

AIRMAIL

Mitani

Colorado River Relocation Center
Poston, Arizona

January 2, 1944

see required
in pfc file

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. B. R. Stauber
Relocation Planning Officer
War Relocation Authority
Barr Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Stauber:

In reply to your letter of November 20th regarding the internment of Reverend Mitani, this is to advise you that while Reverend Mitani was on this project he was very active in the organization of co-operatives and much of the work being promoted by the administration.

I have heard the charge that he took advantage of his position in adult education work to spread some pro-Japanese propaganda but I have no proof that this actually occurred. However, it would have been possible in that work, but if this information was secured through informers on the project I doubt very seriously that it was reliable.

Reverend Mitani has always been a strong supporter of the administration on the project and in the early days made many enemies among the evacuees because of this. There have also been some employees who were suspicious of his activities, but those of us who knew of the work of Reverend Mitani felt that he was doing much good for the project.

There have been a number of instances of evacuees who worked closely with the administration of having adverse reports made and this makes it very difficult to secure good evacuees in the position; that we need them.

As far as the statement is concerned that Reverend Mitani actively tried to prevent the arrest of Genshiro Tachibana, I am sure that this is false. He, in fact, along with the others, knew nothing of Tachibana's arrest until Tachibana had been taken from camp. There was a time when Reverend Mitani was on Tachibana's list to be furnished the Japanese Government, or so Tachibana said, of those evacuees who cooperated with the Government.

If the charges that you state in your letter are the only charges against Reverend Mitani, in my opinion they are not sufficient grounds to hold him.

Sincerely yours,

W. Wade Head
Project Director

WWH:ds

Mr. W. W. Head
Project Director
Administration Bldg.
Poston, Arizona

File

Nov. 10, 1943

Masatane Mitani
Banack 5-4
Santa Fe Detention Station
Santa Fe, N. M.

My dear Mr. Head:

My wife wrote me that you have been doing all you could to help me. Appreciate your effort very much. My hearing is over. The center of questions can be divided into four main parts.

- I. Have I ever made some Anti-government statements in my current event talk?
- II. Am I against the WRA's resettlement program and have I been discouraging people to relocate?
- III. Did I help a criminal to be released at the time of the last year's disturbance? Did I know that M. Uchida was guilty of an attempted murder?
- IV. Does my being loyal to the Emperor as his subject interfere with the U.S. war effort and do I advocate the loyalty among our people?

To these four parts, I refuted all the charges. As you must have noticed, I have never associated myself with any subversive element nor group which advocate violence and action against U.S. or your administration. I tried to side with the law and order always. The FBI men also asked me almost in passing that whether it is true that I have been in quarrel with the WRA officials at Poston. To this charge of course, I answered in negative and added that you know that how cooperative I have been with you and your subordinates during past year. As you know, I have had some enemies who tried to accuse me of practically everything. But I know that if I am released back to Poston after this incident, they cannot be effective against me any more. After this, I can cooperate with you and administration more effectively and work together for a better Poston. Ever since I came here I discovered far more sincere friends who have a deep faith and confidence in me both in Poston and among Caucasian people else where. It is a very gratifying experience. up to their expectation.

With best wishes, I am

Yours gratefully,

Masatane Mitani



11-1-A
Poston, Arizona
November 10, 1943

Mr. W. Wade Head
Project Director
Colorado River Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

Dear Mr. Head:

In the latest letter from Mr. Mitani there is no word about what he is charged with. I am under the impression that he is not permitted to write in detail about his hearing. However, if he does write later about the charges against him, I shall let you know.

I checked the matter of the black car at one of Mr. Mitani's news reports. The person who told me about this is not able to prove that such a car was black or some other dark color, for it was in the dark. The car was seen on the same night that the photographers were present, and so it is more than likely that the car belonged to them.

I am going to be with my family for the next two months. If there is anything that you would want to contact me for, am sure Rev. S. A. Stewart will be glad to forward your message.

Thank you for all you have done to help me during this past month. I remain

Sincerely yours,

Nellie Mitani

(Mrs. M. Mitani)

11-1-A
Poston, Arizona
November 5, 1943

Mr. Wade Head
Project Director
Colorado River Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

Dear Mr. Head:

Thank you for your letter of the 4th.

Mr. Mitani is in this country on a student's permit. He attended the University of Southern California while living in Bakersfield until war was declared. It is necessary for ministers to fulfill two years of work before their status can be changed to that of minister. Mr. Mitani had not completed his two years as a minister prior to evacuation.

I do not know whether it was illegal or legal for him to be in this center during the past year. However, I am sure he has kept in touch with the authorities regarding this matter.

Am sure Dr. Frank H. Smith can give you more definite information regarding ministers' passports, for he has been taking care of similar cases. I shall ask him to write you regarding this matter. (At the time he was here, October, 19th, he definitely said that it could not be on account of Mr. Mitani's passport, for he has been taking care of that end.)

Shall let you know as soon as I learn more about this matter.

Very sincerely yours,

Nellie Mitani

(Mrs. M. Mitani)

Colorado River Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

November 4, 1943

Mrs. Masatani Mitani
Block 11-1-A
Poston, Arizona

Dear Mrs. Mitani:

The information I received today regarding your husband's case indicates that the charge against him is being in this country illegally, inasmuch as he was on a student's permit. If you have any information regarding this, please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

W. Wade Head
Project Director

WWH:ds

Colorado River Relocation Center
Poston, Arizona

November 3, 1943

Mr. Ralph Stauber, Chief
Office of Relocation Planning
War Relocation Authority
Barr Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Stauber:

On October 12, Reverend Masatani Mitani, a Christian minister and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Community Enterprises at this Center, was taken to Santa Fe Internment Camp by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I understand that his hearing will be held in December.

I should appreciate it if you would learn from the Department of Justice what evidence prompted them to apprehend Reverend Mitani. I would also appreciate learning whether the evidence which resulted in his apprehension arose out of his activities before he arrived at this Center, or subsequent thereto. I hope that it may be possible to secure this information.

Very sincerely yours,

W. Wade Head
Project Director

THH:mas

11-2-43

Mr. Head:

Thought you would like
to read this.

Yours.

Mrs. C. T. Seizins

Colorado River Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

November 3, 1943

Mrs. C. T. Sugino
Block 11 - 8 - B
Poston, Arizona

Dear Mrs. Sugino:

Your report dated November 2nd contains several statements which I believe are inaccurate and unrealistic.

It is definitely the intention of this office to aid Reverend Mitani but we must be sure of our grounds before we make a move. We can only give information which we have acquired concerning him while he was on the project. I have always been ready to assist Reverend Mitani by explaining the facts concerning his project work. We have the utmost confidence in Mr. Inagaki, Mr. Nagai, Mr. Nakashima, Mr. Matsumoto and Mr. Kawashima and will work with them in this case whenever our efforts will be most likely to be helpful.

We must be left free to handle this case in the way that will be best for Reverend Mitani, and not open to the guidance of curbstome lawyers of the Roy Tazawa type.

Sincerely yours,

W. Wade Head
Project Director

WWH:ds

MITANI PICKUP
CTS
W. Head ADMINISTRATION

Russch
11/2/1943

C. R.:FBI
C. E.
Council

B1.11 Councilman came to call CTS. He explained:

A letter from Mitani was received by Inagaki of C. E. in which Mitani stated that he feels that an affidavit by W. Head and Nelson of the Project testifying to the part Mitani played in camp would clear him. If Head is unwilling to do this for him then to stop all effort to clarify his position.

Thereafter a committee consisting of Inagaki, Nagai, Nakashima, Matsumoto and Kawashima had gone to Head with his message whereupon Head told them to write a letter and he would sign it. When they did present him with a letter Head had looked it over, told them that of course it had to have some alterations before he could sign it (which they conceded).

Later
^ The committee went to see if he had signed a corrected draft of the submitted letter but now Head says he is going to Phoenix himself and evades signing the letter. Thus the committee feels that they will not only lose face by their inability to comply with the Mitani's request to get a testimonial letter from Head but they fear that ^{this} ~~a bitter disappointment thus~~ seeming unwillingness of the Project Dr. to testify to Mitani's character and contribution to the camp life will be of such stunning disappointment as to alter his faith in God.

11/2/43

For in Mitani's letter to his wife dated October 27, and received November 1, he writes: (she shows to CTS)

"If Mr. Head refused to write, 99% out of 100 I would not be able to return.---So you make us your mind accordingly. If Mr. Head and Nelson consent, let me know by wire so that I shall be prepared to go to the Hearing Board."

CTS also fears the breakdown of Mitani's faith in man and God if Mr. Head and Nelson do not acknowledge the unselfish service and devotion to the people's welfare and Mitani's contribution ~~to making~~ in trying to further the project aims by assisting Mr. Head in every way. For in Mitani's reply of reply of appreciation to CTS written from Santa Fe on October 27, and received November 1, he writes:

"My sincere prayer now is that I may not lose my integrity of purpose--passion for my people and for God---and ultimate conviction that God shall establish just and durable peace."

CTS accompanied the Council man to Mitani's house. Inagaki comes in. Soon Tazawa of C.E. arrived excitedly and says:

"Mr. M.K. has seen Mr. Head and says that Head prefers not to discuss the matter with other people, but would but would with Mrs. Mitani. So it's best to get her to go to make him sign the affidavit."

CT~~X~~ to Tazawa:

"But Mr. Head can't sign that letter. Why he would be called a stooge. That letter is too general and lacks content. I believe that the best thing for Mrs. Mitani to do is to go over Mitani's diary and make a chronological record of Mitani's contribution and devotion in helping Mr. Head with the project work, use some excerpts---take it to Mr. Haas to recast it. When Haas gets through it will be a letter fit for Mr. Head to sign."

All present seemed to assent to the wisdom of the procedure.

November 2, 1943
Poston, Arizona

Mr. Wade Head
Project Director
Colorado River War Relocation Project
Poston, Arizona

Dear Mr. Head:

Following is an excerpt from a letter from my husband,
Masatane Mitani, who was recently interned in Santa Fe.

"Am asking Mr. Head and Mr. Nelson to write a
statement about me. My hearing is November 1, 1943.
... If Mr. head refuses to write, 99% out of 100
I would not be able to return."

Mr. Mitani has spent much time for this community that
it may become a suitable place for the people to live in.
And, as you will recall, he has spent much time helping
you directly as well as indirectly. The above statement
indicates very plainly how much trust and faith he has
in you and in your authority.

I, as the wife of Masatane Mitani, make a petition that
you will do as much as is possible to have him released
and returned to this community as soon as possible. Am
sure that when he married me, a citizen of the United
States, that he made his decision to give his time to
help the descendants of the Japanese who have made their
homes in this country. You are perhaps just as aware
as I am of the sincere motives of Mr. Mitani to help his
people become better "citizens" of their adopted country.

Attached to this letter are some data which might help
you recall some of the things which Mr. Mitani took part
in.

Trusting that you will give your consideration to this
matter, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Mellie Mitani

(Mrs. Masatane Mitani)

May 9, 1942: Met Mr. Head for the first time at the Parker station.

May: Became Block manager (11) in order to help people get settled and to get some order out of the confusion that we had at the time.

Held first church services and helped to organize a united church. His idea was that only through the unity of church can we have a united well working community.

June: Interpreted Mr. Head's messages to the people during the orientation period. This he volunteered to do so that there would be less chance for the people to misunderstand the administration.

July: Helped to form co-op study groups. Co-ops were quite new to the people.

August: Spent much time during these three months
September:
October: organizing co-operative with the aid of the Co-op experts from New York.

November: Poston incident: Spent days as well as nights to keep peace in the community. Conferred with Mr. Head and others constantly on this matter.

December: Labor Relation Board--was made a member of this Board. Tried to establish better relations between workers and the heads of the departments.

January: Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the newly organized Co-op.

February- May: Spent time giving current event reports to establish security within the people. Kept them informed so that they would not be lost when they relocated.

Mitani History

June-August: Made trips to Gila and other centers in
 behalf of the Co-op. Attended Methodist ministers
 conference in Denver.

September:

October: 18 Taken into custody by the FBI and
 sent to Santa Fe.

Mitani

November 2, 1943

Masatane's standard: ABSOLUTE honesty, purity, unselfishness, love.

Following taken out of Quiet Time notebook (thoughts during Morning Meditation).

Dec. 27: Central Executive Board and subordinate boards should first get together and have thorough going understanding.

Work out simple but lasting fundamental policies and get Mr. Head's understanding.

- (1) Open - no secrecy
- (2) Observe carefully all democratic processes.
- (3) Give Nisei as much opportunity for self experience in building community.
- (4) Four freedom - within the boundary of Poston and within the war restriction.
- (5) Chances for mass emotion to be let out - inhibition should be discouraged.
- (6) Open discussion. Tolerance, understanding and mutual help.
- (7) Leaders should lead a God-centered and God-guided life. Make community feel the true value and happiness of real Theocracy.

July 8, '42: Stay behind - Don't occupy positions which others want to occupy!

Serving people and doing God's Will are the only aims of my life.

Aug. 19: Co-operative society will bring a real happiness to this community.

22: "Art of Living" should include Co-op idea in it.

Christians do not run away from a problem.

Sept. 9: If we use dishonest method and win, it is worth little. We must do everything before God according to His Will which is honest and unselfish.

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS
POSTON CHAPTER
RECREATION HALL, BLOCK 30
POSTON, ARIZONA

35659

October 15, 1943

Mr. W. Wade Head, Director
Poston Project Administration
Poston, Arizona

Dear Mr. Head:

The most sudden and unexpected apprehension of our Reverend Masatane Mitani by the Federal Bureau of Investigation authorities on the 12th of October came as a rather severe shock to those of us who have known him.

I am one of many local residents who conjecture that the sole cause of Mr. Mitani's apprehension is the suspicion based upon the possible misinformation on the part of the government authority against the weekly Current Events Commentary or interpretation presented to the public here during the past few months. If this conjecture is correct, then I believe a grave injustice has been accorded Mr. Mitani for the following reasons:

1. The News Commentary Meetings were conducted under the sponsorship of the Adult Education Department of the Poston Project Administration. The responsibility for these meetings, therefore, should ^{also} rest with the sponsoring organization and not with Mr. Mitani alone.
2. If any fear of possible violation of government regulations in the conduct of such meetings was involved, the sponsoring organization should have been forewarned.
3. It is my understanding that Mr. Mitani's news commentaries always consisted only in the summarization of current event news and experts' opinions lawfully published in various English language publications in this country. His speeches were based on carefully prepared manuscripts in which special care was taken to exclude any personal opinions of his own. Thus, Mr. Mitani's service in this capacity has been merely to translate into the Japanese language the secondary materials with which the American public is well acquainted. The natural and logical effect of such service would only be the enlightenment and healthy thinking of the evacuees who otherwise tend to be victimized by all sorts of demoralizing rumors, due to their inability to absorb world affairs news as most of them have neither the time, material, nor command of English language.

I have known Mr. Mitani for quite some time and known him, too, as a breacher of good standing. Moreover, I have looked into his past and see no cause for which he may be taken in for questioning. As far as I can see, he has at no time committed any wrong.

October 15, 1943

Mr. W. Wade Head, Director
Boston Project Administration
Boston, Arizona

Dear Mr. Head:

The most sudden and unexpected apprehension of our Reverend
Massachusetts by the Federal Bureau of Investigation authori-
ties on the 12th of October came as a rather severe shock to
those of us who have known him.

I am one of many local residents who conjecture that the
sole cause of Mr. Mitter's apprehension is the suspicion based
upon the possible information on the part of the Government
authority against the weekly current events commentary or inter-
pretation presented to the public here during the past few months.
If this conjecture is correct, then I believe a grave injustice
has been accorded Mr. Mitter for the following reasons:

1. The News Commentary Meetings were conducted under the
sponsorship of the Adult Education Department of the
Boston Project Administration. The responsibility for
these meetings, therefore, should rest with the spon-
soring organization and not with Mr. Mitter alone.
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taries always consisted only in the summarization of
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country. His speeches were based on carefully prepared
manuscripts in which special care was taken to exclude
any personal opinions of his own. Thus, Mr. Mitter's
service in this capacity has been merely to translate
into the Japanese language the secondary materials with
which the American public is well acquainted. The na-
tural and logical effect of such service would only be
the enlightenment and healthy thinking of the Japanese
who otherwise tend to be victimized by all sorts of de-
moralizing rumors, due to their inability to assess world
affairs news as most of them have neither the time, in-
terest, nor command of English language.

I have known Mr. Mitter for quite some time and know him
too, as a person of good standing. Moreover, I have looked
to his past and see no cause for which he may be taken in
questioning. As far as I can see, he has at no time committed any
wrong.



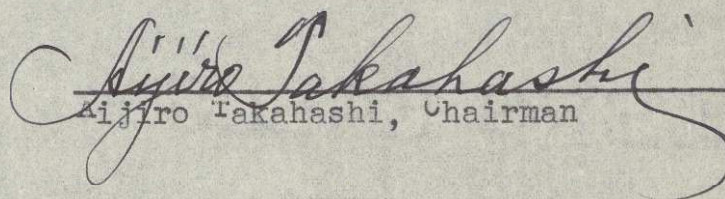
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Thousands, including a great number of the Christian faith as well as others, have come to me, asking that I plead with proper authorities for Mr. Mitani's immediate release.

I trust that you will give the matter your very deep and earnest consideration and expedite Mr. Mitani's prompt release.

Anything you can do will be very much appreciated by all concerned.

Very sincerely yours,


Aijiro Takahashi, Chairman

AT:t



33633

-2-

Thousands, including a great number of the Christian faith as well as others, have come to me, asking that I plead with proper authorities for Mr. Mifani's immediate release.

I trust that you will give the matter your very deep and earnest consideration and expedite Mr. Mifani's prompt release.

Anything you can do will be very much appreciated by all concerned.

Very sincerely yours,


Alfred L. Johnson, Chairman

AT:f



REVEREND MASATANE MITANI - taken from project
by FBI on October 12, 1943



Head

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

COLORADO RIVER PROJECT
WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY
POSTON, ARIZONA

October 13, 1943

Mr. Ralph M. Gelvin, Acting Director
Poston Project Administration

My dear Mr. Gelvin:

The most sudden and very undeserving apprehension of our Reverend Masatane Mitani by the Federal Bureau of Investigation authorities yesterday afternoon came as a rather severe shock to those of us who have known him.

As you are well aware, Mr. Mitani's spirited and informative lecture series have been of tremendous enjoyment to the general public. His addresses have been welcomed with much enthusiasm, everywhere. Needless to reiterate, the source of these speeches have been widely circulated matters off of the American press--magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, bulletins and the like, of ready access to the general public. The current events of the day as reported and seen through the eyes of qualified men, scattered and sparsely spread in and among countless articles and accounts have been boiled down and presented to the grateful, receptive audience. The vast majority of the first generation evacuee residents comprising the weekly audience have neither the time, material, nor command of the English language to fully absorb timely world affairs information in the Anglican print. Mr. Mitani's service in this capacity has been merely to translate into the Japanese language the secondary materials with which the American public is well acquainted.

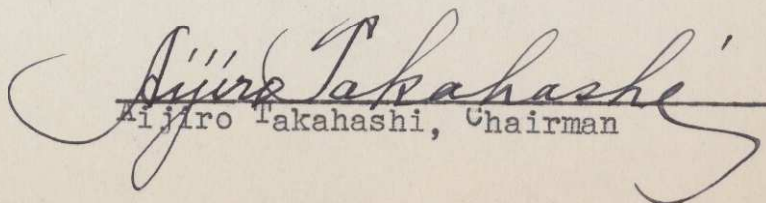
I have known Mr. Mitani for quite some time and known him, too, as a preacher of good standing. Moreover, I have looked into his past and see no cause for which he may be taken in for questioning. As far as I can see, he has at no time committed any wrong.

Thousands, including a great number of the Christian faith as well as others, have come to me, asking that I plead with proper authorities for Mr. Mitani's immediate release.

I trust that you will give the matter your very deep consideration and earnestly discuss thoroughly Mr. Mitani's prompt release with Mr. Head upon his return.

Any thing you can do will be very much appreciated by all concerned.

Very sincerely yours,


Hijiyo Takahashi, Chairman

AT:t