

IN ALL FAIRNESS - ARE THEY LOYAL?

By Galen Fisher

The Editor, San Diego Union:-

A few days ago a leading citizen of San Diego asked me to comment on your editorial entitled, "They Cannot Be Ignored," which appeared on March 31.

The first sentence of the editorial is an error of fact; for Judge Denman, of the Ninth Federal Circuit Court, in his Dissenting Opinion of March 28, did not declare General DeWitt's order barring 70, 000 American-born Japanese citizens from this coast to be unconstitutional. He simply protested the referring of the Hirabayashi Case to the U.S. Supreme Court, and in so doing, the failure of his colleagues to state many relevant facts.

That is a minor point. The main emphasis of the editorial is on the question of loyalty. This astounding statement is made: "It is only fair to concede that there is an occasional person of Japanese ancestry who doubtless is loyal to the United States....it is not likely that the Japs in this country are 100 percent disloyal. But the burden of proof is, or should be, upon the individual Jap." "How then, can the Government of this country set a standard by which to judge loyalty on the part of the Japanese?" No evidence to support these assumptions is given. I venture to offer facts and competent testimony in rebuttal.

1. After Pearl Harbor, the F.B.I. and Intelligence services seized about 4000 Japanese residents on the Mainland, mostly on this coast. Only a handful of them were Nisei, that is, citizens. The Government set up Hearing Boards to sift them. As a result, about 2,500 were interned, as being potentially dangerous. Those Boards were composed of eminent lawyers and other citizens. They examined German and Italian, as well as Japanese suspects, and they found it but little more difficult to pass on Japanese, than on the German and Italian cases. The same rules of evidence apply to them all: actions, words, testimony of informed persons. Members of those Boards have said that it would have been perfectly possible to pass upon the loyalty of all the Japanese and Japanese-Americans during the months of/before the evacuation, or at latest, while they were in the temporary Assembly Centers, within easy reach of the relevant evidence. They believe it would have been comparatively simple in the case of the American-born, educated in our public schools and colleges, and known well by many school-mates, teachers and neighbors.

2. In March, 1943, a registration was held in the ten Relocation Centers, and all evacuees were asked if they wished to leave America and live in Japan after the war. Although there was unfortunate confusion in the minds of the evacuees as to the meaning and purpose of this and other questions, only 20% or 22,000 of the entire 110,000 expressed a desire to leave America, and this in spite of the fact that 40,000 or 36% were aliens. This does not prove that the 80 percent are loyal to this country, but it does suggest that the number who are pro-Japan is far smaller than is popularly assumed. The successive heads of the War Relocation Authority, Milton Eisenhower and Dillon Myer, have both testified to the remarkable loyal and cooperative spirit of the great majority of the evacuees. The former said to a Senate Committee that he thought from 80 to 85 percent of the Nisei are loyal. The disturbances

..... in the centers have been due to a small number of malcontents almost exclusively older aliens ambitious to retain political control, and certain disloyal Kibei, that is Nisei who went to Japan for their earlier schooling. Such Kibei are a small minority of of the Nisei.

3. The record in Hawaii presents striking evidence of the general trustworthiness and loyalty of the Japanese residents. The chief Military Intelligence officers have repeatedly borne testimony to this effect. Out of the 160,000 residents of Japanese stock they have ~~appealed to the loyalty of the entire Japanese population, and their confidence has been~~ interned only about 400, and have evacuated only a few hundreds. They have appealed to the loyalty of the entire Japanese population, and their confidence has been justified fully. Not only has there been absolutely no sabotage, either before or after Pearl Harbor, but there has been marvelously hearty cooperation with the authorities.

(J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, according to an A.P. dispatch of April 5, the Japanese population of Hawaii was not guilty of espionage committed in ~~the Hawaii prior to Pearl Harbor. -- He stated that espionage committed~~ the territory prior to Pearl Harbor. He stated that espionage committed in Hawaii prior to Pearl Harbor was done "by espionage agents and consular agents of the Japanese government" and that his organizations had "practically no trouble with the Japanese in Hawaii.") (Added to Mr. Fisher's letter.)

When the War Department announced on January 28 that volunteer Combat Unit of Nisei could be formed, it said that 1500 would be received from Hawaii. But when some 9400 volunteered and clamored for admission, the Department gradually increased the number accepted to 2875. This result was due in part to the fact that in Hawaii both the government and the public have long given fair and equal treatment to the Japanese and other Orientals, and in part to the high reputation of the separate regiment of Nisei who have been in training at Camp McCoy, as well as of the other 5000 Nisei who are members of the various units of the armed forces. Conditions on this coast are different from those in Hawaii, but both Army officers and civilians who know both areas have said that most of the tragedy and disaffection caused among the the Japanese evacuees on the Mainland could have been avoided if a similar policy had prevailed here. The confinement in barb-wire Centers, the denial to the Nisei of any chance to be heard as to their loyalty, and the threats of disfranchisement and other disabilities, have naturally created doubts as to the reality of Constitutional rights and democratic principles, and all this is reflected in the fact that only about 1000 Nisei volunteered for the Combat Unit in all the Mainland Relocation Centers. (Even so this is said to be equal to the general average for the United States though in the Centers no chance of preferment or choice of services was offered.) (Added.)

4. Competent testimony as to the loyalty and Americanization of the Nisei has been given by some of California's best known citizens, among whom are educators like Robert Millikan, Monroe Deutsch, Tully Knoles, Ray Lyman Wilbur, and Aurelia Reinhardt; businessmen like Frederick J. Koster and Henry F. Grady; and religious leaders like Bishops Bertrand Stevens and James C. Baker. Typical of these statements is the following by Frank S. Bayley, leading attorney of Seattle and President of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A: "I have personally known quite a number of Alien and native-born Japanese, both in and around Seattle and on

Bainbridge Island. All that I have so known, I have found to be reliable and I believe to be free from subversive conduct or attitude.... The Nisei group I consider as loyal, almost without exception. They have shown a fine spirit in voluntarily obeying the removal order, as a means of demonstrating their patriotism. I am quite sure many of us would have claimed constitutional rights and gone to the courts about it."

Your assumption that our fellow-citizens of Japanese stock are nearly all disloyal because you rightly abhor the ideology and acts of the military cast now dominating Japan is on a par with branding all Americans of Russian stock as necessarily antagonistic to American ideals because Russia is a communistic country. President Roosevelt rang true to our best traditions when he wrote to Secretary Stimson on February 1: "Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race relations or ancestry."

5. You also say that "instances where they (loyal Japanese) were of the slightest aid to American officials were so rare as to be almost non-existent." As I write, "I have personally known at least fifteen individuals (Intelligence Officers) who have received continual aid from the group of loyal and patriotic Nisei attached to each, and have in consequence been of great service to the United States in obtaining information regarding disloyal or suspicious Japanese." This statement referred only to Southern California. I know of similar aid given to the F.B.I. and Intelligence Service in other sections of this coast. Intelligence Officers in Hawaii have borne similar testimony.
*insert I have before me a letter from an Intelligence Officer saying;

To cap this evidence let me quote from the article by a high Intelligence Officer in the October, 1942 Harper's Magazine: "I consider that at least seventy-five percent of the (Nisei) are loyal to the United States." (p.490).... "Many of the Nisei voluntarily contributed valuable anti-subversive information to this (the author's) and other governmental agencies. The Japanese Consular staff, the Central Japanese Association, and others known to have been sympathetic to the Japanese cause did not themselves trust the Nisei. A great many of the Nisei have taken legal steps through the Japanese Consulate and the Government of Japan to divest themselves officially of Japanese citizenship (dual citizenship) even though by so doing they become legally dead in the eyes of the Japanese law and were no longer eligible to inherit any property which they or their families might have held in Japan." (p. 491).... "Of the Japanese-born alien residents (the Issei) the large majority are at least passively loyal to the United States. There are among the Japanese, both aliens and United States citizens, certain individuals, either deliberately placed by the Japanese government or actuated by a fanatical loyalty to that country, who would act as saboteurs or enemy agents. This number is estimated to be less than three per cent of the total, or about 3,500 in the entire United States." (p.491)

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