

CONFIDENTIAL

EVACUATION AND RESETTLEMENT STUDY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Annual Report, 1942-1943

file

In previous informal reports, the organization of the study, the general plans, and the cooperative arrangements with government agencies, have been discussed briefly. In this report, the background of the study, the main foci of interest, the point-to-point development over the past year, the functions of the personnel, and the plans for the future will be discussed.

I. General Orientation.

The Evacuation and Resettlement Study of the University of California is oriented around the forced mass uprooting of a minority group (persons of Japanese ancestry) from the area of their primary settlement (the West Coast of the United States). The group has been followed from the outbreak of the war to the period of evacuation en masse into government-controlled camps, through the still continuing confinement of the great majority, up to the present, when government policy is directed towards release from these camps, and dispersal on an individual basis into all parts of the United States except the area of primary settlement.

II. Background.

The events that motivated this forced mass migration are well known, but will be reviewed here very

briefly. As soon as war was declared between the United States and the Axis powers, restrictions were applied to the free movement of enemy aliens. These restrictions bore equally upon Japanese, Germans, and Italians who had not obtained American citizenship. The only discriminatory aspect was that Japanese aliens, with the exception of those who had fought in our Army in previous wars, had been unable to obtain citizenship, whereas Germans and Italians had had free access to the status of naturalized citizens. This meant that practically all foreign-born Japanese were by definition enemy aliens, whereas only those foreign-born Germans and Italians who had failed to obtain citizenship were so classed.

On January 29, 1942, the Department of Justice designated certain limited strategic areas on the West Coast from which all enemy aliens were to be evacuated by February 24. But before this evacuation was completed, an Executive Order was signed by President Roosevelt (February 19) making it possible for the Secretary of War and military commanders whom he might designate to remove "any or all persons," irrespective of citizenship, from military areas which might be prescribed. The Secretary of War thereupon designated Lieutenant General J. L. DeWitt of the Western Defense Command to carry out the Executive Order, and on March 2, General DeWitt defined a wide strip of the West Coast as a strategic area. Exclusion orders were issued shortly thereafter, applying not to enemy

aliens as a class, but to enemy aliens of Japanese nationality only and including a non-alien group, i.e. American born, American citizen descendants of Japanese aliens. These orders were applied rigidly and were interpreted as including all persons who had any degree of Japanese blood. Two out of three of the persons involved in the exclusion orders held American citizenship.

For a time voluntary migration out of the military area was permitted. The bulk of these voluntary migrants moved to a so-called free zone, comprising the eastern portion of Washington, Oregon, and California. Within a few weeks, however, voluntary evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry was stopped completely and plans for mass evacuation were developed by a civil organization set up under the Western Defense Command. Fair grounds and race tracks were turned into temporary camps, or "Assembly Centers," and one neighborhood after another was cleared of all persons of Japanese ancestry. Then the so-called Free Zone in California (but not in Washington and Oregon) was also brought under military control, and all persons of Japanese ancestry in this zone, including both those who had recently moved in as voluntary evacuees from the previously designated restricted areas and the permanent residents of these areas were ordered to be evacuated.

After a period of from two to five months in Assembly Centers, under military control, the evacuees

were moved to so-called Relocation Projects, under the War Relocation Authority, a civilian agency which had been created by Executive Order on March 18, 1942. There are ten of these Relocation Projects in the States of California, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Idaho and Arkansas. Their population varies from around 5,000 to nearly 20,000. Most of them were set up in uncleared or desert areas or swamplands, and most of them include rather extensive acreage which could be cleared, subjugated, or drained and turned to agricultural uses. Quarters for housing and utilities were constructed under the direction of the Army, and the plan is uniform from project to project: rows of barracks, divided into apartments, arranged in blocks, separated by firebreaks; common messhalls, washrooms, utilities, recreation halls, in each block; administrative buildings and personnel housing set off from the evacuee quarters; the whole enclosed by barbed wire, and patrolled by military police, and, in most camps, watchtowers at the corners, manned by soldiers with machine guns.

The administrative organization is an elaborate one, headed by a project director. There is a division concerned with community services, including social welfare, education, recreation, and community government; another concerned with public health; others with farm management and public works, employment and housing, legal matters, community enterprises (including cooperatives,

in some camps), private industry, transportation and equipment, protective organizations, and mess operations. Policies are determined at National headquarters in Washington, but there are important local differences in the interpretation and application of policies. The division heads and most of the administrative personnel are Caucasians, while under the Caucasian personnel are the evacuees, employed at wages with a maximum fixed at \$19.00 per month, whether they be doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers, or cooks, waitresses, truck drivers, farm laborers. Two of the camps are in military areas, and no evacuee is permitted to leave the camp for nearby communities except in an emergency, in which case a military permit must be obtained and a Caucasian escort provided. In the others, access to surrounding towns is somewhat freer. At present, short-term, seasonal, and indefinite leave may be obtained to take up work outside the military area. Such leaves are possible to all who have been cleared by the FBI, who have signed a pledge of loyalty to the United States, who have an actual job offer, or who are sponsored by a cooperating agency, such as the Friends Service Committee, which has set up hostels in several midwestern cities. This, then, in broad outline represents the background and the structure of the situation towards which the study is directed.

III. Foci of interest.

From the standpoint of the population student,

the problem is viewed as falling within the general scope of migratory phenomena, but a migration which has many unusual characteristics. It represents, in the first instance, the migration of a whole population group from the area of primary settlement. Second, this migration is one in which the forces of "push" and "pull" could not operate in what we have theoretically conceived of as the normal selective fashion. Here was no case of individuals moving volitionally from an area of lesser to one of greater economic opportunity. Here was no case, as in most migration of the past, of selection operating positively upon the young, the unmarried; of the less adventurous sex to short distances, of the more adventurous sex to more distant destinations; of the more vigorous, the more intelligent, the more (or the less) stable emotionally; of the upper or the lower classes disproportionately. On the contrary, here was a completely unselective out-migration, enforced upon a population group as an entity. Third, this migration represents one in which the migrants were forced into a particular destination and held there for a period of approximately one year. With a few exceptions, no choice as to other destinations could be made during this period. At these destinations, involuntary "settlement" took place of groups of 5,000 to 20,000 persons, on barren uncultivated land, restricted in area. Fourth, after the passage of a year, varied destinations were opened up to the settlers, excluding only the areas

of primary settlement on the West Coast. In other words, the "pull" force, as manifested in normal migrations, has been re-established, and the whole range of selective forces again comes into prominence. The pull of greater economic opportunity, and the lure of new experience and adventure may be expected to operate in far from a random fashion in respect to age, sex, family status, social class, intelligence, emotional stability, and so on, but it remains to be seen to what degree this operation will be qualified by the inertia produced by the long and inactive settlement, the dislocation of habits and changes of attitudes produced by this experience.

From the standpoint of cultural anthropology, the enforced settlement and concentration of this population group represents an important test case in the field of acculturation. Here was a group sharply divided by the generational line: a relatively old, immigrant, alien group that had preserved many of the customs and ways of behaving common to the Japanese in Japan thirty or forty years ago; a relatively young but far more numerous group composed of their citizen children, grandchildren, and even greatgrandchildren who had been educated in American schools, associated widely with their Caucasian fellow-students and neighbors, knew little about, and cared less for, the culture of Japan, and, in many instances, could not even speak the Japanese language. Between these two groups was a less numerous, marginal group: the American

born, who had been sent back to Japan to be educated and had returned later to America, and in whom the conflict between the two cultures is apparent to a greater or lesser degree. The question arises then as to the nature and extent of the modification and changes in the diverse cultures represented by these three groups under the impact of constant, enforced association.

From the standpoint of political science, interest centers on both national policy and procedures and on political life within relocation camps. The first interest involves questions concerning the nature of pressure group activity and the formation of American public opinion as favoring or opposing evacuation, and, more recently, favoring or opposing detention in camps for the duration and permanent exclusion from California; constitutional issues raised in the forced evacuation of American citizens; policies, procedures, and inter-relationships of the various government agencies concerned with the administration of the Japanese control program. Within the Relocation Centers, interest has centered on (1) the conflict of ideologies and the struggle for power among diverse groups of evacuees; (2) the inter-relationships between groups of evacuees and the Caucasian administration; (3) the effect of successive stages of relocation upon political loyalties; (4) the effect of changing evacuee attitudes on administration of the camp community.

From the standpoint of social psychology, the primary focus is the nature of the collective adjustments made by these population groups, following the crisis of evacuation, to the way of life imposed by the government in the community of enforced settlement, and the extent and sort of institutional reorganization and individual readjustment following voluntary resettlement.

IV. Organization and Point-to-Point Development of the Study.

The main problem of organization was to devise means of documenting the rapidly shifting events of evacuation and resettlement, for it was obvious that documentation from administrative or governmental sources would cover only a small, and almost necessarily a biased, part of the total situation. A staff of qualified observers had, therefore, to be recruited and to be located strategically so that continuous observations would be forthcoming. Techniques for observation had to be developed and means of checking the reliability of the records devised.

The recording staff consists of several classes of workers. These classes of workers, and their functions, are described in the succeeding paragraphs.

(1) Participant observers. Three young Nisei social scientists (one social psychologist, one sociologist, and one psychologist), who had been collecting data on the background of the Japanese minority on the West Coast

even before the war, and who had been following closely the events since Pearl Harbor, became affiliated with the study at its very beginning. Within a few weeks, another Nisei, an anthropologist, was added to the staff. These four became the nucleus of the participant observer group. When evacuation took place, they were sent to four different Assembly Centers: one to the famous Santa Anita Racetrack in Los Angeles, another to the Tanforan Race-track near San Francisco, another to the Tulare Fairgrounds in the Central Valley of California, and the fourth to the Puyallup Fairgrounds in the State of Washington. All of them made records of the way of life and the early adjustments of the evacuees in these four centers. Later, other observers were recruited at Tanforan, and a comprehensive report was prepared covering many aspects of life in this Assembly Center.

When the Relocation Projects were established, the government agencies offered to move the Nisei observers to two projects of our choice, in order that we might centralize our observations and start them at the very inception of this program. One of these sites was the Tule Lake Project, on the border between California and Oregon. The other was the Gila River Project in the Arizona desert. Later, another Arizona desert project (Poston) was added as a primary center of research.

The original plan called for the preparation of a basic report on the social structure of each project,

including coverage of the administrative set-up; of population differentials, dynamics and ecology; of the main institutions (political organization, economic organization, religious organization, the family, education, recreation, communication, protective institutions, food, clothing, and shelter); of the forms of collective behavior (rumors, social attitudes, mass action); of social stratification, social conflict, social reorganization; of personal roles; of Caucasian-Japanese relationships. It soon became obvious, however, that no structural report at a given moment would ever be final, that the situation under observation was so highly dynamic - with almost no relationships constant - that the main problem was to "capture and record" the elements in the significant changes that were occurring. In other words, while anthropological, political, and sociological factors are involved, the study is at the same time a record of social history conceived as an ongoing process.

The technical difficulties in the way of carrying out the study in Assembly Centers and Relocation Projects have been enormous, and there were few precedents that could be used as guideposts. Certain obvious techniques were barred to the observers because of the peculiarities of the situation. Representative sampling was out of the question, schedules and questionnaires could not be used, and even note-taking in public was a hazard, because of the experiences of the evacuees with FBI and other

intelligence officers and the tendency on their part to confuse research workers with "informers."

The extent to which the Nisei observers have actually been participants probably represents an unparalleled situation. They were, in the first place, completely restricted by the barbed wire, psychologically as well as physically. They could not leave the project of their own volition. They were, in the second place, full-time workers in the evacuee work corps. And many of the issues that split the community, e.g. registration for service in the armed forces, bore upon them equally as heavily as upon any other evacuee. They purposely withheld themselves from only one aspect of community life, i.e. active participation in politics.

(2) Nonparticipant observers. In two of the Relocation Projects, nonparticipant observers were also used. Both of these were Caucasians, the one a sociologist, the other an anthropologist. They lived with the administrative staff, and were, to some extent, identified with the administration or with factions in the administration. At the same time, they were independent of the government agencies concerned. They supplemented the records of the participant observers in many ways.

(3) Collaborating participant and nonparticipant observers. Because of the marked cleavages that developed in the projects, particularly along generational lines, it was essential to obtain collaborators who ~~reported~~ other

represented

than the highly Americanized, Nisei point of view. Cooperation of a number of the older generation (Issei) was obtained, and several of these have worked with the study continuously.

The data obtained by participant, nonparticipant, and collaborating observers are for the most part documentary: records on the formation of groups of various sorts and of their activities and development; records of individual and family experience; reconstruction of the background of experience of individuals and families, often extending far into the pre-evacuation period. These documents are noteworthy both for their coverage and for their quality. They run to many thousands of pages and cover most aspects of individual and social life in the projects. There are, of course, still many gaps to fill in regarding the past, and efforts are being made to this end, as well as to continue current observations.

(4) Resettlement staff. The final phase of the study covers resettlement. Preparations have been made not only to follow through the settlers in the Relocation Projects, the bulk of whom may very well stay on what might be called "the reservation" for the duration of the war, but also to follow through the experiences of those who are leaving the camps and taking their place once more in the stream of normal American life.

At present, departures from the Relocation Projects are occurring at the rate of 500-600 per week. Since

approximately one-third of these resettling evacuees are locating in the Chicago area, the study of the resettlement aspect is being centralized in Chicago. Through the courtesy of the University of Chicago, an office has been set up in the Social Science Research Building, and four of the Nisei staff members have moved from Relocation Projects to Chicago to carry on the work there. The work is still in its early stages, but the attached schedule (Appendix A) indicates the scope and procedures. As the plans for resettlement progress, these Nisei field workers will visit other cities as well as rural areas. In the resettlement phase, techniques less unorthodox than those used of necessity on the projects are being utilized. Greater control of the sample is being achieved and direct interviewing is on a freer level.

This study of the resettlers, too, is utilizing the experiential document extensively, carrying the individual and his family retrospectively to the day of Pearl Harbor, following him through the successive crises on the West Coast and through the evacuation and the enforced settlement in Relocation Projects, recording the main features of his initial adjustment to life in the Middle West, following him in the pattern of life he develops there: finding a job and making a living, getting or completing an education, spending his leisure time, establishing a family, participating in political activities and in other voluntary associations. An attempt

will be made to record his changing attitudes towards the war, towards democracy, towards assimilation, towards Caucasians, towards being wards of the government, towards his family, etc.

Particular attention will be directed towards tendencies of the resettlers to concentrate or to disperse. Finally, the resettlers will be "placed," as far as possible, within the framework of the larger communities in which resettlement is taking place, with particular reference to community acceptance or rejection. The shifting policies of the various agencies aiding in or impeding resettlement will also be analyzed.

(5) Central staff. The central staff in Berkeley consists of a director (sociologist) and a research assistant (political scientist). The function of the former consists at present partly in point-to-point planning and supervision of work in the various field offices, partly of handling the statistical aspects of the study. No attempt is being made to collect original statistical data, but it is planned to utilize the data obtained as administrative by-products to throw light on many of the important aspects of population differentials and dynamics. Details of this plan are described in a letter to the Director of the War Relocation Authority (Appendix B). The function of the political scientist is partly to build up the background of the pre-evacuation period, with particular reference to changing public sentiment; to the work of the

Pacific Coast Congressional Delegates, and the relationship between the Justice and War Departments; partly to analyze, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the arguments advanced both for and against evacuation; partly to make a continuing analysis of policy formation in regard to the evacuees.

The functions of both the sociologist and the political scientist require frequent and extensive traveling to the projects, to Chicago, and to Washington.

(6) Collaborating staff. An anthropologist and a political scientist, both professors in the University of California, are freely accessible for advice and criticism as to the direction of the study in all its phases.

* * * * *

The present organization of the study may be summarized briefly as follows:

(1) Observations are continuing at three Relocation Centers, namely Tule Lake, Poston, and Gila.

(2) The resettlement phase is now centered in Chicago.

(3) The general direction and synthesis of the study is carried on from the Berkeley office, where the population and political phases are also being analyzed.

The funds allocated to the study for the first fiscal year were spent as follows: 61% for research assistance; 20% for secretarial and clerical assistance; 13% for travel; 4% for supplies; and 2% for administrative

assistance. This allocation corresponded fairly well with the budget planned when application for funds was made to the Columbia Foundation (when the contingency fund is distributed among the other items in proportion) namely, 61% for research assistance; 17% for secretarial and clerical assistance; 20% for travel; and 2% for supplies. It is expected that the proportions will remain relatively constant during the next fiscal year.

Dorothy Swaine Thomas

Dorothy Swaine Thomas

Giannini Hall
University of California
Berkeley, California

July 1, 1943.