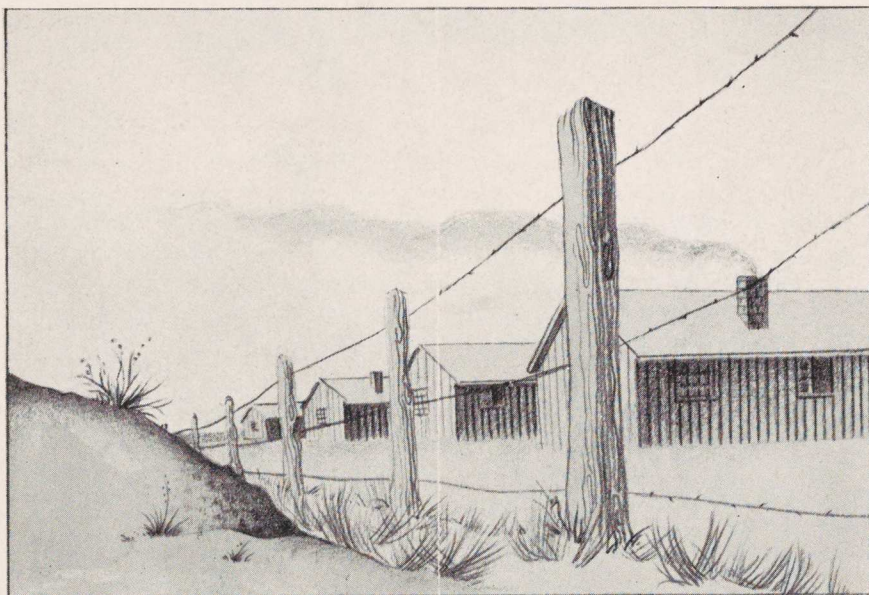


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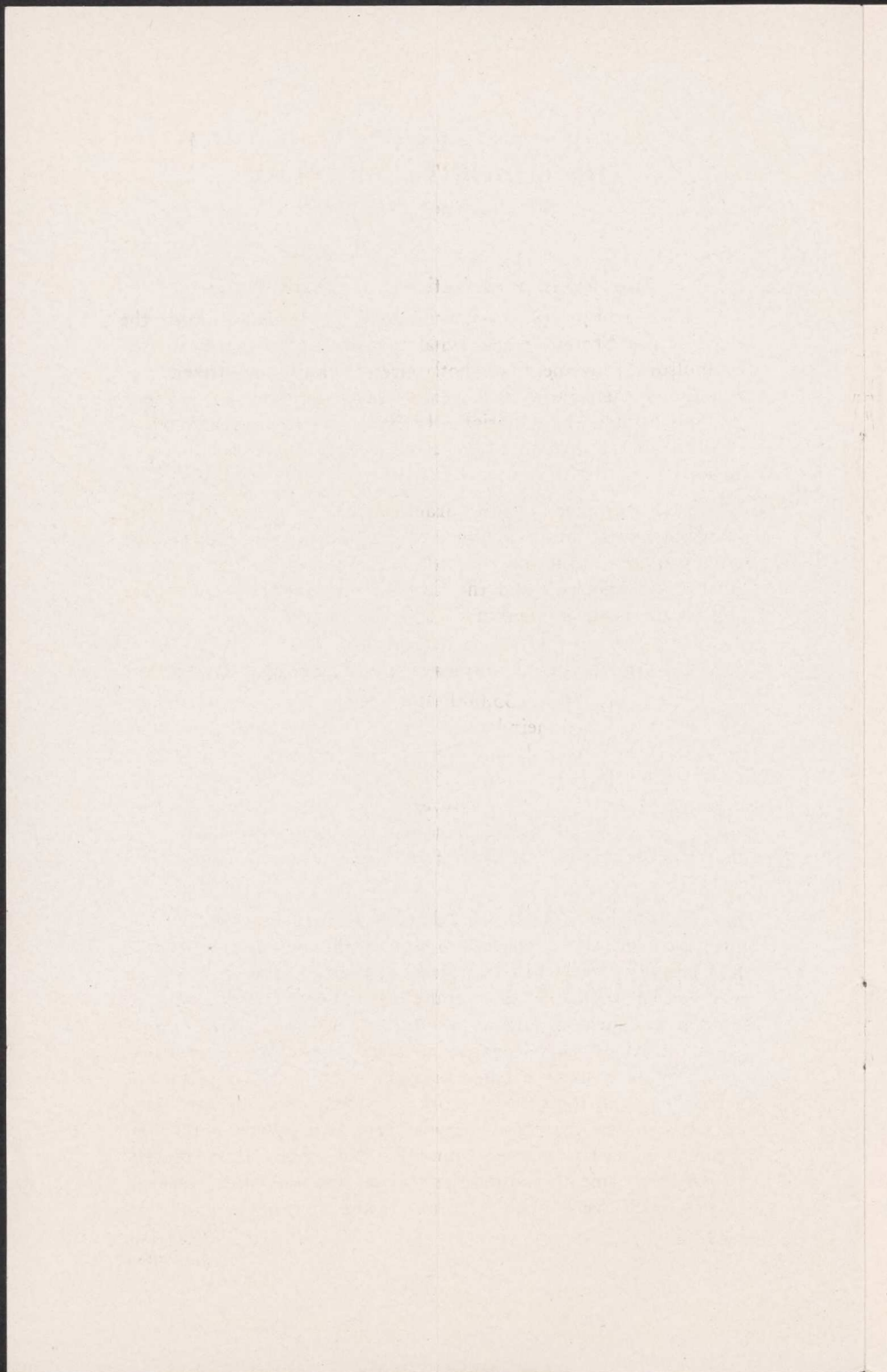
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# The JAPANESE EVACUATION and the MINORITY PROBLEM

*Vol. 1*

*Samuel Nagata*





# THE JAPANESE EVACUATION AND THE MINORITY PROBLEM

By Samuel Nagata

## **The Mass Evacuation, A Vital Issue**

The involuntary mass evacuation of Japanese from the Pacific Coast States created a vital problem. This unprecedented compulsory movement of both citizens and non-citizens on account of their racial homogeneity leaves a tragic page in our glorious history of the nation. It intensifies the minority problem, one of the difficult national and international questions to be solved.

This was accomplished under so-called military necessity. It was carried out in a humanitarian way under the present circumstances. But the act itself was contrary to the spirit of American democracy and the Christian principles of good will and brotherhood of mankind.

## **To the Issei, America, the Promised Land**

There are about 35,000 non-citizen Japanese who were compelled to leave their homes, friends, business and possessions and go to the Assembly and Relocation Centers. They are the fathers and mothers of those 75,000 American citizens. All of them came over here 30 or 40 years ago with youthful dreams, ambitions, vigor and determination. To them this country was the promised land—the land of freedom, equality, opportunity, and fair play.

Before they sighted our golden western ports, they studied our language and prepared to adjust themselves to the new environment. So, when they were allowed to land, their hearts were filled with joy and gratitude. They entered schools, learned our history and social institutions; and after several years of school, they engaged in their respective occupations. Many of them spent a dozen or more winters in school for the preparation of their life's work. Therefore, there are large numbers in the centers who wore caps and gowns with their highest scholastic degrees honored from their alma maters. When they came to assume their social and economic responsibilities, they were made to meet many unexpected and un-

pleasant things of life. They found that on account of their ethnic origin they were denied certain political, social, and economic privileges and opportunities. Also many discriminative laws and measures against them were passed one after another, destroying their economic foundation for which they had paid the highest price with labor and blood. Yet, they did not lose their original admiration, faith, and hope in their adopted land. They pressed on in their life's struggle for financial security for their family and the betterment of their communities. Lately they have been making the utmost sacrifices for the higher education of their children in order that they may become worthy citizens of this most democratic nation in the world.

And now, toward the last stage of their life's journey, this most destructive violence happened, and they were forced to move into the centers against their will. However, their pioneer spirit is not defeated. They are performing services in various activities for the general welfare of their present community and the nation. They are looking toward the new day of understanding, good will, and peace, with faith in the ultimate triumph of justice and humanity.

### **Two-thirds Loyal American Citizens**

Among the center residents there are twice as many American citizens as there are non-citizen Japanese. By their natal right, they are numbered among these 130,000,000 members of the great commonwealth. They are proud of being born here by Divine Providences, under the stars and stripes, with the manifold blessings of life which were not shared by their parents because of their national status. Therefore, they prepared themselves to be worthy constituents of their glorious country.

In schools they learned the noble history of this land; how the early settlers of Pilgrim fathers, Quakers, and other religious groups came to our shores; how the founding fathers brought into being this Union with the utmost efforts and sacrifices; how those great documents of human liberty, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights, etc., were drafted; how the Union was preserved with the tragic end of our Immortal Emancipator; and what



part our nation played in World War I to make the world safe for democracy. They knew well what are the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizens; therefore, they are ever prepared to do their part in any capacity they can perform for the noble principles and ideals for which their nation stands and cherishes.

Yet, when this present global maelstrom broke out, and the orders of their evacuation were made known, they were shocked. For, they know what their civil rights and responsibilities are and what rights and privileges are guaranteed in the greatest charters mentioned in the previous paragraph. And still further when they found out that only the Japanese were involved in the exodus, they were greatly disheartened. But they obeyed the law and took the camp life with their parents, accepting the bitter cup of life of the minority.

### **Thousand Students Stopped Schooling**

There were about 2,000 college and university students who suffered heavily from the movement because they had to stop their studies and go to the centers with their kinfolds. Truly, it was tragedy for these youths to give up their school life and share in the undemocratic camp life under the most free humanitarian state on earth. Later, through the sympathies and assistance of the American Friend Service Committee, Protestant Church Commission for Japanese Service, and other Christian organizations, several hundred of the college students were accepted by inland institutions and resumed their higher learning. But still there are a number of scholars who have discontinued their higher education on account of their dubious economic and political future.

### **Paternalistic Life in the Relocation Center**

In the center the young people are engaged in different phases of activities. Most of them render their services as mess hall helpers, office clerks, carpenters, janitors, teachers, hospital assistants, and field workers—and all at \$12, \$16, and \$19 a month for 44 hours a week. Not only do they work in the camp, but also extend their helping hands to the outside. During last fall, thousands of them went out to help harvest sugar beets and other farm crops, doing their part of civilian duties through labor in the "Food For Victory" program. Thus

they are ever ready to participate in the general good with their compatriots under any circumstances wherever they are.

One of the unique features of the center is its fraternalistic way of life. Here a community of more than 10,000 population live all in the same type of barracks and dine on the same type of food in the same type mess halls. They are fed, sheltered, and clothed partly by the government and are given work within three different scales of wages as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. There are no opportunities for individual enterprise and initiative. This is the most dangerous point for the youth in the center. For, it was the personal initiative, ingenuity and undertakings of Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Schwab, Morgan, Harriman, Mellon, and many other industrial kings that made our United States the greatest industrial nation in human history. But there is no room in the camp for them to exercise their individual enterprising spirit. Nor is there any machinery which encourages them to develop their initiative.

### **Need Understanding, Justice and Sympathy**

Nevertheless, I see in them vision, courage, and determination. They manifest their iron wills and lion hearts, the same spirit which the Mormons, the covered wagoners, and the Santa Fe and Oregon Trailers had and made our great Western states what they are today. I see their loyal spirit of service for the nation through their various activities. Also I notice their potentialities and possibilities through their daily lives. Therefore, I would like to see the public understand them with sympathy, magnanimity, tolerance and justice, in order that these young Americans in the centers may go forward and make their supreme effort for the realization of a fraternal human society in the world.

This forced exodus made a deeper and broader mental effect upon the other minority groups in the nation. It produced a suspicion of whether they would not be the next victims should a similar unfortunate catastrophe befall us in the days to come. If this happened in the old world, it would have been a different story; but it has actually taken place in our most civilized democratic Christian nation. Hence it has an important and far-reaching effect. This is a heterogeneous country. It has succeeded in building a national unity, harmony, and strength



by accepting all the racial and national characteristics of those newcomers seeking their earthly haven in these United States. We should preserve, therefore, all these national traits of freedom, tolerance, good will, and charity for the sake of our great destiny and human civilization.

### **Effect of the Evacuation on the World-wide Question—The Minority Problem**

Indeed, this minority problem is one of the vital international questions which needs greater thought and consideration for its solution. Its satisfactory resolution means a step toward the realization of world peace. One of the reasons why the Versailles Treaty did not succeed in the establishment of a durable peace was because it did not provide adequate ways and means for the settlement of minority problems in the world. This issue should occupy a very important part at the forthcoming peace conference. Therefore, we should prepare ourselves to make the best contribution for its solution.

The Axis powers set forth their objectives in the so-called "New World Order" in Europe and East Asia, while the United Nations made their purposes known thru the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations. We know that our American democratic way of life is the best and happiest for free and peace-loving peoples. Also we know that the families of the humane race, especially of the small states, minority groups, and backward peoples are looking to us for their deliverance, security and peace. Therefore, let us not fail their hopes and aspirations. Instead, let us make supreme efforts for them in order that they may have the same freedom, independence and abundant life that we have and cooperate with us for the establishment of a new peaceful international order of justice, equality and brotherhood.

SAMUEL NAGATA,  
Heart Mountain Relocation Center,  
Heart Mountain, Wyo.



PRINTED AT THE BILLINGS GAZETTE, BILLINGS, MONTANA