

The following bulletin by Lincoln Kanai of the Japanese YMCA, San Francisco, may be of interest to Service Committee members:

San Francisco

March 28, 1942

Sir:

Revealing investigations and witnesses have brought out that among the Americans of Japanese ancestry and also Japanese nationals who have been here long there has been no sabotage in Hawaii or on the Pacific Coast on or since December 7th and there is unlikely to be. This clarification has come from the Governor of Hawaii, the Mayor of Honolulu, Chief of Police Gabrielson of Honolulu, Congressman Samuel King of Hawaii and the Tolson Hearing Committee. And only consular agents in the hire of Japan have been apprehended of espionage.

To some Americans, this may seem reassuring; to others alarming. Still others say that this is the time of watchfulness, and that these Japanese are organized and waiting for orders so that they might strike when invasion comes. These alarmists envision a great fifth column entrenched at the key spots of America's efforts to strike all at once. They say that the Japanese on the West Coast seem to fit perfectly to this, as they are concentrated along the coastal area, power lines, reservoirs, roadways, war factories, and air fields. Simple knowledge that they have been here long before the establishment of defense industries and air fields has never occurred to many. Also that all other nationality groups are likewise in cities, near roadways, fertile valleys, power lines, etc. Then there is the charge that the children have been going to language schools and the dead are sent back to Japan. This type of publicity seems to point this out as a result of their unassimilability. Again simple deductions and findings bring out the fact that the children of Japanese parentage no matter how much they are given to go to language schools here (usually an hour per day) are not able to read and write enough to be literate. Imagine the surprise when the Japanese language education that the children have gone through has given little satisfaction to the parents on the children's ability to converse and also disappointment that they are not able to read and write even a simple letter. The Army and Navy are finding that no matter who it is, unless adept at language, they are not able to fit themselves sufficiently for any language correspondence. We are ignoring the greatest factor of environment and our educational system when we consider these children other than Americans.

But along with this, imagine what a tremendous damage the press and some radio commentaries have done to prejudice the public as well as make John Q. Public fear the Japanese here. The vast majority of educated persons such as Galen Fisher at the Institute of Public Relations; Monroe Deustch, Vice-President of the University of California; Dr. Aurelia Reinhardt, Mills College President; Allan Blaisdell at the Berkeley International House; Richard R. Perkins, Managing Director of the San Francisco Y. M. C. A.; Annie Clo Watson of the International Institute; Dr. Frank H. Smith of the Federation of Churches; Mr. Booth of the Friends Service and a host of others know and understand the problem accurately. But no matter what course and influence those presenting an honest picture have tried to do, they have not been as articulate in their presentation; for accurate information does not make for the spectacular. Whatever the information, there have been others ready to manipulate any statement of truth to justify their own notions. In order to correct this type of publicity, the solution is directional publicity responsible to national unity. If such pressure publicity is not controllable, a martial law along the coast is deemed advisable. It is rather unfortunate that we have not used those persons who have been best acquainted to discover the truth in the question of the Japanese and the Americans of Japanese ancestry. However, the question should not remain as charged if the charges have been found without basis.

There are tremendous problems of dislocations to come with the pending orders of evacuation--first for the alien Japanese; then for the Americans of Japanese ancestry: students, artists, skilled workers, doctors, professional men, technicians, agriculturists, farmers, floriculturists, etc., to over 160 different skills. Some 23 per cent of these people only are in agriculture and yet they produce some 40 per cent of the commercial Truck Farming crops of California, the most important truck farming producing state in the nation. The 5135 Japanese farmers stand to lose approximately \$100,000,000 in investments; but due to the complex economic system, a billion dollars in investments by Caucasian Americans will also be affected. To replace even farmers suddenly and abruptly dislocates our production. However, we have faith that due processes will bring a maximum of equity and we hope that these interdependent and basic industries and skills will not dislocate and bring hardships on our citizenry.

A great many Americans believe that the orders in the blanket statement of the citizens of Japanese ancestry included in the evacuation is in direct opposition to the constitution contrary to the spirit of our fighting aims. This order may permanently scar the very heart of what we are trying to uphold. In the military order outlined, this complicates some two hundred cases of mixed races and their attachments, who will be affected because of their lineage. The condemnation of the whole race by supposition and acts of a few certainly is in line with axis policies and I believe this to be un-American at all times and a vicious practice for America.

Yet we find that the Japanese people, because they have been here long, will do what the government wants them to do. They know and have come to love and cherish the very things for which this country has entered the war. This is well illustrated in their willingness to cooperate, no matter if their families are parting with sons in the Armed Forces of America in this total war.

Now, I fear more than ever the bitterness and hatreds that will develop with this blanket order which includes our own citizens. I know, too, that even if citizens were not included in this blanket order, most of them would move with their families into the interior. This is true, for most of the Americans of Japanese ancestry are young and according to a hasty survey, the average age is about 20 or 21 years. This is also the reason that they number more per capita than those of other ancestry in the Selective Service. The present evacuation may mean that we do not have sufficient confidence in our law enforcement bodies or that we shall have to increase these forces considerably. Perhaps if our food problems and other dislocations become acute, we may have to apprehend and intern those whose hysterical shoutings have brought this evacuation. This blanket order has complicated the problem so that should Hitler himself fly to America on a dare, legally he could not be arrested as he is Austrian and therefore by our laws is a friendly alien.

There is the problem of bringing the morale of a determined country into a united will for this war. I fear that the present blanket order will be among the tragic mistakes of the administration. This order without proper commentary from the War Department will carry the responsibility to the future of the American people. The dislocation of absorbed and enmeshed communities of long standing and establishment of a hundred thousand people and the temporary refugee set-up for their rehabilitation will bring tremendous tragedies on these innocent victims. As a lesser of "two evils" supposition rather than a tested pattern, these orders will remain as at present by the Western Command. If, however, a statement is made by the Western Command that because of military necessity as well as expediency, that they would desire the cooperation of the Americans of Japanese ancestry for this evacuation with hearing reviews before or after, the willingness will be readily seen and demoralization can be prevented.

As we know, the Japanese have been here a long time and have been loyal and obedient to laws and orders. They have children who are American, with many families having their sons side by side in the Army with other Americans. This is the difference between America as compared to Mexico or Canada. The great majority of Japanese have been here developing the basic industries that are needed in this nation and they will continue to do so as long as they are given the opportunity. These old timers have been prevented by our own laws from being naturalized. Bearing this thought, Rear Admiral H. E. Yarnell, formerly of the Far-Eastern Command, has made the statement that this has been a sore spot in our immigration laws. We know too that there would have been some 200 persons enter this country up to the present time, and sorely preventing the cancerous problem of immigration. We must not forget that these people who have been here with their children ever cherish and live in the hopes of some day becoming American citizens. They have been prevented from doing so because of our own laws no matter how much they have contributed to American life. The only naturalized citizens are those veterans who were in the last World War. Now however, the uprooting of the second generation Americans of Japanese ancestry, who they have given as a heritage to America, has made them lose faith to a large degree.

Please understand my position in writing this letter. I stand side by side and shall support the President no matter what course the war will take so long as it is with the objectives of fighting for the democracies and its institutions of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." I shall place myself on an equal basis to be tested as any other American for loyalty, and I shall stand for the unity of command that is strategically necessary to win this war and the peace that follows. I am aware that there are enemies trying to exploit the differences in race, creed, and descent to divide us and bring suspicion and mistrust among all of us. But I do believe that for a total unity of effort and understanding, an unconquerable unity (based on equality, justice, and humanity) will eliminate religious prejudice and racial hatreds to strengthen American democracy and the will of the American people to win this war.

Respectfully yours,

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