

70,000 AMERICAN REFUGEES



MADE IN U.S.A.

About the Author

Truman B. Douglass is Executive Vice-President of the Board of Home Missions, coming from an eight year pastorate in Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Louis, Missouri. From 1930 to 1935 he was minister of Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona, California. He received his education at Pomona College, Claremont, California, at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, New York. Prior to leaving St. Louis, Dr. Douglass was chairman of the Congregational Committee for Work with Japanese Evacuees, established by authorization of the General Council and working under the direction of the Council for Social Action.



CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR RESETTLEMENT
of the Congregational Christian Committee
for Work with Japanese Evacuees

6501 WYDOWN BOULEVARD, SAINT LOUIS 5, MISSOURI

Stephen M. Pronko, Chairman

Robert Inglis, Vice-Chairman

Harold N. Felton, Chairman Executive Committee

Clarence S. Gillett, Executive Director

SUITE 723
★ 1052 WEST SIXTH STREET
LOS ANGELES 14, CALIF.

First Edition printed August, 1943

Third edition revised October, 1944

PRICE TEN CENTS

70,000 AMERICAN REFUGEES



In the winter and spring of 1942, seventy thousand American citizens, charged with no crime, were torn from their homes, forced to leave their properties, businesses and professions, and were sent to concentration centers in semi desert regions where they are now living under armed guards and in barracks unsuited to the family life which they so deeply cherish.

This did not occur in a foreign country, under tyrannical dictatorship. It happened in America, under the flag which stands for "liberty and justice for all."

From a hard-headed, practical viewpoint, the enforced semi-idleness of thousands of persons who possess many types of essential skills and who are eager to work, constitutes a waste of human resources which our country cannot afford at a time when we are faced with a critical dearth of manpower in our industrial plants, in maintaining necessary civilian services in our communities, and in the production of food for ourselves and our military allies.

For those who are genuinely devoted to the principles of liberty and justice for all, the assignment of these Americans to the status of refugees and second-class citizens has tragic and ominous implications. The forcible uprooting of tens of thousands of law-abiding, useful citizens is an unprecedented event in American history. It compels us to ask some searching questions concerning the health and successful functioning of our democracy. More than this, it lays upon every responsible citizen the obligation to do his part in righting the wrong which has been done and in defending and preserving the integrity of the democracy for which men are giving their lives on battlefields around the world.

This pamphlet sets forth the relevant facts in connection with the evacuation, and suggests ways in which the reader may help remedy this injustice and check this needless waste of human resources.

THE FACTS IN THE CASE

Who Are The Refugees?

On the day of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor there were in the United States about 127,000 persons of Japanese ancestry. Approximately two-thirds of these were, and are, American citizens. The great majority of them lived on the Pacific Coast, in the states of California, Oregon, and Washington.

On February 19, 1942, the President issued a proclamation authorizing the Secretary of War to prescribe military areas "from which any or all persons may be excluded, and with respect to which the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave shall be subject to whatever restrictions the Secretary of War or the appropriate military commander may impose in his discretion."

Under the authority of this proclamation all Japanese and persons of Japanese ancestry, numbering 104,000, were evacuated from the designated area on the Pacific Coast and were sent to ten relocation centers. Comparable only to our tragic treatment of American Indians, this action was taken against all the members of a single racial group.

False Rumors of Sabotage

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, rumors were rife charging that "Japanese" residents of Hawaii had engaged in large-scale acts of sabotage. None of these charges has been substantiated. All of them have been specifically denied by persons in high authority in Hawaii, including the F.B.I. and the Military Intelligence. It is unfortunate, to say the least, that the official denials were not forthcoming until three months after the attack, thus giving abundant opportunity for the wide dissemination of propaganda instigated by racial bigots.

There is no verified evidence that any act of sabotage has been committed either before or since Pearl Harbor by Japanese Americans in Hawaii or on the Pacific Coast. Without exception, all investigations of the facts have sustained the conclusions summed up by Blake Clark, formerly a professor in the University of Hawaii and author of the important book, "Remember Pearl Harbor."



California evacuees being removed to Assembly Centers

"Just the day before I left Honolulu," writes Professor Clark, "the chief agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Hawaii told me 'You can say without fear of contradiction that there has not been a single act of sabotage—either before December 7, during the day of the attack, or at any time since.'"

"Chief Gabrielson of the Honolulu police, which works in close collaboration with the army, told me the same thing. 'If the Japanese here had wanted to do damage, December 7 offered them a golden opportunity,' he added.

"Where were the Japanese on that Sunday if they were not out sabotaging?" you ask the chief of police. 'Hundreds of them were actively defending the territory,' he will tell you. 'Members of the Oahu Citizens' Defense Committee, most of them Japanese, rushed to their posts as volunteer truck drivers. They stripped a hundred delivery trucks of their contents, inserted into them frames prepared to hold four litters, and went tearing out to Pearl Harbor to aid the wounded. Some of these Japanese got there so promptly that their trucks were hit by flying shrapnel. They proudly display these pieces of steel now as souvenirs.'

"When the call came over the radio for blood donors, again the Japanese were among the first to respond, and by the hundreds. They stood in line at Queen's Hospital for hours, waiting to give their blood to save the lives of American soldiers."

Non-Military Influences

The demand for the indiscriminate evacuation of these citizens from the West Coast area was undoubtedly increased by agitation carried on by persons who were not exclusively, or even primarily, concerned for matters of military safety. Very few white residents questioned the necessity of clearing vital military areas of Japanese residents, but many eminent citizens, including the Tolson Commission, opposed mass evacuation, without any hearings, of one racial group. The fact that there was an interval of approximately six weeks between the attack on Pearl Harbor and the emergence of any concerted demand for the evacuation of persons of Japanese ancestry is significant. It strongly suggests that this period was being used by professional anti-Orientalists, such as the Hearst press, in preparing to exert organized pressure on the government and the military authorities. That the agitation for removal was carefully engineered is implied in an editorial in the *San Francisco Chronicle* of February 6, 1942: "The supposed 'hysteria' over enemy aliens and their descendants scarcely exists among the people themselves, but the excitement is visible almost entirely in political and journalistic quarters. . . . They are seeking to capitalize on a supposed excitement of others which is mostly a figment of their own imaginations." Certain prominent politicians played upon hysteria in order to make political capital. There can be no doubt that unscrupulous and greedy merchants, farmers and realtors were eager to turn the misfortunes of Japanese Americans to their own profit.

That six week period, plus the months the evacuees were in the Assembly Centers, were ample to allow hearings, if General DeWitt had authorized them.

It is significant that in Hawaii, which is obviously an area of critical military importance, no such concentration and evacuation as have occurred on the mainland have been carried out. Why this difference of policy? Is it not due in good part to the better inter-race relations which have prevailed in the Islands? There is a strong presumption that other methods of insuring military safety might have been used on the Pacific Coast except for the prejudiced attitudes existing in the white community. This confusion of the problem of national safety with the dogmas of racism is one of the most ominous consequences of the evacuation.

Indiscriminate Evacuation

The evacuation was indiscriminate, in the sense that no attempt was made to determine loyalty or disloyalty in individual cases. Happily, an approach to the method of individual hearings is now being made, as the War Relocation Authority, utilizing the records of the F.B.I. and the Military and Naval Intelligence, has developed well-guarded procedures for releasing citizens of Japanese ancestry from the relocation centers. In the evacuation, however, aliens and citizens alike were removed from their homes, the sole test being whether or not there was "Japanese blood" in their veins. This policy has no parallel in American history. The indiscriminate uprooting of thousands of American citizens, without even a declaration of martial law, is difficult to bring within the framework of American justice.

They Are Americans

No responsible evidence has been brought forward showing that the mass of these evacuees is disloyal. Over 12,000 young men of Japanese parentage are now in our armed forces and evacuees are now being drafted like other American citizens. In Italy the distinguished 100th Battalion and the 442d Combat Unit were all volunteers. On December 20, 1943, after his trip to the South Pacific, H. V. Kaltenborn, the well known radio commentator, stated, "On the basis of first-hand information I can tell you that American citizens of Japanese ancestry are performing some of the most valuable work being done by our armed forces in the Pacific." General Richardson, Commander-in-Chief of our army in the Central Pacific, with headquarters at Honolulu, told him there has not been a single case of active disloyalty proved against a single one of the 160,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans in the Hawaiian Islands. Citizens of Japanese ancestry can be more readily identified than persons of German parentage. As one young man put it: "We are Americans with a racial mask which we cannot take off. Because we look like Japanese, people treat us that way."

Complex Forces At Work

From the foregoing paragraphs it will be seen that the Pacific Coast evacuation was not prompted wholly by fear of espionage and sabotage, or by the difficulty of distinguishing

between the loyal and disloyal members of the Japanese American community. As Galen Fisher summarizes the situation:

"The social historian would add that complex forces were at work: the treachery of the Japanese Government; the unpreparedness of the American forces at Pearl Harbor (with the resultant attempt to find a scape-goat); the tradition of vigilantism in the west; certain economic and political interests eager to profit by expulsion of the Japanese; anti-Oriental prejudice, the present outburst being only the latest of the racial eruptions that began seventy years ago; and the general acceptance by the public of the rumors of sabotage by Japanese residents in Hawaii."

THE ISSUES AT STAKE

It is urgently important that Americans of good will shall not overlook the larger implications of the evacuation. Each of the questions propounded below deserves full-length discussion. In this pamphlet there is space for only a brief allusion to them.

1. *Can we Americans offer resistance to rumor and propaganda?*

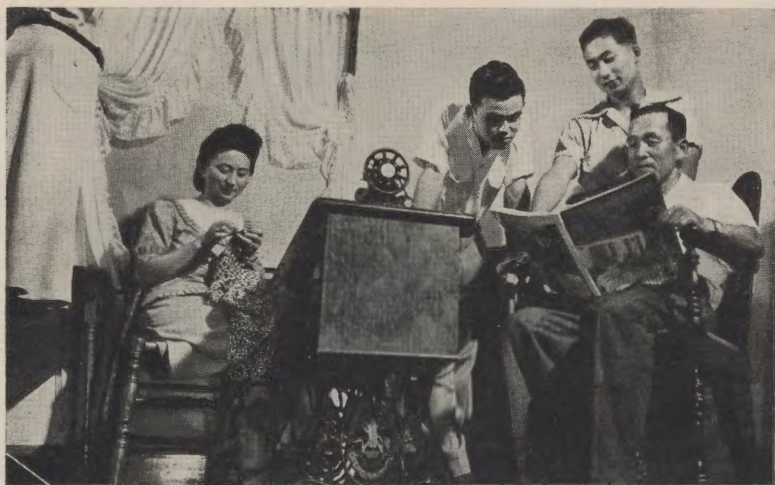
What has been done cannot be wholly undone. There is no reasonable hope of returning these people to their homes, at least for the duration of the war. But our action from now on—our treatment of the evacuees—will determine whether the scare-mongers are to carry the day, or whether we are capable of correcting our judgments and attitudes in the light of available facts.

2. *Can we discount unscrupulous politicians who attempt to make capital of prejudice against minorities?*

This issue is obviously fundamental for the working of our democracy. If such manipulating of suspicion is allowed to go unchecked, the same weapon can be turned against other minorities, and the fabric of our national life will be rent asunder.

3. *Can we safeguard the Bill of Rights?*

"The theory of justice frankly acknowledged in every totalitarian state is that the interest of the state as interpreted by the dictator is supreme. The individual has no right against



Courtesy of the St. Louis Post—Dispatch PICTURES

The Henmis, parents and sons, all work as domestic employees for a St. Louis family

it." This is essentially the theory on which the evacuation of American citizens of Japanese ancestry has been effected. There is clear recognition in our domestic law that in war time enemy aliens may be restricted in their movements or interned. But the mass confinement of American citizens creates, in fact, a second-class type of citizenship which threatens the whole conception and practice of equality before the law. Here again we are faced with a dangerous precedent which may be used against other minorities.

4. *Can we demonstrate the genuineness of the democratic faith for which we are fighting, and for the defense of which we are seeking support from the common peoples in all parts of the world?* It becomes more clearly apparent, with every day that passes, that hundreds of millions in Asia and Africa — potential friends and allies — will make momentous decisions affecting the future of the world on the basis of the treatment which is accorded colored minorities in America. The Axis radio waves going out across two continents ceaselessly carry the news that thousands of America citizens are now in concentration camps because their skin is yellow. Anyone who has studied samples of Japanese propaganda cannot fail to be impressed by the adroit use which is made of these incidents

in persuading members of the colored races that they cannot expect justice and fairplay from America. "The issue must be faced. Democracy will go down first of all on the rocks of racial prejudice and discrimination. We cannot wait until the war is over. For one of the fundamental issues in this world-wide war is that of race equality or inequality."

5. *Finally, the plight of our Japanese American neighbors confronts every Christian with a test of the alertness and vitality of his own compassion and active good will.*

Will we stand by our belief in the universal brotherhood of man? The fact that our nation is at war with Japan does not alter the obligation to deal with these neighbors and fellow-citizens as individual human beings, and to refuse to set them apart because of the irrelevant fact of national ancestry any more than we do the corresponding German and Italian-descended residents among us.

War brings many tragedies, and these fall on both the innocent and the guilty. It is important to distinguish, however, between the kind of suffering which accompanies our involvement in a total war that leaves none of us untouched, and the kind of suffering which results from the manipulation of war-time psychology in the service of prejudice and greed. Undoubtedly many persons who are loyal to our American principles consented unprotestingly to the evacuation procedure because of a sincere belief that the presence of large numbers of persons of Japanese ancestry on the Pacific Coast constituted a real and acute threat to our national safety, and they believed the Government would handle the situation wisely. They were also hindered from arriving at a balanced judgment because many of the relevant facts were not then available. But the critical test of our sincerity, both as Americans and Christians, comes now—when the facts are at hand, when their implications can be calmly considered, and when ways have been opened for positive action toward the amelioration of wrongs and injustices. The questions raised in the foregoing paragraphs are not intended to create distrust of the policy of our government (which is now definitely committed to the release and resettlement of Japanese Americans); but are rather an urgent invitation to all of us to ask ourselves, "What are we going to do about it?" Shall the issue go by default to the racial bigots, because the people of good will fail to take the constructive action which is now open to them?



"Sometimes when I'm alone I begin to think and wonder, and I seem to lose faith — faith in Uncle Sam — faith even in God."

THE PICTURE TODAY

About 75,000 persons are still living in nine Relocation Centers. Of these nearly one-half are American citizens.

Despite sincere efforts by the Government to provide tolerable living conditions, these are far from satisfactory. The camps are situated in arid regions where the making of attractive surroundings is accomplished with great difficulty. The food is simple, costing an average of 40 cents a day per capita. The buildings are constructed on the pattern of barracks, and are generally unsuited to family life. There is little opportunity for privacy. Internees must eat *en masse* in common mess halls. Entire families occupy a single room, and it was not uncommon for a while to find more than one family living in quarters without partitions.

Much more trying than these physical discomforts are the sting and stigma of segregation. This hardship is felt with special keenness by the young men and women who were born in this country and have known no other home. It must not be forgotten that these young people think and feel as Americans. They are Americans. They do not wish to be Japanese. All their

interests and loyalties are attached to America. They desire to have a responsible and productive part in our national life. Young men who are serving in the armed forces of our country are obliged to pass barbed wire and soldiers with fixed bayonets when they visit members of their own families.

No other recent immigrants have made so commendable a record in displaying the basic qualities of good citizenship and community standards. The rate of crime and delinquency among them is the lowest of any group in America—much lower than that of the “native white” population. The percentage of young people in college is the highest to be found in any section of the American community. During the depression years there were almost no persons of Japanese ancestry on relief.

While the spirit in which the evacuees have endured their hardships is altogether remarkable, it is not surprising that there should be signs of increasing discouragement and cynicism among the younger members of the communities. Help must come soon or our nation will suffer an unnecessary and tragic loss as the faith of these young citizens in American institutions and justice is slowly destroyed. We shall be in danger of having a second American Indian problem.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ?

A few evacuees are being allowed to return to the Pacific Coast. Gradually more may return. For the rest the only alternative to their continued life in camps is to be received into communities in the East and Midwest. They need friends as they make the difficult transition from the present segregated life under government supervision to life “on their own”. The policy now is that of wide dispersion. Many members of the younger generation, especially, wish to scatter, avoiding the establishment of concentrated communities of Japanese Americans which may grow into future “little Tokyos.” They wish to find homes and jobs in many communities, thus becoming an integral part of our American life.

Helping Our Government

The War Relocation Authority has been established as an independent agent of the Federal Government and is in charge

of all aspects of the life of the evacuees. The program of this agency includes the development of what are now well-formulated procedures for the release of Japanese Americans from the Relocation Centers as rapidly as jobs and living quarters are made available. Approximately 30,000 persons are now in the group ready for prompt release.

This is the sincere effort of our Government to relieve injustices which have been deemed necessary under the war-time emergency. Those ill-informed and prejudiced persons who are opposing this procedure are guilty of unpatriotic efforts to obstruct a well-considered and just policy of our Government.

Approval of Government Officials

The sincerity and good faith of the Government are attested by the following statements from high officials.

President Roosevelt has given his approval to the War Department's plan to create a "combat team" for the Army, composed of American citizens of Japanese descent. In a letter to Secretary Stimson, approving this plan, the President further states:

"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. . . . Every loyal American should be given the opportunity to serve this country wherever 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."

In Hawaii, Lieutenant General Delos C. Emmons, fully gave the War Department his hearty cooperation in helping to organize combat units of Japanese Americans in that territory.

Such units have notably distinguished themselves and a large percentage of their officers are citizens of Japanese ancestry. About the situation in the Islands, General Emmons says:

"Americans of Japanese descent in Hawaii have contributed generously to the nation's war effort. . . . Open to distrust because of their racial origin and discriminated against in certain fields of the defense effort, they nevertheless have borne their burdens without complaint and have contributed materially to the strength of the Hawaiian area. They have behaved themselves admirably under most trying conditions, have bought great quantities of war bonds and by the labor of their hands have added to the common defense."

In re-opening the Army to Japanese Americans wishing to volunteer for combat service, Mr. Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, said on January 28, 1943:

"It is the inherent right of every faithful citizen, regardless of ancestry, to bear arms in the nation's battle. When obstacles to the free expression of that right are imposed by emergency considerations, those barriers should be removed as soon as humanly possible. Loyalty to country is a voice that must be heard, and I am glad that I am now able to give active proof that this basic American belief is not a casualty of the war."

(It is noteworthy that within the first two weeks following the announcement in Hawaii that Japanese American volunteers would be accepted in the Army, enlistments reached 7,500 and soon totaled nearly 10,000—more than six times the number that had been asked for.)

From the Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy, comes the following statement:

"Anything that can legitimately be done to compensate loyal citizens of Japanese ancestry for the dislocation to which they have been subjected, by reason of military necessity, has our full approval."

The Select Committee of the House of Representatives, investigating national defense migration, made the following comment in a recent report to the House:

"The nation must decide and Congress must gravely consider, as a matter of national policy, the extent to which citizenship, in and of itself, is a guaranty of equal rights and privileges during time of war. Unless a clarification is forthcoming, the evacuation of the Japanese population will serve as an incident sufficiently disturbing to lower seriously the morale of vast groups of foreign-born among our people."



The "junior" baseball team at Manzanar

Resettlement Now Going On

In cooperation with the War Relocation Authority, and under the direction of the National Student Relocation Council, over twenty-five hundred college and university students of Japanese ancestry have been placed in schools outside the evacuated areas. This is especially significant as scholarship aid has been severely limited and many parents now have no income.

The more pressing problem is that of helping families and individuals establish themselves in many different communities. There is good reason to believe that Government authorities are looking very definitely to the churches to do the pioneer work in this field.

Before being released from the centers, all persons are carefully investigated and checked by the proper officials. The Gov-

ernment then requires certain assurances from persons living in the communities where the evacuees are to be received. These requirements are reasonable and simple:

1. Assurance of a job at the prevailing wage for this type of work in the community.

2. Assurance of housing, at least temporarily.

3. Assurance that the new-comer will not be subjected to indignity or abuse. This should be a simple matter. The Japanese American is just as much an American citizen as any of us. Persons are released from the Relocation Centers only after thorough investigation by the War Relocation Authority and check with the records of the F.B.I. and the Intelligence Services. In this matter of community acceptance, a statement by a responsible group of churchmen or other citizens or a clergyman or public official should provide the W.R.A. with the necessary assurance.

In the Relocation Centers are citizens who have filled a great variety of positions in civilian life, and who will be valuable additions to our communities in this time of acute manpower shortage. Persons are available to fill positions as domestic servants, secretaries and stenographers, accountants, farmers and gardeners, laboratory technicians, nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and many other jobs requiring specialized skills.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. *Know the facts.*

A carefully selected reading list has been inserted in this pamphlet. Most of these materials may be found in your public library. The Citizens Committee for Resettlement, 6501 Wydown Blvd., St. Louis 5, Mo., will gladly furnish speakers and assistance to any study groups desiring further information or more extended bibliographies. A study-packet is available from the above address at a cost of twenty-five cents.

2. *Help others to know the facts.*

Many false rumors and erroneous opinions are in circulation. Meet prejudice with accurate information. Why not take the lead in promoting wide distribution of this pamphlet in your church and community?

3. *See that a committee is formed in your church or community.*

The task of resettlement is one which must be done locally, or it will not be done at all. Your church will be missing a supreme opportunity for enlightened Christian action if it does not take definite steps toward finding jobs and preparing your community for the reception of these uprooted fellow-citizens. If your church has a vigorous Committee for Social Action, encourage it to take the initiative in this matter. In many instances it will be preferable to form a new group for this specific purpose.

4. *Call attention to this source of employees when your friends talk about the manpower shortage.*

Tell them of the variety of skills available, and offer to put them in touch with the Committee for Work with Japanese Evacuees.

5. *Help in finding housing.*

Enlist the interest of persons who will help in making temporary shelter available while evacuees are finding permanent dwellings.

6. *Notify us promptly of offers of employment.*

These must be cleared through the War Relocation Authority. We will communicate with the proper Regional Office.

7. *Cooperate with your denominational committee.*

At the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, meeting at Durham, New Hampshire, action was taken authorizing the formation of the Committee for Work with Japanese Evacuees. The Committee has now established a central office in St. Louis. Recently the Federal Council of Churches has organized a Committee on Resettlement of American Japanese, of which Mr. George Rundquist is director. Our Committee is cooperating fully with this and other active groups.

8. *Fill out and return the enclosed post card.*

Let us know what you will do.

« »