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PROBLEMS OF EVACUEE RESETTLEMENT IN CALIFORNIA

Address by Dillon S. Meyer, Director of the War Relocation Authority, at Eagle Rock, California, June 19, 1945.



WRA is nearing the finish line. There are still some resettlement problems in California, as well as elsewhere, to be overcome. We need a lot of sympathetic understanding and active help, but with the experience we have behind us, and the support that is being offered on every hand, we think we know pretty well how the rest of the job is going to work out.

A great many of the obstacles that still stand in the way are hand-overs from 1943. That year we had more poison spread about the evacuees--more lies and half-truths--than I would have believed possible. During the year before WRA's first months of existence were primarily a period of housekeeping and planning for the future. In 1942 we had the job of receiving the evacuees at partially completed centers; setting up all the administrative machinery necessary to the efficient and economical operation of these centers; establishment of all the functions and services which you would expect to find in 10 ordinary small cities outside.

But in 1943 the difficulties began to multiply. Looking back, it seems that there was an official investigation of one sort or another being conducted throughout the year without a break. It wasn't quite that bad, but we did spend a great deal of time answering accusations; defending ourselves from the attacks of a violently opposing and highly imaginative section of the national press. We met a discouraging unfriendliness on many fronts, and watched with alarm the fabrication and growth of suffocating myths which we had neither the time nor the staff to deal with adequately.

I doubt now that there was any effective way in 1943 to deal with the damning falsehoods that fast gained credence throughout the country, and especially on the West Coast. We did not have an audience large enough or strong enough to turn the tide. It was the thing to do in 1943 to believe the worst about America's Japanese.

Bad as it was, however, 1943 was not a total loss. Early that year the War Department announced that volunteers from the mainland and from Hawaii would be accepted to serve in a special All-Nisei Combat Team. This was the first time citizens of Japanese ancestry had been acceptable for induction in any manner since June, 1942, when the War Department had advised Selective Service to discontinue Nisei inductions until further notice. Several hundred volunteered from the centers, along with a large group from Hawaii.

During the year we completed our relocation organization in the East, the Midwest and Rocky Mountain areas, establishing offices which could help evacuees find employment, housing and acceptance in normal American communities, where they reentered the mainstream of normal life and began to contribute their share to the nation's war-time job. We helped 17,000 evacuees effect a successful resettlement during 1943, and these pioneers into a new land east of the Sierra Nevadas began to win general acceptance for themselves and for those who were to follow them from the centers.

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1944 was as successful as 1943 had been difficult. The year opened with announcement by the War Department--undeniably impressed by the excellent showing made by the 442nd Combat Team in training and by the outstanding record of the 100th Battalion already on the battle front--that Nisei again would be inducted through regular Selective Service procedures. I think that this action of the War Department, restoring to American citizens the privilege and duty of fighting for their country, is the most basic and most important single factor which makes possible a decent solution to the problems created by the evacuation. I had urged that announcement for many months, and I have entertained no doubts about successfully completing my job since Secretary Stimson in that way announced official War Department acceptance for the Nisei.

Hundreds of young citizens began leaving the centers to start their training at Camp Shelby, Miss., and smaller groups soon were leaving the ports of embarkation.

The relocation program continued with increasing velocity, as new friends of those already relocated began to speak out for them and it became, with the passing of time, an established fact that the evacuees could find pleasant, solid and economically satisfactory living and working adjustments away from the West Coast. As stories of outstanding Nisei soldiering began to come back from the Italian front, fair-minded people at home who had not bothered themselves greatly about the evacuated group began to piece together the threads of information and wonder what they could do for the displaced wives and sisters and parents of these fighting men. The general situation of the evacuee group continued to be steadily favorable throughout the year, until the middle of December, when relocation received its great impetus with announcement by the War Department that the military situation had become such that mass exclusion was no longer necessary or desirable. The nation, still in the unprecedented turmoil of having to fight two major wars, had nevertheless been big enough to study a comparatively minor problem and relieve the restrictions which had displaced a small minority of its people, as soon as military necessity for the evacuation no longer existed.

When the War Department announced that, effective January 2, 1945, all those evacuees determined individually eligible by Army authorities would be free to return to the evacuated area, WRA was ready with definite policies for subsequent administering of its responsibilities. Among other things, we had definitely decided that the centers should be closed as soon thereafter as efficiently possible. The carefully studied reasons for that major decision are still completely valid.

All through 1944, however, and to some extent through this half of 1945, WRA has been plagued by the myths which gained currency in 1943 until some people began to accept them as established fact. There has been no let-up in our fight against this poison which has been spread deliberately in a bid for calculated results.

There have been a great variety of myths. Many of them were manufactured 40 years ago. Some are vicious, some almost credible, some just plain ridiculous. They are identical in that they are false and in that they have been repeatedly challenged both by WRA and by many thinking and interested people outside of WRA. But some of these myths still persist through the efforts of far-sighted enemies of the American bill of rights who wish to prolong their present economic opportunities, or they remain involuntarily in the minds of other people who have been led by continuous repetition into believing them.

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One of the most popular and most sinister of the myths that have been built up is the one that all children born in the United States of Japanese parents owe allegiance to Japan. This arises from the fact that many of the American-born Japanese--but not all of them, by any means--are so-called "dual citizens."

The fact is that children born in the United States of alien fathers from almost every country in the world, outside of South and Central America, are dual citizens, at least until they become of age. In the great majority of cases, they remain dual citizens for life unless they renounce allegiance to one country or the other. The Japanese law which resulted in dual citizenship for some children born of Japanese parents in the United States before the war was not at all unique and was, in fact, far more liberal than the nationality law of Germany and many other nations. Since 1924, a child born of Japanese parents in this country has been a dual citizen only if registered as such by the parents with a Japanese consulate within fourteen days after birth. And even children so registered have had the privilege of renouncing their Japanese citizenship after they reach the age of 21. Dual citizenship is a bug-a-boo of international law, not an American term for a sinister Oriental creed that guarantees to the Emperor of Japan the unhesitating obedience of his contemporary's grandchildren in foreign lands.

A few weeks ago a Washington columnist placed dual citizenship in its proper category when he reported that a national official of the Veterans of Foreign Wars was refused a French visa because the French embassy declared that he was a dual citizen of France and a deserter from the French Army. The columnist reported that the trouble was ironed out, especially since this man is American born and therefore had no obligation to serve in the French army, but only after the French embassy discovered that the man's father had been born in Alsace, which country at that time flew the German flag. The columnist reported France was delighted to issue the man a visa on the basis that he was a German.

And then there is the myth that the religion of all Japanese, no matter where they live, binds them to the Emperor; that they all have Shinto shrines in their homes.

The fact is that the Japanese in the United States have two major religions; Buddhism and Christianity. There is no evidence that Buddhism is in any way connected with Emperor worship. Shintoism on the other hand is divided into three distinct kinds. One of these three is state Shintoism, which fosters a belief in the divinity of the Emperor and the purity of the Japanese race. This state Shintoism, a comparatively recent development in Japanese history, is the creed which has given rise to the accusation that all Japanese are Emperor worshippers. The charge that all Japanese in the United States, or even any considerable number of them, have Shinto shrines in their homes is a pure fabrication which has no substance at all except in the minds of the persons who concocted it.

You have heard a hundred variations on the theme that all the Japanese language schools maintained in the many communities on the West Coast before the war attempted to inculcate American-born Japanese with the national ideals of the Japanese Imperial Government. I personally

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think that the Japanese language schools as such should not be reinstated. I happen to think that this country's public schools are doing an adequate job.

But much of what has been bandied about concerning the Japanese "indoctrination" that flowed from the language schools here on the Coast has been completely debunked. The hundreds of Nisei boys fighting in the Pacific in the uniform of the United States Army, establishing outstanding records of loyalty and devotion to duty, represent a complete refutation of such a charge. Similar schools have been conducted by the Chinese, by the Germans and by many other nationalities in the form of parochial schools. They have all been supplementary to the public schools and were established so that these first generation Americans could acquire the language facilities necessary within the family group.

I don't doubt that many teachers of Japanese language schools may have tried to inculcate the Japanese culture into their students, but if they did they have failed miserably.

Our public schools, on the other hand, have done a really magnificent job of inspiring our young citizens including those of Japanese descent with an understanding of American institutions. And I want to pay tribute here to the public school system of California and the other West Coast States both for the training they have given these youngsters in the past and for the way they are now receiving evacuee children upon their return. I have always felt it is deeply significant that we find comparatively little prejudice against Japanese Americans in the primary and the secondary schools.

But if I may be permitted to make a suggestion, I would advocate that courses in the Oriental languages be added to the curriculum of the high schools in this section of the country. I believe that this is important in view of the far-reaching possibilities of postwar trade and other relations which we will undoubtedly have with the Oriental nations.

We can't overlook the often repeated myth that the Japanese in California deliberately concentrated in strategic areas to be near important military installations. The fact is that the vast majority of the Japanese who lived near important military installations when the war began had been settled in the same localities long before they became military sites. The main geographic pattern of Japanese population was fixed many years ago with reference to economic, social and soil conditions. That these points may now be near certain strategic military and industrial areas is no proof of a diabolical purpose on the part of the Japanese Americans. The two communities most frequently cited to support the allegation that the Japanese chose important military sites for colonization are Terminal Island and the San Francisco-Oakland Bay region. Actually, the settlement of Japanese fishermen on Terminal Island began in 1901 and practically halted in 1907. Roosevelt Naval Base and Reeves Field, which have given military significance to the Island, were of course not established until long afterwards.

As for the second community, the total population of foreign-born Japanese in the San Francisco-Oakland metropolitan district in 1940 was

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,676. In the same area lived 24,387 foreign-born Germans and 42,861 foreign-born Italians.

It has been falsely stated many times that Nisei soldiers are not used in the Pacific theatre because the Army does not trust them to fight against the Japanese. The fact is, and it is documented in a recently multilithed WRA pamphlet "Nisei in the War Against Japan", that Nisei soldiers are serving with the United States Army in every battle area of the Pacific and in Burma. In addition they are serving, on loan from the Army, with the Marine Corps and with various units of the Allied Nations.

You also can read this story in the current issue of the American Mercury magazine. I understand that this same article, slightly boiled down, will also be carried in the July issue of Readers' Digest.

One of the most ridiculous, but at the same time most persistent of the myths is that the Japanese in this country knew all about Pearl Harbor but that not one felt called upon to warn the authorities.

I called this statement ridiculous. How many of you men and women-- unquestionably loyal to the United States, interested in its affairs and conversant with hundreds of military and civilian officials--how many of you knew the date and the hour of the Normandy invasion? How many of you knew that Iwo Jima was to be invaded until you read of that accomplishment over your morning coffee?

Enemies of the evacuees whisper that they congregated in close little groups and seemed excited on Pearl Harbor day. How many of you talked about that tragic occurrence with a neighbor? Which one of you did not seem excited on that Sunday evening?

And then there are a collection of myths: that the presence of Japanese workers in a community lowers the standard of living; that Japanese Americans are mainly stoop laborers and domestic workers; that American farmers of European descent cannot compete with farmers of Japanese descent. The truth is that these accusations grow from the fact that these people have refused to remain in the role of stoop laborers.

They are hated because as the new generation grows up they do not accept an inferior standard, but in full accord with the American tradition seek to improve their economic position. Actually, they are condemned to do what ordinarily would be commended. 1940 census figures tell the story. Nearly three-fourths of the paid workers in the evacuated group were employed in a wide range of occupations not classified as either farm work or domestic work.

This group concentrated in the production of vegetables, berries and small fruits, because experience had proven to them that they could compete more successfully in this type of farming than in others. They also generally agree that the farmers of this group did not displace the farmers of European descent. They came in after we had quit, and they made a go of a crippled industry.

In the same connection there is the myth that the farming methods of the Japanese ruined the soil and caused the land to depreciate in value.

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This is flatly not true. I personally know something about soil conservation and I know these people as a group bought at least as much fertilizer as the average California farmer and they maintained production at a high level. I personally know that their intensive farming reclaimed low areas, little patches of land between the telephone posts and fences, small vacant tracts in residential and business sections, and that they generally did a very good job of farming and of conserving the soil.

But the biggest, the most fundamental, the most dangerous myth of all is the old threadbare cliché "Once a Jap, always a Jap." In a sense, this underlies all the other myths. It is the last refuge of the race-baiter--the accusation he falls back on after all his other charges and innuendoes have been refuted. It permits him to point to the people in relocation centers and make the perfectly fantastic statement, "These people are killing and torturing our boys in the Southwest Pacific. When our boys return, they will not tolerate these people in their midst."

There are so many things wrong about that myth that it's hard to know where to begin. In the first place, it's absolutely contradicted by all the scientific evidence we have. I don't know of a single reputable biologist or anthropologist who will support it. These scientists will tell you that physical characteristics of race are inherited--we all know that, of course--but the idea that loyalty to Japanese institutions is somehow carried in the bloodstream is pure bunk.

All our experience in WRA with the Japanese American people convinces me that our American institutions have been far more potent in affecting the minds of these youngsters than any transplanted institutions of the Orient. Japanese American children placed in a normal American environment and given half a chance will absorb Americanism almost as naturally as they breathe. In fact, we have learned that even when you put them in camps and cut them off from the mainstream of American life, they will reach out for American institutions and develop them even in such an artificial atmosphere. The race baiters it seems to me, show a regrettable lack of faith in America when they ignore these fundamental facts.

If further refutation is needed for this idea that no person of Japanese ancestry can conceivably be loyal to the United States, we can certainly find it in the combat record of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Combat Team. I have talked to several of these boys who returned with wounds and I have read news stories quoting others. And it's clear to me that these boys have been fighting with that old cliché "Once a Jap, etc." firmly embedded in their minds. It's been almost a hymn of hate with them, and it helps to explain the almost pathetic eagerness which some of them have shown to get in the fight against Japan. They have been fighting "like demons", as one correspondent put it, to smash that ugly, un-American concept--to win honor and vindication not only for themselves, but for their relatives and friends, for all Japanese Americans who prefer the American way of life. When you look at some of the honors these boys have won--two Presidential citations, 31 Distinguished Service Crosses, 183 Silver Stars, 218 Bronze Stars, 64 Divisional Citations--there can be very little doubt about where their loyalties lie.

It is true, as the race baiters say, that the Caucasian veterans are going to come back full of wrath on this subject. In fact, some of

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men have already come back and written back with the highest indignation. The only catch is that their wrath and their indignation are directed not against the Japanese Americans but against the people who are pushing them around, shooting at them in the night, and organizing boycotts to put them out of business. When the boys who have known the Nisei soldiers in combat return, that sort of thing will not long be tolerated.

I have touched rather casually upon some of these myths and even more casually upon the facts which refuted them. If you are interested you may read the whole story in "Myths and Facts About Japanese Americans", a WRA pamphlet answering the common misconceptions regarding Americans of Japanese ancestry. Copies are available at our local WRA offices if you should desire one.

With the military necessity for mass exclusion no longer existent, and after complete individual Army clearance had been given the great majority of evacuees still living in the centers, relocation north, east, south, and west got really under way early in 1945. The rate of departure from the centers has been steadily increasing from something like 100 a week to more than 1,000 the past week. More than 12,000 men, women and children have become reestablished in normal outside communities since the War Department lifted its mass exclusion orders. Slightly less than two-thirds of this total have resettled east of the Sierra Nevadas, the others returning to their homes on the West Coast.

This rate of relocation has been very close to what we expected. We expect the rate of departures to increase steadily to a peak which may be reached in the late summer or early fall.

I am confident of this pattern in spite of the fact that some of the old myths stubbornly persist through the efforts of organized political and economic resistance, particularly against the return of the evacuees to their West Coast homes. I am confident, in spite of the fact that with repetition of the myths there are constantly new accusations hurled in the path of democratic justice.

Among the new charges, the recent accusation has been made that I am propagandizing in the interests of a particular racial group: That WRA circulates "propaganda" favoring the Japanese people. The cannotation is that WRA is being very undemocratic. The charge carries the vicious implication that a government agency is working in the interest of the people of Japan. It was shouted for the ears of unthinking people whose subsequent repetitions would tend to discredit the agency and the evacuees, cloud their relocation program and delay their return to normal American life.

Such an accusation is recognized as pure nonsense by thinking people, who know that WRA's work is with a strictly American racial group whose ancestry happens to be Japanese. WRA was created for that particular purpose. The Congress has continued to appropriate funds for that particular purpose--namely civilian administration of the relocation of people evacuated from military areas because of military necessity. It just happens that our work has been limited almost entirely to persons of one particular ancestry. If I have been "propagandizing" it has been not for any group of people but for the American Bill of Rights, for

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decency and fairplay and individual opportunity. It has been necessary to insist that the evacuee group receive that kind of justice--insist in every way I know--for the simple reason that there are those who from the platform, over the radio, through the press and by door-to-door campaigns endeavor to deny these people the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution. The very vigor of this irresponsible but organized resistance has set the pace for our counter efforts.

The most recent charge was made by State Senator Jack B. Tenney-- that Japanese Americans and aliens with an open and notoriously disloyal attitude are being released by the WRA to work in war plants and on wharves and docks. The San Francisco News, in quoting the Los Angeles senator to this effect, indicated that the charge was made in a resolution calling for approval by FBI and Army and Navy intelligence officers of WRA decisions affecting persons of Japanese ancestry.

The senator's remark could have been made only from ignorance or malice. By now every intelligent person should know that the Army lifted its mass exclusion order because the military need for exclusion no longer exists. Certainly a State Senator should know that the War Department is solely responsible, and always has been responsible, for checking each individual and determining exactly who will and who will not be permitted back on the West Coast. These facts have been clearly stated time and time again by the Army, by WRA and by others.

Part and parcel of the myths and the accusations are the acts of terrorism that have been directed at returning evacuees since the exclusion orders were lifted by the War Department the first of this year.

Since January 2 there have been 33 incidents of violence or open intimidation directed against returning evacuees, just in California. Twenty of these have been shooting attacks. There were also one attempted dynamiting, three arson cases and nine instances where evacuees were threatened and warned to stay out of the community.

Secretary Ickes reported 24 of these instances to the nation the middle of last month. Immediately, organizations which stand for democracy and decency and fair play, individuals who see the threat that such practices represent to the nation, and editors from one end of the country to the other shouted their disapproval.

A California editor wrote:

"Here is a problem primarily of law enforcement and law observance right in our own state. We cannot, as California citizens, do much about safeguarding representative government and democratic freedom in Poland, in Greece, in Spain or in Argentina. But we can demand that our state government and our various county officials observe and defend the letter and the spirit of the American Constitution in regard to minority groups of American citizens."

And across the country, in Pennsylvania:

"But if there is sympathy for the hoodlums on the part of the constituted authorities, it is time a higher power stepped in to show them that

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there is no room anywhere in this country for the philosophy this terrorism reflects..Big as this country is, it isn't large enough to fight a war against tyranny and oppression and tolerate them at home."

But the incidents continued unabated. The number climbed to 33 within the next two weeks.

Probably more dangerous even than the incidents and the forces that support them, however, is the rationalization--private and public--which permits the perpetrators to go unpunished.

Two of the 33 incidents actually got into court. In the first, three men accused of attempting to burn and dynamite ranch buildings of an American citizen in Placer County were quickly found not guilty by a jury which had heard the defense attorney plead that "this is a white man's country." In the second, a man who admitted firing four shotgun blasts at the home of a returned family; from a distance at which any one of the buckshot would have caused death, was tried for firing a gun in a "rude and threatening manner." The defendant was found guilty, sentenced to six months in jail, and freed on probation.

Editors found such a situation intolerable. They wrote about California's "anemic" law and recalled the San Francisco Chronicle's phrase condemning a Washington Judge's \$1,000-fine as punishment for burning four houses. The Chronicle said: "He has praised this kind of outlawry with faint damns."

Secretary Ickes told his press conference it seemed as if law and disorder had been substituted for law and order, and that if someone shot into his home he would think it was "pretty damned rude." But the judge complacently defended his position. He said it was not strictly his decision, that several local residents were in the courtroom and talked the case over before the trial. They agreed, according to the judge, that they did not want any more hoodlumism in their county but feared that imposing sentence on the defendant would fan the flames of community sentiment and lead to more shootings.

Then there is also the case of Mary Masuda, in Orange County. That young woman, you may recall, was visited by five men and warned to stay out of the community, in spite of the fact that she had four brothers in the service before the eldest was killed at Cassino. Local officials told her, when she asked for protection, that they could do nothing until some "overt act" had been committed.

Part of the same story is brilliantly revealed in the complaint of a former California state senator, speaking last month before a mass meeting of the California Preservation Association at Auburn, Placer County. He was quoted by the Sacramento BEE as terming the induction of Japanese Americans in the U. S. Army "the saddest thing that has happened in this war." He declared their bravery and fighting is being used as a "selling point" by "pro-Japanese" interests.

But no such thinking can rationalize away the rights and honor due members of the most decorated combat unit in the American Army.

Right here I want to make it clear that I feel no sense of anger

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against the people who so rationalize. My reaction to these people is a sincere feeling of pity. I am sorry for a judge who samples public opinion before he places sentence. I am sorry for a merchant who against his personal convictions participates in a boycott and whispers to himself an excuse that he knows is not valid. I sincerely pity all men and women who succumb to rationalization and refuse to face the facts, especially when they are bringing nationwide shame upon their communities as well as themselves.

So long as these myths continue to be fostered by the race-baiters and repeated by unthinking people, so long as insupportable accusations win credence and acts of violence are allowed to occur, just so long is a victorious America in danger of succumbing to the historic principle of war that the culture of the conquered will prevail. Because these things are evidence of the culture which was Nazism. Hitler is dead, but I repeat what has been said before: here is evidence that Hitler won a victory in America.

These myths are the tools of individuals who bully merchants into placing 'No Japs Wanted' signs in their windows, applaud the terrorism which has been directed against returning evacuees, and establish economic boycotts against one group of people--a group which today is of Japanese ancestry and which tomorrow may be Jews or Filipinos or Negroes or Catholics or some other sect or racial group.

Just so long as these myths are bandied about for a purpose we can know that there are men among us who subscribe to the methods and the principles, or lack of principles, which brought Germany to her downfall. The men responsible are not the men who pull the triggers when rifles are fired in the night. They are not the ones who strike the match that burns a home to the ground. Those really responsible publicly 'abhor' the hoodlumism that has brought shame to the state of California, but in the next breath they privately accept full responsibility for the acts that occur. They whisper the falsehoods and calculatingly fan the sparks of misled prejudice into overt acts of lawlessness which damn the meaning of democracy.

These incidents--the night riders and the discouragement they spread-- is one of the specific problems faced by WRA in its determination to go out of business, which after all is another way of saying to help some 50,000 people reestablish themselves in American society. To overcome this problem the evacuees must have the support of decent, thinking Americans whose convictions allow them and urge them to be vocal in asserting themselves. In order to dispel these rationalizations and Hitler-like actions, they must give the country and their local communities definite and tangible evidence that they do not intend to tolerate organized bigotry, lax law enforcement and similar un-American practices.

There have been important instances where definite and tangible action has been taken. Last month the Monterey Peninsula Herald of Monterey, California published a full page advertisement demanding "The Democratic Way of Life For All." It quoted an official War Department statement:

"The War Department believes that the people of the Pacific Coast area will accord returning persons of Japanese ancestry all the considerations

to which they are entitled as loyal citizens and law-abiding residents."

Below the statement were listed 449 residents of the community who subscribed to the policy stated as follows:

"We, the undersigned, then believe that it is the privilege and responsibility of this community to cooperate with the National Government by insuring the democratic way of life to all members of the community."

That is an example of vocal support. Every name on that list is a weight on the democratic side of the balance. The mere fact that a man asked that his name be included is a direct influence for right over someone whose name did not appear, and over someone else who might otherwise become confused under the influence of irresponsible counsel and commit an act which would place Monterey under the same kind of shame which brands otherwise similar California communities.

More recently, on May 16, three Nisei were removed from work in a Stockton, California, warehouse because 300 members of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union Local 6 had voted the previous day to refuse to work with them and threatened to strike if the Nisei stayed. But the president of Local 6 did not agree and stated publicly:

"Local 6, now as in the past, will not tolerate any discrimination against loyal Americans....The so-called 'Stockton incident'....does not represent the thinking of the majority of our members...We have begun an investigation to determine responsibility for the incident."

And two days later ILWU officers, representatives of the state Attorney General's office, WRA people and representatives of the FEPC were in Stockton, asking members of the local to sign a pledge not to "refuse to work with any person because of such person's race, color or creed." On May 22 the ILWU suspended the Stockton local, and threatened that every member of the unit who had not signed the agreement to work with Nisei by the following evening would be suspended from the union and face expulsion trial.

That is an example of vigorous, sudden, hard-hitting and straight-to-the-point protection of individual rights.

On May 22 the Stockton Record carried a full page advertisement which stated in part:

"Discrimination does not stop at any designated point. In Germany, it did not stop with the Jews. After them came the trade unionists, then the Catholics, then all those who hadn't voted for Hitler in the first instance, and on and on until skeletons were piled high in torture camps.

"Stockton's own sons have died so that this might not happen in America. We have faith in our members who work here, and we have faith in the people of Stockton. We confidently believe they will solve this problem in a manner which will make Americans proud."

Less spectacular, but definitely outspoken and tangible, is the support of a small committee at Hood River, Oregon, which defies two

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flourishing 'anti' groups in the name of liberty and justice for all Americans. This handful of citizens, too few to demand democracy, nevertheless identifies itself and its members publicly and strives to combat the 'anti' elements with nothing more than true statements of fact. Out-numbered as they are, so far as organization is concerned, these few individuals have made themselves heard. There is more decency and understanding and democracy in Hood River today than before they took up the fight for justice.

Perhaps our greatest problem facing relocation is the matter of housing, which is as much a problem in one part of the country as another, and as much a problem for one group of individuals as another.

There doubtless must be some sort of temporary housing provided for some of these people, but regardless of the type it will generally be better housing than the barracks provided in the Relocation Centers. Hostels, temporary homes provided and operated by interested outside groups throughout the West Coast as well as in other areas, are playing an important role in meeting this initial problem. Additional hostels will be established, so that families can relocate together and be sheltered while they find their individual permanent solution. But there is another vast source of housing available to these returning evacuees.

There are thousands of West Coast homes where domestic help is needed and desired--homes which can provide rooms as supplement to salary. Certainly in these times, with domestic wages at their current standard, I think that many of the evacuees would be quick to accept that type of work. It is clean, respectable work, and it offers excellent transition possibilities.

In spite of all these problems, in spite of past mistakes and in spite of individual injustices which have occurred, we and the public must not be soft hearted about the job that must be done. There are important--urgent--reasons for the announced time limit on completion of the relocation job.

First, and probably most important, the institutionalized, subsidized life of the centers, destructive as it is to individual initiative and to normal family ties, is an insupportable environment for the thousands of children and young people who have had to spend formative years there. It is an environment that should be wiped off the record of American history as quickly as possible. The evacuee youngsters should have the chance, as young Americans, to grow up in American communities.

Second, it is important that the job of resettlement be completed now, when the demand for workers to maintain the war economy makes job opportunities more plentiful than at any time in our history.

Third, full wartime economy has placed private and public welfare agencies, right now, in the best position in which they have been or will be to help evacuees become rehabilitated and reestablished. The return of large numbers of veterans and unemployed from war plants will radically change the employment and assistance pictures.

Fourth, consideration must be given to the fact that members of Congress have repeatedly asked how long the WRA will continue to spend

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public funds for the maintenance in segregated communities of persons able to take their place in normal life. The answer, as you know, is that WRA has requested no funds for operating the centers beyond January 2 of next year.

And fifth, as long as the centers remain open and occupied--isolated colonies cut off from the rest of American life--their residents will be marked out as the target of suspicion and hostility, the prey of the race baiters.

There will necessarily be some temporary relocation for a few individuals and families, some marking time on a second-choice job while they work out the arrangements for a permanent individual solution. But this will be only the first step. And the first step must be taken soon if the evacuees are not to remain permanently in the centers, dependent on government bounty, deprived of all initiative and self-respect. The longer the readjustment is postponed, the harder it is for the evacuees to face the problems it implies, the easier it is to cling to the false security of the isolated center life.

This step that must be taken is a step that requires personal courage and outside support. It is the first step in a job that must be done from a positive approach, not from the shaky platform of sentimentality. You, as thinking members of a democratic society, must help the evacuees and the people in your own community to understand the problems and face them as rational human beings. We are working under the basic American principle that under our democracy a man is judged on his individual worth and allowed to prosper in direct accordance with his ability, his industry, his personal decency and his democratic regard for the rights of his fellowmen. We are working not for a racial group or a man or a family. We are fighting for the principle of individual rights.

That is the job of WRA and the role of California in relocation--to ask and to demand that the principle of democracy be applied to a small minority which has been charged with, and to some extent persecuted because of, nothing more than the shape of their faces.

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