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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

EVACUATION AND RESETTLEMENT STUDY
207 GIANNINI HALL
BERKELEY 4, CALIFORNIA

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University of California
Enemy alien study

RBF - MAR 18 '44
February 23, 1944
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Dr. Joseph H. Willits
Rockefeller Foundation
49 West 49th Street
New York, 20, N.Y.

Dear Joe Willits:

Thank you for your letter of February 11. I, too, wish that we could get together and discuss "causes and constructive steps."

Right now, we are witnessing another crisis in the relocation camps. As you know, the draft was reinstituted for Nisei on January 20. In the press release concerning this matter, President Roosevelt's statement, made more than a year ago, was quoted:

No loyal citizen of the United States should be denied the right to exercise the responsibilities of his citizenship, regardless of his ancestry. The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race and ancestry.

And Dillon Myer, Director of the War Relocation Authority, was quoted as follows:

The announcement by the War Department that Nisei are to be inducted through the Selective Service System marks another significant step forward for American citizens of Japanese ancestry The obligation to bear arms in defense of the nation is one of the essential elements of American citizenship.

Induction orders are now being received in the camps. It is too soon to know how the crisis will be resolved. At present, there are manifestations not of mass resistance but of a widespread individual bitterness and disappointment that merely the "responsibilities" and not the "rights" of citizenship have been restored. In this connection, I quote the following questions which, among others, were submitted by the Topaz, Utah, Community Council to the Project Director and were sent by him to Washington since they "could not be answered locally."

Is the induction of American citizens of Japanese

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descent in War Relocation Centers for military service in violation of the constitution of the United States by virtue of the fact that citizens of Japanese descent have been incarcerated and guarded by Military authorities?

Will the Japanese American veterans have the same rights and privileges as other American veterans after the war?

Can an honorably discharged nisei, during the war period, travel in the evacuated area?

As American citizens, drafted on the same basis as other citizens, why aren't the other branches of the Armed Forces open to the nisei, such as the Marines, Air Corps, Navy, Coast Guard and Armored Forces?

Why are the nisei segregated again into one unit instead of being inducted, trained and assigned to service with their fellow Americans?

Since their children are being inducted, why cannot the privilege of citizenship be given to the issei in the same way as that privilege has been given to the Chinese?

If nisei are assumed loyal enough to fight for this country, why are not they permitted to go to the Pacific Coast as civilians?

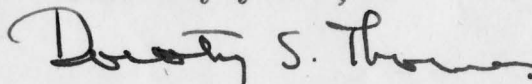
Can parents of nisei soldiers return to the Pacific Coast during the war period?

Will the fact that a nisei's dependents are in a WRA center affect the allotments that they are eligible to receive from the government under the provision of the Service Men's Dependency Allotment?

Will the government aid in abolishing or discouraging discrimination against the Japanese?

Why doesn't the government restore civil rights to the nisei prior to their induction?

Sincerely yours,



Dorothy Swaine Thomas