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Feb 13, 1942

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FORUM ON JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY PROGRAM
72 West 52nd Street
New York, N. Y.

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The attack by the Japanese military fascists on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, brought many drastic changes in the life of the American people. To the Japanese American it brought such special change, such far-reaching and fundamental change, that all his personal, economic and ideological relationships have had to be re-evaluated and readjusted.

A complete disintegration of his community life took place on that day. Without organized guidance or proper leadership, he had to meet the reality of that attack and strive to reshape his community and his life as a part of the United Nations.

The economic and political leaders of the pre-Pearl Harbor Japanese American community had been pro-militaristic in their outlook on Japan in world affairs. The leading cultural and fraternal organizations in this country had been media for the constant circulation of propaganda favoring the militarists in Japan who were responsible finally for the treacherous attack at Pearl Harbor.

Japanese aggression against the United States exposed as dangerous the very sources guiding the leaders of the Japanese American community. The Japanese Americans were confused and shocked. They struggled to express in every way that they could their willingness and eagerness to help America defend herself against the enemy.

It was in this spirit that 110,000 Japanese Americans - both American citizens and non-citizens - gladly cooperated with Government authorities in their evacuation from the strategic West Coast military area to inland centers, despite great personal discomfort and sacrifice. In the same spirit, too, Hawaiians of

Japanese birth or descent fought side by side with Hawaiians of other national origins in our effort to drive off the invaders and defend Pearl Harbor.

There are only 130,000 Americans of Japanese birth or descent in the United States, but the attitude of these 130,000 people is vitally important to the war effort of the United Nations. The successful utilization of this racial "enemy alien" minority and their descendants, and their involvement on the side of the United Nations will reflect the degree to which our country is successful in achieving national unity and the total mobilization of the American people for victory. Moreover, the eyes of millions of Asiatic peoples are following closely what treatment is accorded Asiatics by this country. In the global struggle to defeat Axis slavery, our treatment of the Japanese-American becomes an important indication of the integrity of the democracies.

Finally, democratic treatment of the Japanese American is the clearest possible refutation of the poisonous race propaganda which the Axis powers are desperately trying to use as a part of their old tactic to "divide and conquer".

Today, the great majority of the Japanese Americans who formerly resided on the West Coast are living in centers under the War Relocation Authority. Each of the ten centers has a population of from 8,000 to 20,000 and they are located in Eastern California, Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, Utah and Arkansas.

The War Relocation Authority has organized self-government in the Centers and has established consumer cooperatives, educational and health institutions, police and judicial machinery, and cultural and recreational facilities. All of these functions of the Center are in the hands of the evacuees themselves.

The WRA has temporarily released thousands of evacuee volunteers to harvest crops vital to the food and material production of the nation. Recently, the WRA has undertaken to permanently release individual evacuees, under certain conditions, so that they may resettle outside of the War Relocation Centers, except in

the West Coast Military Defense Area.

Despite these achievements of the WRA in regard to the evacuees, the productive manpower of the evacuees is still not, in the main, utilized for the war effort, and most of the potential energy is left idle in the centers. Consequently, one of the most important phases of the rehabilitation of these people has not yet been accomplished. As a result of lowered morale, strikes, riots and other disturbances have occurred from time to time within the centers. These disturbances have occurred because the evacuees were confused, and sometimes embittered and frustrated by their own idleness and uselessness, and the small anti-democratic minority among them was able to utilize these confused feelings by instigating deliberate divisions and incidents in order to interfere with our country's victory program.

It is essential that the American people be made aware of the pro-democratic feelings of the majority of Japanese Americans in order to eliminate social and economic discrimination based on race. It is essential that we isolate and defeat the fascist-minded elements, and promote the pro-democratic in the Japanese communities. Furthermore, it is essential to fully utilize the available idle manpower of the Japanese Americans in the nation's production program.

The solution to this problem is the concern of the entire American people. It must be solved as a part of the people's movement to eliminate all obstacles to our victory in this war. Misunderstanding and prejudice directed against Japanese Americans disrupts national unity and hurts the victory program. And a successful all-out production for victory program requires full use of the total national energy.

In order to promote greater understanding of the role and status of Japanese Americans, this FORUM ON JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY PROGRAM is being co-sponsored by the Japanese American Committee for Democracy and the American Com-

mittee for the Protection of the Foreign Born. Information concerning the Forum
may be obtained by writing to : FORUM ON JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY
PROGRAM, 72 West 52nd Street, New York, N.Y.

Mid-January '43

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JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY PROGRAM

FEBRUARY, 1943

JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR DEMOCRACY
72 WEST 52 STREET, NEW YORK CITY (10¢ A COPY)

PREFACE

This brochure is by no means exhaustive, but is intended as part of an endeavor to acquaint the American public and especially labor, with some of the problems that Japanese in America face today. It is a publication of the Japanese American Committee for Democracy, and issued for the Forum on Japanese Americans in the Victory Program, Hotel Commodore, New York City, Feb. 13, 1943.

Special acknowledgement for cooperation must be made to the following with our sincere appreciation:

Mr. John Baker, Chief, Office of Reports, WRA, Washington, D. C.				
Mr. Wade Head, Project Director, Colorado River Relocation Center				
Mr. Ralph Merritt	"	"	Manzanar	" "
Mr. LeRoy Bennett	"	"	Gila River	" "
Mr. Harvey M. Coverly	"	"	Tule Lake	" "
Mr. Charles F. Ernst	"	"	Central Utah	" "
Mr. Harry L. Stafford	"	"	Minidoka	" "
Mr. Guy Robertson	"	"	Heart Mountain	" "
Mr. J.G. Lindley	"	"	Granada	" "
Mr. Ray D. Johnston	"	"	Rohwer	" "
Mr. Paul A. Taylor	"	"	Jerome	" "

We also wish to thank various evacuees at different Centers for helpful suggestions and information.

Yoshitaka Takagi, Exec. Secty.
Japanese American Committee
for Democracy
72 West 52d Street
New York City, N. Y.

February 13, 1943

Following is the text of a letter received by the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, from the President:

February 1, 1943

My dear Mr. Secretary:

The proposal of the War Department to organize a combat team consisting of loyal American citizens of Japanese descent has my full approval. The new combat team will add to the nearly five thousand loyal Americans of Japanese ancestry who are already serving in the armed forces of our country.

This is a natural and logical step toward the reinstatement of the Selective Service procedures which were temporarily disrupted by the evacuation from the West Coast.

No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the democratic right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of his ancestry. The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy. Every loyal American citizen should be given the opportunity to serve this country whenever his skills will make the greatest contribution -- whether it be in the ranks of our armed forces, war production, agriculture, government service, or other work essential to the war effort.

I am glad to observe that the War Department, the Navy Department, the War Manpower Commission, the Department of Justice, and the War Relocation Authority are collaborating in a program which will assure the opportunity for all loyal Americans, including Americans of Japanese ancestry, to serve their country at a time when the fullest and wisest use of our manpower is all important to the war effort.

Very sincerely yours,

/s/FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

DEMOCRACY AND EVACUATION

War can be either democratic or anti-democratic. In the hands of Hitler and Tojo it is a weapon for subjugation, exploitation and slavery; whereas for us who believe in the ultimate victory of democracy, it is a weapon to fight what they represent.

This too, is true of the evacuation of the West Coast Japanese, which was a military necessity, stemming directly from this war.

For selfish interests and race-baiters, the evacuation made an excellent football, just as the anti-Japanese movement did in the 1910's and 20's. For defeatists and so-called pacifists, the evacuation was something to holler about and to raise hair-splitting questions through test cases in the courts. These people, knowingly or otherwise, are fighting the war on the side of Hitler and Tojo.

But for those of us who believe in democracy and have faith in America, the mass evacuation, even at the greatest personal inconvenience, was "the only sensible and logical way out", a way to demonstrate our faith and loyalty and to do our part in the nation's war effort.

Thus, one hundred ten thousand Japanese on the West Coast refused to play the game for Hitler and Tojo. They showed not by words alone but deeds that the democratic ideal was thicker than blood.

Mr. Milton S. Eisenhower, then Director of the War Relocation Authority testified last June before a House sub-committee:

"I just cannot say things too favorable about the way they (the Japanese) have cooperated under the most adverse circumstances."

General Tojo and his militarist followers must have counted on Japanese aid in America, having long spread the gospel of "Japan's sacred mission of world conquest" before Pearl Harbor.

Japanese American cooperated with President Roosevelt's program one hundred per cent, rather than Tojo's. In so doing they gave a stinging rebuke to the jingoists and defeatists in America.

Having completed the evacuation without accident or incident, now the period of re-assimilation into America and active participation in the war effort has begun. Can and will America give the evacuation, and subsequent resettlement the truly democratic meaning the evacuees desire, and help make it a success?

America, in her fight for democracy and freedom cannot afford to do otherwise!

RESETTLEMENT PROBLEMS

Today, those 110,000 Japanese Americans, after evacuating the strategic Pacific Coast areas, have been relocated in ten centers under War Relocation Authority. They are awaiting opportunities for permanent resettlement--a return to normal, private life in American communities outside the centers and evacuated areas. Let us now discuss this problem.

Following the Presidential order of February 19, 1942 which authorized the designation of military areas for evacuation, the Japanese Americans were urged by the government to evacuate voluntarily and to resettle on their own initiative outside designated military areas.

This voluntary evacuation and resettlement became a failure after about 8,000 moved out. Reasons were that American communities, mainly in the intermountain states, met Japanese evacuees with hostile prejudice and misunderstanding, and that the majority of Japanese on the Coast did not know where to go. In the words of Mr. Eisenhower,

"Considerable difficulties developed, however. ----- First, the States did not wish the evacuees to acquire real property, as some did. Evacuees moved to localities where there had previously been a small Japanese population, and difficulties arose there. Second, demands arose that the Government should guarantee that evacuees would be removed from the States to which they were going as soon as the war was over. Third, the demand was made that evacuees be permitted to move only under military guard. Serious trouble was threatened."

The situation became so critical that the voluntary resettlement plan had to be abandoned and a systematic, planned and orderly mass evacuation was ordered March 27, 1942.

This hostile attitude on the part of the American public was in many instances improved when nearly 8,000 evacuees volunteered to meet the nation's farm labor shortage and were released on work furloughs during the summer months of 1942 to work on sugar beet fields.

"The success of this large-scale experiment suggests," said Mr. Dillon S. Myer, present director of WRA, "that as the supply of manpower in the nation grows smaller and the demand grows stronger, employers of many different kinds may request that persons now living in relocation centers be permitted to take jobs." (Common Ground, 1943 Winter Issue, p. 47)

Earlier, the WRA announced its policy in its first quarterly report covering the period, March 18 to June 30, 1942, thus,

"Effective employment of this sizable reservoir of manpower and talent has been one of the most pressing tasks of the War Relocation Authority. Mass idleness, clearly, would be damaging to evacuee morale, costly to the taxpayer, and inexcusable in a na-

tional period of decreasing manpower and all-out production."
(p. 14)

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION HAMPERERS

It is now being estimated that 10,000 of 110,000 evacuees wish to seek opportunities outside the WRA centers. But difficulties are still there to be overcome.

Although considerable improvement has been noted regarding public reaction to "selling the unknown Japanese", anti-Japanese feeling still persists in some instances and localities, particularly in the form of opposition to evacuees' acquiring real property for agricultural purposes and of job discrimination in defense and other industries.

In Utah, the influx of Japanese was condemned, and introduction of an anti-alien land bill to the State legislature was announced by the AFL unions. In Illinois, the American Legion Post protested admission of evacuee students in colleges and universities. In California, Mr. James K. Fisk of the Joint Immigration Committee declared that the national American Legion was soon to exert pressure in Washington, D.C. for revocation of citizenship from the American-born Japanese and deportation of aliens after the war.

Senator Wheeler of Montana opposed leasing of land to American citizens of Japanese extraction, while during the last Congressional election the Montana Republican party laid the labor shortage to the fact that the Democratic administration in Washington kept the evacuees in relocation centers and "pampered" them.

In California where the spearhead of anti-Japanese movement is being pushed, the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West and American Legion are threatening the expatriation of nisei in Federal courts while the AFL State Federation of Labor rejected endorsement of such a move.

JAPANESE AS FARMERS

Before the evacuation, 22,000 Japanese farmers in California alone produced over 8% of the total nation's agricultural commodities yearly. If given incentive plus opportunities, these same farmers can certainly produce as much, if not more, to relieve the nation's present food crisis.

Voicing the sentiment of the evacuees, a nisei from Colorado River center in Arizona, wrote "Land suitable for truckfarming situated near a city or cities with transportation facilities available should be made available to the Japanese farmers" for their possible resettlement.

In view of great financial losses caused by the evacuation and meager, if any means of earning thereafter, the same nisei continued to say that "Federal Credit Administration loans should be made available to those who wish to farm and who are capable of farming."

"Group resettlement, limited perhaps to twenty-five families each," is be-

ing proposed by Mr. Isamu Noguchi, well known nisei sculptor, in order to prod some reluctant evacuees, especially the alien group "whose individual adjustment to a strange community would be extremely difficult." (New Republic, Feb. 1, 1943) "The Noguchi plan" for group resettlement can be worked out whether in agricultural or industrial employment.

Such or similar steps, if taken with the aid of WRA, will undoubtedly spur the resettlement move of the evacuee farmers to a great extent.

Agriculture, however, is not the only opening that can be looked for. Defense and other industries should be opened for them without discrimination on the ground of race or citizenship. Mr. Charles F. Ernst, Project Director of the Central Utah Center, in observing the situation, made the telling statement that as major obstacles yet to be overcome it was necessary "to convince the defense industries that they should employ people from the relocation centers," (Letter answering our inquiries, dated Jan. 25, 1943)

JAPANESE AND LABOR MOVEMENT

In early days friction had developed between American labor unions and Japanese workers. However, since the introduction of the New Deal, labor organization among them was greatly stimulated in step with the general advance of the American labor movement.

Those in fishing, canning, wholesale, retail or service industries on the Pacific Coast joined either AFL or CIO unions, their number reaching around 5,000 before the evacuation. They struggled with labor of other nationalities and enjoyed the American standard of living.

In resettling the evacuees, therefore, care should be taken that Japanese do not undercut the prevailing wage scales, thus repeating mistakes of the early days. In this connection, cooperation especially with various labor unions is not only desirable but imperative.

It is also pointed out by Mr. James G. Lindley, Project Director of Granada Relocation Center, Colorado, that unless breadwinners of evacuee families are paid by decent standards in the new communities, "only younger and older persons who are either un-employable or semi-employable" would be left in the Centers. Thus some of the more vital service and maintenance activities in the Centers would lack the necessary manpower to allow them to carry on efficiently.

He further declared that "we must make every possible endeavor to locate more opportunities that are attractive and suitable for family groups or employment opportunities that employ a normal wage earner at a scale at which he could easily afford to care for a family group on a decent standard of living."

PROBLEM OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

It is agreed by all competent observers that the problem of resettlement boils down to a problem of public relations to sell the unknown qualities of Japanese, to correct misinformation on their behalf and at the same time to check development of anti-Japanese movement on account of racial prejudice.

Recently all Japanese Americans were greatly encouraged by the announcement of the War Department opening enlistment to nisei volunteers in a special unit of the Army, and by President Roosevelt's statement approving this new ruling as "a natural and logical step toward the reinstitution of the Selective Service procedure which was temporarily disrupted by the evacuation."

However, it is still regrettable to note anti-Japanese sentiment expressed in Congress and the various measures of discrimination made in California and other State legislatures.

To counter any further development of this trend, it is our sincere hope and desire together with the Heart Mountain Sentinel (Jan. 30, 1943) that "restoration of Selective Service rather than voluntary enlistment, service in units side by side with Americans of other extraction, status of alien parents and others" be made clear as soon as feasible.

The present resettlement plan is a measure to facilitate our assimilation into American communities and to develop our contribution to the nation's war effort. For this reason, those 10,000 evacuees estimated to go out of the WRA centers during 1943, should be imbued with the pioneering spirit, ready to shoulder the responsibility of future resettlement for others to follow suit.

BASIS OF RELEASE SELECTION

Selection, therefore, for release from the centers should be made only after careful consideration as to the evacuees' occupational choice, abilities and other qualifications. Mr. Lindley of Granada Center recently wrote us on this phase,

"There seems to be a tendency for this group (domestic workers) to change employers quite frequently, thereby causing some dissatisfaction among the original employers who negotiate directly with the Relocation Center. Relative to the solution of this problem, we are endeavoring to make a careful selection of the workers for jobs and in addition impress them with their responsibilities in accepting an employment offer if work conditions are reasonable and wages are prevailing, in addition making certain that the applicant is thoroughly qualified and desires the type of employment offered, as a means of earning a living."

As it stands today, the number of evacuees released from the centers is still negligible. Since last October, about 1,300 have moved out, the majority of them either students or domestic workers.

Therefore, success of resettlement is yet to be seen. "It is the desire of the majority of evacuees to develop the program slowly on a sound basis ... due to uncertainty of community acceptance", observed Mr. Ray D. Johnston, Project Director of Rohwer Relocation Center in Arkansas.

Once the ice is broken, however, the tempo of resettlement will be very much accelerated.

"RIOTS" ANALYZED

In the past few months, trouble has been reported from various centers, first at Santa Anita (temporary California center), then followed by Tule Lake (California), Poston (Arizona), Manzanar (California) and Jerome (Arkansas). According to newspaper accounts, this was attributed to friction between the "loyal American-born citizens" and "disloyal Japanese aliens." However, closer observation shows this is an oversimplification of the factual situation, and a gross exaggeration.

Mr. Noguchi, recently out of Poston center, observed on^{the} disturbance there,

"Pro-Japanese sentiment, and a plain hoodlum element in the center played a part in the trouble. But the situation of which the trouble-makers took advantage was produced by other causes, chiefly two: the great sense of frustration which all members of the camp feel and the great cleavage between the first and second generation which has made the American-born, who cooperate with the authorities, the subject of attack. 'As you have not been treated as Americans, your cooperation must be opportunism' is the charge." (New Republic, Feb. 1, 1943)

Segregation of pro-Japanese evacuees who prefer repatriation to Japan rather than staying in America is now in the process of making. They may soon join with those who are interned under the Department of Justice.

REACTION IN CONGRESS

Repercussions of these "riots" found immediate expression from time to time on the floor of Congress, and was made a means to attack the Administration and WRA, far out of proportion to its relative importance. Indeed, it has been given as much publicity as the "fifth columnist menace" on the West Coast before the evacuation.

Ex-Congressman Leland M. Ford of California (defeated by Congressman Will Rogers, Jr. for the present session) sharply attacked the WRA, saying in part,

"My conclusions are that if jurisdiction in these camps had been kept under the Army, and that if the socialistic experimenters had not been put in charge, your Japanese evacuation program would be in much better shape than it is today." (Congressional Record, December 10, 1942)

On January 15, 1943 Senator Reynolds was quoted as saying "Control of the relocation centers should go back to the Army. We are at war. These evacuees cannot be pampered as they have been." (New York Times, Jan. 16). Senator Johnson of Colorado also attacked alleged "pampering", while Senator Wallgren of Washington announced introduction of a bill to put the management, control and discipline of the evacuee Japanese under full jurisdiction of the Army. Senator Chandler was appointed to head a sub-committee for investigation of the WRA centers.

Shifting the jurisdiction, as suggested, from WRA to Army will not, however, solve the problem. At the time of evacuation, the Army was called upon to the tasks as it was the only Federal agency that had the organization to undertake such a tremendous job on short notice. Even so, the Army owed much of its success in concluding the evacuation to full cooperation from various government agencies. Among them were the Departments of Justice, Agriculture, Treasury, Navy, the Farm Security Administration, United States Employment Service and others, not to mention local agencies and civilian organizations.

The present problem as we have stated, is not of a military nature but rather more civilian inasmuch as it involves resettlement and rehabilitation of 110,000 men, women and children.

As to the alleged charge of "pampering", it drew the fire of protests, not only from evacuees almost everywhere but from competent observers, including an invitation to live with them for one month.

"We would be glad to have Senator Reynolds spend a month with us behind barbed wire ... to share our one-room apartments and the rationed messhall fare and perhaps walk through the snow with him to our 'fine bathrooms' when the temperature is 30 degrees below zero." (Heart Mountain Sentinel, Jan. 23, 1943)

LETTER FROM CAMP

"The general bitter feeling which existed in the Assembly center under the Army is gradually decreasing", wrote a nisei, prominent in civic affairs at Central Utah WRA center. "Especially, since those who went outside to work on furlough came back and told of the wartime conditions on the outside. Visitors have also told and so have letters been coming in telling of the rationing, manpower mobilization, imminent prospect of military offensive this year, etc. Very few squawk about food and other physical things now.

"Another incident that changed their attitude towards the Caucasian staff (WRA administration) was the search for the man who wandered off when the Welfare Department went on a picnic in the mountains. The Caucasian staff cooperated 100% in searching for this fellow. One week's ration of gas was used in one day. Three days long we searched. We also had about 25 men staying up in the mountains building a fire and keeping vigil.

"The parents in particular who were very anti-Caucasian and naturally anti-U.S. said that they were convinced of the sincerity of the government and said hereafter they would never ridicule their son about being pro-American. We found the fellow alive but almost gone. He was exhausted and lying on his back."

CENTER PROBLEMS REVIEWED

The problems within the center are as complex as found in any American community of 10,000 population. They vary from childbirth to community gov-

ernment. They cover productive activities, consumer service projects, cultural, educational, religious and recreational activities, health, sanitation, self-government, police and fire departments and so on. These problems, undoubtedly, can be worked out smoothly as the WRA center administration and the evacuees as a whole cooperate fully.

Just one or two observations on problems in the centers.

Inasmuch as the main emphasis is now being placed on resettlement outside the centers and its tempo will be accelerated as the plan goes into effect, all activities within them will be coordinated and subordinated to the resettlement plan. Evacuees should be mentally prepared as well as vocationally trained to meet future placements. Projects in the centers should be prepared to meet the inevitable decrease in population.

The fact must also be recognized in dealing with evacuee problems that divisions do exist among various groups --- between citizens and aliens who are not eligible for American citizenship, old and new generations, difference of background, degree of Americanization, clannishness and the sectionalism of pre-Pearl Harbor days, and other conflicting interests that are still carried over to this day.

UNITY, COORDINATION ESSENTIAL

In view of these existing divisions, utmost care should be made to smooth out differences, rather than splitting them further. If this unity and coordination is maintained, half the problems in the centers can be solved without great difficulty. The morale of the people would be kept at a high level and a smoother functioning of center life would be achieved. Here seems to lie the key for a successful self-government set-up which in most cases is still in the making.

Furthermore, if a democratic body, representing all those who desire to cooperate, regardless of groupings, background, etc., deals with the WRA administration, relations between the people and the WRA can be made closer. Misunderstanding on either side will gradually disappear. This is true not only locally in each WRA center, but nationally as well.

TOLAN COMMITTEE REPORTS

In concluding this brochure, we wish to call the reader's attention to the following statement from the House Committee Investigating National Defense Migration, headed by Congressman John H. Tolan (Calif.):

"It has become clear that a curtailment of the rights and privileges of the American-born Japanese citizens of this country will furnish one of the greatest tests of democratic institutions in our history. As with all previous crises in the Nation's history, the preservations of liberties will depend upon the degree to which clear vision is applied to momentary difficulties. Realism must go hand in hand with a profound sense of responsibility for the maintenance of our way of life.

" The war years and the days after the war are crucial times.

Decisions profoundly affecting our national institutions, exemplified in the West Coast evacuation orders ... must of patriotic necessity be fully interpreted for our people. America is great because she has transcended the difficulties inherent in an institution which finds all races, all nationalities, all colors, and all creeds within our border. This breadth of vision must be applied to the present circumstances." (House reports No. 2124, May 1942, p. 11)

What we witness today in America as the Japanese problem will be what we may face tomorrow in Japan after the defeat of militarism. The implication of this American Japanese problem is not merely national, but also international and of particular significance in our relations with the Far East.

America must give a truly democratic meaning to the West Coast evacuation and the present problem of resettlement.

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JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY PROGRAM

Upon the basis of strengthening the war effort of the United Nations, all loyal Japanese Americans, both citizen and foreign born, must be integrated into the nation's war program, either in the armed forces or in production for victory.

1. For Total Utilization of All Manpower in Industrial and Agricultural Production for Victory:
 - (a) put to work the available idle manpower of 110,000 Japanese American evacuees from the West Coast
 - (b) use evacuee labor on an equal basis with all other labor to fill needs in production where there are labor shortages
 - (c) Government must cooperate with organized labor to insure proper placement and democratic use of Japanese American labor
2. Destroy the Fifth Column and Its Influence:
 - (a) identify and destroy all disloyal pro-Axis, appeasement, anti-war elements among Japanese Americans
 - (b) recognize and promote pro-democratic anti-fascist leadership within this national group
 - (c) distinction must be made between (1) true anti-fascist (2) "phoney" (3) pro-Axis (4) sincere but confused elements
3. End Discrimination Against Japanese Americans Because of Race:
 - (a) open Selective Service so that loyal Japanese Americans, both citizen and non-citizen, can bear arms for their country equally with all other Americans
 - (b) amend the naturalization law so that Japanese and all Asiatics can become citizens of the United States
 - (c) Government and trade unions must cooperate to assure Japanese Americans employment in industry on an equal basis
4. Prevent Mis-use of the Japanese American Problem by Reactionary Forces:
 - (a) defeat Wallgren Bill S-444, attacking the War Relocation Authority
 - (b) defeat discriminatory anti-Japanese measures in state legislatures, and as they appear in Congress
 - (c) clarify confusion around "civil rights of citizens" cases and other anti-Administration court actions attempting to divert attention from real issues and problems confronting Japanese Americans

WHAT YOUR ORGANIZATION CAN DO

- 1/ Educational - through thorough discussion, become acquainted with all phases of the Japanese American problem in relation to winning the war, and have your membership express its understanding by passing resolutions on RESETTLEMENT and AGAINST DISCRIMINATION on the basis of race
- 2/ Legislative - as an organization and individually, take action on legislation affecting Japanese Americans, wherever these bills are in the State legislatures or in Congress
- 3/ Anti-Discrimination - include loyal Americans of Japanese birth or descent in your fight to end discrimination in industry against workers because of race, color, or national origin
- 4/ Employment - as part of your organization's policy to utilize all available manpower for production for victory, investigate possibilities where there are labor shortages and establish procedures to make use of evacuee labor wherever it is needed; have your labor-management committees consider Japanese American labor on an equal basis with any other available labor needed for production.
- 5/ Financial - show your understanding of the importance of the correct solution to the problems of the Japanese Americans as a vital part of the whole victory war effort by having your organization contribute financially to the furthering of the work of the Japanese American Committee for Democracy on this program

SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Forum on Japanese Americans in the Victory Program

Hotel Commodore, New York February 13, 1943

co-sponsored by Japanese American Committee for Democracy

American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born

Abner Green, Secretary of the American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, acted as Chairman of the Forum, since Arthur Upham Pope was unavoidably detained until late in the meeting.

Mr. Green outlined the purpose of the Forum, pointing out the need for coordinated activity between Government agencies, trade unions and other interested organizations and the loyal Japanese Americans themselves, in order to make use of this important minority group as a part of the whole country's war effort. Citing the recent move of the Senate reactionaries under Senator Reynold's leadership to "investigate" conditions in the War Relocation Centers as an example of the dangerous interest that such forces have in the Japanese American problem, he pointed out that such an "investigation" was in reality an attack not only on the Japanese American evacuees, but also an attempt to discredit the War Relocation Authority, a Government agency carrying out its job as an authorized part of the President's war program, and thus an attack on the whole American victory war effort.

Blake Clark, Office of Civilian Defense, Washington, D. C.

Mr. Clark, from his experience in Hawaii, before, during and after December 7, 1941, presented evidence refuting false rumors of sabotage by Hawaiians of Japanese birth or descent. He showed how in every phase of the defense of Pearl Harbor at the time of the treacherous attack, civilians and soldiers and volunteer defense workers not only cooperated with our Government, but showed stamina and initiative that could only come from the most conscious and unswerving loyalty to their country. Quoting from the records of nisei (2nd generation) in the Army and from their superiors, from the FBI, from all sources who had constant contact with Japanese Americans, particularly in Hawaii, he stated the conviction that as a group there was no doubting the integrity of these people nor any question as to which side has their support in this war.

Donald Henderson, Int'l President of United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America, CIO

Mr. Henderson, in whose union there were many members of Japanese origin and descent, particularly those workers in the salmon fish canning industry on the West Coast, said that the only way to find a positive solution to the Japanese American problem was to approach it, not sentimentally, but realistically from the point of view of strengthening the war effort. He reviewed the whole "messy" background of this particular minority group in this country, and showed that, whatever the cause, it had an especially isolated and non-assimilated character different from the rest of the American people. He felt that the trade unions, insofar as they had organized these people, had done a better job of integrating and assimilating and carrying out non-discriminatory practices than any other type of leadership that the Japanese had in this country. He stressed the need of considering the special aspects of the Japanese American situation, not only for the duration of the war, so as to achieve a correct economic base whereby they could contribute to help win the war, but also, as a part of strengthening the war effort internationally, and in reference to the post-war situation in the Far East and our relation to the people there.

He felt that the real problem of treating the Japanese American minority in this country in the proper democratic manner meant seeing that the democratic forces among the Asiatic peoples were strengthened rather than weakened. This would mean that

the democratic forces of the people of Japan could see to it that after the war a real reconstruction in terms of true democracy, and not in any "phoney" puppet terms would be established there.

He stressed the same point in the handling of the problem here, and showed the necessity of developing real anti-fascist leadership among the Japanese American workers by integrating them into the trade union movement, and by seeing to it that, without fear of any racial prejudice or discrimination, they were recognized as a part of the whole people's fight against fascism.

Michael Obermeier, President of Local #6, Hotel and Club Employees Union, AFL. Mr. Obermeier spoke both as a trade unionist and as Chairman of the Victory Committee of German-American Trade Unionists. He told of his many years' experience with the Japanese as active members of his local, and remembered the anti-militarist demonstrations organized in Japan by the militant trade unions there in 1932. He showed the similarity between the big problems confronting the anti-fascist German Americans and the anti-fascist Japanese Americans: exposing and ending pro-Axis propaganda and its carriers within the national group itself, and tying up the development of new pro-democratic leadership with the struggle going on inside the fascist countries themselves to destroy fascist militarist enslavement, and set up true democracies free from any vestige of fascist or "puppet" control.

John C. Baker, Chief, Office of Reports, War Relocation Authority, Washington, D. C. Since Dillon Meyer, Director of WRA, was unable to arrange his work schedule to attend the Forum, Mr. Baker spoke in his stead, reporting the whole story of evacuation and relocation of the West Coast Japanese Americans in War Relocation Centers.

Mr. Baker explained the basis for the evacuation order as a measure to insure the safety of the strategic military areas on the West Coast, especially as a potential zone of combat, and said that only because of the concentration of these people in this one area had evacuation been found necessary. He emphasized that the Government does not recognize the evacuees as "enemies", nor individually as "criminals, potentially subversive, dangerous to society, or to national security." He gave as the basic rule of the WRA in both policy and administrative decision, the slogan, "Be Fair," and said that WRA in setting up the relocation centers had no way of knowing how long they would be used, but was determined that the period of time should be as short as possible. He told of the difficulties arising from hasty preparation, and the quick construction work necessary to lay at least the bare framework for relocation life. He described living conditions as at "a minimum standard of decency," providing food and shelter, adequate care in case of sickness, education for the children, and work in maintenance of center life. Workers receive nominal wages of \$12, \$16 and \$19 monthly, plus clothing allowances for all members of the worker's family (\$3.75 monthly for an adult).

He mentioned the War Department announcement of January 28, 1943, and quoted in full President Roosevelt's letter commending Secretary Stimson for opening the U.S. Army to nisei volunteers in order to form a special combat battalion of American citizens of Japanese ancestry. The President's letter said... "Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race or ancestry," and acknowledged the new collaboration between the Army, Navy, War Manpower Commission, Justice Department, and the WRA in assuring the opportunity for the loyal Japanese Americans to serve their country "at a time when the fullest and wisest use of our manpower is all-important to the war effort."

Today, Mr. Baker said, registration is taking place in the centers, of all persons,

over 17 years of age, male and female, citizen and non-citizen. This is being done to clear the background of all evacuees, not only to volunteer in the Army, but so that when employment is found for those ineligible for the Army, all cleared evacuees can leave to resettle in the country outside the centers anywhere except in the West Coast military area. WRA expects, by the end of May, to have cleared 40,000 employable men and women as a labor source for prospective employers.

Already released, on an individual basis, are about 2,000 evacuees, 350 as college students, most of the rest for jobs. WRA is setting up offices in Cleveland, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver and Salt Lake City to aid in getting employers in touch with qualified evacuees, working with War Manpower Commission, U.S. Employment Service and Department of Agriculture. Position of WRA in getting employment is to see that prospective employer makes connection with prospective worker, "from that point on arrangements are between them." Only restriction after evacuee is on the job; he may not return to evacuated area, he will keep WRA informed of his whereabouts, if he is an alien, he is of course also subject to Justice Department restrictions in regard to aliens.

Mr. Baker concluded by saying that he considered evacuee manpower of vital potential use to the war effort, and that with a successful resettlement achieved, he hoped there would no longer be a Japanese problem in the United States by the end of the war.

Janet Fukushima, Chairman of Japanese American Committee for Democracy, Miss Fukushima traced the effect of Pearl Harbor on the Japanese American community, showing the disintegration of the old social, economic and political relationships controlled by the former community leadership, now in the main repatriated to Japan or interned as pro-Japanese in this country. She told of the instinctive identification, although confused and without organized leadership, of the freed people with the war effort of this country, and of their cooperation as they were evacuated from the West Coast. She commended WRA, but mentioned problems which had not yet been resolved by WRA. She raised the matter of the evacuees' almost complete isolation from the rest of the country's war effort, except for the small camouflage net projects and the emergency harvesting of vital crops, for which thousands of evacuee volunteered. The general idleness resulted in a feeling of frustration, increased by the bitterness aroused by the arbitrary distinctions made between citizen evacuee and alien evacuee, a separation first aroused by the raising of abstract "civil rights of citizens" test cases which greatly confused the minds of Japanese Americans. She showed the struggle between the pro-Axis minority, who were not segregated and who were able to seize every opportunity to create disruptive incidents, and the genuinely anti-fascist elements who were trying, without recognition and on their own initiative, to educate and stabilize the people against divisionism and disruption from within and without the centers.

She stressed the importance of Secretary Stimson's statement opening the Army to nisei volunteers, and showed the need of positive action to follow this step forward by working out a concrete program to successfully integrate all Americans of Japanese birth or descent into either the Army or essential industry, and to recognize the importance of destroying the fifth column and developing clear new leadership among Japanese Americans so that these people could become a self-respecting part of the United Nations.

Arthur Upham Pope, Chairman of the Committee on National Morale, arrived and greeted the Forum, characterizing the meeting as "a patriotic, humane and honest undertaking

in the interest of this country." He noted the fact that certain journalists had attempted to "cast suspicion and ill will on this undertaking and those concerned with it" as indication that they were thus taking the Nazi line, "to create suspicion of one community against another," and were by doing so rendering their own patriotism doubtful. He paid tribute to the loyalty of the evacuees under the most critical conditions, and expressed admiration for the Japanese people through his long contact with them. He stressed the difference between the Japanese people and the brutal military clique which seized power and rules Japan, and who is our enemy today.

Louis Goldblatt, Int'l Representative of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, CIO

Mr. Goldblatt, who represented the CIO, as Secretary of the California State CIO Industrial Union Council, at the Tolan Committee hearings in California at the time of evacuation, made recommendations as to the most effective ways of bringing about the contribution of Japanese Americans toward winning the war. He commented that WRA, in spite of the fine progress it had made, had one serious shortcoming: it had consistently treated the evacuee situation from a social service rather than from a war consideration of evacuation and handling of Japanese people in America. He reminded the Forum that at the Tolan hearings the CIO had asked immediate setting-up of a tribunal whereby loyal Japanese could establish a clear record and then be permitted to take their proper place within the industrial war effort or within the armed forces of America. He felt that the new WRA policy of clearance first, and then finding employment, would become a point of departure for convincing the American people, and for mobilizing the democratic forces in America into acceptance and cooperation with an aggressive, progressive program of resettlement by WRA.

Mr. Goldblatt criticized the WRA for failing to make a distinction within the centers between the true anti-fascist Japanese and the "phonies" and the anti-American minority, thus depriving the people of their genuine pro-democratic leadership, who were put in an unfavorable light just because WRA did not recognize the need for developing and respecting such leadership. He drew an analogy to the result in industry, where even after the establishment of labor-management committees to increase production, if management does not support the union's effort with like contributions, attempts to discredit the union by defeatist and disrupter elements often result.

He made the following recommendations:

1. Set up machinery to clear loyalty of Japanese Americans, with unions and other anti-fascist organizations of which they are members participating and helping to establish the records of the evacuees
2. Vindication by wide publicity resulting from these hearings would mean general recognition that the assimilation of Japanese Americans into the American war effort would be one of the greatest contributions toward defeating the Axis
3. Correct union policy could see that Japanese be brought into industry and kept there side by side with other workers to establish a fundamental unity which will end any possibility of discrimination because of race or national origin
4. America to stop discrimination against Asiatics; amend the naturalization law so that all Orientals can become naturalized citizens, recognizing this as the "single greatest political weapon" for defeating the Axis, and proving to the people of Asia that America is fighting a people's war, and will get a people's peace and a people's world

DISCUSSION

Carol King, American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, announced that they

are about to have introduced into Congress a bill to amend the Naturalization Law so that there shall no longer be denial of naturalization to the Asiatic peoples in America because of race

Charles Collins, Executive Secretary of Negro Labor Victory Committee, urged the opening of the Selective Service draft for Japanese Americans on an equal basis with all other Americans

Teru Masumoto, Japanese American Committee for Democracy, announced that through correspondence with Dillon Meyer, Director of WRA, this Committee had established the fact that WRA would accept as guarantee of employment the statement of a trade union that it could place evacuees through its employment bureau in a field where there is a shortage of labor, without specifying name of employer. Local #16, General Clerical UOPWA, CIO, is thus guaranteeing jobs in N.Y.C. to two evacuee girl

Louis Goldblatt stressed importance of Government taking an aggressive attitude on discrimination against Japanese in industry in order to assure success of the unions' fight to end discrimination as a bar to full mobilization for maximum production to win the war. He cited the fight to end discrimination against the Negro people in industry.

Donald Henderson said that in spite of the known labor shortage of agricultural workers, over which UCAFAWA has jurisdiction, neither WRA nor any Government agency has ever approached UCAFAWA to place Japanese American labor on the farms; reading from a UCAFAWA organizer's report (Arizona, cauliflower packing) he reported that Japanese labor had been imported to replace union labor at a lower wage, and said that unless WRA and the Department of Agriculture stopped such practices, and adopted correct labor policies, the unions could do nothing to end discrimination against racial minorities so used.

RESOLUTION

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unanimously adopted by

FORUM ON JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY PROGRAM

Hotel Commodore, New York City

February 13, 1943

WHEREAS, Japanese Americans, who are loyal to the United States, must be enabled to make their contribution to our victory program; and

WHEREAS, existing discrimination interferes with the complete mobilization of Japanese Americans; and

WHEREAS, the activities of fifth columnists in the Japanese American communities serve to spread confusion and prevents unity; and

WHEREAS, Japanese Americans are anxious to serve equally with all other Americans in our armed forces; and

WHEREAS, the War Relocation Authority has sought to administer the Centers in a democratic American fashion; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That this Forum on Japanese Americans in the Victory Program go on record urging the complete elimination of all forms of discrimination against Japanese Americans in our national, social, economic and political life; and,

RESOLVED: That those released from the War Relocation Centers be enabled to secure employment in war factories and not forced to take employment in non-essential occupations, while those who remain in the Centers also be fully utilized to work useful to the production for Victory Program of the Country; and,

RESOLVED: The government isolate and remove fifth columnists and Japanese agents from the ranks of the Japanese Americans; and,

RESOLVED: That all Japanese Americans, citizen and non-citizen, be permitted to serve in our armed forces on the basis of selective service equally with all other Americans; and,

RESOLVED: That we voice our opposition to the Bill, S-444, introduced by Senator Mon C. Wallgren of Washington, and providing to turn over supervision of the War Relocation Centers to the War Department, and urge that Congress defeat this measure; and,

RESOLVED: That we commend the War Relocation Authority for the manner in which it is fulfilling its responsibilities to the Japanese Americans and to the American people.