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Enemy Alien Study

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#### JAPANESE EVACUATION AND RESETTLEMENT

Since the summer of 1942 a group of sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists, sponsored by the University of California, have been making an on-the-ground study of the human problems involved in the forced migration of Japanese on the Pacific Coast.

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It is too early to report a summary of their observations. Many of the findings are confidential, and must remain so to the end of the war. But this can be said: despite the changes in the evacuation and resettlement program, and the many vicissitudes which have beset it, the researchers have been able to keep abreast of the fast-moving developments. They are amassing and organizing a body of data on group incidents, individual experiences, ideological adjustments - the contemporary record of how "a hated minority" were treated in time of war, and how they reacted - a record that will be unique in the annals of social science. Twenty-five or thirty years from now historians will be wanting to write the story of this movement; and they will find it possible to write with a fullness, an intimacy and an understanding - thanks to the work of the California group.

Some social scientists fear that the next quarter-century will intensify the growing attitude of intolerance toward minorities. They predict that there will be efforts in various parts of the world to force mass migrations in the postwar period. In these eventualities, and indeed in whatever developments may come, the studies now being made of Japanese evacuation and resettlement should contribute to a wiser dealing with minority problems. The procedure is in striking contrast with concentration camp techniques.

Prior to the summer of 1942 three requests for funds had been presented to The Rockefeller Foundation for studies in connection with the moving of Japanese on the Pacific Coast. All had been declined. But when a program was formulated for a thorough-going study to be conducted under the joint direction of Professor Robert H. Lowie and Professor Dorothy S. Thomas of the University of California, the case won support at the level of \$7,500 per year for three years. Additional funds have been supplied by the Columbia Foundation of San Francisco, the Giannini Foundation of the University of California, and the Social Science Research Council; and these with the Rockefeller grant are providing an annual budget of \$24,000. The project has headquarters at the University in Berkeley, with field studies at three relocation centers, and an office in Chicago for the study of evacuees who have left the camps and are beginning to take their places in the stream of American life. The entire research undertaking has the approval and is receiving the full cooperation of the civilian and military authorities, both state and national.

In the first phase of the migration, just following the raid on Pearl Harbor, voluntary evacuation from the Pacific Coast area was permitted. Within a few weeks, however, this plan was revoked, and a system of forced mass evacuation was decreed. Various racetracks and fairgrounds were designated as temporary receiving camps or "assembly centers," and rapidly one neighborhood after another was cleared of its Japanese residents, as they were transferred to these places. The movement had reached this second stage when the projected study began.

Among the evacuees were three young Nisei (American-born Japanese) who had been graduate students at the University, one in sociology, one in



psychology, the other in social psychology. They were at once engaged as observers for the project, and within a few weeks a fourth Nisei, an anthropologist, was added to the staff. The four were sent to four assembly centers - one to the Santa Anita Racetrack in Los Angeles, one to the Tanforan Racetrack near San Francisco, one to the Tulare Fairgrounds in Central Valley of California, and the fourth to the Puyallup Fairgrounds in Washington. Each of these men made notes of what was happening in his camp. He recorded what he saw of the varying adjustments of the evacuees, including his own personal reactions.

Confinement in the assembly centers was temporary, however, and after a period of two to five months the evacuees were moved further inland to "relocation centers." There were ten of these, distributed among California, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Idaho, and Arkansas. The authorities agreed to transfer the Nisei observers to whatever relocation centers the project preferred. Eventually three were chosen: Tule Lake in California, Gila River and Poston in Arizona. With their shift to these new bases, the observers began to record a new phase in the migration. Their difficulties were many. They could not make use of the standard technique of representative sampling; schedules and questionnaires were barred; even note-taking in public was a hazard because of the tendency of guards and security officers to confuse research workers with informers. The Nisei observers, moreover, "were completely restricted by the barbed wire, psychologically as well as physically." They were also full-time workers in the evacuee work corps, and to that degree had to do their researching on the side.

In addition to its Nisei observers, the project enlisted the collaboration of a number of Issei (native-born Japanese) who were able to

represent a point of view different from the highly Americanized attitude of the Nisei. In the three relocation centers several of these Japanese of the older generation have worked with the study project continuously. In two centers a Caucasian observer is also employed, in one a sociologist, in the other an anthropologist. These Caucasians have supplemented the records of the participant observers in many ways, giving the outside point of view.

Last summer a crisis arose. The War Relocation Authority announced a plan for segregating the evacuees "whose interests are not in harmony with those of the United States." These were to be separated from the other evacuees "who wish to follow the American way of life," and would be concentrated in a single relocation center. This decree raised a great rumpus for a variety of reasons, psychological, legalistic, political. There was particular trouble at Tule Lake, which had been designated as the segregation center for the "disloyal." Later came strikes, assaults and other violences, and finally the Army was called in and placed in charge of Tule Lake. Undoubtedly some cruel and senseless mistakes were made in handling this segregation problem, and one of the values of the study will be that it captured and recorded the ephemeral elements of action and reaction on the spot as they occurred.

When Tule Lake was turned into a center for the "disloyal" the study project had to withdraw its observers. "The gulf between Caucasians and Japanese widened to such an extent that no Caucasian observer could hope to establish a sufficient degree of rapport with the segregants to obtain reliable records. And no Japanese American (Nisei) could stay in the center unless he were willing to declare himself 'disloyal.'" Our Nisei observer moved out of Tule Lake on the last trainload of 'loyal' evacuees. He has

gone to Minidoka (a relocation center in Idaho), and is there following the progress of some 1,500 other 'loyal' Tuleans who moved to the same camp."

Although there is regret at having to cut short the study at Tule Lake, the transfer to Idaho opens a new phase of the study. The contrast between Tule Lake and Minidoka is striking. Minidoka has a reputation for cooperation with the administration. Its evacuees are mostly urban Japanese from Seattle and other Northwestern cities. Of all the relocation centers it has provided the largest number and proportion of volunteers for the Army. "The arrival of 1,500 aggressive Tuleans, mostly rural in origin, with the Tulean tradition of anti-administration, anti-keto behavior, is already producing many interesting and sociologically enlightening situations," says Dr. Thomas. "Our observer there is one of our most competent staff members, and I have every reason to believe he will make an important contribution."

A former Tule Lake observer is now writing a detailed account of life at Tule Lake up to the date of segregation. Other observers are in the Midwest, circulating among the Japanese who have been resettled on farms, in towns, and cities, recording the story of their reception by the local citizenry, the attitudes for and against, the resulting adjustments and maladjustments. Meanwhile, the reinstitution of the military draft in the relocation centers has created another crisis whose intimate data are being preserved and analyzed.