

Military Area

February 21, 1944

Dear Mr. Best:

I have not had the honor of meeting you since coming to Tule Lake from Poston although I have heard Mr. Burge and Mr. Anderson speak very highly of you.

While in Poston it had been my pleasure to serve on the Temporary Community Council for one term and on ^{the} Local Council of Unit One up to the date of my departure on October 7, 1943.

During my term on the Temporary Community Council I was a member of the Employment Committee. With my colleagues we worked hard to put over the Camouflage Net Project with the help of Mr. Vernon R. Kennedy, Chief of Employment Division. Mr. Kennedy is now in Kansas City, Mo.

For ten months I was employed as Warehouse accountant of the Community Enterprise of Poston, ^{and} later for a very brief period as Chief accountant in the office of the Enterprise after which I went to work for the Agriculture Dept. for the sake of my health, but I must admit that was strenuous work and I was not used to manual labor.

I arrived in Tule Lake on Oct. 9, last, with my family - wife and four children,

the youngest of which is yet two years of age.

And before I had time to even settle down - my baggage had not yet arrived - to say nothing about getting acquainted with the people of even my own block, the very unfortunate farm incident happened. Meetings were held and the people elected me as vice representative of Block 18.

Mr. Best, I do not have much education - I am not a college man, not even a high school graduate. So if I make grammatical errors and ^{my} vocabulary and phrases are poor, the reasons for them are obvious. I have not the background. As I write this to you I am conscious of it all and I hope you will overlook it.

When on the afternoon of January 6th of this year I was arrested by the Military Police and put in the stockade, I did not know the reason for it. I have not been given a hearing - the one opportunity that I'd hoped for to make myself clear. However, about a month ago, I was called into Lt. Schaner's office and there was Capt. Hartman who told me that I was arrested for being "mixed up" in

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politics. That was ^{about} the only thing that Captain Hartman told me. However, by way of establishing my record which seemed to interest the Captain, I told him of my activities in Boston. Also of myself while in Los Angeles, and a little of my life history - where I was born, where I went to school, and for how long.

While Capt. Hartman did not say much, I think I have an inkling of why I was arrested. And I owe it to myself to explain and clear myself as much as I can - not only to myself, but to my wife and even to you. I think you should know, therefore, with your patience, I would respectfully request ^{you} to read this through.

I had called a meeting of the representatives on the morning of January 5th with the permission of Colonel Austin. But on January 3rd I became sick and I could ^{not} attend the meeting on the 5th. The meeting was postponed. That hurt the Colonel's feeling and he sent the Army doctor to examine me. The doctor's examination disclosed my temperature, pulse, and blood pressure to be normal. On the afternoon of the 6th I was arrested. But, Mr. Best, in spite of it all, I can truthfully say this

for myself - I had an awful headache up to the 5th of January, my appetite very poor, and had a bad case of constipation for weeks prior to that with stomach pains. I am not telling you a story nor am I making excuses. I would not stoop so low as to try to fool people with such trickery. My employment record will prove that I have always been loyal and faithful as it is my firm conviction of heart that faith and honesty always pay dividends, both tangible and intangible. Such is my creed and such is my faith in God, believe me, Sir.

I have learned that no matter how firm the faith, there are always dark moments of doubt. I have also learned, always slowly, and many times painfully, that things balance, somehow, the good and the bad. I would rather believe in a hundred people and ninety-nine fail me, yet the hundredth stand firm. This life of ours would not be worth much if one has to live in the darkness of mistrust and caution, and in wariness always.

And so Mr. Best I would ^{like} very much, more than anything else at this time, to have you believeⁿ me, and I am sure that I can prove that I mean well, that I mean every

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word I say if I am given the opportunity to explain.

You may then ask me what is my opinion regarding the incident of the Center. It has always been my most sincere wish and desire to settle such matters peacefully through mutual understanding. Bull-headedness and irrational ideas never did get anywhere, and never will. In my way of thinking and reasoning there is nothing that cannot see a happy ending if we understand each other.

And so today, as always, I am praying that we have a peaceful, normal center where the people could go about their own business and be happy. Today there is, as far as I know, a score of such people in the stockade, and perhaps many more, who wish to see the Center restored to its normalcy. I for one firmly believe that that is as it should be.

About two weeks ago Mr. Iwao Shimizu and I met ^{with} the Coordinating Committee at the Administration Building. Perhaps you ^{have} read the minutes of that meeting. Well, that is exactly how I feel. The score of others share our opinion. We believe in them; we have faith in them - the Coordinating Committee - that they are serving the community

with unselfish and untiring efforts in order that the people of the Colony may be happy.

In order that they may speedily attain their goal and accomplish it, we, who are of the same opinion, are even willing to cooperate and do whatever we can even from within the limits of the stockade. Under the circumstances, that is impossible. But we are glad that Messrs. Shimizu, Mohri, and Inoué have been released because these three gentlemen share our exact opinions. We have discussed the matter many times and we share the knowledge and understanding ^{the same} of those of the Coordinating Committee. These three gentlemen, when they speak and act, are also doing it for us.

As I have stated earlier I have a family with four youngsters. They are very dear to me. At present my wife is shouldering all the responsibilities of the family in my stead. She works in the kitchen - she has to because I am financially destitute. I am sorry that I am burdening my wife with everything and I would to God that I could go back to my dear ones and relieve my wife of all the responsibilities which are mine.

For reasons stated herein I would respectfully request that you give consideration to

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my case and a hearing as I believe that I can
better explain the whole matter by talking to you
personally.

May I look forward to that meeting,
I beg to remain,

Very respectfully yours,
Ernest M. Fozuma