

Anti-Japanese Feeling Breaks Out in Hawaii

Flare-up noted as charge of arrogance is made against Nipponese by white residents.

The relocation of Japanese and Americans in Hawaii have gone through several phases since the assault on Pearl Harbor. The latest development is an upsurge of renewed tension. The first of two articles on this situation follows.

By WILLIAM NORWOOD

HONOLULU- An upsurge of anti-Japanese feeling in Hawaii has been noted by military and civilian agencies charged with maintaining inter-racial harmony in this community.

Criticism of the Japanese is heard with increasing frequency, even from some influential Hawaiian residents heretofore noted for their outspoken defense of this racial group.

Although complaints have not yet reached proportions sufficient to offer any major detraction from the generally good war record of Hawaii's residents of Japanese ancestry, they are occurring with enough frequency and persistence to evoke editorial comment from Honolulu papers and to attract the serious attention of the authorities.

Among the most common charges are that the Japanese in Hawaii are becoming too "important," "too complacent," and "too independent."

Surface Manifestations

Observers in a position to weigh the significance of this criticism regard the accusations as surface manifestations of economic and social pressures under which the Japanese residents of this Territory are assuming a new status.

Traced to their fundamental sources, the complaints suggest that racial harmony in Hawaii up to the present has been dependent on maintenance of an economic balance, which the war is tending to upset.

The acute manpower shortage emphasis upon American principles of equality, gradual elimination of old-country attitudes of humility and obedience, and-most important unionization of labor in which are major influences leading the Oriental residents of this Territory, especially the Japanese, to a new appreciation of their rights and privileges under the United States flag, and a new willingness to demand those rights.

As a consequence of this trend many of the Orientals no longer are willing to accept a dual standard of wages or the traditional principle of benevolent paternalism under which, up to the present, they have been well cared for and well controlled by employer groups.

Some of the current complaints against the Japanese in Hawaii maybe traced to upper class Caucasian families who have lost their yardmen or maids because of more attractive work elsewhere.

Still other critics who confess confidentially to having noted a new "cockiness" in the Japanese are those who have retained their maid of yardman, but have had to up wages to do so.

In a sense the complaints are somewhat paradoxical, for the very "cockiness" and "independence" which some residents of Hawaii resent are typically American characteristics, and may in part be the product of the Americanization program which has been underway in this Territory with varying degrees of emphasis ever since the start of the war.

For two years the Japanese in Hawaii have been exhorted to think American, speak American, be American, act American. This theme has been used over and over again in newspaper editorials, advertisements, radio appeals, luncheon club talks and in community morale promotion. One explanation seems to be that some of the Japanese, especially some of the younger generation, have responded so promptly and so forcefully to these appeals that their behavior is regarded as disturbing, especially when their adoption of American standards takes the form of union activities and pursuit of higher pay.

Effect of Publicity

It also has been suggested by some observers here that perhaps the Japanese in Hawaii have been over publicized and have become somewhat heady as a result of pats on the back for buying so many War Bonds, for sending their sons to war and for "not sabotaging" the islands.

For several months after the Army's call for volunteers was answered so enthusiastically by Japanese youths in Hawaii interracial friction diminished, and the atmosphere cleared temporarily of suspicions and accusations.

Now, however, the effect of that event as a lubricant upon interracial friction is beginning to wear off, and some of the new irritants described are appearing.

Another cause of friction here, actual and potential, is complacency, combined with some war weariness.

Uncertainty Lessens

For many months the Japanese did not know from day to day whether they were going to be moved en masse from the islands; they were apprehensive and cautious. Because of the uncertainty of their status they exercised unusual care to be unobtrusive and unoffending.

Now since months have elapsed without any further indications of a mass evacuation, the Japanese feel less need for restraint in their relations with the rest of the community.

But if the Japanese are complacent, they are not the only ones exhibiting this attitude. Although military authorities keep reminding the islanders that Hawaii still is in the danger zone, there is a general feeling here that the tide of war in the Pacific is ebbing now toward Japan, nor flowing toward these shores.

So Hawaii is exhibiting some of the typical characteristics of a big family which turns a solid front of unity and comradeship against any threat or attack, but reverts to squabbling among its various members when the threat is removed or the attack beaten off.