executive Committee

American Friends Service Committee

Mr. Robertson M. Fort, Sec., Relocation

Mr. George Rundquist, Staff Member

American War Communities Service

Miss Edna H. Porter, Executive Secretary

Board of National Missions,
Evangelical and Reformed Church

Mr. Henry Tani, Assistant Treasurer

Brethren Service Committee

Miss Myrtle Barley, Staff Member

Mrs. Eldon Burke, Staff Member

Camp Fire Girls, Inc.

Miss Ruth Teichmann, Program Dept.

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of New York

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Child Welfare League of America

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Community Chests and Councils, Inc.

Miss Violet M. Sieder, Health and
Welfare Planning Dept.

Congregational-Christian Church

Rev. Clarence S. Gillett, Staff Member

East and West Association

Mrs. Liby Edelman, Director

Miss Ruth Smith, Director, Open Door

Family Welfare Association of America

Miss Margaret Wead, Director,
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Girl Scouts of America

Miss Dorothy Taylor, Field Staff

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Mr. Peter Aoki, East Coast Representative

Japanese American Committee for
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National Board Y.W.C.A.

Mrs. Wm. H. Chambers, Executive Assistant
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Interracial Education

Mrs. Sarah Mallory, Secretary,
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of Monsignor O'Grady

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Miss Helen Sanders, Staff Member

National Federation of Settlements, Inc.

Mrs. Kimi Ogawa, Office Secretary

National Japanese American Student
Relocation Council

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National Organization for Public
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Miss Dorothy Rusby, Assistant Director

National Social Work Council

Miss Mildred Esgar, Assistant Secretary

National Student Council, Y.W.C.A.

Mrs. Yolanda B. Wilkerson, Secretary,
Interracial Education

New York School of Social Work

Miss Mary Hurlbutt, Professor

Nisei Week (Japanese American News
Corp)

Mr. Thomas Komuro, Correspondent

Pacific Coast Committee on American
Principles and Fair Play

Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman,
Executive Secretary

Presbyterian Board of Christian
Education

Miss Fern M. Colborn, Assistant Director
in Community Organization

Protestant Church Commission for
Japanese Service

Rev. Royal H. Fisher, Baptist
Representative

Bishop C. S. Reifsnider, Episcopal
Representative

Rev. Clarence S. Gillett, (repeat),
Congregational-Christian Representative

Protestant Episcopal Church

Dr. George A. Wieland, (repeat), Execu-
tive Secretary, Board of Domestic
Missions

Religious News Service

Miss Ina Sugihara, Staff Member

Salvation Army

Commissioner Donald McMillan,
National Secretary

Union Theological Seminary and
New School for Social Research

Dr. Arthur L. Swift, Jr.
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Dept. of Christian Social Relations

Womens International League for
Peace and Freedom

Mrs. Mercedes Randall, Member

Mrs. Gladys D. Walser, National
Chairman of Committee on Japanese
Americans

VISITORS:

Mrs. Royal H. Fisher, Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service

Sergeant Yeichi Kuwayama, 442nd Combat Team, United States Army

Rev. K. Harper Sakaue, Baptist Minister, Rohwer Relocation Center

Miss Gertrude Shultz, Retired Member, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

DRAFT

Hon. Harry S. Truman
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

We address you in behalf of the Japanese minority in our country evacuated from the Pacific Coast defense area in the early months of the war with Japan as a measure of military security. It would appear now from the record that the fears then expressed that a substantial portion of this minority was disloyal were wholly without foundation. No case of espionage or sabotage occurred. Thousands volunteered for the armed forces and thousands more were drafted and served with great distinction on the battlefields of Europe.

It would appear, therefore, that so unprecedented an evacuation on purely racial grounds was not in the event justified by the fears of disloyal activities. Yet to thousands of our loyal citizens grave injustices have been done, and the entire social and economic life of a whole group of people long resident among us has been uprooted.

Since the relocation procedures went into effect in October, 1942, a substantial number of those evacuated have resettled away from the Pacific Coast and are making their way successfully in American life. But thousands returning to the Coast, now that the centers are being closed by December 15, 1945, are confronted with serious problems in securing housing, employment and assistance in re-establishing self-support.

Moved by the urgency of these problems, a national Conference on Japanese Americans was held in New York on November 8th, attended by 65 representatives of 40 national organizations engaged in aiding in one way or another the people of Japanese ancestry in re-establishing themselves. The conference was called together by the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans of the Home Missions Council of North America.

As a result of its deliberations, the conference desires to request you to take the following action. The organizations officially endorsing this request are represented by the signers. Representatives of other organizations present were in entire agreement but their official action has not reached us within the short time following the conference.

We request:

1. That you authorize by executive order the creation of a special agency within the Department of the Interior to continue the necessary federal services to the evacuees after the War Relocation Authority goes out of existence next June. Our experience has shown that the several federal departments concerned with housing, social security and employment require coordination of their work in relation to this particular minority, whose problems are distinct and for whom the government has a peculiar responsibility, since the problems were created by the evacuation.

2. That you recommend to the Congress procedure for the consideration of the legitimate indemnity claims of this minority, whose property losses as a result of the forced evacuation were enormous. They were obliged to sell property at a fraction of its value or lease or rent it at nominal figures. Confusion reigned under the pressure of the army's orders for speedy internment and many lost land, buildings, and movable goods

altogether. Since this was a war measure, it is clearly the responsibility of the federal government to make proper restitution. These war claims certainly have as strong a moral justification as others recognized by the government. But there is no way of meeting them without Congressional appropriations out of which the Federal courts may meet what they find to be legitimate charges against the government.

3. That the Department of Justice be requested to adopt a policy in the deportation to Japan of interned aliens and of those who renounced their citizenship not more onerous than that already in effect for German enemy aliens. That policy, we understand, provides for the deportation only of those who were leaders in pro-Axis organizations or who were otherwise actively pro-Axis. Consideration should also be given to the fact that many of the aliens have American-born children, some of whom have served honorably in our armed forces. Such families should not be broken up. These humane considerations, we understand, obtain in the case of German aliens and they should equally obtain with the Japanese. All aliens who desire to remain in the United States and concerning whom there is no convincing record of disloyalty should be given hearings.

We trust, Mr. President, that these requests will have your consideration with appropriate instructions to the administrative departments and with a request to Congress for consideration of the claims. We speak as American citizens concerned for justice to a minority which is the victim of war-time and other prejudices and whose integration in American life is a necessary obligation of our democracy.

We are, with great respect,

Sincerely yours,

George A. Wieland, Chairman
National Conference on
Japanese Americans

Agenda

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JAPANESE AMERICANS

Sponsored by

Committee On Resettlement of Japanese Americans,
Home Missions Council of North America

Parkside Hotel, 18 Gramercy Park South, New York,
Thursday, November 8, 1945

Dr. George A. Wieland, Chairman, Presiding

- 10 a.m. "Conditions on the West Coast" (1) Up to the Evacuation
(2) Since the Return of the Evacuees
by Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman, Executive Secretary, Pacific Coast Committee
on American Principles and Fair Play.
- "The Closing of the Relocation Centers"
by Mr. Jobu Yasumura, American Baptist Home Missions Society.
- Noon Adjourn for lunch
- 12:15 p.m. Luncheon. Guests of honor: Nisei Veterans of World War II.
"The Concern of Nisei Soldiers"
by Mr. Bill Ugifusa
- 2:00 p.m. "Unsolved Problems of Japanese Americans"
by Mr. Peter Aoki, Regional Representative,
Japanese American Citizens League.
- 3:00 p.m. (a) "Legal Problems".
Discussion led by Mr. Roger N. Baldwin, Director,
American Civil Liberties Union.
- (b) "Community Adjustment Problems"
Discussion led by Mrs. Ruth W. Kingman.
- 4:30 p.m. Closing Session