

# Are Japanese Evacuees Getting a Fair Break?

What is to become of the Japanese who were evacuated from the Pacific Coast after Pearl Harbor? Much oratory (some of it inflammatory or hysterical) has been poured out on that subject, but some of the hysteria has subsided. So, The Times recently invited an expression from a man eminently qualified to discuss this delicate topic—the Rev. L. H. Tibesar, M. M.

Father Tibesar, a Maryknoll missionary who worked eight years among the Orientals at Dairen, Manchuria, and another eight years in Seattle, went to Camp Minidoka, near Twin Falls, Idaho, when that relocation camp was established to house Japanese banished from the Northwest coastal area by military decree. He speaks their language, knows their minds and has their confidence.

Responding to The Times' request for a statement of his views, Father Tibesar wrote: "... I have tried to keep silence, but realize I may have something to say worth hearing. We haven't won the war anywhere as yet, though the picture has brightened... We still have a chance to lose both war and peace. It seems to me that Coast prejudice will need to bridle itself... I hope what I have written may be some contribution in that direction."

By THE REV. L. H. TIBESAR, M. M.

WE had a little Seattle-born, third-generation Japanese-American chap and his mother with us on a recent trip into Twin Falls. He was too young to remember anything of his trip into camp over a year ago; he's only approaching 2 years of age now. We shall never forget how his face lighted up and the long-drawn-out "Ooooh" he emitted at the sight of his first real tree. He sat there speechless, just looking until the tree was out of sight. Unbidden, Joyce Kilmer's words came into mind... "Only God can make a tree."

The incident is revealing. These American families of Japanese parentage have been in this desert camp for over one year, men, women and children. Some persons are interested in what is happening to them. What is?

Now that segregation of loyal from disloyal has been effected, the question is one of greater significance to all of us who are loyal Americans ourselves.

We happen to be fighting a world war. Our President has designated the objectives of that war to be application of the Four Freedoms not only to our own people, but also to the peoples of the world. We shall succeed in our peace efforts after the war in proportion as we implement our President's words with concrete performance in accord with those high objectives.

We cannot export what we do not have at home.

Are we willing to make our democratic ideals apply in the case of the Orient? If so, we have a little house-cleaning to do. If not, then we have lost the peace in the Orient before we have really set about the task of fighting a very long and costly war to achieve it.

The responsibility for this may be placed squarely at the door of the Coast population, the very persons who stand to gain most from a permanent peace with the Orient. We use the term Orient advisedly because our attitude toward the Chinese has in the past differed but little from that which we have chosen to adopt toward the people of Japanese ancestry, and that has changed very little under the stress of war.

SOME 15,000 persons of Japanese ancestry have declared in writing that they are disloyal to this government and now are interned at Tule Lake, Calif. Among them are many young folks who are American born, who can never hope to make out in the country of their parents and who one year ago were as loyal to this country as anyone else born here. The reason for their drastic step is simply that they have no confidence in our democratic protestation in view of what has happened to them and to their relatives and friends.

We commenced to write history in a big way when we clamored for the removal of everyone of Japanese ancestry from the Coast during the first hysteria after war broke out.

We condemned a whole people, a minority, it is true, but a whole people nonetheless, unheard. Few among them at that time condoned what had transpired at Pearl Harbor any more than we did. No acts of sabotage were recorded against them and none has been to this day. How are they standing up under the treatment accorded them and what are their prospects for the future, if any?

The Japanese people are supposedly stolid, wooden, one might say who did not know them. The writer can say in all truth he has never seen so many tears in all his life as during and since evacuation among these same supposedly stolid people.

The older folks regretted having to leave their homes that had cost them so much in sweat and labor since their coming to this country, 30, 40 or 50 years ago. They felt no resentment, for the most part. What was happening to them was of a piece with what they had had to go through during the term of their residence here.

The young folks born here were hardest hit. They had had such naive confidence in the fundamental fairness of the American people, of whom they felt themselves a part. They had gone to American schools, joined Christian churches, taken their share in community life in so far as that was permitted to them.

They were stunned at this complete rejection by the people they knew and trusted and genuinely liked. They accepted the challenge to their loyalty with heavy hearts, it is true, but with loyal ones.

They left the only homes they knew since childhood, not knowing what might become of them, but expecting that ultimately all might turn out for the best. They have been in camps for over a year now. Their prospects for the future are slowly crystallizing before their eyes into a pattern of hard, cold reality. Under that process many have already wilted and proclaimed openly: "Japanese militarism couldn't be any worse than this. We'll take our chances with Japan. We are finished here."

These persons now are interned in Tule Lake.

THE majority were made of sterner stuff. Several thousands of them signed up with the Army—over 300 from this camp alone—volunteers. Only too often these have had to meet taunts such as, "What are you doing here? You have nothing to fight for. Your folks are in camps. You are fools for not staying with them."

The morale of these boys has stood up thus far against such things and we may rest assured that when the time comes the majority of these boys will give as good an account of themselves as boys with whiter skins but not whiter hearts.

Some have already been wounded. Some have even won citations for bravery in combat. Many are rendering to the Army the service that only they can



THE HUNT CENTER looks like this, when invaded by rain and melting snow.

render as Intelligence officers having a command of the Japanese language. Their peculiar gift will come more into requisition as the fighting develops in the Far Eastern zone, the one in which Coast people are interested particularly and the one that may prove most troublesome.

Among the volunteers are many fathers who have left their families in these camps to go out and fight while Congress argues the advisability of drafting white fathers. These men have something to fight for and they are willing to leave it long enough to do their share of fighting for it.

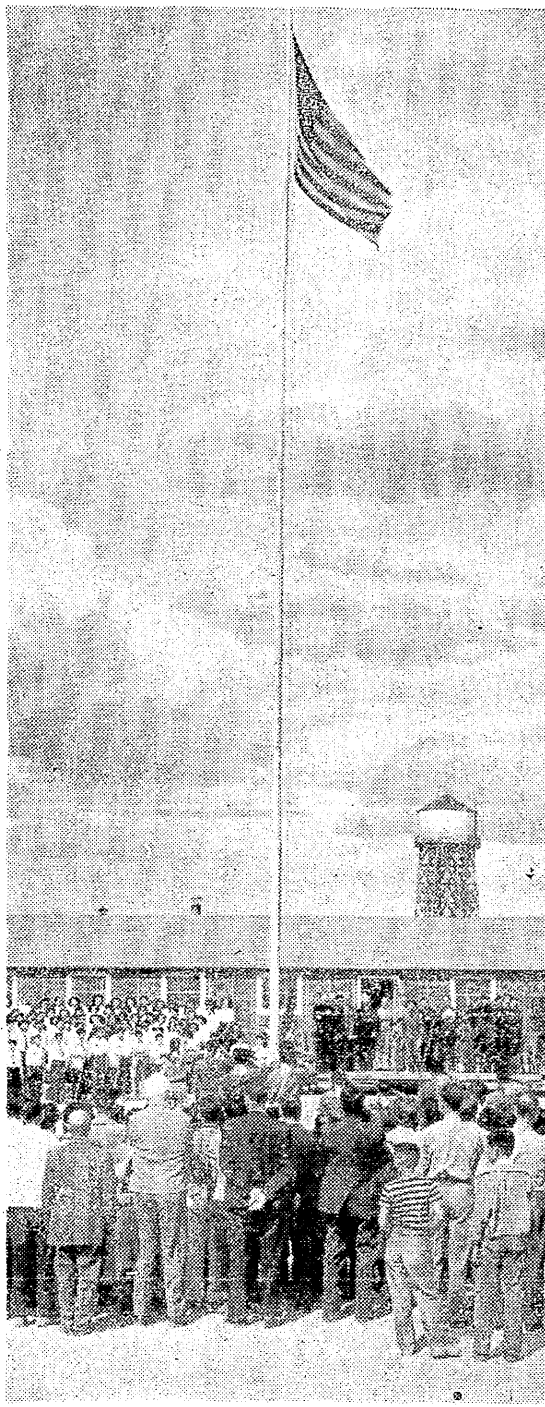
What of their families left in camp? Camps are not good places in which to raise children, and these camps are no exception. One room for a family does not allow for that privacy that decent living would demand. Eating in common mess halls does not make for family unity nor does it provide the opportunity for careful home training. Most of all, this is the complaint one hears from parents here:

"Our children are growing up wild. We have so little chance to train them."

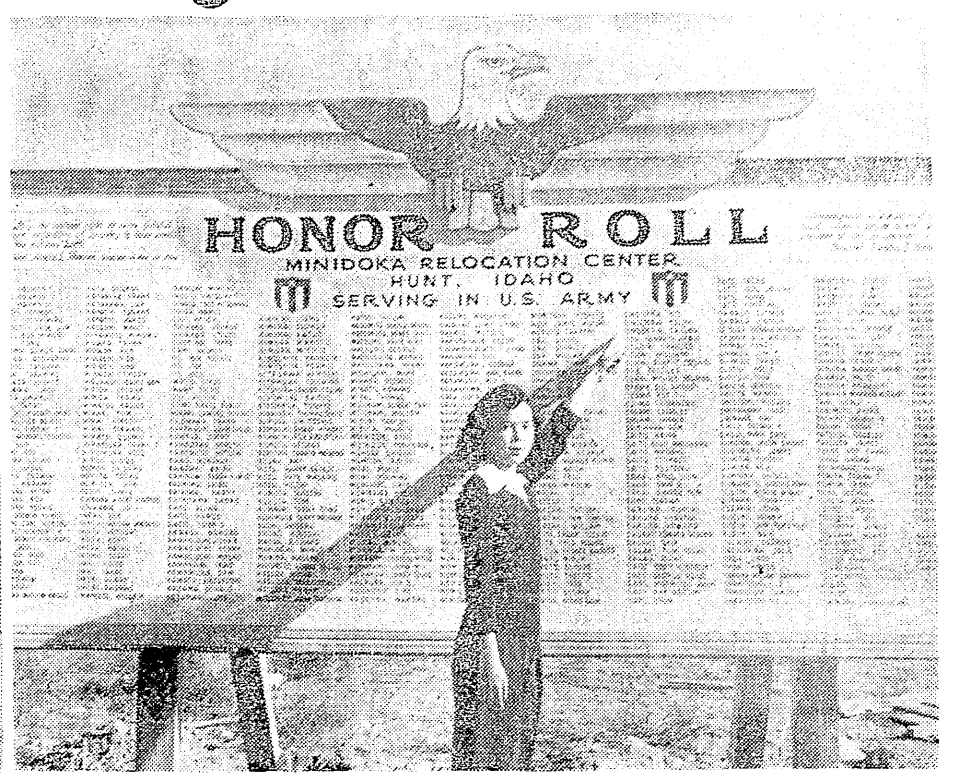
This is true. The family tie is breaking down. Parents may not, in some cases, see their children all day except at bedtime. Young men and young ladies grow restive of camp restrictions. They find themselves a job and go out on their own. Hundreds of such may be found in some large cities of the Midwest.

Very little is possible in the way of entertainment in camp. The Japanese people have always been known as an intensely active one. The devil finds work for idle hands, we used to hear from our mother's lips. He's still on the job here.

WHAT are the old folks doing? How has camp life affected them? In many instances they have profited by their stay in camp, physically and intellectually. The hard-working older folks have had a rest for the first time in



FLAG POLE at Minidoka Relocation Center (Hunt, Idaho) is dedicated at impressive program, flag ceremony conducted by the Hunt Boy Scouts.



FUMI ONODERA proudly points to names of three brothers serving in U. S. Army—Ko, Kaun and Satoru, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Toyosuke Onodera. Their father is a former Seattle tailor. The Hunt honor roll numbers 416.

its acceptance. So, we have some choice, but not much.

We have tried our Oriental populations as no others have been tried and in the main they have not been found wanting. Now we'll just have to be big enough to accept them as partners to our thinking and living.

The truth is we need the Orient and we need the Oriental in our midst. Our Intelligence services could hardly function without them in time of war. In time of peace they have never been the problem to us some individuals would have us suppose. We just haven't been big enough to give them a chance. In a way they are getting one now and they will use it.

THE prevailing sentiment one finds on the war here in these camps is the wish that it might all end soon and that the countries engaged in it are all ruining themselves financially over something that might better have been settled amicably.

Most of the heads in here are old ones and view this world's affairs with a detachment that is surprising. Many are still much bewildered by it all, prefer not to think or speak about it, feel deeply grateful to America for what chance they have had here, view with some concern the future as it affects their children, but feel that ultimately good sense and the sense of fair play will win out in American hearts.

Those who felt otherwise have been for the most part removed and those who still feel like them will likewise be removed to a place in which they will have more leisure to think it over once again.

Parents whose boys are in the service are proud of them and the boys are proud of their part in the service. Their pride is subject to misgiving at times as they think of the uncertainty of theirs and their parents' future, but the prevailing attitude is one of hopeful confidence that their loyalty to the country

**JAPANESE PROVE MAN WORTH IN ITALY**

By JOHN LARNER  
North American Newspaper Alliance  
WITH THE AMERICAN FIFTH ARMY ADVANCED FORCES IN ITALY, Oct. 25.—(By Wireless)—(Delayed)—The unit of American-Japanese soldiers fighting the Germans here was bivouacked in a sunny-tomato field on an Italian farm beyond the north fork of the Volturno River. German shells were dropping in the bottom land and also around a crumbling castle on the hill just above.

The Japanese had completed one month of battle in this land halfway around the world from their homes in Hawaii. The net verdict of other troops in the sector is that they are very good soldiers, noteworthy especially for their aggressiveness and stamina. They looked good.

**Tank Knocked Out**  
Near a solitary house by a curve in the road stood an enemy tank, full of holes. When we reached the camp a little farther on, the unit commander, Lieut. Col. Farrant Turner of Honolulu, was taking notes on the story of Pvt. Masao Awakuni, a bazooka gunner who shot up this tank.

The bazooka, as you may know, will raise hell with a tank, but the gunner must be pretty close and tanks are not comfortable to be with.



MINIDOKA students help clear sagebrush from a field near Hunt, to prepare ground for planting of food crops to supply the relocation center.

necessity of cooperation with the Orient, of extending our democratic thinking to include the Oriental regardless of origin.

The fact is, we can't afford to lose the war, nor can we afford to lose the peace after it. If we are to win the war we must get used to the idea of a hands-across-the-Pacific fraternal and democratic acceptance of the Filipino and Chinese and Indian and Japanese when peace comes. Else we fight in vain.

We may strain at the point, but to no avail. If we do not make good on the promise of such acceptance after this war, then we are but preparing for another in which we shall be compelled to

those who have gone to the Eastern seaboard will certainly never think of returning to the West Coast. Nor will those who are relocated in the Midwest, and their number is great. For the most part they have been well received wherever they have gone, gratefully so in many instances. This they will never forget.

PERHAPS the farmers are worst off of any in camp. They have no cash on which to set themselves up in farming once again or, if they had the cash, they could not procure the farm implements necessary to carry on their work. Nor do they know the soil or East nor irrigation methods followed hereabouts. Many are learning here in camp, but without hope that eventually they can get back into farming on their own.

Thousands of these men went out to help the Idaho, Montana and Utah farmers get in their crops last year and this and their labor has gone far to help solve the problem of manpower shortage in this region. Some have gone into Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri and Ohio and will probably settle there and may ultimately be able to set themselves up once again. They love the land and will not be divorced from it readily. If the Coast does not want their skilled production they can find outlet for it elsewhere nearer the great eastern markets and in many instances they are welcome there.

Perhaps the most surprising development of all is the avidity with which youngsters of school age have seized the opportunity to complete their college training at eastern schools of which they had formerly only dreamed. This has been matched only by the welcome they have received in many cases.

All of which seems in a way to indicate that the Oriental problem is no longer to remain subject to the vagaries of Coast rabble-rousers. That will have been a gain.

As this war develops we shall have to turn our eyes more and more to the

their lives. They have found an opportunity for social intercourse, of which they always have been very fond but for which they have hitherto just not had the time.

No, they have not grown lazy. The type of work possible to them in camp just cannot be as strenuous as that to which circumstances forced them before evacuation and they also live very close together; sometimes two families share the same apartment.

Probably no other race of people would have stood up under the trial of evacuation like this people did. They had hardly landed here in a cloud of dust when they set about planting a garden. Most of them brought slips of flowers with them as mementoes of Seattle or the Valley. The place has since become a riot of flowers.

Classes in English are well attended. Indian leather work has been taken up as a hobby by many. The most interesting of all handicraft work, though, is that which has turned the bitter-brush and sage brush into lovely articles of furniture or ornaments for these poor little homes. These plants seemed formerly to be of little use. The people here have not only found them useful, but ornamental to a very high degree.

In general, those who most needed to leave the camps have not been in a position to do so. They are the parents of families of children. Some have wanted desperately to leave because of what they have seen happening to their children. They cannot find jobs and housing. At least the wage they can command in the only jobs open to them would not suffice for them to live decently and support their children on it.

Over 1,000 of those able to do so have left camp on a permanent basis. Others would do the same were they able to do so. Which would seem to indicate that for the most part these people have seen the handwriting on the wall so far as the Coast is concerned and intend to remove inland permanently.