

HAWAII SHOWS JAPAN--AND ASIA

By Charles S. Bouslog

In Hawaii since December 7 we have neither evacuated nor interned our people of Japanese ancestry. We have placed almost no restrictions on their lives which are not shared as war necessities by the entire population. We have followed this policy under martial law, in a combat zone! "We trust you; find a useful job" has been the official point of view. How is it that this policy, so sharply in contrast with our treatment of Japanese-Americans on the Pacific coast, has been successful?

In Hawaii there are about 120,000 American citizens of Japanese ancestry and 35,000 alien Japanese. Most of that group of citizens has been firmly assimilated into the cultural life of the islands. Intramarriage in Hawaii among all races has moved at a heady pace for many years. Racial setting in limited areas has been small. Among the Japanese-Americans, voting as a racial group is not prevalent. American education has helped to make Americans out of Hawaii's Japanese, as well as out of Filipinos, Chinese, Portuguese, Koreans, Hawaiians and all her other racial groups. To the new islander type, each has brought a part of his old culture, accepting from the others some of the mores which make up a new cultural pattern.

The 155,000 persons of Japanese ancestry comprise more than 37 per cent of Hawaii's population. They are scattered throughout the islands and the city of Honolulu. They are engaged in every kind of work, from banking, law, medicine, dentistry and the fine civil service of the territorial government to day labor on plantations, stevedoring at the piers, hog raising, spot welding and skilled machine repairing. Because of their importance to agriculture in particular, the Japanese have had since the war the powerful and determined support of the highly centralized business interest of Hawaii.

The known dangerous alien Japanese were arrested promptly in the first days after Pearl Harbor, from lists long before prepared by the intelligence agencies. The language-school teachers were almost all held for investigation and many were brought to interment camps on the mainland. Almost all Shinto priests were interned, and also many Japanese Buddhist priests. All known leaders among pro-Japan groups were arrested. The 35,000 Japanese aliens in Hawaii are now mostly the men who emigrated to better themselves thirty or fifty years ago; and their wives are country cousins who came perhaps as picture brides. Their stake in Hawaii is very large. The greatest part of the stake is their own children and grandchildren--American educated adults and youths who speak Japanese only limpingly and feel about Japan somewhat vaguely as many second and third generation Americans from Europe may feel about their homeland in England, Germany, Norway, Poland.

In the past three years I have known several hundred young Japanese students at the University of Hawaii. I had previously taught for three years at a large mid-west state university. As far as I could tell, my students of Japanese ancestry were the same crew of ed's and coeds. They had the same fads in dress, the same wide variety of attitudes toward their college work. Perhaps more of them were earning their own way through school and living poorly in the meanwhile than would be found at a mainland college. Fewer smoked, for cigarettes were judged an unnecessary expense.

Because of homes where English is perhaps an acquired (or not acquired) language to the parents, the students had more trouble with their English course than any other. Yet in my freshman and sophomore English courses in literature and composition I always found many Japanese students whose writing was on a level with the best work done for me on the mainland. And in three years I found perhaps six really superior students; five were Japanese, one Caucasian. My classes were perhaps 60 per cent Japanese.

To the most of these young second and third generation Japanese-Americans the war brought complex problems. Some of their fathers and grandfathers had been interned; others had lost their jobs during the temporary fright of mid December. Neither December nor January nor any of the following months brought mass evacuation or interment of Japanese; but still the specter hung over their heads. They hesitated to be vociferous about their loyalty to the United States; that might seem false and opportunistic. They feared to seem afraid; that might be misunderstood. As the months passed, however, these apprehensions began to lift. The democracy they had learned in school, was, for them, proving itself in the most difficult of all possible situations. Most of the boys soon found jobs and put the university life behind them for the duration. The girl en-

tered all kinds of activities.

Left free to follow their lives as normally as any citizen can in Hawaii under martial law and war zone conditions, the Japanese are far more fortunate than their cousins on our West Coast. They have used this happy freedom to help the fight against Japan. That is the real news in Hawaii today.

To what has been a negative action, being left unmolested, Hawaii's Japanese have responded in hundred of positive ways. On the first day of war many stood for hours at the hospitals in order to give their "Japanese" blood for American soldiers and sailors shot up by airmen from Japan. Large numbers attempted to volunteer for army service in any capacity.

The first theme turned in by one Japanese freshman after the university began its second semester in February, was a clear analysis of how dangerous one of her relatives was. He should, she wrote, be arrested. The teacher called this student in and learned that she was not acting through spite. She was afraid for her own family, before whom this relative talked of the glorious Pacific victories of Japan; and she feared the man was capable of active treason if he got a chance. As a youngster she could not herself call on the authorities; would the teacher? The teacher did.

The Hawaii National Guard, called up some time before the war, contained many Japanese. Selective Service drafts had steadily brought many young Japanese-Americans into the regular army. They made good soldiers. Last summer all the Japanese-American troops who had received their primary training were sent to Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. The 100th Infantry Battalion had there been given intensive military training, and the morale was very high. One day these men were taken to Madison for a mass holiday. They found banners over the street; police cars with sirens and sound trucks escorted them about. The loudspeakers blared forth, "This is the Hawaiian National Guard, which saw action at Pearl Harbor." A great many chests swelled large that day. And the announcement was of course true, for many of these men had manned guns firing on Japanese plane's planes.

I read many of the letters these soldiers wrote home. They were very proud to be Americans.

Back in Hawaii their parents and relatives were also proud of them. All had accepted fully the need for shipping them to the mainland United States. If Japan were to attempt invasion of the islands, Japanese parachute troops might well be dropped in American army uniforms in order to create chaos among defenders where Japanese-American troops were stationed.

Japanese-Americans drafted in Hawaii last February received little military training and were used as a labor battalion. After the war began there was seldom any time for training recruit in Hawaii. Every army unit was too busy building and extending defense fortifications.

Another labor battalion provides one of the best possible pictures of the response of the Japanese-Americans to the war. On the afternoon of December 7, the national guard being already in service, a home guard unit was formed, called the Hawaii Territorial Guard. At the university almost all members of the R.O.T.C. unit volunteered for the H.T.G. Late in January some military authority decided to "inactivate" all the Japanese-Americans in the H.T.G. The youths went home hurt and angry. Whatever the reasons behind the "inactivation," it was a racial singling out new to Hawaii except in the economic sphere. After talking it over a few of the boys were sent to the military governor, Lt. General Delos C. Emmons, to propose that the entire group be allowed to volunteer its services to the army as civilians. Their sincerity was so obvious that the offer had to be accepted. One hundred and twenty-two joined from the university and about thirty others from outside.

In a perhaps misguided moment the new group named itself heroically the "Varsity Victory Volunteers." Time has worn the title down to the initials "VVV." The VVV's were installed at a regular army post on Oahu and given regular army officers as commanders. One popular university athlete, Thomas Kaulukukui, was granted a commission as a second lieutenant.

Last year I visited them at their station. Five months had put about ten pounds on each of them, and they were looking very husky. They had become experts in many kinds of work. I saw many portable iceboxes they had constructed. They had built bridges

across dry gullies (and hung signs up saying "No Fishin' Here"), dug air raid shelters, built large groups of barracks and mess halls. In places where mass production of small items was being carried on, as at the sawmill, they had posters on the walls showing the daily production rate of different groups of workers.

They are paid two dollars a day and charged a small amount for board and laundry. Occasionally they are granted a day's leave to return to Honolulu. More than one hundred and fifty had entered; only five, I was told, had dropped out by late summer. One of these had been asked to leave; the others had been needed at home to help support younger brothers and sisters after the illness or death of the father. Financially, all are making a sacrifice.

When the boys first came to the station to work, the mainland soldiers quartered on each side viewed them with suspicion. Many of the VVV's felt understandably depressed and ill at ease. After work one day a few stood about watching soldiers on a ball diamond. Presently a soldier asked whether they had ever learned the American game called "baseball". The VVV's made up a team and won. This was not exactly fair, as it happened, for several of the VVV players were star college performers. Shortly they were teaching ju-jitsu to American troops. They took them on in golf and tennis. By late summer they had the respect if not the admiration of all the soldiers with whom they had come in contact. This respect was based as much on their hard work and engineering achievement as on their prowess in "American" sports.

Japanese-American friends from the northern island, Kauai, told me of a strange dinner party there. A few soldiers, fresh from the mainland, were asked by a boy on the road whether they would care to come home with him for dinner. Yes, he assured them, his parents had sent him "to find some soldiers 'cause we have a roasted whole pig and can't hope to eat it all." You do not need to guess about what the soldiers did.

At the end of a gay and luscious meal, the time for departure came. While expressing their thanks and agreeing to come back and bring some friends, one of the men, wishing to be very tactful, mentioned the fine fighting "your countrymen did alongside our boys in Bataan." There was a long, shocked silence.

The father said very quietly, "We thought you knew from our names. You see, we are Japanese. Japanese-Americans," he added.

As the whole mixed group hovered there over its embarrassing moment, one of the soldiers suddenly shook the father's hand and said, "No, we didn't know. But what difference can that make? Does the offer to return still stand for us?"

Perhaps the story is apochryphal. In Honolulu many of my Japanese friends have American soldiers to dinner frequently. At almost any time you can see American soldiers walking down the streets with pretty little Japanese-American girls. Throughout our time in Hawaii we read the marriage notices in the newspapers. The war made no change in the number of Japanese names being coupled with those of other races. Hawaii's Japanese-Americans began to join the O.C.D. when it was first established in the summer of 1941. Today, perhaps because of having had air raids and because of expecting more, the O.C.D. organization in Hawaii is very well trained and equipped. Japanese-American air raid wardens and fire wardens are in almost every precinct. Our precinct and zone wardens were both Japanese-Americans who, like all the other O.C.D. volunteers, had full-time jobs during the day. All have attended many hours of evening classes and Sunday demonstrations.

There are Japanese-American volunteer ambulance drivers, some of whom drove throughout the day of Pearl Harbor and collected shrapnel hits on their station wagons. Many are prominent in the Red Cross. Every bond drive in Hawaii is actively supported by the Japanese.

Shortly after the war began, various committees for the different racial groups were set up under the military governor. The Japanese "morale" committee engages in many kinds of activities. It assisted the military authorities in finding a basis for recommencing publication in January, 1942, of Honolulu's two Japanese-language daily newspapers, THE HAWAII HOCHI and the NIPPUN JIJI, both important for getting accurate information to those aliens who read little English. Literal English translations are printed.

Many of the Shinto shrines and Japanese tea-houses, closed by the authorities after the war, were owned by the corporations. Those buildings are needed today. The morale

committee is helping in the dissolution of the corporations and the legal sales of the properties.

With the aid of the social agencies and the Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A., in both of which are many Japanese, the committee is trying to pry within the once closely knit Japanese family group and to push there a social change. The parents know that their own future lies in the path that their children choose; and that path is America. Once docile and submissive youngsters have taken over the initiative in many families where the parents had formerly tried to hold instinctively to a Japanese pattern of life. Because of the interment of most of the priests and language-school teachers, the traditional neighborhood leadership has been removed and disrupted. In this void are now stepping new pro-American leaders. Some of the new leadership now is working closely with the F.B.I. and other intelligence agencies. Four days after Pearl Harbor, Dr. Shunzo Sakamaki, of the University of Hawaii, made a public appeal for Japanese "to submit all information promptly to the police or to the Bureau of Investigation."

Professor Sakamaki spoke for a large majority of Hawaii's Japanese when he said, "Japan's dastardly attack leaves us grim and resolute. This is a battle to the end, and to all loyal Americans and other lovers of democracy and human freedom that end is the complete destruction of the totalitarian governments that are blighting our world today."

In this account of the Japanese in Hawaii since the war, I have voiced what are undoubtedly the feelings of most people in Hawaii today. Possibly the picture is not so wholly sunshiny as I have painted it. The war brought loss of livelihood to a number of alien Japanese. The Japanese fishing fleet of sampans does not go out any more. Perhaps there are still some potentially dangerous Japanese loose in Hawaii. For many, the war has increased the psychological troubles of a "non-white" race in a community of "white" economic control.

My information is based almost entirely on the life on the island of Oahu and particularly within the limits of the city of Honolulu. There have been rumors of less satisfactory conditions on some of the "outside" islands, not so much in the behavior of the Japanese as in the treatment of them.

The prevailing impression on a resident of Honolulu who has known the fine spirit of friendship among all the "races" there, is one of belief in the justice of the present democratic treatment of Hawaii's Japanese.

I think of Kome Miyake, our laundress, with whom communication in a language half signs and half mixed Japanese and English was a constant, unnerving trial. I had had one of her two sons in class at the university. He was doing odd jobs so as to continue with his education. Last spring he won the prize at the Honolulu Art Academy for the best oil painting by a first-time exhibitor. Kome's other son, of whom she is very proud, is Staff Sergeant Mitsokazu Miyake of the 100th Infantry Battalion, U.S.A. This is not, possible, a typical Japanese family in Hawaii; yet in its steady Americanization it seems almost typical to me.

Obviously, the most important job in Hawaii now is the war effort and the firm defense of the islands. If the Japanese were to imperil in any way that program, they should be interned no matter how great the loss to the homogeneity of the islands, no matter how great the injustice to most of them.

Late last fall the military governor announced a plan to evacuate from Hawaii all "nonproductive" citizens and aliens of Japanese ancestry. No one seems to know exactly what is intended. The criteria determining nonproductivity have not been announced. Presumably this evacuation is intended to be small in scope. Hawaii does have a serious shipping problem, particularly for civilian food supplies. All nonworking citizens were asked to leave early in 1942. Most families of service men were evacuated early in the war.

After so many months of successful adherence to the seemingly successful policy of trust and encouragement in loyalty, it is difficult to believe that the military authorities will suddenly reverse their course and fall into the pattern of our Pacific coast. Possibly the present attempt (January, 1943) to restore a larger measure of control in Hawaii to civilian officials will cause the abandonment or curtailment of a plan as yet extremely vague in detail.

The Japanese, whether American citizens or aliens, have generally proved themselves so reliable and diligent and loyal that it should not be necessary to penalize them for their ancestry. It is cold fact that there was no sabotage or fifth column activity on

December 7 6rthereafter, and conditions were almost perfect on the morning of December 7 for successful sabotage. All rumors and amazing stories concerning sabotage in Hawaii are lies. They should be traced back to their sources.

Because of the success of the present treatment of Japanese by the military authorities in Hawaii, it is possible to consider mainly the effect of that treatment on the Hawaii of the future. It will be a better place democratically than ever before. I wonder whether the time has not come for letting all Asia see how America, in the midst of war with Japan, has strengthened the will to democracy among the Japanese of Hawaii.

Both Mr. Bouslog's article and the following one by Stella M. Jones reveal how common sense, neighborliness and lack of hysteria have successfully eliminated any serious "Japanese problem" in Hawaii, with its 155,000 American born and alien Japanese.

Mr. Bouslog, until recently an instructor in English at the University of Hawaii, discusses the situation as a whole, with special emphasis on Oahu, where Honolulu and Pearl Harbor are situated.

Miss Jones, a high school teacher in Hawaii and former research associate in anthropology at the University of Hawaii, has made a careful investigation of conditions among the rural groups on the more remote island of Kauai. Both Mr. Bouslog and Miss Jones emphasize the rise of a new and younger leadership among the Japanese, vigorous in morale and American loyalty.

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