

NEW YORK HEARING

NOVEMBER 23, 1981

STATEMENT TO THE COMMISSION ON WARTIME RELOCATION AND
INTERMENT OF CIVILIANS BY COLONEL ANGELO DE GUTTADAURO

My father was ordered on 1 September 1942 to appear before an Individual Exclusion Board held on 8 September 1942 by Headquarters, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army. The order stated that "Material in the hands of the Board will not be made available for your inspection," and that his counsel would "not be heard by the Board nor be permitted to examine witnesses."

The result of this Board was that Individual Exclusion Order Number F-1, dated 23 September 1942, was signed by LTG J. L. DeWitt, then the commanding general of that headquarters. It immediately excluded my father from living in 20 states, and also prohibited zones in another 9 states. Of most important relevance is the fact that it forced an American citizen to be excluded from his residence in California, lose his employment, home and property, and endure hardship and economic and psychological deprivation in future years.

When my father was excluded in 1942 at the age of forty-four, he never reestablished himself professionally as an accountant. As a consequence, the entire family suffered economically. Prospective companies were

hesitant to hire an employee tainted with the brush of disloyalty. Because of the swiftness of the expulsion order, household goods were either stored or simply abandoned due to the confusion involved.

We were forced to rent, in numerous cities, furnished homes or flats at high costs due to our transient status. The entire family became, by fiat, involuntary gypsies. It fell upon my mother to create for her two children, aged five and seven, an artificial family atmosphere while my father roamed the Rocky Mountain states searching for a living.

Perhaps the greatest damage was done to our psyches, especially those of my parents. Until my father was excluded, my mother tried to comfort him saying, "Nonsense! This is America, Nino. We don't do things here the way they do it in (fascist) Italy'. How wrong I was!" My father lost his confidence, his self-esteem, his inner worth. Because of this arbitrary and coercive action, a man's value to himself, to his family, and to society was dramatically reduced.

My father's exclusion order was cancelled on 13 March 1944. Just a few days later he received a letter dated 14 March 1944 from the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice. It was addressed to him in his capacity as the Commander of the Italian American Legion in San Francisco. I quote the entire text.

"Dear Sir:

More than ever we should be anxious to make this year's observance of "I Am An American Day" an auspicious event. To that end an endeavor is being made to arouse more interest than previously has been manifested.

A meeting to select a chairman and committees has been scheduled for Wednesday, March 22nd, at 3:30 PM in the Y.M.C.A. Building, 200 Golden Gate Avenue. May we express the hope that you will have a representative present.

Very truly yours

/s/ I. F. WIXON
District Director
San Francisco District