

FORUM ON JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY PROGRAM

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The attack by the Japanese military fascists on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, brought many drastic changes in the life of the American people. To the Japanese American it brought such special change, such far-reaching and fundamental change, that all his personal, economic and ideological relationships have had to be re-evaluated and readjusted.

A complete disintegration of his community life took place on that day. Without organized guidance or proper leadership, he had to meet the reality of that attack and strive to reshape his community had been pro-militaristic in their outlook on Japan in world affairs. The leading cultural and fraternal organizations in this country had been media for the constant circulation of propaganda favoring the militarists in Japan who were responsible finally for the treacherous attack at Pearl Harbor.

Japanese aggression against the United States exposed as dangerous the very sources guiding the leaders of the Japanese American community. The Japanese Americans were confused and shocked. They struggled to express in every way that they could their willingness and eagerness to help America defend herself against the enemy.

It was in this spirit that 110,000 Japanese Americans--both American citizens and non-citizens--gladly cooperated with Government authorities in their evacuation from the strategic West Coast military area to inland centers, despite great personal discomfort and sacrifice. In the same spirit, too, Hawaiians of Japanese birth or descent fought side by side with Hawaiians of other national origins in our effort to drive off the invaders and defend Pearl Harbor.

There are only 130,000 Americans of Japanese birth or descent in the United States, but the attitude of these 130,000 people is vitally important to the war effort of the United Nations. The successful utilization of this racial "enemy alien" minority and their descendants, and their involvement on the side of the United Nations will reflect the degree to which our country is successful in achieving national unity and

the total mobilization of the American people for victory. Moreover, the eyes of millions of Asiatic peoples are following closely what treatment is accorded Asiatics by this country. In the global struggle to defeat Axis slavery, our treatment of the Japanese-American becomes an important indication of the integrity of the democracies.

Finally, democratic treatment of the Japanese American is the clearest possible refutation of the poisonous race propaganda which the Axis powers are desperately trying to use as a part of their old tactic to "divide and conquer".

Today, the great majority of the Japanese Americans who formerly resided on the West Coast are living in centers under the War Relocation Authority. Each of the ten centers has a population of from 8,000 to 20,000 and they are located in Eastern California, Colorado, Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, Utah, and Arkansas.

The War Relocation Authority has organized self-government in the centers and has established consumer cooperatives, educational and health institutions, police and judicial machinery, and cultural and recreational facilities. All of these functions of the center are in the hands of the evacuees themselves.

The WRA has temporarily released thousands of evacuees, under certain conditions, so that they may resettle outside of the centers, except in the West Coast Military Defense Area.

Despite these achievements of the WRA in regard to the evacuees, the productive manpower of the evacuees is still not, in the main, utilized for the war effort, and most of the potential energy is left idle in the centers. Consequently, one of the most important phases of the rehabilitation of these people has not yet been accomplished. As a result of lowered morale, strikes, riots and other disturbances have occurred because the evacuees were confused, and sometimes embittered and frustrated by their own idleness and uselessness, and the small anti-democratic minority among them were able to utilize these confused feelings by instigating deliberate divisions and incidents in order to interfere with our country's victory program.

It is essential that the American people be made aware of the pro-democratic feelings of the majority of Japanese Americans in order to eliminate social and economic discrimination based on race. It is essential that we isolate and defeat the fascist-minded elements, and promote the pro-democratic in the Japanese communities.

Furthermore, it is essential to fully utilize the available idle manpower of the Japanese Americans in the nation's production program.

The solution to this problem is the concern of the entire American people. It must be solved as a part of the people's movement to eliminate all obstacles to our victory in this war. Misunderstanding and prejudice directed against Japanese Americans disrupts national unity and hurts the victory program. And a successful all-out production for victory program requires full use of the total national energy.

In order to promote greater understanding of the role and status of Japanese Americans, this FORUM ON JAPANESE AMERICANS IN THE VICTORY PROGRAM is being co-sponsored by the Japanese American Committee for Democracy and the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born. Information concerning the Forum may be obtained by writing to:

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