

## JAPANESE EVACUATION: POLICY AND PERSPECTIVES

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On the West Coast of the United States our democracy is undertaking at the moment a herculean and utterly novel project: the evacuation and resettlement of approximately 117,000 men, women, and children--virtually the entire Japanese population, American citizens and aliens alike, resident in this country.

By reason of the magnitude of the task and the and the difficulties and complexities involved, our social resources and ability to plan for democratic objectives are being challenged as never before.

Here is a task which can well be the yardstick for measuring the capacity of a democracy to function efficiently under the strain of unprecedented emergency. Here is a task which can be handled democratically and fairly for the attainment of highly desirable social objectives, or mishandled and botched in a manner that will gravely reflect upon the ideals and standards which now, as never before, we are proudly emblazoning to the world. Because this project has been undertaken in great haste, out of military necessity, without the advantage of precedent, it is natural to expect that mistakes in practice will be made (dozens have occurred already). But these initial errors are not of paramount concern; they can be corrected with a minimum of inconvenience and damage.

It is the matter of policy, of objectives, which is all-important at the moment. To date no general policy has been defined. It is still possible, therefore, to influence the objectives being formulated; but tomorrow they may have crystallized beyond hope of revision. A clear and comprehensive policy, formulated now, would serve not only to minimize mistakes and discount the inevitable confusion of the moment but, most important, to reassure the Japanese Americans, to allay the understandable fears and misgivings of the evacuees.

In the formulation of policy, the crucial considerations are, first the type of assumptions that are made, and, second, the type of perspectives. It cannot too often be emphasized, in considering the evacuation program, that we are experimenting with the lives and fortunes, the hopes and aspirations, of more than 100,000 human beings. The matter of policy and perspective is, therefore, the real concern of the moment.

Before discussing perspectives as such, it is important to realize that the evacuation program is not being undertaken in a social void or vacuum. On the contrary, it is being undertaken against a definite background. We are involved in a war, world-wide implications and significance. It is a token of our good faith; it is a crucial test of the validity of our war objectives. The manner in which we handle this problem--particularly as it involves a racial "minority"--may have the utmost significance, not only in the Orient, but to some 13,000,000 Negroes in the United States. It is not only an immediate problem of great moment, but it can be utilized, properly handled, as extremely important propaganda. It can become an outstanding example of how democracy can convert a measure of military necessity into a program for the achievement of democratic objectives. It is the perfect propaganda foil for the treatment of the Jews in Germany.

Not only does the evacuation program need to be studied in this particular historical context, but it must be remembered we are dealing with human beings, who, like other human beings, are moved by fear and hope, who have legitimate human aspirations and who are capable of cherishing perfectly human resentments. There is also an important psychological kick-back involved in the program which affects not the

Japanese Americans but the rest of us. Already we hear, not from the Japanese but from the ordinary John Does of our democracy, that the Jews inspired the intire program, that they are fattening themselves on the misfortunes of others. The presence of many signs in vacant store windows in Little Tokyo is commonly pointed to as circumstantial proof of the charge, for many of the auctioneers quite naturally have had Jewish names. Issues of Social Justice made their first appearance in Little Tokyo a few weeks ago. The evacuation program, in other words, has a larger domestic significance than is generally realized.

The very existence of such headlines as "Get Out, Japs Told" in West Coast newspapers has stimulated race-feeling and aggravated dormant tensions affecting other groups. It is the possible psychological damage to Japanese Americans, more than any economic loss involved, which presents the most serious issue. If you has been drafted, how would you like to be told, when on leave, that you were subject to curfew reglrations? One young Nisei soldier said to me: "If we can't be trusted to walk down Broadway in Los Angeles at 9:30 p.m., they should take these uniforms away from us." Naturally their morale has been s shaken; naturally they are bewildered and confused.

It should also be noted that evacuation has aggravated every tension existing within the Japanese communities. It has demonstrated, in fact, what was currently charged--that there were deep currents of nationalism in many resident Japanese; it has made it possible to sort out pro-Japanese carefully avoid those Nisei concerning whose attitude there is no question. The point involved here is quite simple: a sound policy for the evacuation program would strengthen the position of the loyal elements and weaken that of the suspect elements. It also indicates that such a policy must embrace a general educational, morale, and Americanization program.

## II

Before considering the matter of policy in detail, it is necessary to clarify the question of responsibility. Just where does the policy-making function reside? The actual evacuation itself is the responsibility of the Army, since it is being undertaken as a matter of military necessity. It is for the Army to decide such military considerations as the areas to be evacuated, the time and manner of evacuation, the persons to be evacuated, and the areas of non-military significance which might to designated as resettlement sites. This responsibility the Army, assisted by the War-time Civilian Control Administration (attached to the West Coast command), has already assumed under the President's first executive order. But the real problems arise not over the technical details of evacuation or of temporary maintenance. Even if badly handled, these matters, which are essentially preliminary, would not be of longrange importance. The real problems arise, first, in relation to resettlement and, second, in relation to the post-emergency period. Responsibility here rests with the War Relocation Authority, a civilian organization created by executive order of the President and headed by Milton Eisenhower, formerly with the Department of Agriculture. In the last analysis, responsibility for policy rests with the Administration itself, with the President, and, for that matter, with the American public. The line of demaracation which I have indicated has, in fact, been adopted. The Army is to have charge up to the time the evacuees enter the reception centers; thereafter responsibility shifts to the War Relocation Authority. What basic assumptions should govern in the determination of resettlement or relocation policies? The first, it seems to me, is this: the government, having created the existing social problems affecting the resident Japanese, is morally obligated to assume the

burden of solving them. Certainly these immediate problems of health, education, and housing were non-existent prior to the President's executive order. The government must therefore be prepared to devote whatever amount of money, energy, and time may be necessary to see this program through, "I mean seeing it through to a post-war conclusion. This should rule out any proposals based upon the assumption that the government's responsibility ends with the armistice. (In one sense, it will be precisely at that moment the greatest responsibility will arise.) Then, too, I think we must assume that the resident Japanese will remain in the United States; that all of them, citizens and aliens alike, must be regarded as permanent residents. The necessity for assimilative measures is, for this reason, self-evident.

If Japanese were to be kept in actual concentration camps or enlisted in compulsory work brigades, the measures could end only in deprivation of citizenship and eventual deportation and must, therefore, be ruled out. If we assume then that the Japanese are to remain with us as citizens after the war, every precaution must be taken to protect their morale, to avoid unnecessary bitterness, to insure that the children involved are not victimized by compulsory ostracism during their most impressionable years. And above all we must try to avoid the shock of that second dislocation which may arise when the emergency is over. Any measures which merely contemplate releasing the Japanese at the end of the war, turning them loose to shift for themselves, and probably involving a second mass evacuation, must be avoided. Were such a policy to be adopted, it might likely result in the creation of a class of "untouchables," of economic and social pariahs in our society.

Should permanent resettlement be contemplated or merely temporary relocation? For what period of time is the emergency likely to last? Frankly I don't know, nor does anyone. But I find it extremely difficult to imagine that the Japanese will eventually resettle again in large numbers on the West Coast. In California, at least, the doors have been locked behind them. Already measures are being initiated to tighten up the loopholes in the Alien Land Act; to bar Japanese from certain trades and professions; to make it, in effect, impossible for them to return. Even assuming that certain of these measures might be unconstitutional (so far as citizens are concerned), the damage has already been done. New vested interests have already arisen: within a few weeks the entire produce business will have shifted to non-Japanese control; by midsummer some 5,000 Japanese farm-operators will have been supplanted by non-Japanese operators. The Little Tokyos are already being invaded by other groups and other interests.

Mass evacuation is drastic economic and social surgery; once a group has been forcefully removed, they cannot by mere executive fiat be restored. Besides, it is highly debatable whether from their own long-range interests the Japanese should return to California; it is equally debatable whether such a return would be in the interests of a sound national policy on the "minority" question. Therefore I think we must plan in terms of permanent resettlement, recognizing, of course, that this applies to the bulk of the evacuees as a group, not to each and every one of them as individuals. As free American citizens, they will make their own post-war decisions; these, however, can and should be influenced by a sound Federal policy in reference to evacuation. Serious problems, of course, arise over the tendencies inherent in the relocation program. Is it likely to result in permanent segregation in the post-war period? Can the relocated Japanese survive economically after the emergency? Won't the relocation program serve to emphasize, that is, to magnify, the "minority" question? These dangers are, of course, quite obvious; they should not be minimized. But there are some mitigating considerations. It is possi-

ble, for example, that after their movement from the reception center to the resettlement area (in some cases the reception center will be a permanent relocation project) The Japanese can be divided up into smaller units of a hundred or so families and relocated again; or self-help units may be permitted to branch off from the parent community.

Most of the sites selected to date are remote from any large settlements. On the whole, this is desirable: the Japanese will not immediately enter into competition with non-Japanese groups. They may possibly arouse the antagonism of other groups by being provided with better services. They are likely, for example, to have better hospital facilities, a better milk supply, than the "natives" in Arizona and Idaho. But one must remember that the Japanese, by and large, are well educated. The government is not colonizing an immigrant group, but relocating one familiar with American institutions and capable of minimizing sources of friction and misunderstanding.

In the relocation projects, much hand labor can be devoted, at least at the outset, to construction work: land subjugation, building irrigation laterals and canals, and so forth. But after the first year (for these large resettlement units can accomplish much with modern machinery in a short period of time) it will be necessary to devise other work projects. It is here that the WRA has a real opportunity. It should provide not merely routine or commonplace jobs but devise a unique type of work for the Japanese--something that will enable the evacuees to make a special contribution to the war effort. If they are given this opportunity, then, through an effective public relations program, much ill-feeling and possible hostility can be mitigated. The opportunities in this field are unlimited: the Japanese can be used in translating, in radio and other types of propaganda, and in the manufacture of many articles of special importance. In the last analysis it is the impending manpower shortage which offers the best guarantee of a sound relocation program. This shortage is likely to reach such proportions the nation will insist the Japanese be given important, as distinguished from makeshift, types of work.

One other important assumption, it seems to me, should be made. The Japanese are being evacuated, not because they are suspect en masse--the contrary has, in fact, been publicly stated by responsible Federal officials; but primarily to allay popular uneasiness created by their presence on the West Coast in large numbers in strategic areas an uneasiness which might conceivably have reached such proportions as to interfere seriously with the war effort itself. The bulk of the evacuees are, therefore, clearly victims of situation they did not create and for the existence of which they have no direct responsibility. We must remember that of the evacuees 41,000 are aliens, but that 71,000 are American citizens whose civil liberties have been suspended and whose property rights have been jeopardized--in many cases destroyed--without due process of law. We cannot permit this situation to stand as precedent. It is absolutely imperative that the whole evacuation program be premised upon a sound constitutional concept.

How can this be done? By providing, as we have always provided, for due compensation when an individual's property is taken or his rights impaired for a public purpose. In many cases, of course, it would be impossible and also unfair to assess this damage in monetary terms. What is the damage, measured in dollars, to a Nisei lawyer whose practice has been suspended? Besides, many American citizens, as victims of priority orders, have had their livelihoods jeopardized, and we do not assume it is necessary to make them whole. But to the extent

that the Japanese have been discriminated against as a group, they should be recompensed. The form this compensation should take is indicated by the peculiar circumstances of the case itself: it should be group or social compensation, not individual indemnification. It should take the form, primarily, of the government's providing group opportunities which are essentially the same as those destroyed. This can be accomplished within the framework of the resettlement or relocation program itself--if it is soundly conceived, if it is liberally construed, if the American nation decides it should be done, and will not capitulate to demagogic harangues and discreditable race-baiting.

### III

Military necessity behind the determination to evacuate the Japanese must be converted into social objectives inherently desirable. To appreciate the possibilities which the program offers--for it is not only a challenge but a unique opportunity--some possible perspectives should be outlined.

During 1940 and 1941, I spent considerable time in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, studying the so-called "distressed rural areas" from which so many migrants now present in California originally came. In commenting upon these problem areas in *Ill Fares the Land*, I suggested that what they require, if unnecessary migration is to be checked, is basic reconstruction. Some areas should actually be evacuated in the interests of soil conservation, if for no other reason. But the exodus should be planned; outmigration is merely a laissez-faire type of evacuation. I also suggested that to achieve the subsequent reconstruction of these areas rural reconstruction authorities, patterned on the TVA model, might be established. In making this suggestion, I naturally had to contemplate a new pattern of resettlement, a pattern, for example, that would evacuate families from distressed areas before they were forced off the land. The idea is resettlement plus evacuation, conceived of as an integrated program under Rex Tugwell aimed, too, at something more than rehabilitation.

The ideal there was the creation of new community patterns such as those developed in Greenbelt and Arthurdale. The resettlement of resident Japanese offers an opportunity to experiment with the original Greenbelt idea on a greatly expanded scale--for the number of families involved is far in excess of the number affected by the earlier program--and with much better prospects of success.

Note a few special aspects of the resettlement of the Japanese. The officials had much difficulty at Arthurdale, for example, in finding non-competitive markets. Nearly everything they attempted to do impinged upon a private interest. No such problem is presented with the Japanese, for the armed services provide an unlimited outlet for all types of manufactured articles ranging from cartridge belts to camouflage nets. Production, moreover, is the order of the day. Another difficulty at Arthurdale was the attempt to create a co-operative oasis in a competitive world. Occupants were tempted to escape from the oasis and re-enter the competitive arena. They were neither a particularly homogeneous group nor held together by any particular compulsion. The Japanese, on the contrary, must remain on the new projects; they will be motivated by the strongest considerations to make these projects success; and they constitute a homogeneous group.

Also they have a great diversification of skills. They are by no means all agriculturalists. Among the evacuees are doctors, lawyers, journalists, architects (one of the most promising young architects on the Pacific Coast), and persons of other skills and professions.

But the group has a predominantly agricultural base, which is precisely what is needed for a large-scale resettlement project.

Since his operations are dictated by powerful public considerations, Mr. Eisenhower should be allowed the widest possible administrative scope. This project is resettlement divested of any suspicion of dilettantism or utopianism; this is resettlement by necessity--and by order of the President. The War Relocation Authority is an agency which fortunately is streamlined for action: it has broad and ample powers; it is, in effect, an independent agency of government, not a bureau in an already existing department. If it is possible to plan for new community patterns in a democracy, then it should be possible to do so in this case. For Mr. Eisenhower has the people and the skills; he has the necessary social compulsions and economic motivation; he has the resources; and he has an unlimited market, at least for the time being. Hence I see in the resettlement of the Japanese a unique opportunity to work out not only new community patterns on a modified Greenbelt basis, but the necessary administrative skills and techniques for dealing with the whole problem of rural and urban reconstruction in the post-war period.

Nor is this the only perspective that should be considered. The desirability, from a long-range point of view, of breaking up the closely knit, socially introverted Japanese communities in California is a point of view, of breaking up the closely knit, socially introverted Japanese communities in California is a point conceded by many of the Nisei themselves. "For many years," writes my friend, S. J. Oki, in a recent letter, "the Japanese communities in California have been in a state of chronic economic distress. Few Japanese workers were able to earn over \$18 or \$20 a week. Employes of a now prominent Nisei leader were getting \$10 to \$15 a week for 10 to 12 hours work a day, seven days a week. Girls working in a manufacturing plant in Little Tokyo were paid \$1 a day for 10 hours work." Little Tokyo in Los Angeles was, in effect, a sweatshop. There were too many merchats and not nearly enough customers--for the patronage was, of course, largely Japanese. The community simply could not sustain by itself all these shops, service industries, and professions. Even with sweatshop conditions prevailing. Japanese merchats did not get rich, nor were they ever accepted as an integral part of the American business community. They did deserve, as Oki well points out, as an important link, albeit on a small scale, between the most reactionary sections of both American and Japanese capitalism. They were not at all averse to using both American and Japanese capitalism. They were not at all averse to using both the "Red Squad" of the Los Angeles police and the services of the Japanese consulates in cracking down on progressive elements in the Nisei group.

By and large, the Japanese communities were precariously stabilized on a much too narrow economic base. Hence they could not provide adequate outlets for the amazing talents which many of the younger generation possess. It was, in general, an unhealthy situation which, sooner or later, would have disintegrated. "As far as the Japanese are concerned," writes Mr. Oki, "the evacuation program could become a blessing. Their sweatshops are no more. Their slave camps in the field are about to be disbanded. Their unemployment problems have been solved. Security, in so far as food and shelter are concerned, is guaranteed them. And the progressives among them can now speak out freely"--that is, if they are given a chance to do so. I emphasize again that the evacuation program can be made to serve an important social end and need not necessarily be regarded as something inherently baneful and undesirable.

Last, it should be pointed out that evacuation provides an opportunity

to democratize the Japanese communities themselves, for it can definitely be geared to an educational program. The first generation were never encouraged to become citizens. There was therefore little incentive to learn English; nor was there much incentive to study American economic, social, and political institutions. We are ourselves in part to blame that there are strong currents of nationalism among the resident Japanese. But the evacuation program now provides the opportunity to correct a serious mistake in national immigration policy. It affords us an admirable chance to make citizens of the first generation, at least in fact if not in name. To realize this end, however, the evacuation program should be modified in some respects. I think the case of university students, for example, needs to be reviewed and reconsidered immediately. Japanese students, citizens and aliens, should have been permitted to finish their present school terms in junior colleges, colleges, or universities. Provision should be made, moreover, for their transfer to Midwestern or Eastern universities in the Fall. In those cases where parents as a result of evacuation are unable to advance money for travel, tuition, or sustenance, it seems to me equitable that the War Relocation Authority assume the expense. Certainly it would be indefensible to deprive these youngsters of the right of a college education.

Because the evacuation program is being carried out as a military measure, it will not be possible to realize all that might be hoped for out of it in the way of sound social planning. Social ends must naturally be reconciled with military considerations; desirable objectives must be imperfectly realized because of the urgent nature of the program itself. Nevertheless, the WRA has indicated that it does appreciate what can and should be accomplished in the field of resettlement. In announcing the policy of the WRA on selecting sites, Mr. Eisenhower has pointed out the governing considerations: all reception centers must be located on public lands so that improvements made at public lands so that improvements made at public expense will not pass into private hands; therefore lands acquired for resettlement purposes must remain in public ownership. This policy would not be a serious limitation were it not for the fact that the WRA apparently intends to utilize only those sites already publicly owned--which does narrow the range of possibly desirable locations. Then, too, in an effort to minimize the problem of military surveillance and protection, large settlements are being planned. This is unfortunate since it tends to isolate the resettlement project from the community. In any case, the projects will range from 5,000 to 10,000 occupants. Each center must provide opportunities throughout the year for the employment of the evacuees. Work opportunities throughout the year for the employment of the evacuees. Work opportunities will be of three types: public work, such as land subjugation; food production; and the production of war goods. Here, again, the policy announced represents a compromise, but--all things considered--not a bad one.

To date, a number of permanent sites have been selected. One project will be located on a tract of 68,000 acres of government land in Jerome County, Idaho, designed to accommodate 10,000 evacuees; another on an 8,000 acre tract in the Tule Lake Recreation Reclamation District in Northern California, also designed for 10,000 evacuees.

In Arizona the WRA has leased a large section of land from the Indian Service, on which the Japanese can produce vegetables from some 8,000 acres already under irrigation. At the Parker Center, near Parker Dam, water and raw land are available to develop 90,000 acres of new production.

Little can be said yet by way of appraising the work of the WRA, other than to indicate the areas selected for resettlement and to

point out, as I have attempted, some of the limitations which the authority faces. None of these, however, is necessarily fatal; nor would any of them preclude the attainment of some of the objectives I have mentioned.

What Mr. Eisenhower really needs in this whole matter is not advice, with burdened, but rather the understanding people. If the public can be made to realize the excellent social objectives of resettlement in relation to the war and to the post-war world, then I am reasonably sure the WRA is capable of doing a good job.

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