

November 20, 1943

TULE LAKE

My collection of evanescent attitudes toward the segregees, once they had left for Tule Lake, is haphazard. Attempts to elicit information were often resented and I was obliged to content myself with collecting spontaneous remarks.

For some days after the last group left, persons who had relatives en route to Tule expressed their concern over the fact that they had not heard from them. However, when the post cards and letters began to arrive, they were, in general, pleased; in fact, such excellent conditions were reported in Tule Lake that they caused some good-natured expressions of jealousy. On the evening of October 12, Mrs. Okuno remarked on the nice things she was hearing from friends in Tule Lake. They were getting plenty of tofu.<sup>1</sup> (a Japanese dish ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> we do not get here in Gila.) They were also being allowed to buy fresh fish everyday.<sup>2</sup> The schools were reported to be very nice and compared very favorably to schools on the outside. On the train the segregees were fed very well.

Immediately after segregation had taken place there was considerable discussion in Gila on the better food served in Tule Lake and the better service offered by the Co-op. At Tule some former Gilan tasted ice cream and beer for the first time since arrival at the relocation center.<sup>3</sup>

At a meeting held to discuss a possibility of opening a Caucasian store, Mr. Hutchinson, principal of Canal Elementary School, remarked that the children in Tule Lake were writing to children in Gila that they were able to buy ice cream cones. This, he feared, humorously, might start an uprising in Gila.

That same evening I was waylaid by my block manager who wanted to hear the latest gossip. He had heard from a letter in Tule Lake that "they had received fine treatment and fine food. I am sorry I didn't go now," he said, and then added rapidly, "Only I don't really mean that." He remarked that he was very lonesome and missed his brothers a great deal.

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<sup>1</sup>tofu is made of soy bean ground to a smooth paste which is hardened by cooking. It is sold in rectangles of 2x2x4 inches and eaten with rice.

On October 5, Hikida emphasized the fact that some of the Gilans were dissatisfied with the decision of the Co-op Enterprise to pay the people of Rivers in Revolving Fund Certificates, while they paid the segregees in cash. One young man remarked, "Why do they give the disloyal cash and give us loyal the Revolving Certificate." People also felt it was wrong to defer payment for three years. They suspected that a great deal could happen to the funds in those three years. "People in a way think they're getting less than those going to Tule Lake." At this time there was a general, though temporary conviction that now that the segregees had left camp, life would improve. The Administration would treat the "loyal" evacuees better. A few optimists voiced the hope that some piece of good news was about to be released which would affect the Gila. In the near future, perhaps, some evacuees might be allowed to go back to California.

Another attitude I happened upon by accident came from two Co-op employees, who did not notice my presence: "This place <sup>(Gila)</sup> will soon be closed up. See you in Tule in six months."

From a group of woman friends with whom I gossiped on October 8, I received a somewhat different impression. They expressed nothing but sympathy for the segregees, saying that people who were in the blocks that lost the most people stayed up all night. There were a great many difficult partings. One woman said, "I don't think that the people leaving are disloyal in the sense Caucasians think of it. I don't think anyone of them had any intention of harm in his mind. I think that with the younger ones, they're going with their parents. I think that there is a ~~lot~~ of confusion in their minds. †

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<sup>2</sup> Fish is sold in Gila only one day a week. To be served promptly, one must have friends on the canteen staff.

<sup>3</sup> This does not take into consideration the consumption of hard liquor which continues to be smuggled into camps by Caucasians and sold for exorbitant prices.

think that there is a lot of confusion in their minds. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if many of them hadn't been for this country but evacuation had brought it on."

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On October 12 Mr. Hikida gave me to understand that all the letters arriving from Tule Lake were not cheerful. He had received one letter which said that compared to Gila, Tule Lake was just like a slum; Gila, compared to Tule was like a millionaire's residence. The food and the supplies at the canteen were much better, but the general outlook was bad. Hikida had been impressed by an article written in a Japanese newspaper published in Denver. It was written by a kibeï in a sarcastic tone. The author had been one of the people who had remained in Tule Lake. He said that to him, Tule Lake was like a depression. "A friend of mine sleeping next to me talked in his sleep saying, 'I want to go back to Granada,' and when I think about the barbed-wire fence around the camp, and the feeling of imprisonment, my thoughts seem very low."

"In other words," continued Hikida, "He tried to express the sad situation of the people who came from Granada to Tule Lake. Hikida also received gloomy post cards from his wife's sister's Brother-in-law, who had been segregated.

During the process of segregation, Hikida had noted a significant departure from former Japanese custom in the United States: not nearly the usual emphasis was placed upon farewell parties. Before segregation Issei had been in the habit of having farewell parties "carried on in full scale." Parties would be given not only in honor of persons leaving but a man who intended to depart would reciprocate with a party for his friends. This, says Hikida, follows long years of established custom in Japan.<sup>1</sup> However, during segregation this

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<sup>1</sup>Hikida advances the hypothesis that these elaborate farewell parties are a function of Japan's geographic situation. The inhabitants of these small islands take any departure very seriously. Also, when the issei left Japan, a journey was a far more serious matter than it is now and this impression has remained with them.

usage broke down. There were not nearly so many parties as Hikida expected, and those which were held were less elaborate.

The statements made to me by two women who are members of the pro-Japanese element of the camp should not be ignored. Mrs. Mizuno, whose husband is interned made the following remark October 12:

"The Yes-Yes people disgust me. They are sitting on the fence waiting to see who is going to win the war. If the Americans win they are going to be Americans. If the Japanese win, they are going to be Japanese. They are afraid to ask for repatriation and go to Tule since they are not certain who will win. They are not willing to take the consequences of a Japanese victory. Such persons are no good for any country. They make me ashamed."<sup>2</sup>

Another woman whose husband and children are in Japan made the following statement October 6:

"The people who are going to Tule are the best. The Yes-Yes people are not sincere. You should hear the way they talk about the way the Caucasians swallow what they say. The people going to Tule are no more disloyal than most of those remaining."<sup>3</sup>

Whenever I could do so without giving offense, I asked for the correspondence from Tule Lake. Most evacuees preferred Mrs. Mizuno's husband is interned at Santa Fe. It is she who X fears is pulling my leg. X mistook the fact that I quoted Mrs. Mizuno's remarks without comment for naiveté on my part. As I have explained before, Mrs. Mizuno is "I"'s sister. "I" is one of my most fluent pro-Japanese informants (now in Tule). He introduced me to his sister with orders that she tell me all. She doesn't, but I go to see her every few weeks and let her rave. Later I hope to write a case study. Tuttle has a thick file on the lady.

<sup>3</sup> Neither this nor Mrs. Mizuno's statements are verbatim. Naturally I cannot write in their presence. Both impress me as very neurotic.



to tell me merely that their brother or friend was getting on well. The ~~Asami~~ camp did not look so nice as Gila, but the canteen was much better; they could get ice-cream and beer. Through my friendship with the Kondo's I received two cards and a letter. It was during a Japanese lesson that I heard of this correspondence. Two male friends of the Kondos were also present. When I expressed my desire for news from Tule and asked for permission to take notes on the letters, a very awkward silence fell. I realized instantly I had made a blunder and apologized for trying to intrude on private correspondence. Mrs. Kondo came to my defense and explained my presence on the project. The guests seemed partially reassured and the recipient of the letter allowed me to copy it, although it was apparent that he relented because he trusted Kondo and not me. As I copied it I mentally gave thanks to Mr. Asami who had told me just two days before, "When the Japanese become quiet, watch out!" and resolved to be more tactful in the future. An postcard follows:

"I guess you probably have heard everything ~~about~~ about this camp already. We kids have been writing about all the bad things and I have never mentioned the good (very few). The canteens are swell here with all kinds of things imaginable. There is also a big gym here where movies will be held. Gosh, I'm so homesick for Gila and all the friends. How does it feel with about 2,000 persons gone, I trust you are still going to Coolidge for the ration books. Lots of people are relocating. Don't work too hard."

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Second card: "Thank you ever so much for everything. How

I miss you and the rest of the girls. Arrived in Tule about nine a. m. yesterday. The trip was very boring and tired me. We are living way out in the sticks. We got separated from the Hashimoto family. I don't know anybody in our block. The canteen is okay, they have all kinds of things there. I can't get over that we are miles and miles away and wished and wished I could go back to Gila and work.

P. S. Don't work too hard. Will write later and tell you from soup to nuts."

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The following letter gives more detail. It brings out several interesting points, the difficulty which the authorities encountered in getting the evacuees to serve as kitchen police, the enthusiasms over the food, so different from Gila fare, and the young man's sentiments toward his former Caucasian boss, the portly Mr. Keadle. The rumors mentioned are interesting and are, no doubt, samples of a vast body of circulating ~~uses~~ *guesses* about the segregees' future.

October 11, 1943

"Dear Mr.....

"Sorry for writing to you in 2H pencil since the ink are not available at the canteen at the present time. When I get hold of it, I'll try my best in writing so that you wouldn't have hard time reading it. Ha! Ha!

We left Gila according to schedule, but the train wasn't there at Casa Grande. Later we were informed that the locomotive got in trouble en route Casa Grande from Tucson. They sent a substitute locomotive which was very slow. Soon as we left here, we went through a terrific heat up to Indio, California. I had to take my shirt off in order to cool myself and dry the shirt at the same time. It was worse than Gila.

At Bakersfield they had to change locomotive to make up the lost hours. Believe it or not! It took more than seven hours from Los Angeles to Bakersfield, or average of about twenty miles an hour. Passed by our ex-center Tulare and Turlock Center. At both centers I saw soldiers so it must be a training center. Also got off couple of times to stretch our legs and arms near Fresno and Sacramento.

On the train quite a bit of segregees worked as waiters and K. P. They had to work so hard that most of them refused to volunteer on the last day; therefore, captains and monitors had to work on the last day as K. P. and waiters. To tell the truth it was my first experience as a waiter in my life. Paul, ex Co-op chairman and segregation coordinator also worked as K. P.

When I got here I thought there were going to be lot more Kibei than Nisei, but it was ~~the~~ visa versa. Also there is quite a bit of bachelors, old ones,<sup>1</sup> and more girls than what I anticipated.

Most of the people here are sincere and sympathetic at the present. I wouldn't know about them tomorrow, but hope it will continue for the duration or till the exchange comes. We're all waiting in vain.<sup>2</sup>

Oh Yeah! about the mess that I wrote on the card previously. There the mess hall is run more or less on cooperative style. All the cooks, part of dishwasher, waiters, and waitress that is on duty work together in cooking, washing dishes, and waiting on block people. By doing this no one person have to work hard and other taking it easy. They all must be pitching in there. As for the block people, the seats are all assigned, By doing this it will save a waitress in telling the people where to sit as in the case of mess<sup>3</sup> 74 in Gila. Also we do n't have to line and wait like a tramp.<sup>3</sup> It's just like Chop Suey only you don't order, but eat what they serve to you. Not bad at all.

How's the rice situation over there, Hope it's not serious as what the people talk about. What I heard about it was that it was smuggled out during the night. Maybe this is true, since it is impossible to make an error of more than thousand sacks.<sup>4</sup> Poston people that arrived here also stated that they are going through the same situation as Gila. Something is fishy if the rice situation gets worse<sup>st</sup>. Rumor here is that Poston and Gila will close early part of next year. (Rice) Another rumor is that we the repatriates also are going to be transferred to New Mexico Camp. Hope all these rumors are false.

Gee Whiz! I forgot to tell you about foods that we get here. Its incomparable to that of Gila. You just can't expect

<sup>1</sup>In quite another connotation Hikida informed me that the old bachelors are the least cooperative members of the community. In Gila it was they who complained about contributing to the War Fund Drive.

<sup>2</sup>This is a most significant paragraph. It is full of implications among which are unrest, worry and lack of confidence in the Caucasians.

<sup>3</sup>The oft repeated complaint.

<sup>4</sup>Evidently some mess scandal which so far has escaped the administration and myself. I do not quiz Kondo on such matters. Usually he tells me himself, if he feels like it.

more. But butte three ~~times~~ times a day, meat, apple or orange pie, cake, or cookies, ~~mess~~ vegetables, etc. almost daily. Probably they are using the points up to the maximum.<sup>1</sup>

Administration building is very hi-tone compare to that of Rivers. It was just like walking through Federal Reserve Bank in L. A. All department is separated by glass walls. I felt like working here too. ~~mess~~ Don't get me wrong, Henry.

I left something out. I met balloom stomach Keadle and white hair sourpuss Thomas<sup>2</sup> at the Casa Grande station. That Thomas really give me a good YUCKYKY look. Keadle was better. Went as far as saying that if I wanted a recommendation he will write me one. I didn't ask since I didn't care to work for the Mess Operation. Hope I could work in the Co-op office and learn some trade. Good part is that my sis May got a job in there as senior secretary.

I'll write more later on about this camp life.

Always,

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Thanks for the candy very much. Give my regards to the Mess Operation crews."

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<sup>1</sup>Which was not being done at Gila at this time. A report in preparation will give as much detail as I have been able to accumulate.

<sup>2</sup>Keadle's assistant.

When the difficulties began at Tule Lake, the evacuees at Gila were reluctant to discuss them. Only trusted friends of mine would say much. My block manager experienced much vicarious excitement over the affair. "Gee, I bet my brother's really in it. I hear they're bringing out the tanks and tear gas and everything. Gosh." He was happy however, when he received a letter on November 13, in which his brother informed him that he was safe and that he was spending his time playing baseball. On the way to the warehouse, though, a bullet had whizzed over his head!

Several Nisei before and after the uproar began, spoke pityingly of the situation of their loyal friends in Tule. These young people had been segregated, said their friends, just to please their parents. Some had hoped to stay with their parents for a year and the ~~Special~~ apply to the board to be released from Tule Lake. Now their hopes were shattered.

Even before the rioting they had been having difficulties. The Kibei were making trouble. Nisei dances were broken up. Only Japanese dancing was to be allowed at Tule, said the Kibei. Some Nisei were reported to be afraid to speak in English. I received information in this theme from about eight people, among whom were Mrs. Kondo and Mary Obata.

The Gila reaction of zestful guessing as to the part energetic friends might be playing on the one hand and concern over the fate of the hapless Americanized Nisei or relatives on the other was emphasized by Mr. Hikida on November 10. Hikida said that he and other evacuees of his acquaintance had anticipated this trouble.<sup>1</sup> The fact

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Kondo told me that in the beginning of October "X" told her he expected trouble. But I do not think he expected it so soon.

that the group was so disunited also predisposed it to trouble in Hikida's opinion. These persons, thrown together from all the centers would feel irresponsible and would have no community feeling whatever. The Kibei were expected to make trouble in any case.

Hikida's point that trouble of this sort might not have occurred had the people had time to settle down and learn to look to strong and trusted leaders for guidance is interesting. I am inclined to doubt it and would very much appreciate X's opinion on the matter. Hikida's guesses as to the causes of the trouble are interesting and probably are as near correct ~~as those of any Gilan~~ as those of any Gilan. No doubt he bases his remarks on correspondence which he does not care to reveal to me in toto.

It is interesting to note that no evacuee has criticized the rioting Tuleans in terms any stronger than those Hikida uses: "It certainly will reflect upon us.<sup>1</sup> It will give advantage to the anti-Japanese politicians in California." An attitude of "Well, you can't blame them," is most common. Two of the evacuee doctors at Gila, both very Americanized, stated that they thought the doctor in Tule who was assaulted was a pretty rotten doctor and implied that he got his just deserts.

HIKIDA'S STATEMENT ON NOVEMBER 10 verbatim

"I have expected this. We often said before segregation that anybody who took an active part in community affairs (in Tule) is going to have a pretty tough time. Because you have a majority of the more dissatisfied group, you have

<sup>1</sup>The idea that the Tuleans should hesitate because of how their actions will affect the fate of non-segregates strikes me as amusing. Only the Caucasians, Hikida, and a few Japanese Christians made the statement to me.

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certain antagonistic feeling toward the Administration and to Caucasians and to Americans.<sup>1</sup>

Another point - people who came from all different centers, unification and cooperation of these people is very very hard. Another point - you have more of the Kibei taking a very active part. So just exactly what we thought happened.

I think most of the people say: "See, what's happened. Just what we expected." It certainly reflects upon us. Giving advantage to anti-Japanese politicians in California.

I understand the main cause is injury of the farmers when the truck turned over. One died, three, four others were seriously injured. The truck driver happened to be a very young boy. The community as a whole protested about the negligence and also demanded a guarantee to protect the evacuees from a further recurrence of an injury of this kind. I think among the demands was a certain compensation to the families and to the persons injured and these demands were not met. And then some people say, if something happens like that we have no protection here. Can we take the risk, etc.?

Another thing, this happened just about a month after segregation. The people were not organized. If on the evacuee side they had five or six good leaders, even if they got very very mad, they wouldn't have done that. It happened so soon after segregation. There was no leader to take matters into his hands.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A beautiful example of Hikida's homeopathic approach to the truth- strengthened about 1,000 times it would come close to what the evacuees actually thought!

<sup>2</sup> Hikida may or may not be correct. It is interesting that the assault on a Caucasian at Santa Anita took place soon after the opening of the Assembly Center, or so I was recently informed by an evacuee.

In Gila now after a year the people know who the leaders are and if anything happens, these heads can control it.

I think the hospital in Tule Lake must have been one of the starting ~~points~~ points of the trouble, according to the articles I read.<sup>1</sup> The San Francisco Examiner mentioned that the evacuees demanded several things, one of which was not to have any Caucasian doctors and nurses. So the hospital in Tule Lake must have had a certain policy which give the Japanese a feeling of dissatisfaction.

The Japanese ~~and~~ people in this country have a certain peculiar view toward sick people. Suppose my mother have cancer which is incurable. An operation is no use. But still the Japanese like to spend two thousand to three thousand dollars and try to save the person. So if any sign of unsympathetic feeling on part of the doctors and nurses they sure get mad.

Also, some persons ~~have~~ expressed sympathy to me for them who went from here to Tule, to them who have been here very cooperative and peaceful loving. Of course, at the same time they say, 'Well, it seems like with this happeningm so-and-so must have been participating.'"

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The following is the only letter from Tule I have been able to get since the rioting started. It was written to a Caucasian and in my opinion is not nearly so typical as the letter written to the Kondos. It reenforces Hikida's point that hard feeling grew up through neglect in the hospital. That is is an expression of the motivating-spirit in Tule I whole-heartedly doubt since it comes from a member of the "Nisei fringe."

<sup>1</sup> See letter, p. 13 for corroboratory evidence.

Tule Lake Center  
Newell, California  
November 8, 1943

Dear Friends,

Thank you ever so much for your interesting letters and the snapshots. We were very delighted to hear from you. A couple of days after I wrote to you, I found work at the social welfare department and was busily occupied. As a social worker at \$19.00 per month, I had my hands full, taking care of special transfers to other centers. The experience seemed quite valuable in the way of getting acquainted and understanding people from all walks of life.

Since last Friday every employee except the mess hall and hospital workers is temporarily having an enforced vacation. Why? It's a long story that requires plenty of explanation. Even the mail delivery and collection had to be halted. Tomorrow morning for the first time at 8:15 a. m. mail will be collected, according to the announcement. So, I'm writing away (or should I say typing) into the wee hours of the night in an effort to get this letter finished and off to you without further delay. Sooner or later there may be censorship of the mail.

Much has happened since the last time I wrote to you. For one thing we had the thrill of our life when it snowed unexpectedly. Starting around 9:00 p. m. last October 20, the first lovely snowfall of the season covered the camp and the surrounding hills in a very short time and created the most beautiful impressive scene! The next morning snow had not yet melted away, so that we had the great pleasure of slushing through it and hearing it crunch under our shoes. As it was our first experience, many of us from Gila were highly excited, but the former residents of this place mildly stated, "O, snow!" and didn't seem to give it another thought.

Ever since our arrival there has been more confusion and trouble within this camp. We are still dazed and bewildered over the rapid succession of events that occurred: fire truck turned over; farm truck accident in which one worker was fatally injured and the subsequent quarrel concerning the place to use for his funeral services; delayed hospital treatment for a two year old boy who was scalded when he fell into a bucket of hot water and his death; as well as several other deaths that might possibly have been avoided; peaceful demonstration of 10,000 or more people in front of the administration building to show that they were backing up their representatives who were in conference with Messers. Myer, Best, and other Caucasian staff members, etc.

Then unexpectedly on Thursday night about 10:30 p. m. we were aroused from sound sleep when we heard a great commotion just outside our barracks. Gazing out the window and afterwards peeping through the door slit, we witnessed the real fireworks as the army rolled into action: armored tanks and jeeps rumbled by in hot pursuit of the people who were running pell-mell in all directions for their dear lives;

flashlights flared here and there into the silent darkness in search of those who might be hiding in nooks and corners of barracks; and all the while guns and rattling machine guns<sup>1</sup> could be distinctly heard above the yelling command and shouting of the M. P.'s and the pursued. Our first notion that the army was having a practice and try-out was quickly forgotten as we realized the full significance of the terrifying events.

By this time you must have heard ~~about~~ all about our disturbances over the radio or read about them in the newspapers. But much of the news that has been let out is more or less exaggerated and distorted, because the administration and the army have not as yet given the inside story of what has actually happened here during the past week and a half. For example, the radio stated that Friday morning (Nov. 5) some 20,000 disloyal Japanese gathered and tried to attack the ad. bldg., so that M. P.'s had to disperse them with tear gas. Of course, this news is only partially true. Yes, about 7:50 a. m., bright and early, all we workers started to head toward the ad. bldg. in order to report to work when the guards in armored tanks and jeeps plus machine guns and rifles and tear bombs stopped everyone of us as we reached the road opposite the place leading to the ad. bldg. Without any explanation whatever, they threw tear gas directly at us! K. happened to be near the gas and she claims it smelled more foul and terrible than anything she's ever encountered! A minor incident seems to have caused this outbreak and as far as I can make out at the present time it has some connection with attempts by a number of Caucasians to steal food and supplies from the Japanese warehouse during the night. And when the Japanese wardens and watchman tried to prevent them from doing so, the army intervened and started shooting and captured at the point of gun the J. guards who were merely doing their duty. According to some people the Caucasians wanted to get food in order to feed the J. laborers who were hired from other places to harvest the center crops that were spoiling as a result of the farmer's strike. But all in all, there are too many rumors and gossips flying around for propaganda purposes, so that it is very hard to get the true facts. One thing is certain though, and that is many people got injured and one fatally as a consequence of the army intervention.

This morning about 60 coal workers were recalled to work as a try-out to see if they could be trusted to work peacefully. The coal supply was gradually diminishing especially when every stove is being burned these terribly cold frosty mornings.

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L I allowed a captain in the U. S. army to read this letter. He said he had two criticisms: machine guns do not rattle and tear gas does not smell foully.

The Tulean  
Dispatch  
that just  
came out  
confirms  
this as  
the cause.

An announcement has even been made to the effect that in consideration of the exhausting coal supplies, we may have to go without baths unless the residents get busy and did their own coal hauling in wheel barrows from a place some distance away.

Japanese school~~a~~ has been started temporarily within the blocks. In our block there are several classes - day school as well as night school. K. is in the second grade and she is really a sad case to begin with for she's forgotten practically everything. I'm in the high school second year, but heaven knows, I have to relearn a lot of things too.

In between the studies I have done some sewing and at present I am making a blue rayon dress. I've done some reading too and the latest best seller that I liked especially is Linyutang's "Between Tears and Laughter" and I started on "Head Hunting in the Solomons" but didn't get to finish it before the time expired to return it to the circulating library.

We certainly miss you and several others at Gila. ####